

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

Lesson # 13

Identity and Race, Part 2 (Grades 2-3)

Learning Goal: To explore our own identity by creating a self-portrait.

Key Vocabulary

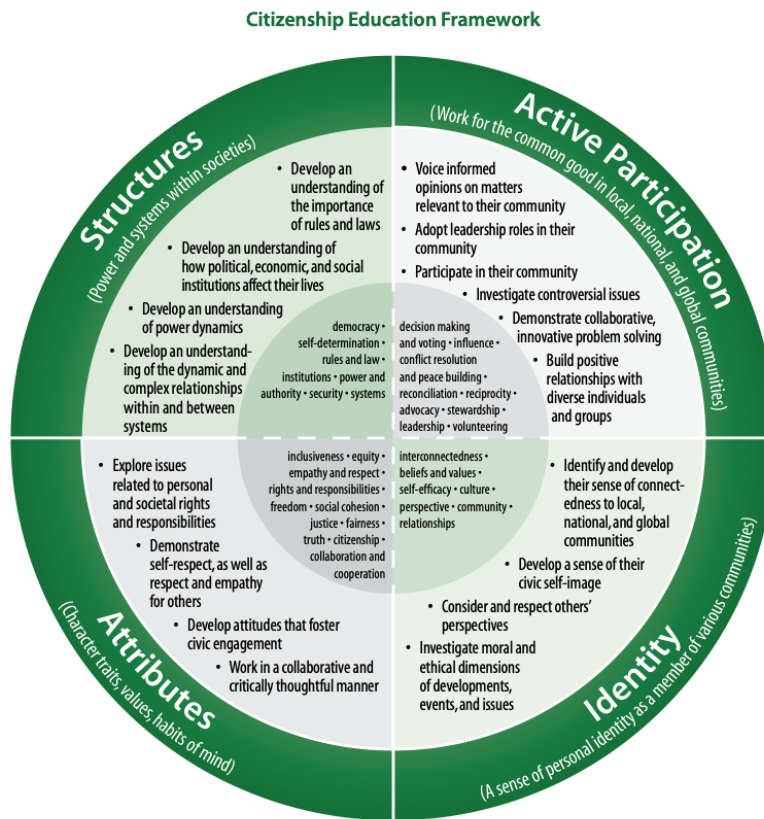
Race - The idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences. Racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. Genetic studies have 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).

Racialization - Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular "race" and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. Put simply, "racialization [is] the process of manufacturing and utilizing the notion of race in any capacity" (Dalal, 2002, p. 27). While white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the authority to name and racialize "others" (SOURCE: [Calgary Anti-Racism Resources](#))

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

Social Studies



Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8

The combination of the citizenship education framework and the knowledge and skills in the curriculum expectations brings citizenship education to life, not only in social studies, history, and geography, but in many other subjects as well.

The Citizen Education Framework in the front material of the Social Studies/ History and Geography curriculum outlines the information and skills a learner needs to understand in order to study History and Geography. One quadrant focuses on Identity, and one's place within their local and the global community. This lesson is a component of students acquiring the knowledge necessary to understand themselves, and their role as citizens of Canada.

Grade 2-3 (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.

Tools and Materials

- Book read aloud – [Skin Again](#)
- Racial identity brainstorming web
- Crayola's multicultural crayons

- Drawing paper
- Art supplies (i.e., colouring pencil, paint, crayons, pastels or anything that allows blending of colours)

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 a 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).

Student Pre-reflection

What are some of your favourite things about the way you look on the outside?
What are some of your favourite things about who you are on the inside?

Provocation

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

Read Aloud: Read the book [Skin Again](#) (video: 4.23 mins) to the class. Ask them to discuss the following question with their peers in flexible groups:

- *What is connection between this book and the idea of racial identity?*
- *How does this book help us appreciate our own racial identity?*

Ask students to briefly share their important ideas from the group discussion.

Learning Task/Activity

To begin, refer to the web about racial identity that was cocreated in Part 1 of this lesson. Briefly discuss the various ideas. Ask students if they would like to add any other thoughts or ideas to the web.

Explain to students that they will be making their own self-portraits to express thoughts about their own racial identity. Remind them to use ideas from the web so their self-portraits express not only the colour of their skin, but also their emotions and who they are based on their lived experiences.



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Students will work independently to make a list of ideas they would like to show about themselves through their self-portraits. In addition to the various points from the web, the list may also include individual characteristics and stereotype-fighting features. This may also be a good place to introduce the concept of visible and invisible parts of our identity (things people can see or notice and things that they can only discover if we choose to share or once they get to know us). This may give students even more ideas of what to include in their portraits.

Give students the chance to share their lists with friends they are comfortable to share with. This will allow them the chance to discuss how they might use a self-portrait to express these ideas.

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.



Give each student paper, a small mirror, and colored pencils, paints or the art supplies of your choice. Allow them to work on self-portraits that show themselves, including aspects of themselves that are important for them to communicate.

(Portions of this lesson have been adapted and modified from the Art and Activism series from the Teaching Tolerance website at <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/art-and-racial-justice-what-is-in-a-selfportrait>)

Consolidation

Give students time to share their work at the end of the period, even if it is a work in progress. Make sure to find time for students to complete these self-portraits and display them in your classroom or school.

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

To delve deeper into this introspective process to embrace their racial identities, students can be encouraged to write a journal reflection regarding their understanding of racial identity and describe their self-portraits to go more in-depth through a metacognitive process by expressing their thoughts about their perception of self.