

Welcome to Cultivating Critical Conversations



As we wait to begin,

- Please drop your name and affiliation in the chat.
- Contribute to our jamboard with your questions & topics

<https://tinyurl.com/teachla21>



We need to talk: Cultivating critical conversations

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Land Acknowledgement



I acknowledge the yak tiṭu tiṭu yak tilhini (ytt) Northern Chumash as the original, current, and future caretakers of the land and culture of the area occupied by Cuesta College and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. We are in tilhini, the Place of the Full Moon. We gratefully acknowledge, respect, and thank the yak tiṭu tiṭu yak tilhini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region in whose homelands we all are guests.

<https://native-land.ca/>

Land Acknowledgement - beyond words



Humpback Whale by Fred Collins





“Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other.”

~Freire, 1970 p. 72





Meet your facilitator

Dr. Rosemary Wrenn

she/her/hers

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- Education
 - Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Fresno State
 - M.Ed. Elementary Education, UCLA
 - B.A. Russian Studies, UCSD (Muir)
 - Clear, Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (California)
 - Ethnic Studies for Educators Certificate, UC Riverside
- Cuesta College
 - Lead Faculty, Education Department
 - Student Development & Success
 - Distance Education Equity Trainer
- Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
 - University Supervisor, School of Education
 - Lecturer, Liberal Studies
 - Children's Literature in a Diverse Society
 - Liberal Studies Orientation/Career Exploration
- ACCCTEP, CTE
- Research Interests: How to better prepare teachers to navigate issues of race & identity in the classroom; recruiting & retaining a more representative teaching force.

Today's Workshop



1. Welcome & Introduction (please drop your name, where you're from, and email in the chat)
2. Four Agreements (Singleton, 2015)
3. What are critical conversations?
4. Why are these important?
5. How do we facilitate them with our colleagues and students?
6. Practice

Setting Up for Meaningful Conversations



- **Oops!** - I just messed up and I acknowledge it. I will do better.
- **Ouch!** - You just said/did something that causes me harm.
- **Whoa!** This conversation is getting too heated. Can we take a breath?

-adapted from personal conversation with Oscar Navarro,
Ph.D

FRED values

- **Freedom** of expression
- **Respectful** environment
- **Equal** treatment/value to all in the group
- **Diversity** of ideas, values, and lived experience celebrated

Pace, 2018

Four Agreements (Singleton, 2015)

1. Stay engaged
2. Speak your truth
3. Experience discomfort
4. Expect and accept non-closure

Waterfall Chat

Please type your response to the following question into the chat and wait to press enter until the countdown...



*What comes to mind when you hear,
“critical conversations”?*

Critical Conversations - a definition (*not the only one, though!*)



Critical conversations

- invite us to inquire, reflect, and act in order to better understand and address socially constructed concepts such as race, gender, class, ability, religion and more to better understand the very real implications of these on people's lives
- decenter colonial and white ways of knowing and invite inquiry
- disrupt the status quo of color blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) and color muteness (Pollock, 2004)
- center on the sources of inequity in our schools and society in general

Why do we need to have these conversations? (future teachers)



- For our current and future students
- Need for warm classroom environment to develop trust (Pace, 2018)
- Not talking about race & other challenging topics makes them worse - Americans do not have the tools (Pollock, 2017)
- Is it right for children to learn about these issues from TV, radio, social media? (Pace, 2018)

Why do we need to have these conversations?



- We've had so little practice in school - *Did you have the opportunity to discuss in K-12?*
- Support development of racial literacy in ourselves as future teachers (Price-Dennis & Sealy-Ruiz, 2021)
- Inservice teachers do not feel equipped - K-20 & teacher prep have underprepared educators (SPAN, 2021, Wrenn, 2021)

Conversations build community



conversations > building relationships >
building trust >
building community >
creating space for conversations, empathy and
differing ideas of ways of knowing and being



“...create a culture and provide structures that encourage ALL educators to discuss race openly, honestly, and as safely as possible in the school environment....the welfare of all students - no matter what their race - depends on all of us succeeding at this conversation.”

~Singleton, 2015



Critical Conversations at core of Everyday Antiracism (Pollock)



- uncover the socially programmed beliefs and values that make us take particular actions toward children
- explore the tensions in being “antiracist”
- make antiracist conversations an expected ongoing aspect of discourse, in professional communities
- confirm for educators that their everyday acts can make a significant difference
- develop a shared knowledge base to support discussion of race issues in schools

6 Elements of Courageous Conversations (Singleton)



Principles: passion, practice & persistence:

- get personal
- keep the spotlight on issues of race
- engage multiple racial perspectives
- keep everyone at the table
- understand the history and definition of race
- address issues of Whiteness



How do we engage in these with each other?



- Possess a racial identity
- Communicate and model vulnerability & inquiry into identity and race* (Carpenter & Diem, hooks)
- No endpoint - accept that
- Be intentional and intrusive - data shows that teachers are catalyst (Carpenter & Diem)
- “Go first” to model inquiry and reflection and dismantle hierarchical barriers (Carpenter & Diem)
- Engage colleagues

Why does identity matter?



- Privilege
- Power
- Positionality

Intersectionality:

“Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It’s not simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.”

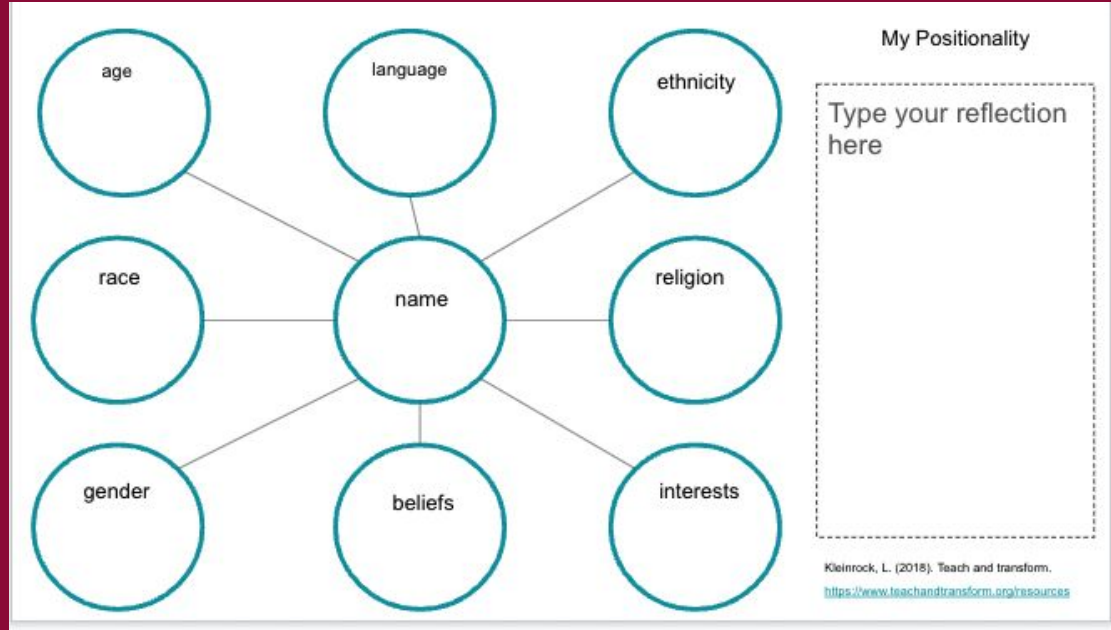
-Kimberlé Crenshaw



What are YOUR Identity Markers



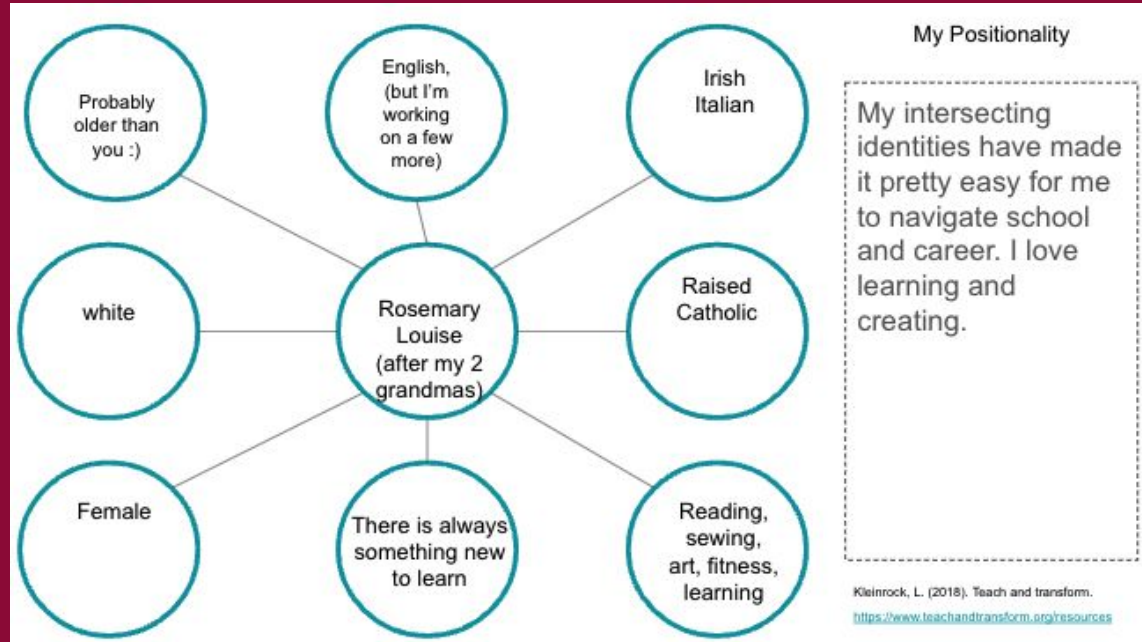
- What comes up for you with these markers?
- Depending on the situation, location, context, different elements of our identity will be more dominant.
- How does the intersection of these influence your interactions in the classroom?



What are YOUR Identity Markers



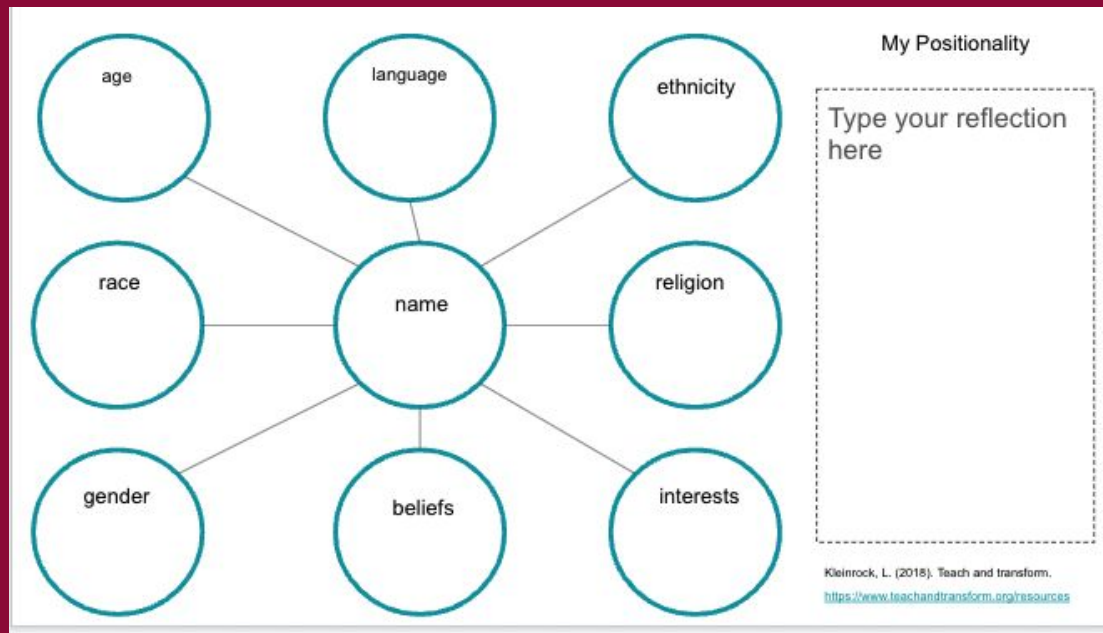
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How do we engage in these with children?



- Answer their questions when they ask!
- Community Talking Circles (Tribes)
- Addressing conflict when it arises in the classroom
- Intentionally inquire into history, literature, and all subject areas
- Culturally sustaining pedagogies: *Textured Teaching*, Lorena Germán
- Books!
 - *Just Ask!* By Sonia Sotomayor
 - *We are Water Protectors*, by Carole Lindstrom
 - *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
 - Additional book suggestions

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Pace, 2018

Learn by Doing



It's time to talk!

- Pairs to breakout rooms
- Question shared in chat
- 5 minutes each - (first speaker is person whose first name is alphabetically last)
- Speaker responds to the question
- Listener listens - can ask more questions, but resist commenting
- Switch

Invitation to share reaction when we return

Share out (waterfall)



What did you learn about yourself and/or your colleague in the breakout?



Share Out

*Please use the raised hand if you'd like to share verbally.
Type your comment in the chat and wait for the waterfall.*

Call to Action



Initiate critical conversations/ask critical questions

- In class
- When you see/read/learn something

Choosing Topics

- “Just Ask”
- Conversation starters
- General resources for critical pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment

Accountability

- Step up in class, at meetings, in community
- Critical colleagues - in person or virtual network

Practice - practice - practice

Thanks for participating!



Any questions?

You can find me at rwrenn805@gmail.com

Link to Slides: <https://tinyurl.com/S22LARCx>

Link to resources: <https://tinyurl.com/S22LARCx>

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