

**Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild@HWDSB: Building a Community of Care
Module 2 Understanding Identity and Intersectionality**

Lesson #12 – Identity and Race, Part 1 (K-1)

Learning Goal: To discuss race as an important aspect of identity and to explore/share our own identities through creating a self-portrait.

Key Vocabulary

Race - The idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups based on inherited physical and behavioral differences. Racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. Genetic studies have concluded that race is a made-up social construct to uphold European and white standards, and not an actual biological fact. (Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002, p.141).

Racial identity - An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience ([*Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*](#). Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. Routledge, 1997).

Curriculum Connections

Kindergarten (Self-Regulation and Well-Being)

This frame encompasses children’s learning and development with respect to:

- their own thinking and feelings, and their recognition of and respect for differences in the thinking and feelings of others;
- regulating their emotions, adapting to distractions, and assessing consequences of actions in a way that enables them to engage in learning;
- their physical and mental health and wellness. In connection with this frame, it is important for educators to consider:
 - the interrelatedness of children’s self-awareness, sense of self, and ability to self-regulate;

The role of the learning environment in helping children to be calm, focused, and alert so they are better able to learn. What children learn in connection with this frame allows them to focus, to learn, to respect themselves and others, and to promote well-being in themselves and others.

Grade 1 (Visual Arts)

D1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process (see pages 19–22) to produce a variety of two- and three-dimensional art works, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings.

D3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts: demonstrate an understanding of a variety of art forms, styles, and techniques from the past and present, and their social and/or community contexts.

Tools and Materials

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book read aloud – Skin Again • Crayola’s multicultural crayons (if available) • Drawing paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art supplies (i.e., colouring pencils, paint, crayons, pastels) • Chart paper • Lesson 12 Primary PowerPoint |
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Educator Pre-reflection

Before engaging in this lesson, consider/think about...

Racial colourblindness is an approach to reduce interracial tension which proposes that “racial categories do not matter and should not be considered when making decisions such as hiring and school admissions. The primary tenet of this approach is that social categories should be dismantled and disregarded, and everyone should be treated as an individual” (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2003; Firebaugh & Davis, 1998; Lipset, 1996; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). This ideology posits itself on the premise of equality for all, rather than equity and thus, at its core is an insidious practice of racism in itself.

The core premise of this lesson is to negate such colourblind practice by attempting to bring race into the conversation in primary classrooms. This is an extremely necessary and important way of disrupting the development of racist beliefs and thoughts in the early years as children start internalizing racial bias by the time they are 5 years old (Baron, 2015; Dunham, Baron, & Banaji, 2008).

Furthermore, please be aware that race is a heavy burden many racialized students carry even at a very early age due to their lived experiences. If a racialized student is unwilling to share, participate, or even be present for these conversations, it may be due to personal triggers. Thus, enforcing them in a conversation about race they do not feel safe to do may cause added harm to such students. As the expert on your students’ background history, triggers, body language, and classroom dynamics, please make informed and empathetic decisions regarding ensuring a safe and inclusive setting to engage in these brave conversations.

Student Pre-reflection

Before you begin, think about...

- *Can we tell what kind of person someone is from the way they look on the outside?*

Provocation

Possible Diagnostic Task:

Before beginning this lesson, consider having students draw a picture of themselves, focusing on their face and hair. Take a picture of these drawings as documentation, noting how students portray themselves prior to this lesson.

Read Aloud: Read the book (video: 4.23mins) [Skin Again](#) to the class to provide context regarding the discussion to follow.

Reminder: Log into YouTube using school email and play videos in safe mode.

On chart paper, draw the outline of person. Model reflecting on identity by asking and recording answers to the following questions:

- What are some things you love about the way you look on the outside? (i.e., skin colour, hair, eye colour) - ***write these ideas inside the person's outline***
- What are some things you love about yourself about who you are on the inside? (i.e., first language, family life, culture, religion, country of birth, hobbies) - ***write these ideas on the outside of the person's outline***

Emphasize that all these points about yourself make up your identity (write the word “identity” in capital letters as the title of the chart).

Explain to students that there are parts of our identity that are very visible, like the colour of our skin or hair, and there are parts of our identity that are less visible, like the languages we speak, or even invisible parts, like our place of birth.

Race is also a part of our identity. Discuss that the word “race” is sometimes misunderstood to only represent a person’s skin colour. However, a person’s racial identity is more than the colour of their skin; it is also about how they see themselves based on their culture, life experiences, family life, language, where they were born, etc.

Learning Task/Activity

Discuss that a self-portrait is an artist’s way of thinking about and expressing details about who they are on the inside and on the outside - their identity. Explain to students that they will be making self-portraits to tell the story of who they are on the outside and on the inside.

Students will use details about what they look like to draw what they look like **inside the outline** and the things that make them who they are outside the outline; so, their self-portraits express not only their physical features (colour of their skin, hair, eyes, clothing) but also their emotions and who they are based on their family background and lived experiences.



If you have Crayola's multi-cultural crayons available:

Before students start, introduce Crayola's multicultural crayons as an essential tool for creating their self-portraits and be very purposeful about explaining that using these crayons to portray their authentic skin colour is a key part of this art lesson. This is the premise of the lesson to disrupt the myth of "racial colourblindness" being a desirable aspect in striving for equity. It should be explicitly discussed that recognizing and appreciating the colour of our skin is the first step to being proud of our racial identity.



Have each student find a plain piece of paper and whatever colouring supplies they may have available (crayons, colored pencils, paints or the art supplies). Allow them to work on self-portraits that show their identity.

If you are in Remote Learning or don't have Crayola's multi-cultural crayons available:

Have each student find a plain piece of paper and some colouring supplies they may have available (crayons, colored pencils, pastels, paints or other art supplies where colours can be blended). Once these supplies are gathered have a class discussion on the following:

Ask students to look at the colours available to them and select a colour that they feel best matches their skin tone. **Was it easy or hard to find a good match? Why?**

(Possible responses: It was easy because I had lots of colours to choose from. It was hard because I would need to mix the colours I have to match my skin tone.)

Show a picture of the multi-cultural crayons and ask students: **Why do you think these special crayons were created? How might they help us?**

(Possible responses: People have different colours of skin and hair so they need more crayon colours for their art. These crayons give us more choices for hair and skin colour.)

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Allow them to work on self-portraits that show their identity.

*It is recommended that you join the students in creating a self-portrait to engage in a co-learning environment to build trusting relationships regarding discussions about race and set precedence about creating student centered learning space where brave dialogue is facilitated based on a collective, rather than teacher directed learning; this is a key component of the anti-oppression/anti-racist educational framework.

Consolidation

Allow each student time to share their self-portrait with the class and express various inside and outside characteristics of their identity and race. Share your own portrait with the class as well.

Educator/Student Post-Reflection

- What is the main idea I want to remember or take away from this lesson?
- What is my next step?
- What do I need to learn more about?
- How is my mental wellbeing after this co-learning experience?

Ideas for Going Deeper/Further Resources

For a deeper appreciation of the identity of others, students can speak to their self-portraits as their expressions of their self-identity is scribed. Display the self-portraits and their descriptions on a wall in the classroom or in the school or make a digital slide show. Students can do a gallery walk and ask each other questions regarding their self-portraits to develop deeper understanding and appreciation for the unique characteristics of their peers and recognize the similarities beyond the colour of each person’s skin colour.

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Name _____
Practice your self-portrait

