Building coalitions of students, families, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers around interventions and strategic improvements in practice and policy that are culturally responsive
We strive to produce the most reliable and current academies possible. Therefore, our academies are updated regularly based on facilitator and participant feedback, on subject-matter expert input, and on up-to-date research. You will find the version of this academy on the Table of Contents page. Please check our web site regularly -- www.NCCRESt.org – to find new versions and addenda to this academy.

Module 1: Understanding Culture and Cultural Responsiveness

Academy Abstract:

In this academy we examine social power and privilege as it plays out in society and in education. We also explore how power and privilege disparities within schools create inequitable educational opportunities and outcomes for students of color, students whose first language is not English, students who are economically disadvantaged and students who are labeled with special education needs.

Academy Outcomes:

As a result of the activities and information shared at this Leadership Academy, module participants will:

- Define social power, privilege, and institutional racism.
- Recognize power and privilege disparities within schools that create inequitable experiences for students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Create an action plan to bridge the gap between school and students from diverse cultures.

Academy Agenda:

Review the agenda, noting the structure of the academy (lecture, activities, question-answer period, break time, assessment), and process for answering participant questions.

ACADEMY OVERVIEW ................................................................................................................10 MINUTES
LECTURETTE: WHAT IS CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS? ............................................................10 MINUTES
ACTIVITY: GROUND RULES ......................................................................................................15 MINUTES
ACTIVITY: MERITOCRACY OR INVISIBILITY OF PRIVILEGE .......................................................30 MINUTES
LECTURETTE: SOCIAL POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM...............................20 MINUTES
ACTIVITY: LETTER FROM KAI JAMES ........................................................................................20 MINUTES
BREAK.......................................................................................................................................10 MINUTES
LECTURETTE: POWER AND PRIVILEGE IN SCHOOL.................................................................15 MINUTES
ACTIVITY: BRIDGING THE CULTURE GAP ................................................................................30 MINUTES
THINGS TO REMEMBER..............................................................................................................5 MINUTES
OUTCOMES REVIEW.................................................................................................................10 MINUTES
TOTAL: ........................................................................................................................................2:55
GROUND RULES

Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change

This activity establishes academy ground rules for participant and facilitator conduct. Since race, ethnicity, and culture are sensitive and potentially conflicting topics to discuss, this activity generates rules that will govern how participants can discuss the topics with comfort and without fear of negative reactions.

In small groups, discuss the following questions: What would it take to feel safe talking, sharing, and participating in the academy? Include in your dialogue how a safe, culturally responsive, and interactive learning environment can be created through body language, words and language, physical arrangement, and instructional design. Record suggestions in the spaces provided below:
ON THE INVISIBILITY OF PRIVILEGE

Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change

Taken from PEACEWORK, p. 10
February 1991*

“Doors of advantage swing open so silently and invisibly to whites,” says Dr. Peggy McIntosh, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. “I had been taught about racism as something that put others at a disadvantage, but I had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege…

“I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, code books, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks.

“Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, formative, and average and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’.”

Dr. McIntosh has named some of the ways of white privilege:

1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my own race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be causal about whether or not to listen to another person’s voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children’s teachers and employer will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others’ attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world’s majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

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24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the “person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my own race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize his/her chances for advancement than mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily in my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing, or body odor will be taken as a reflection of my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers suspect I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative, or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race will be mistreated in the place I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
50. I will feel welcomed and “normal” in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.


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KAI JAMES VIGNETTE

Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change

Kai James was a freshman in high school when he wrote the following letter.

Dear High School Teacher,

I am a new high school student and I am looking forward to these next years of my schooling. I feel the need to write this letter because I seek a different experience in high school from that of elementary school. One of the things I would like to see changed is the relationship between students and teachers. I feel that a relationship that places students on the same level as teachers should be established. By this I mean that students’ opinions should be taken seriously and be valued as much as those of teachers, and that together with the teachers we can shape the way we learn and what we learn...After years of being ignored, what the students need, and in particular what black students need, is a curriculum that we can relate to and that will interest us. We need appropriate curriculum to motivate us to the best we can be. We need to be taught to have a voice and have teachers who will listen to us with an open mind and not dismiss our ideas simply because they differ from what they have been told in the past. We need to be made aware of all our options in life. We need to have time to discuss issues of concern to the students as well as the teachers. We must be able to talk about racism without running away from it or disguising the issue. We must also be taught to recognize racism instead of denying it and then referring to those who have recognized it as “paranoid.” We also need to be given the opportunity to influence our education and, in turn, our destinies. We should also be given the right to assemble and discuss issues without having a teacher present to discourage us from saying what we need to say.

Teachers must gain the trust of their students, and students must be given the chance to trust their teachers. We need teachers who will not punish us just because they feel hostile or angry. We need teachers who will allow us to practice our culture without being ridiculed...

Discussion Questions:
What is Kai James asking teachers to do?

What do you think James’ experiences as an African American student have been like in school?

Why do you think changing the power structure of schools is important to him?

After reading this letter, what new thoughts do you have about cultural identity, development, and learning?


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HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change

Historically, Power and Privilege Has Played Out…

- Reduced access to educational resources
- Reduced access to career and occupational opportunities
- Reduced mobility in professional careers
- Glass ceilings on professional advancement
- Glass ceilings on regional and national (and sometimes community-level) leadership opportunities
- Few positive role models and positive reinforcements in the literature, movies, television shows, and social conventions
- Public mocking and stereotyping at the expense of the subordinated group’s dignity
- Increased suspicion of social malevolence and mischief
- Negative impact from culturally installed notions of poor work ethic and limited bottom-line capability
- Negative impact of internalizing culturally oppressive forces
- Reduced access to credit and other wealth-building resources
- Unfair treatment by dominant group members of the legal system or law enforcement
- Unwillingness on the part of the legal system to seek the repeal of normative legislation granting subordinated group members a legal right of access to the power, privilege, and influence that is culturally afforded to the dominant group members


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Use the PATH Process to plan your change effort. Record your ideas in the spaces below.

**PATH PROCESS**

**Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th>Step 5</th>
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**Step 1**

Bridging the culture gap between school and students by drawing on resources from the community and improving parental communication.

**The School’s North Star**

**ACCEPTANCE AND EXCELLENCE**

**DIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**
Take some time to carefully observe your practice for prejudicial and stereotypical behaviors. Try to look from a variety of perspectives, to see things through eyes other than your own. What would these eyes see?

- What would the seating arrangement suggest?
- Which children are regarded as the smartest? The slowest?
- What does the room environment reveal?
- Are photographs, pictures, and books representative of the diversity of society?
- If there is a toy corner, are there multiracial dolls?
- Are both boys and girls encouraged to participate in all games and activities?
- Are there different discipline practices for minority children who are engaged in the same behaviors as their European-American classmates?
- Is the question of racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences ever brought up in classroom activities?
- How does the teacher try to encourage participation of diverse parents? If not initially successful, what other attempts are made?
- How often does the teacher telephone the parents of diverse students with good news about the students’ progress?
- How many home visits does the teacher make during the course of a year?
- How much does the teacher know about students’ background and home culture?
- What does the teacher say to his or her colleagues about the culturally diverse students?
- What attempts has the teacher made to learn about effective teaching strategies for diverse learners?

Often, there is a conflict between school climate and students' cultures. It is displayed in curriculum, building structure, instruction, referral to special education, and miscommunication with parents. What are some techniques and resources that educators can use to bridge this culture gap?

Social power is given to people who are members of groups which have more or less power in society. Groups that everyone belongs to include gender, class, ethnicity, age, & education. Discuss implications of allowing social power to remain invisible, unacknowledged, and unexamined in schools.

Power and privilege and closely tied. Discuss how they are similar, different, and how they are connected.

These are the outcomes we've covered in this academy. Choose one or two and brainstorm the knowledge and skills you’ve gained today.
FACILITATOR EVALUATION

Academy 3: Power, Privilege, and Change

Please answer the following questions to let us know how you feel the academy went and to help us improve future academies.

1. What is your profession?

2. What professions were represented by the academy participants?

3. How many participants attended the academy?

4. How long did the academy take to complete?

5. Provided is a list of the activities and lecturettes. Please circle the rating you feel best suits the activity or lecturette. A rating of 1 = very poor, a rating of 5 = excellent.

   Lecturette: What is Cultural Responsiveness?
   1  2  3  4  5

   Activity: Ground Rules
   1  2  3  4  5

   Activity: Meritocracy or Invisibility of Privilege
   1  2  3  4  5

   Lecturette: Social Power, Privilege, and Institutional Racism
   1  2  3  4  5

   Activity: Letter from Kai James
   1  2  3  4  5

   Lecturette: Power and Privilege in School
   1  2  3  4  5

   Activity: Bridging the Culture Gap
   1  2  3  4  5

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6. Which parts of the academy went quickly? Were there parts that ran over the time limit? If so, why do you think this occurred?

7. How did you learn about the academy? Would you lead another academy?

8. Please list suggestions for new topics as well as possible additions or deletions from this module.

9. Please list any changes that you feel should be made to the activities or lectureettes of this academy.

10. Please write any additional comments you want the module developers to hear.

Thank you for your feedback! Your suggestions will improve experience of future facilitators and academy participants. Please fax this form to the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems at (480) 965-4942.
I am a

- General Ed Teacher
- Administrator
- Special Ed Teacher
- Parent
- Paraprofessional
- Other

I am affiliated with a(n):

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- Secondary School

If I were on the next academy planning team, I would ...

Three things I learned that made me go... AH HA!

1. ______________________________________
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________

As a result of my participation in this academy, I am going to ...

Please let us know how useful you found the topics and activities:

Activity 1: Ground Rules
- Poor
- Great
  1 2 3 4 5

Activity 2: Meritocracy, Invisibility of Privilege
- Poor
- Great
  1 2 3 4 5

Activity 3: Letter from Kai James
- Poor
- Great
  1 2 3 4 5

Activity 4: Bridging the Culture Gap
- Poor
- Great
  1 2 3 4 5

Self Evaluation
- Poor
- Great
  1 2 3 4 5

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Glossary

Culture: A body of learned beliefs, traditions, principles, and guides for behavior that are shared among members of a particular group.

Cultural racism: Value systems that support and allow discriminatory actions against racially and ethnoculturally marginalized communities.

Cultural responsiveness: The recognition and acknowledgement that society is pluralistic. In addition to the dominant culture, there exist many other cultures based around ethnicity, sexual orientation, geography, religion, gender, and class.

Cultural sensitivity: The ability to be open to learning about and accepting of different cultural groups.

Discrimination: To make a difference in treatment on a basis other than individual character.

Discrimination: Behaviors directed towards people on the basis of their group membership.

Diversity perspective: Research that seeks to emphasize a wide range of voices, viewpoints, and experiences, and may seek to include identities of ethnicity, culture, sexuality, gender, age, disability, or a wide range of other perspectives.

Ethnocentrism: To judge other cultures by the standards of one’s own, and beyond that, to see one’s own standards as the true universal and the other culture in a negative way.

Institutional and structural racism: Racism that systematically deprives a racially identified group of equal access to a treatment in education, medical care, law, politics, housing, etc.

Prejudice: Generalized attitude towards members of a group without adequate prior knowledge, thought, or reason.

Racism: A belief that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

Sexism: The belief in the inherent superiority of one sex (gender) over the other and thereby the right to dominance.

Social privilege: A right or immunity granted to or enjoyed by certain people beyond the common advantage of all others.

Stereotype: Generalized belief about members of a cultural group.
Resources


