

11th GRADE On-Level SUMMER READING -- 2018
Richard Montgomery High School

Welcome to 11th grade! We're excited to teach you next year. The attached eight readings focus on race and identity, as our first unit questions the way individuals evolve in their search for self.

ASSIGNMENT 1 - Exploring Identity

Annotation

Choose four of the articles and annotate for the following items. Your annotations may be done on the printed articles, or by using the comment function in Google Docs:

- Author's claim
- Author's tone toward the subject of the article
- Audience
- Occasion
- Rhetorical strategies to support the claim
- Specific diction to create an effect

Paragraph

Select the article that had the greatest impact on you and use the template below to create a two-paragraph response.

The general argument made by author X in her/his work, _____, is that _____ . More specifically, X argues that _____. S/he writes, " _____." In this passage, X suggests that _____. Ultimately, X's belief is that _____.

In my view, X is (wrong/right/only partially right) because _____. More specifically, [I believe that] _____. For example, _____. Although author X might object that _____, [I maintain that] _____. Therefore, [I conclude that] _____.

ASSIGNMENT 2 - Independent Reading (Novel)

Choose a book to read that is a young adult novel or adult fiction/nonfiction. Please make sure your novel is at a high school reading level. If you start reading a book and don't like it, please don't trudge through—choose a different book! If your book has a movie adaptation (e.g. *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *The Help*, etc.), part of your Book Chat and written notes must address comparisons between the book and the movie (see #9).

Prepare a 60 second Book Chat. On a separate sheet of paper you must include the following:

1. Book title & author.
2. Genre (historical fiction, mystery, fantasy, memoir, etc.).
3. Setting (where & when is your book set?).
4. Narration (1st/3rd person, anything unusual like two different narrators, etc.?).
5. Main character's name (& age/gender/race if important)
6. Main character's main challenge (the conflict of the book) [DO NOT GIVE AWAY THE END!!]
7. Three character traits of your main character.
8. What you liked best about your book and why.
9. Comparison between book & movie if applicable.
10. A short passage, no longer than eight lines, to share and discuss with the class. Include a citation (page number).

Both assignments are due the second day of school.

How Diversity Makes Us Smarter

Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and harder-working

October 1, 2014

By Katherine W. Phillips - *Professor of Leadership and Ethics and senior vice dean at Columbia Business School.*
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

IN BRIEF

Decades of research by organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists and demographers show that socially diverse groups (that is, those with a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups.

It seems obvious that a group of people with diverse individual expertise would be better than a homogeneous group at solving complex, non-routine problems. It is less obvious that social diversity should work in the same way—yet the science shows that it does.

This is not only because people with different backgrounds bring new information. Simply interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.

The first thing to acknowledge about diversity is that it can be difficult. In the U.S., where the dialogue of inclusion is relatively advanced, even the mention of the word “diversity” can lead to anxiety and conflict. Supreme Court justices disagree on the virtues of diversity and the means for achieving it. Corporations spend billions of dollars to attract and manage diversity both internally and externally, yet they still face discrimination lawsuits, and the leadership ranks of the business world remain predominantly white and male.

It is reasonable to ask what good diversity does us. Diversity of *expertise* confers benefits that are obvious—you would not think of building a new car without engineers, designers and quality-control experts—but what about social diversity? What good comes from diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation? Research has shown that social diversity in a group can cause discomfort, rougher interactions, a lack of trust, greater perceived interpersonal conflict, lower communication, less cohesion, more concern about disrespect, and other problems. So what is the upside?

The fact is that if you want to build teams or organizations capable of innovating, you need diversity. Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem solving. Diversity can improve the bottom line of companies and lead to unfettered discoveries and breakthrough innovations. Even simply being exposed to diversity can change the way you think. This is not just wishful thinking: it is the conclusion I draw from decades of research from organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists and demographers.

Information and Innovation

The key to understanding the positive influence of diversity is the concept of informational diversity. When people are brought together to solve problems in groups, they bring different information, opinions and perspectives. This makes obvious sense when we talk about diversity of disciplinary backgrounds—think again of the interdisciplinary team building a car. The same logic applies to social

diversity. People who are different from one another in race, gender and other dimensions bring unique information and experiences to bear on the task at hand. A male and a female engineer might have perspectives as different from one another as an engineer and a physicist—and that is a good thing.

Research on large, innovative organizations has shown repeatedly that this is the case. For example, business professors Cristian Deszö of the University of Maryland and David Ross of Columbia University studied the effect of gender diversity on the top firms in Standard & Poor's Composite 1500 list, a group designed to reflect the overall U.S. equity market. First, they examined the size and gender composition of firms' top management teams from 1992 through 2006. Then they looked at the financial performance of the firms. In their words, they found that, on average, “female representation in top management leads to an increase of \$42 million in firm value.” They also measured the firms' “innovation intensity” through the ratio of research and development expenses to assets. They found that companies that prioritized innovation saw greater financial gains when women were part of the top leadership ranks.

Racial diversity can deliver the same kinds of benefits. In a study conducted in 2003, Orlando Richard, a professor of management at the University of Texas at Dallas, and his colleagues surveyed executives at 177 national banks in the U.S., then put together a database comparing financial performance, racial diversity and the emphasis the bank presidents put on innovation. For innovation-focused banks, increases in racial diversity were clearly related to enhanced financial performance.

Evidence for the benefits of diversity can be found well beyond the U.S. In August 2012 a team of researchers at the Credit Suisse Research Institute issued a report in which they examined 2,360 companies globally from 2005 to 2011, looking for a relationship between gender diversity on corporate management boards and financial performance. Sure enough, the researchers found that companies with one or more women on the board delivered higher average returns on equity, lower gearing (that is, net debt to equity) and better average growth.

How Diversity Provokes Thought

Large data-set studies have an obvious limitation: they only show that diversity is correlated with better performance, not that it causes better performance. Research on racial diversity in small groups, however, makes it possible to draw some causal conclusions. Again, the findings are clear: for groups that value innovation and new ideas, diversity helps.

In 2006 Margaret Neale of Stanford University, Gregory Northcraft of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and I set out to examine the impact of racial diversity on small decision-making groups in an experiment where sharing information was a requirement for success. Our subjects were undergraduate students taking business courses at the University of Illinois. We put together three-person groups—some consisting of all white members, others with two whites and one non-white member—and had them perform a murder mystery exercise. We made sure that all group members shared a common set of information, but we also gave each member important clues that only he or she knew. To find out who committed the murder, the group members would have to share all the information they collectively possessed during discussion. The groups with racial diversity significantly outperformed the groups with no racial diversity. Being with similar others leads us to think we all hold the same information and share the same perspective. This perspective, which stopped the all-white groups from effectively processing the information, is what hinders creativity and innovation.

Other researchers have found similar results. In 2004 Anthony Lising Antonio, a professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Education, collaborated with five colleagues from the University of California, Los Angeles, and other institutions to examine the influence of racial and opinion composition in small group discussions. More than 350 students from three universities participated in the study. Group members were asked to discuss a prevailing social issue (either child labor practices or the death penalty) for 15 minutes. The researchers wrote dissenting opinions and had both black and white

members deliver them to their groups. When a black person presented a dissenting perspective to a group of whites, the perspective was perceived as more novel and led to broader thinking and consideration of alternatives than when a white person introduced *that same dissenting perspective*. The lesson: when we hear dissent from someone who is different from us, it provokes more thought than when it comes from someone who looks like us.

This effect is not limited to race. For example, last year professors of management Denise Lewin Loyd of the University of Illinois, Cynthia Wang of Oklahoma State University, Robert B. Lount, Jr., of Ohio State University and I asked 186 people whether they identified as a Democrat or a Republican, then had them read a murder mystery and decide who they thought committed the crime. Next, we asked the subjects to prepare for a meeting with another group member by writing an essay communicating their perspective. More important, in all cases, we told the participants that their partner disagreed with their opinion but that they would need to come to an agreement with the other person. Everyone was told to prepare to convince their meeting partner to come around to their side; half of the subjects, however, were told to prepare to make their case to a member of the opposing political party, and half were told to make their case to a member of their own party.

The result: Democrats who were told that a fellow Democrat disagreed with them prepared less well for the discussion than Democrats who were told that a Republican disagreed with them. Republicans showed the same pattern. When disagreement comes from a socially different person, we are prompted to work harder. Diversity jolts us into cognitive action in ways that homogeneity simply does not.

[. . .]

The Power of Anticipation

Diversity is not only about bringing different perspectives to the table. Simply adding social diversity to a group makes people *believe* that differences of perspective might exist among them and that belief makes people change their behavior.

Members of a homogeneous group rest somewhat assured that they will agree with one another; that they will understand one another's perspectives and beliefs; that they will be able to easily come to a consensus. But when members of a group notice that they are socially different from one another, they change their expectations. They anticipate differences of opinion and perspective. They assume they will need to work harder to come to a consensus. This logic helps to explain both the upside and the downside of social diversity: people work harder in diverse environments both cognitively and socially. They might not like it, but the hard work can lead to better outcomes.

In a 2006 study of jury decision making, social psychologist Samuel Sommers of Tufts University found that racially diverse groups exchanged a wider range of information during deliberation about a sexual assault case than all-white groups did. In collaboration with judges and jury administrators in a Michigan courtroom, Sommers conducted mock jury trials with a group of real selected jurors. Although the participants knew the mock jury was a court-sponsored experiment, they did not know that the true purpose of the research was to study the impact of racial diversity on jury decision making.

Sommers composed the six-person juries with either all white jurors or four white and two black jurors. As you might expect, the diverse juries were better at considering case facts, made fewer errors recalling relevant information and displayed a greater openness to discussing the role of race in the case. These improvements did not necessarily happen because the black jurors brought new information to the group—they happened because white jurors changed their behavior in the presence of the black jurors. In the presence of diversity, they were more diligent and open-minded.

Group Exercise

Consider the following scenario: You are writing up a section of a paper for presentation at an upcoming conference. You are anticipating some disagreement and potential difficulty communicating because your collaborator is American and you are Chinese. Because of one social distinction, you may focus on other differences between yourself and that person, such as her or his culture, upbringing and experiences—differences that you would not expect from another Chinese collaborator. How do you prepare for the meeting? In all likelihood, you will work harder on explaining your rationale and anticipating alternatives than you would have otherwise.

This is how diversity works: by promoting hard work and creativity; by encouraging the consideration of alternatives even before any interpersonal interaction takes place. The pain associated with diversity can be thought of as the pain of exercise. You have to push yourself to grow your muscles. The pain, as the old saw goes, produces the gain. In just the same way, we need diversity—in teams, organizations and society as a whole—if we are to change, grow and innovate.

Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person

By Gina Crosley-Corcoran, author and advocate behind TheFeministBreeder.com

Posted: 05/08/2014 12:57 pm EDT Updated: 09/03/2014 11:59 am EDT

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosleycorcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html

Years ago some feminist on the Internet told me I was "privileged." "THE F&CK!?!?" I said.

I came from the kind of poor that people don't want to believe still exists in this country. Have you ever spent a frigid northern-Illinois winter without heat or running water? I have. At 12 years old were you making ramen noodles in a coffee maker with water you fetched from a public bathroom? I was. Have you ever lived in a camper year-round and used a random relative's apartment as your mailing address? We did. Did you attend so many different elementary schools that you can only remember a quarter of their names? Welcome to my childhood.



This is actually a much nicer trailer setup than the one I grew up in.

So when that feminist told me I had "white privilege," I told her that my white skin didn't do shit to prevent me from experiencing poverty. Then, like any good, educated feminist would, she directed me to Peggy McIntosh's now-famous 1988 piece "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

After one reads McIntosh's powerful essay, it's impossible to deny that being born with white skin in America affords people certain unearned privileges in life that people of other skin colors simply are not afforded. For example:

"I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented."

"When I am told about our national heritage or about 'civilization,' I am shown that people of my color made it what it is."

"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."

"I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time."

If you read through the rest of the list, you can see how white people and people of color experience the world in very different ways. But listen: This is not said to make white people feel guilty about their privilege. It's not your fault that you were born with white skin and experience these privileges. But whether you realize it or not, you do benefit from it, and it is your fault if you don't maintain awareness of that fact.

I do understand that McIntosh's essay may rub some people the wrong way. There are several points on the list that I felt spoke more to the author's status as a middle-class person than to her status as a white person. For example:

"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."

"I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me." "I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or Harassed."

"If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege."

And there are so many more points in the essay where the word "class" could be substituted for the word "race," which would ultimately paint a very different picture. That is why I had such a hard time identifying with this essay for so long. When I first wrote about white privilege years ago, I demanded to know why this white woman felt that my experiences were the same as hers when, no, my family most certainly could not rent housing "in an area which we could afford and want to live," and no, I couldn't go shopping without fear in our low-income neighborhoods.

The idea that any ol' white person can find a publisher for a piece is most certainly a symptom of class privilege. Having come from a family of people who didn't even graduate from high school, who knew not a single academic or intellectual person, it would never occur to me to assume that I could be published. It is absolutely a freak anomaly that I'm in graduate school, considering that not one person on either side of my family has a college degree. And it took me until my 30s to ever believe that someone from my stock could achieve such a thing. Poverty colors nearly everything about your perspective on opportunities for advancement in life. Middle-class, educated people assume that anyone can achieve their goals if they work hard enough. Folks steeped in poverty rarely see a life past working at the gas station, making the rent on their trailer, and self-medicating with cigarettes and prescription drugs until they die of a heart attack. (I've just described one whole side of my family and the life I assumed I'd be living before I lucked out of it.)

I, maybe more than most people, can completely understand why broke white folks get pissed when the word "privilege" is thrown around. As a child I was constantly discriminated against because of my poverty, and those wounds still run very deep. But luckily my college education introduced me to a more nuanced concept of privilege: the term "intersectionality." The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and definitely not privileged in others. There are many

different types of privilege, not just skin-color privilege, that impact the way people can move through the world or are discriminated against. These are all things you are born into, not things you earned, that afford you opportunities that others may not have. For example:

Citizenship: Simply being born in this country affords you certain privileges that non-citizens will never access.

Class: Being born into a financially stable family can help guarantee your health, happiness, safety, education, intelligence, and future opportunities.

Sexual orientation: If you were born straight, every state in this country affords you privileges that non-straight folks have to fight the Supreme Court for.

Sex: If you were born male, you can assume that you can walk through a parking garage without worrying that you'll be raped and then have to deal with a defense attorney blaming it on what you were wearing.

Ability: If you were born able-bodied, you probably don't have to plan your life around handicap access, braille, or other special needs.

Gender identity: If you were born cisgender (that is, your gender identity matches the sex you were assigned at birth), you don't have to worry that using the restroom or locker room will invoke public outrage.

As you can see, belonging to one or more category of privilege, especially being a straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied male, can be like winning a lottery you didn't even know you were playing. But this is not to imply that any form of privilege is exactly the same as another, or that people lacking in one area of privilege understand what it's like to be lacking in other areas. Race discrimination is not equal to sex discrimination and so forth.

And listen: Recognizing privilege doesn't mean suffering guilt or shame for your lot in life.

Nobody's saying that straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied males are all a bunch of assholes who don't work hard for what they have. Recognizing privilege simply means being aware that some people have to work much harder just to experience the things you take for granted (if they ever can experience them at all).

I know now that I am privileged in many ways. I am privileged as a natural-born white citizen. I am privileged as a cisgender woman. I am privileged as an able-bodied person. I am privileged that my first language is also our national language, and that I was born with an intellect and ambition that pulled me out of the poverty that I was otherwise destined for. I was privileged to be able to marry my way "up" by partnering with a privileged, middle-class, educated male who fully expected me to earn a college degree.

There are a million ways I experience privilege, and some that I certainly don't. But thankfully, intersectionality allows us to examine these varying dimensions and degrees of discrimination while raising awareness of the results of multiple systems of oppression at work.

Tell me: Are you a white person who's felt uncomfortable with the term "white privilege"? Does a more nuanced approach help you see your own privilege more clearly?

What Is A Chicano?

By: Cheech Marin

Posted: 05/03/2012 7:44 am EDT Updated: 07/03/2012 5:12 am EDT

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cheech-marin/what-is-a-chicano_b_1472227.html

Who the hell knows?

To me, you have to declare yourself a Chicano in order to be a Chicano. That makes a Chicano a Mexican-American with a defiant political attitude that centers on his or her right to self-definition. I'm a Chicano because I say I am.

But no Chicano will agree with me because one of the characteristics of being Chicano is you don't agree with anybody, or anything. And certainly not another Chicano. We are the only tribe that has all chiefs and no Indians. But don't ever insult a Chicano about being a Chicano because then all the other Chicanos will be on you with a vengeance. They will even fight each to be first in line to support you.

It's not a category that appears on any U.S. Census survey. You can check White, African-American, Native-American, Asian, Pacific Islander and even Hispanic (which Chicanos hate). But there is no little box you can check that says Chicano. However, you can get a Ph.D. in Chicano Studies from Harvard and a multitude of other universities. You can cash retirement checks from those same prestigious universities after having taught Chicano Studies for 20 years, but there still no official recognition from the government.

No wonder Chicanos are confused.

So where did the word Chicano come from? Again, no two Chicanos can agree, so here is my definition what I think. In true Chicano fashion, this should be the official version.

The word "Chicano" was originally a derisive term from Mexicans to other Mexicans living in the United States. The concept was that those Mexicans living in the U.S. were no longer truly Mexicanos because they had given up their country by living in Houston, Los Angeles, "Guada La Habra," or some other city. They were now something else and something less. Little satellite Mexicans living in a foreign country. They were something small. They were chicos. They were now Chicanos.

If you lived near the U.S.-Mexican border, the term was more or less an insult, but always some kind of insult. In the early days, the connotation of calling someone a Chicano was that they were poor, illiterate, destitute people living in tin shacks along the border. As soon as they could get a car loan and could move farther away from the border, the term became less of an insult over the years. But the resentment still lingered.

Some ask "Why can't you people just all be Hispanic?" Same reason that all white people can't just be called English. Just because you speak English or Spanish does not mean that you are one group. Hispanic is a census term that some dildó in a government office made up to include all Spanish-speaking brown people. It is especially annoying to Chicanos because it is a catch-all term that includes the Spanish conqueror. By definition, it favors European cultural invasion, not indigenous roots. It also includes all Latino groups, which brings us together because Hispanic annoys all Latino groups.

Why? Because they're Latino and it's part of their nature. (Aren't you glad you asked?)

So what is a "Latino?" (It's like opening Pandora's box, huh?) "Latino" is refers to all Spanish-speaking people in the "New World" - South Americans, Central Americans, Mexicans, and Brazilians (even though they speak Portuguese). All those groups and their descendents living in the United States want to be called Latinos to recognize their Indian roots.

Mexicans call it having the "Nopal" in their face, that prickly pear cactus with big flat leaves that Mexicans eat, revere, and think they look like. When you go to Mexico and walk down the street in Mexico City, it's like walking through a Nopal cactus garden. Nopal is everywhere.

For Latinos who don't want to be so "Nopalese," there's always "Mexican-American." Or the

dreaded "Hispanic" that should only be used when faced with complete befuddlement from the person asking what you are.

Because I am the only official version of what being Chicano is, I say Mexican-American is the politically correct middle ground between Hispanic and Chicano. Like in the song I wrote to be sung by a Chicano trying to be P.C. "Mexican-Americans; don't like to just get into gang fights; they like flowers and music; and white girls named Debbie too."

All those names made it confusing for me growing up. I lived in an all-black neighborhood, followed by an all-white one, and other kids in the always called me Mexican in both neighborhoods.

It never bothered me until one day I thought to myself "Hey, wait a minute, I'm not Mexican." I've never even been to Mexico and I don't speak Spanish. Sure, I eat Mexican food at family gatherings where all of the adults speak Spanish, but I eat Cheerios and pizza and hamburgers more. No, I'm definitely not a "Mexican." Maybe I was "Mexican-ish," just like some people were "Jew-ish."

These thoughts all ran through my mind when I chased down an alley by five young African-American kids. "Yo, Messican!" they called out in their patois. I stopped in my tracks and spun around. "I'm not a Mexican!" I shouted defiantly. They stopped too, then stared at me. The leader spoke, "Fool! What you talking 'bout? You Mexican as a taco. Look at you."

"No," I said. "To be a Mexican, you have to be from Mexico. You're African-American. Are you from Africa?"

"N--. You crazy. I'm from South-Central, just like you."

"That's exactly what I'm talking about!" I said. "Did anybody knock on your door and ask you did you want to be African-American?"

"Hell no! The social workers don't even knock on our door, they too scared," he said, cracking everyone up.

"Then why you letting people call you whatever they want? What do you want to be called?" I asked.

He looked at the others, thought about it for a few seconds and then said proudly, "I'm a Blood." "Ooo-kay," I said making it up as I went along. "Then you're a Blood-American."

That seemed to go over well. They all nodded. "Yeah, we Blood-American."

"Well, then go out and be the best Blood-Americans that you can be. Peace, brothers, I got to blow." I walked away and so did they. Self-identification saved the day. Yet, I still was dissatisfied with what I wanted to call myself.

When I got home, there was a party going on. A bunch of relatives had come over for dinner and everybody was sitting around gabbing and drinking beer. My Uncle Rudy was in the middle of a story: "So, I took the car into the dealer and he said, 'Yeah, the repairs gonna run you about \$250.' Two-fifty? Estas loco? Hell, just give me a pair of pliers and some tin foil. I'll fix it - I'm a Chicano mechanic. Two-fifty, mis nalgas."

And that was the defining epiphany. A Chicano was someone who could do anything. A Chicano was someone who wasn't going to get ripped off. He was Uncle Rudy. He was industrious, inventive, and he wants another beer. So I got my Uncle Rudy another beer because, on that day, he showed me that I was a Chicano. Hispanic my ass, I've been a Chicano ever since.

‘What Are You?’ Reflections on Asian American and Hapa Identity

05/30/2013 10:44 am ET | **Updated** Jul 30, 2013

Rev. Vicki Flippin - Pastor, The Church of the Village

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-vicki-flippin/what-are-you-reflections-on-asian-american-and-hapa-identity_b_3351770.html



YouTube link to the skit - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ>

There is a YouTube video making its way around this month. In it, a white man begins making small talk with an Asian American woman, and says to her, “Where are you from? Your English is perfect!” Annoyed, the woman responds, “San Diego. We speak English there.”

This leads to a downward spiral of questioning, and — once the man gets the woman to admit that “her people” are “from” Seoul — he proceeds to bow to her and talk about Korean barbeque and kimchi. When she asks him where *he* is from, he answers that he’s “just a regular American.” Finally, he gets it and admits that his ancestors are in fact English. The punch line is that she then begins to imitate all of the English stereotypes she can think of, including repeating phrases like “Top a the mornin’ to ya!” and complimenting “his people’s” fish and chips.

Many of my Asian American friends have been passing this video around because it is so true to experiences we have all had. People often ask us, “Where are you from?” And it is always slightly infuriating. I’ve been trying to figure out exactly why I have such a negative reaction to this question. We all know that what people are really asking is, “What is your ethnic heritage?” And really, I don’t mind talking about my ethnic heritage. In fact, I enjoy sharing this kind of information with other people. It’s one of the things I love best about me.

I think what is so infuriating, then, about this question is that it is always asked by someone who has just met me. So all they really know about me is what I look like. And if they immediately ask me where I am

from, it is evident to me that they looked at me and immediately got distracted by the fact that I look different from them. At least that's how it feels. Me looking like this means that there is something foreign about me, and so "where I am from" must be the most profound and interesting thing about me.

There is another question that is similar but even less delicate: the infamous "What are you?" It's something that multiracial people get asked a lot. "What are you?" is perhaps a more sophisticated version of "Where are you from?" because it recognizes that Asian Americans can be "from" the same places that non-Asian-Americans can be "from": San Diego, Missouri, Chicago, Midtown. "What are you?" seeks to get past someone's place right to the heart of their identity. And the heart of one's identity is obviously one's ethnic make-up (unless they're white, of course).

There is an artist named Kip Fulbeck who has created a photography series called The Hapa Project. Hapa is a Hawaiian term that has come to refer to people who are multiracial, with one part of their heritage being Asian or Pacific Islander. In The Hapa Project, Kip Fulbeck photographs Hapa people, and asks them to handwrite below their photograph an answer to the so common question, "What are you?"

Many of the subjects do write something about their ethnicity. For example, a future comedian child writes below his photo, "I am part Chinese and part Danish. I don't usually tell people I am Danish though, because they think I'm a pastry." Others write statements that push back on the identity question. A young woman writes, "I am a person of color. I am not half-'white'. I am not half-'Asian'. I am a whole 'other'." Others challenge the idea that the most important part of their identity is their ethnic heritage. These people write things like, "I am a mom, an architect, a pacifist, an American."

What is so liberating about the way Kip Fulbeck asks "What are you?" is that he is not assuming that the ethnic heritage of people of color is what is most fundamental and important about their identity. Instead, he lets *them* decide who they are. He turns "What are you?" into a genuine, curious and liberating question.

And he encourages me to wonder what I would write if Kip Fulbeck photographed me. If I could only write a few lines, what would be the most important things I would want to express about my identity? Maybe I would say, "I am Chinese and Hillbilly." Or maybe I would say, "I am a pastor, a wife, a daughter, a cat-mom, and a pursuer of social justice." Or — and this is what I hope matters most — maybe I would just say, "I am a beloved child of God."

I invite you to think today about what *you* would say if someone really asked you the question, "What are you?"

For inspiration, here is one of God's responses.

...Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' She said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"' God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations. (Exodus 3:13-15)

So...What are you?

This Is What It's Like to Be a Muslim Schoolkid in America Right Now

Bullying of Muslim students—even by their teachers—is on the rise.

By Kristina Rizga | Wed Dec. 9, 2015 7:00 AM EST

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Students in New York. Anthony Behar/Sipa via AP Images

"Are you part of the 9/11 or are you ISIS?" "Did you ever kill anyone?" "Are you going to bomb this place?" These are some typical questions that 12-year-old Abdu Rahman Mohamed says he's been asked by his non-Muslim classmates week after week in his Long Beach, California, school, he told youth radio VoiceWaves.org last week.

Earlier this year, a high school teacher in Richmond, Texas, sent all his students home with a new study guide he had created, with the title, "Islam/Radical Islam (Did You Know)." In the study guide, which had not been approved by the school, the economics teacher presented fictional statements as if they were facts, including, "38% of Muslims believe people that leave the faith should be executed." The teacher also wrote up instructions for what to do "if taken hostage by radical Islamists."

In Weston, Florida, a high school French teacher allegedly called one 14-year-old Muslim student a "rag-head Taliban" in February. The student's father, Youssef Wardani, a software engineer and an immigrant from Lebanon, said his son, an honor roll student, now hates going to school.

These are not isolated incidents. The federal government, leaders of Muslim organizations, many Muslim students, and parents report an increase in anti-Muslim rhetoric and abuses in classrooms.

Last week, during an event hosted by the nonprofit organization Muslim Advocates, US Attorney General Loretta Lynch expressed concerns about what she sees as an uptick in anti-Muslim incidents in schools. The Department of Justice has partnered with the Department of Education to advise schools on anti-bullying measures. Lynch added that the DOJ is investigating MacArthur High School in Irving, Texas; the school in September called the police and suspended 14-year-old Ahmed Muhammad when he brought a clock he had made to school, to show it to his engineering teacher. School administrators assumed it was a bomb.

Recent figures from a 2014 California survey of students by the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CA) show that 52 percent of Muslim students in California reported being the target of verbal abuse and insults. That's twice as many students as those who report being bullied based on gender and race nationally. The survey also found that 29 percent of students who wear a hijab reported offensive touching or pulling of their headscarves. One student said, "They would call me a terrorist and 'towel head' and throw rocks at me." Another student reported, "Someone threatened to kill me if I went to school on 9/11."

Research shows that students who are bullied do worse academically, and abuse can reappear later in life; former victims have reported struggles with depression and anxiety, as well as risks of suicide.

Perhaps most concerning in the figures and news reports is the number of anti-Muslim incidents that have originated from teachers and administrators, as was the case with Ahmed in Irving. One in five Muslim students in California said they experienced discrimination by a teacher or an administrator. Of these, only 42 percent said reporting a problem to an adult made a difference.

This poses a challenge for advocates and parents who are working to combat Islamophobia in schools. While students, especially in high schools, play a large role in combating any form of meanness and abuse at their schools, adults play a greater role in setting the tone of their classrooms and enforcing positive social norms.

The rise in bullying of Muslim students is a reflection of the rising Islamophobia in the United States since 9/11. As *Mother Jones'* Edwin Rios reported last week, "The most recent FBI data indicates that hate crimes based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation have dropped across the board—with the exception of crimes against Muslim Americans. In 2014, even as the total number of hate crimes dipped nearly 8 percent from the year before, anti-Muslim hate crimes rose 14 percent." And on Sunday, the *New York Times'* Laurie Goodstein found that in the aftermath of attacks in Paris and the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California, "Muslims and leaders of mosques across the United States say they are experiencing a wave of death threats, assaults and vandalism unlike anything they have experienced since the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001."

When Whites Just Don't Get It, Part 6

Nicholas Kristof APRIL 2, 2016

The New York Times <http://nyti.ms/25D79YY>



Photo: A Baltimore protest last April about Freddie Gray, a black man who suffered a fatal injury while in police custody.

Credit Yunghi Kim/Contact Press Images

LET'S start with a quiz. When researchers sent young whites and blacks out to interview for low-wage jobs in New York City armed with equivalent résumés, the result was:

- A) Whites and blacks were hired at similar rates.
- B) Blacks had a modest edge because of affirmative action.
- C) Whites were twice as likely to get callbacks.

The answer is C, and a black applicant with a clean criminal record did no better than a white applicant who was said to have just been released from 18 months in prison.

A majority of whites believe that job opportunities are equal for whites and blacks, according to a PBS poll, but rigorous studies show that just isn't so.

Back in 2014, I did a series of columns called "When Whites Just Don't Get It" to draw attention to inequities, and I'm revisiting it because public attention to racial disparities seems to be flagging even as the issues are as grave as ever.

But let me first address some reproaches I've received from indignant whites, including the very common: *You would never write a column about blacks not getting it, and it's racist to pick on whites.* It's true that I would be wary as a white person of lecturing to blacks about race, but plenty of black leaders (including President Obama) have bluntly spoken about shortcomings in the black community.

Toni Morrison in her novels writes searingly about a black world pummeled by discrimination but also by violence, drunkenness and broken families. In a CNN poll, 86 percent of blacks said family breakdown was a reason for difficulties of African-Americans today, and 77 percent cited "lack of motivation and unwillingness to work hard."

Frankly, the conversation within the black community seems to me to be more mature and honest than the one among whites, and considering how much of the white conversation about race invokes "personal responsibility," maybe it's time for whites to show more.

Obama's election reinforced a narrative that we're making progress. We are in some ways, but the median black household in America still has only 8 percent of the wealth of the median white household. And even for blacks who have "made it" — whose incomes are in the upper half of American incomes — 60 percent of their children tumble back into the lower half in the next generation, according

to a Federal Reserve study. If these trends continue, the Fed study noted, “black Americans would make no further relative progress.”

Most of the public debate about race focuses on law enforcement. That’s understandable after the shootings of unarmed blacks and after the U.S. Sentencing Commission found that black men received sentences about 20 percent longer than white men for similar crimes. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Lead poisoning, for example, is more than twice as common among black children as among white children, and in much of the country, it’s even worse than in Flint, Mich.

Three generations after *Brown v. Board of Education*, American schools are still often separate and unequal. The average white or Asian-American student attends a school in at least the 60th percentile in test performance; the average black student is at a school at the 37th percentile. One reason is an unjust school funding system that often directs the most resources to privileged students.

So if we’re going to address systemic disadvantage of black children, we have to broaden the conversation to unequal education. There’s a lot of loose talk among whites about black boys making bad decisions, but we fail these kids before they fail us. That’s unconscionable when increasingly we have robust evidence about the kinds of initiatives (like home visitation, prekindergarten and “career academies”) that reduce disparities.

Reasons for inequality involve not just institutions but also personal behaviors. These don’t all directly involve discrimination. For instance, black babies are less likely to be breast-fed than white babies, are more likely to grow up with a single parent and may be spoken to or read to less by their parents. But racial discrimination remains ubiquitous even in crucial spheres like jobs and housing.

In one study, researchers sent thousands of résumés to employers with openings, randomly using some stereotypically black names (like Jamal) and others that were more likely to belong to whites (like Brendan). A white name increased the likelihood of a callback by 50 percent.

Likewise, in Canada researchers found that emails from stereotypically black names seeking apartments are less likely to get responses from landlords. And in U.S. experiments, when blacks and whites go in person to rent or buy properties, blacks are shown fewer options.

Something similar happens even with sales. Researchers offered iPods for sale online and found that when the photo showed the iPod held by a white hand, it received 21 percent more offers than when held by a black hand.

Discrimination is also pervasive in the white-collar world. Researchers found that white state legislators, Democrats and Republicans alike, were less likely to respond to a constituent letter signed with a stereotypically black name. Even at universities, emails sent to professors from stereotypically black names asking for a chance to discuss research possibilities received fewer responses.

Why do we discriminate? The big factor isn’t overt racism. Rather, it seems to be unconscious bias among whites who believe in equality but act in ways that perpetuate inequality.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, an eminent sociologist, calls this unconscious bias “racism without racists,” and we whites should be less defensive about it. This bias affects blacks as well as whites, and we also have unconscious biases about gender, disability, body size and age. You can explore your own unconscious biases in a free online test, called the implicit association test.

Political Correctness: The Effects on Our Generation

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By Kai Sherwin - Junior at a high school in Connecticut

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kai-sherwin/political-correctness-the_b_9600916.html

According to Listverse, a school in California sent five students home after they refused to remove their American flag t-shirts on Cinco de Mayo, the day that marks Mexico's victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla. An Xbox player who put his homeplace, Fort Gay, West Virginia, on his Xbox Live profile was banned by Microsoft because it was "inappropriate in any context". Santa Clauses in Australia were forced to stop saying the traditional phrase of "ho ho ho" because it could "frighten children" and be "derogatory to women".

George Washington once said, "If the freedom of speech is taken away then the dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to slaughter." Our contemporary society has no defined limitations on free speech, however, there is an undertow threatening to erode this sacred principle: political correctness. To comprehend how political correctness is shaping the privilege of free speech, one must first understand several major aspects of this concept. The basic premise is that if intellectuals and pundits can influence how individuals think and act, then they can also influence what is socially 'acceptable' language. By imposing their political views on some subjects, they create a pressure to conform to these standards. But generally, a person does not want to be labeled as an objector of popular opinion, thereby forcing them to subject their own ideas to the prevailing ideology.

In addition, political correctness encourages the pursuit of conformity. Through social intimidation, a diverse body of ideas and expressions no longer flourishes in the diminishing world of American free speech. A growing aspect of societal multiculturalism only further contributes to this problem. Proponents of political correctness obsess over their belief that language should not be injurious to any ethnicity, race, gender, religion or other social group. They attempt to eliminate what they consider to be offensive remarks and actions and replace them with harmless substitutes that come at the expense of free expression.

Several institutions have come under fire for issues relating to political correctness. One of the more recent controversies has been about Amherst College's decision to drop "Lord Jeff" as their mascot. Many of the college's students viewed Lord Jeff as a racist and oppressive white symbol. The institution was "encouraged to cut its ties with Lord Jeff, who came to be seen as an inappropriate symbol and offensive to many members of the student body", as per the New York Times. The Lord Jeffery Inn, a local campus hotel, is also going to be renamed. However, there has been an understandable backlash stemming from current students and alumni. The opposition criticized the incident because of how it affronted the legacy of Lord Jeffery, who was a respected war general, as well as the college itself. William H. Scott, a member of the class of 1979, said, "We sterilize history by eliminating the mascot...It's...censorship."

Declaring that some thoughts, phrases, and actions are "correct" while others are not is creating an ever-tightening noose around the freedom of speech and expression. No matter how uncomfortable we are with inflammatory language or actions, it's crucial to recognize that this is a small price to pay to maintain a democratic system that promotes free expression as a basic pillar of society.

When Falling In Love Can Put Your Life In Danger

Malaka Gharib March 4, 2016 5:11 PM ET

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/03/04/466427039/when-falling-in-love-can-put-your-life-in-danger>

While photographer Robin Hammond was on assignment with *National Geographic Magazine* in Nigeria in 2014, he heard about five young men in Lagos who were arrested and facing the death penalty — just because they were gay.

A few days later, he tracked them down. By that time, the case had been dismissed, but the men had been ostracized by their families, were homeless and in hiding, and faced an uncertain future. Hammond was deeply moved by their stories. He took their photos and asked them to write their own accounts of what had happened.

"Their personal testimonies connected me in a way that statistics or stories in newspapers couldn't," he says.

Hammond wanted to hear more stories. Over the next few months, he traveled to countries with anti-gay laws like Cameroon, South Africa and Uganda to interview and photograph people who'd been discriminated against for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

In May 2015, with \$20,000 from the Getty Grant for Good, he started a project called Where Love Is Illegal. Hammond publishes stories and photos from his travels; users can also submit their own. Any survivor of LGBT persecution — no matter what country they come from — is welcome to use the platform to speak out and raise awareness for gay and lesbian human rights.

So far, there are nearly 120 stories on Where Love Is Illegal, and more than 132,000 followers on the Instagram account. Hammond adds a new story almost daily.

Around 3 billion people in nearly 80 countries live where identifying as LGBT could lead to imprisonment, corporal punishment or even death, says Outright International, a group that monitors LGBT human rights violations and provides data to the U.N.

"These people live in countries where they're deliberately silenced," says Hammond, 40, who is from New Zealand and is not gay. "Discrimination thrives in environments where those persecuted do not have the opportunity to speak out or have their stories heard."

During his travels to Africa, Hammond said he saw a lot of homophobic statements from politicians and church leaders in the media — but almost never heard from members of the LGBT community, who were too intimidated to share their point of view.

Scroll through the Where Love Is Illegal website and you'll see dozens of testimonies, from the U.K. to Uganda. For many people Hammond met, it was the first time they had ever spoken openly about their sexuality.

A man named Ishmel, depicted in a photo with his back to the camera, shares the consequences of being gay in Nigeria. Some people in his neighborhood had heard rumors that he was gay, so they entered his house, beat him and brought him to the police, he says.

"I spent almost one month in prison with not enough food, not taking a bath, not even seeing sunlight," he writes. "After I was released, I faced many problems with my relatives and my friends Sometimes I even think that I should leave the world because of the terrible condition that I found myself in."

A 16-year-old named Kofi from Ghana sounded more hopeful.

"Thanks to Chris Colfer from Glee, I knew who and what I was and am," he writes. "One day I will leave Ghana and start over on some far-off land where me being gay will be a cause for celebration, and I will no longer have to hide."

The project is growing. Hammond has a volunteer staff of 10, and some of his own photos from the project have been exhibited in galleries in San Francisco and New York. Global LGBT groups have reached out and asked permission to share some of the stories.

Hammond's next step is to create storytelling workshops in countries where same-sex relations are outlawed, like Kenya. He'll teach a group of 10 people to capture stories for *Where Love Is Illegal*, and he hopes they'll each train 10 more people to do the same.

And perhaps one day his project will no longer be relevant.

"Look at this country, where we were 50 years ago. People were out on the street campaigning against gay rights. And now they're doing the opposite," Hammond says.

"That's what gives me hope," he adds. "People can change their minds."