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**Literature Circles: Chapter Summaries**

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**Chapter 1 & 2: Critical Thinking/Theory and Socialization**

**Role: Illustrator**

* The main point of this chapter is become aware of the generalizations that people make about any group of people.
* In the chapter, Sensoy and DiAngelo talk about gender and how our society imposes our beliefs about what is acceptable in society at a young age. For example, men cannot wear pink and or woman must appear clean shaved in order to look feminine.
* The chapter also talks about race and the hiring process and the discrimination that still exists among diverse groups of people. For example, employers can discriminate people by choosing who they select for a job even though many black people who apply for jobs may meet the qualifications for a job.

How perspective is influenced by how we are socialized

* One of the examples in the book is about women who shave or do not shave underarm hair. Depending on the place, this could be either socially acceptable or not socially acceptable. We are influenced by our culture, traditions, beliefs, and values as to how we are socialized and this impacts our perspective/ our way of seeing.

The illustrations I have provided for the literature circle are images I searched that were based on generalizations made in society.

* The images that I have found relate to what is being implied in the chapter as one of the images, for example, states that an employer provides equal opportunity for all people, but depicted is a woman trying to enter into the building with a door shaped as a man. This is an example of how employers can discriminate, by who they choose and who has more authority/power.
* We are influenced by our society in developing our identity from our parents, teachers, friends, and the public. There are also norms that are the conceptions of appropriate and expected behavior held by members within society. We are socialized through formal and informal education and also in different ways that result from our culture.

**Chapter 3: Prejudice and Discrimination**

**Role: Advocate/Protestor**

This chapter defines the difference between prejudice and discrimination

* Prejudice: Learned prejudgement about members of a social group to which we don’t belong. Prejudice is based on limited knowledge or experience with the group. Judgements and assumptions are made and projected onto everyone from that group.
* Discrimination: Action based on prejudice. When we act on our prejudices, we are discriminating.

Ideas to advocate for/to understand:

 Prejudices:

* Can be either positive or negative, but they are always unfair.
* Prejudice is learned prejudgement towards social others
* Prejudice begins as stereotypes
* Prejudice comes to play when we add values to our stereotypes

We also categorize and sort people, but this can be seen as a sensitive issue depending on the context and the intended purpose. For example, who categorise people with exceptionalities in order to help us to understand the differences between exceptionalities so that we as teachers can make accommodations to meet their specific needs. However, labels and the way we categorize people can be hurtful if one did not use people first language and speak as if the disability defines the person.

Discrimination:

* Action based prejudices / how we think about groups of people determines how we act towards them.
* Discriminatory behaviours produced by people are not always known to us.
* We all have prejudices and discriminate
* Values of social groups: how you speak – your tone, the words you use, and even your facial expressions.

**Chapter 4: Oppression and Power**

**Role: Connector**

This chapter covers many definitions and makes distinctions between all definitions.

Oppression – is to deny a social group full access in a given society. Prejudice in an oppressed group is backed by social, historical, and institutional power.

Ex: women’s right to vote.

Prejudice – describes the dynamics on an individual level and in which all individuals participate.

Social stratification – the concept that social groups that are positioned in a hierarchy of unequal value

Ex: identities (men/women) – rank by group – the dominant group - men are positioned more valuable than women

All people have prejudice and discriminate, but the dominant group back prejudice by social, historical, and institutional power.

Oppression is more than individual – understanding isms – various forms of oppression – sexism, racism, classism, nationalism, etc.

Discrimination

Ex: If a man gets hired in the education system, he will be more likely to rise to a position of leadership over the very women who hired him.

From my internship, there was a principal and two vice-principals at the high school, all of which were males. When one of the principals were not around and needed someone else to fill in I noticed that a female did fill this position. I think there is a change occurring in the way our education system functions, but this also depends on many factors: the school, place, their views/knowledge on gender and social justice, and the people involved who have more authoritative power. However, it is also important to note that not every teacher wants to be a principal because it means taking a different setting in the school system. Some people may also think that they can still be a persuasive leader in their school without having an official title or position. There are many types of leadership. Teachers can lead and foster growth in each other as well as in their students—all in the same job.

**Gender and Sexual Identity**

**Role: Discussion Leader**

1. What is the most important part of your identity? Is it your sex, your race or ethnicity, your sexual orientation, your class status, your nationality, your religious affiliation, your age, your political beliefs? Is there one part of your identity that stands out from the rest, or does your identity change depending on who you’re with, what you’re involved in, where you are in your life?
2. Knowing everything you know about gender, say you get to choose which sex you are born. What choice would you make? Why did you make that choice? What might be better about your life as the sex you chose? What might be worse about your life as the sex you chose?
3. There are many terms to discuss gender identities. What are the proper terms and how do I know when to use them?
4. There are no gender variant youth in your school (that you as a teacher do not know of at least). Why still address these issues?
5. What are the health, safety, and educational concerns of gender variant students in our schools today?
6. What would you do if a student discloses a gender variant identity to you?
7. What can the schools do to support youth and gender identity?
8. What can the schools do to support the parents/caregivers of students and gender identity?
9. How can the schools build resiliency among students and their gender identity?

**Chapter 7: Racism**

**Role: Idea Generator**

What to do as a teacher:

As teachers, we should facilitate interactions and learning experiences that foster acceptance and understanding of a range of people and culture. To do this, we must nurture a healthy curiosity and develop a comfortable environment to ask about and share personal cultural traditions in our classrooms. One way to do this is to bring props to the lesson to let students see, hear, taste, and feel through bringing traditions into the classroom to help deepen learning about a variety of cultures.

Exposing students to a variety of people and environments can also help break the barriers by getting to know others though events like field trips, festivals, and even our neighbourhoods. Prior to the event, students could also do some research about the culture(s) that they will explore to encourage students to ask questions and perhaps experience a part of that culture through learning a few words of another language. Another thing teachers should consider is allowing students to have choice in choosing a culture that they find intriguing and to also understand the day-to-day experiences of a culture besides just learning about food so that learning goes deeper. Sharing pictures and stories could also be a way for teachers and their students to discuss how race/ethnicity, religion, culture, geography, socioeconomic status that result in vastly different life experiences for different groups of people. Having books in the classroom is another way that students can explore topics and teachers can engage students into a discussion after they read them.

Letting students ask questions can increase their comfort level and help distinguish between stereotypes and misconceptions that flourish. Teachers should also provide more explicit lessons that are about dealing with racism and cultural misunderstandings and mistreatments. Lastly, the school should provide opportunities to learn about social justice through school-wide and community-wide work, events, and activities.

<http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/combating-racism-multicultural-classroom.shtml>

The use of strategies is important in the classroom, but it does mean that we as teachers will never encounter issues of racism. However, it is better to be informed of the issues that exist in our society than to not be aware and think that such issues do not affect us or that we have no influence in the things that happen around us.

**Chapter 8: Racism as White Supremacy**

**Role: Media Reflector**

http://www.paulkivel.com/issues/racial-justice/item/96-understanding-white-supremacyflector

This website link of Paul Kivel who is an educator, activist, and a writer features the article Understanding White Supremacy: Challenging White Privilege and Working for Social Justice

Key points from the article/ conference:

* He began by asking people in the audience to pair up with another person and to talk about one impact the civil rights movement had on their lives. Then he asked people to pair up with someone else and talk about a young person who inspires them in some way. Our struggle for social justice is built on the contributions of those who have gone before us and is inspired by our vision of the world we want to leave to our children and our children’s children.
* We need to look at the social, political, and economic context we are in. The financial crisis and the tremendous inequalities of wealth and power and our involvement in other conflicts throughout the world. However, seeing issues does not come as easy in a case where one is part of a dominant group.
* He also states that: “When people of colour are angry about racism, my first response is to say that I’m not racist and I treat everyone equally. But their anger is not directed at me. They want to know if I stand with them in the struggle for racial justice. When women express their anger about male violence to me and other men I also want to throw up my hands in protest and tell them that I don’t hit my partner. But they want to know if I stand with them against male violence”.
* We all have prejudices and false beliefs about other groups, but he also states that we each have a responsibility to become more aware about the misinformation we have accumulated.
* Racism is caused by, and further reinforces, institutional and cultural racism regardless of the intentions of individual white people. Example listed by Paul Kivel: “I can be a white teacher in a school and treat all my students, white and students of colour with respect and care, helping each one to master the class material and move on to the next grade level. However, if I am teaching in a school that tracks students of colour into lower-achievement classes than white students, or disciplines students of colour more harshly than white students, or doesn’t hire and support faculty of colour, or uses a curriculum that doesn’t include the contributions of people of our society, then regardless of my personal practice as a teacher, I am teaching in an institution that enforces racism”.
* Systems of oppression confer power and benefits to those in control and make others vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and marginalization. But not all in the more powerful group benefit equally. We need to look at the economic system to see who really is affected by racism.

* The point of understanding white benefits is to challenge white power. Our benefits lead us to understand how and in what ways to be engaged in social justice work.
* In the conference he also asked the audience: Please stand if the clothes you wear, the electronic devices you use, and most of the food you eat are produced by low-income people of colour, primarily women, in this country and in other countries? Thank you.