

Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?

By: Dr. Beverly Tatum

Caltech Center for Inclusion and Diversity **Summer Campuswide Book Read**

Community Guidelines:

- **Recognize:** We recognize that we must strive to overcome historical and divisive biases, such as anti-blackness, racism and sexism, in our society.
- **Acknowledge:** We acknowledge that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group(s) and about members of other groups. This is true for everyone, regardless of our group(s).
- **No Blame:** We agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- **Calling-In vs Calling-out:** Both approaches are valid and can be done with care and respect, with the goal of helping each other learn. We acknowledge that we may be at different stages of learning on the content and discussion topic.
- **Individual Experience:** We agree that no one should be required or expected to speak for their whole race or gender. We can't, even if we wanted to.
- **Make Mistakes:** We all make mistakes and have bad days; when these occur, let's challenge and encourage each other to do better. We acknowledge once again that we may be at different stages of learning on the topic.
- **Make Space & Take Space:** Share responsibility for including all voices in the discussion. If you have a tendency to dominate discussions, take a step back and help the group invite others to speak. If you tend to stay quiet, challenge yourself to share ideas so others can learn from you. If you are exceedingly quiet, do expect that the facilitator will call on you in meetings to participate. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak; assigning a time keeper may be a good idea. Allow people to "pass" on questions they aren't ready to answer.
- **Listen to Understand & Learn Together:** Everyone in the group is here to learn. We also recognize that everyone has an opinion. Opinions, however, are not the same as informed knowledge backed up by research. Depending on the topic and context, both are valid to share but it's important to know the difference. To engage in deep learning, we will want to lean more toward informed knowledge and gain practice reflecting and speaking thoughtfully on difficult topics. Avoid the need to "teach" anyone in the group. Speak from "I" e.g., I feel uncomfortable when... I don't understand this concept... etc.
- **Ask for help:** It's okay not to know. Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes when approaching a complex task or exploring new ideas. Be open to changing your mind, and make space for others to do so as well. Write down questions that come up and have each person volunteer to find a few answers for the next meet up.

July 31, 2020

Intro Meeting:

- Introductions: Names, Pronouns, Why did you sign up for this book club?
- What is your comfort level with discussing issues of race?
- Where and with whom do you currently talk about issues of race? (i.e., on-campus, off-campus, with family, with friends, online, which social media platforms?)
- What do you hope to gain from reading this book and talking about it with the group?
- Logistics: Write down: names, email addresses, and general availabilities for three dates you'll follow up for your meetings.
- **Please email the CCID: diversity@caltech.edu with the above information.**
- Optional: Write down common fears/themes that come up from the comfort level of each person around discussing race. This will be helpful to reflect on throughout your meetings.

We recommend 3 meetings:

Week of Aug 3rd: Prologue, Part 1: Chapters 1-2

Prologue/Introduction:

Suggested Questions:

- Despite the growing racial diversity in our country (where white has become a minority), old patterns of segregation persist in many neighborhoods and schools. What was the demographic makeup of the neighborhood where you grew up? What was the population of the schools you attended growing up? What role has segregation played in your life (if at all)?
- Where do you live now? Is it the same or different from the schools in your community now?
- Dr. Tatum discusses significant changes in our history: anti-affirmative action backlash of the 20th/21stcenturies, 2008 Great Recession, and mass incarceration. What stood out to you? What surprised you?
- “A Black child born today is less likely to be raised by both parents than a black child born during slavery.” How do trends in family structures and dynamics create racial disparities?
- She describes millennials (based on surveys) to be part of a more *color-silent* (vs color-blind) society. Do you agree with her description?
- Do you agree that limited cross-racial contact is a barrier to understanding the experiences of people of color in the U.S.? Why or why not?

Part 1: A Definition of Terms

Chapter 1: Defining Racism “Can we talk?”

Key Concepts: Prejudice, Racism (Prejudice + Power), Internalized Racism, White Privilege, Difference Between Race and Ethnicity

Suggested Questions:

- What is the first incidence of racism you can remember (if at all)?
- Upon reflecting on the stereotypes you were exposed to when you were growing up, what did you learn about other people (or even about your own group) that you now know were based on stereotypes or the result of distorted or omitted information?
- What is internalized racism? How can you relate?
- “It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility to interrupt this cycle.” What level of responsibility do you feel around these issues?
- How does the author distinguish racism and prejudice?
- Based on her conveyor belt analogy of racism: active, passive, bystanders, where do you see yourself in different areas of your life (work, home, friendship groups, etc.)?

- Language continuously changes, why is it important to change? E.g. Hispanic/Latino/a, Chicano, Latinx
- Using Peggy McIntosh's Invisible Knapsack, how does it show the systemic advantages of being White? Reference video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRnoddGTMTY>

Chapter 2: The Complexity of Identity “Who am I?”

Key Concepts: Dominant, Subordinate, Identity

Suggested Questions:

- Try the “I am” exercise within your group. Give everyone 1 minute to continuously list the identities they hold. What made it to the top of that list? What was absent? What did you notice in listening to others' lists?
- “The dominant group is seen as the norm for humanity.” Not the majority, but the dominant...they have to justify why they are “dominant.” How do your identities fall into both dominant and subordinate categories?

2) Week of Aug 10th: Part 2 & 3: Chapters 3-7

Part 2: Understanding Blackness in a White Context

Chapter 3: The Early Years “Is my skin brown because I drink chocolate milk?”

Key Concepts: race constancy, White resistance, teaching empowered black resistance, colorism

Suggested Questions:

- How would you respond to children who make race-related observations?
- What’s something you’ve revisited from the past (e.g. Boxcar children memory) that makes you cringe now? For example, do you see that movie/book/song with a more critical lens where you can identify any -isms (racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.).
- Have you been able to spot “that stuff”?
- How have you learned to break down complex concepts to be digestible to friends or family?

Chapter 4: Identity Development in Adolescence “Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?”

Key Concepts: Identity “statuses”, microaggression, oppositional identity, emissary, stereotype threat, Identity development

Suggested Questions:

- Do you remember your K-12 education? Were you part of the tracking system? How would you describe your social dynamics outside of school?
- What are your experiences with microaggressions (as one who’s engaged in, observed, and/or experienced them)?
- Being “authentically Black” – have you ever thought what it would be/mean to be “authentically” your race? Did you ever feel part of an outgroup within your racial peers?
- What are some identity-affirming experiences you’ve had in the past or at Caltech?

Chapter 5: Racial Identity in Adulthood “Still a work in progress...”

Key Concepts: REC Identity Development, Cycles of Identity Development, Identity Recycling

Suggested Questions:

- How would you describe our Caltech “corporate cafeteria?” What would you observe in terms of our communities of color?
- What are your thoughts and experiences of white identity development based on Cross’s White Identity Development model? Where do your experiences align and where do they differ?

- What role has a positive sense of racial identity shaped who you are today?

Part 3: Understanding Whiteness in a White Context

Chapter 6: The Development of White Identity “I’m not ethnic, I’m just normal.”

Key Concepts: White Racial Identity, Individualism, Disintegration, Allyship

Suggested Questions:

- How does this chapter resonate with White Fragility? How does it differ?
- What are your feelings on “White-only spaces”?
- Disintegration - What would it mean to distinguish between Whiteness and ethnic identity?
- The author talks about the need for White people to develop a positive White identity based in reality, not on assumed superiority. What would this look like in predominantly White spaces, like Caltech?
- What is the difference between being an ally and doing effective allyship work?
- What are your spheres of influence? Even when faced with feeling powerless, consider the areas of power and control you have access to.

Chapter 7: White Identity, Affirmative Action, and Color-Blind Racial Ideology

“Affirmative Action was nice. It had its time. Its time is over.”

Key Concepts: affirmative action, reverse discrimination, quota, goals, color-blind, aversive racism

Suggested Questions:

- What are your feelings about affirmative action?
- How would you now respond to stories/anecdotes about someone losing a job opportunity because a “less qualified” person of color took their spot? Or people talk about how others may have “played the race card?”
- What are the features of a color-blind racial ideology? What are ways we still see/experience this now?
- The author discusses a national survey in which 50% of White Americans believe that discrimination against Whites has become a problem equivalent to that against people of color. Why do you think so many White people hold this belief despite the data on persistent racial gaps on measures of social or economic well-being?
- How are these beliefs related to “aversive racism?”
- Do you agree that color-blind racial ideology is widespread? Why do the social scientists cited in the book agree that being “color-blind” is problematic?
- How do the results discussed in regard to standardized testing and college admissions relate to Caltech?

3) Week of Aug 17th: Parts 4 & 5: Chapters 8-10, Epilogue

Part 4: Beyond Black and White

Chapter 8: Critical Issues in Latinx, Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern/North African Identity Development “There’s more than just Black and White, you know.”

Key Concepts: familism, ethno racial outliers,

Suggested Questions:

- What did you learn about the rich histories of Latinx, Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern/North African? Did you learn any of this in your K-12 experience? Why do you think that’s the case? What historical omissions and distortions can you identify?
- Have you ever felt like an “ethnoracial outlier”?
- How do you acknowledge others’ presence institutionally?
- What can parents, educators, and other caring adults do to foster positive psychological outcomes for children who are at risk from racism?
- What are some of the critical issues that stood out for you in thinking about the experiences of students from these various cultural groups?
- How can the concept of “familism” affect students of color in an academic setting?

Chapter 9: Identity Development in Multiracial Families “But don’t the children suffer?”

Key Concepts: One drop rule, protean identity, colorism, transracial identity

Suggested Questions:

- Have you ever been considered racially ambiguous? Getting asked questions like “What are you?” is a common question for many who are faced with others trying to “place” their racial identity.
- What are you taking away from reading about multiracial identity development from preschool through college and adult years.
- How have your views been formed around interracial relationships? (family, parent, geographic location, your own racial make-up, media, laws, etc.a)
- What insights do you gain from reviewing this history of racial categorization in the United States?
- How can people’s identification with Rockquemore and Brunnsma categories affect their perception of identity?
 - Singular (exclusively one)
 - Border (Biracial)
 - Protean (shifting)
 - Transcendent (rejecting all racial categories)

Part 5: Breaking the Silence

Chapter 10: Embracing a Cross-Racial Dialogue “We were struggling for the words.”

Key Concepts: White silence, racial code

Suggested Questions:

- Tatum writes about fear induced silence, white silence, and the psychological cost of silence. Share a time that you have experienced this, or one of the tools you are taking away from this book towards addressing these barriers to discussing race.
- Increased zest, a sense of empowerment, greater knowledge, an increased sense of self worth, and the desire for greater knowledge are some of the benefits of growth-producing relationships. Reflect on who you have those with and where you can focus your time and energy on people you want to build this type of relationship.
- Tatum asks two important questions - Please apply these to the campus you work on:
 - “How can we create campus environments in which engagement across lines of difference is perceived as the norm rather than the exception?”
 - “How can we maximize the learning opportunities created by the diversity of our communities?”
- Within your role, strategize with your group on ways you can translate Tatum’s ABCs into action?
 - Affirm identity
 - Build Community
 - Cultivate Leadership

Save the Date!

August 25, 2020 from 12-1:30pm

Debrief and Q&A with Dr. Beverly Tatum