



Challenging the White Frame of Mathematics Education: Racialized Differences on Math Test Scores

By: Emily Rucki, 2019 CTI Fellow
Garinger High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
9th Grade Mathematics

Keywords: Equity, Privilege, Race

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: When most people think of math, they do not necessarily think numbers can be racist. What I have found is that while the numbers themselves are not necessarily racist, how we use them has power. With that power has come inequities over the many years of education. Students of color are showing much lower scores on standardized tests than their white peers. In this curriculum unit I will provide activities that promote awareness of the white privilege that exists throughout the country. My students and I will reflect on what white privilege is, what it means, and how it makes us feel.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to seventy-nine 9th grade students in mathematics in March 2020.

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Emily Rucki

Introduction

Rationale

Students know whether they go to a “good” school or “bad” school, but do they know why the school is considered “good” or “bad?” Do they know that those words are racially coded? Do they know why those words are racially coded? In this unit, students will analyze state test scores. Test scores are what the state uses to determine school grade reports and the grade reports are what the public uses to determine the “success” of a school. It is the intention of this unit to expose students to and identify the differences between schools in the same district. Using test results from the state standardized tests students will examine the difference in demographics and scores of students from high poverty, moderate poverty, and low poverty schools. As a white woman, I understand the privilege that I have and the choices I have to address topics such as this. I, in no way, intend to look down upon schools in which white students are the majority. The intention of this unit is to address patterns that are noticed throughout the country that affect students of color.

School/Student Demographics

Data from Breaking the Link, a document released by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, states that in the 2017-2018 school year shows that 147,359 students were enrolled in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools on the 20th day of school, which is the official date used by the state of North Carolina. From that number, approximately 38% of students were Black, 28% were White, 24% were Hispanic, 7% were Asian, 3% were multi-racial, and .4% were Native American. CMS students speak 205 languages in addition to English and are from 186 countries. More than 19,000 of the 147,359 were English Language Learners and 13,000 were Exceptional Children (known in other states as special education). In CMS, there are 96 elementary schools, 27 middle schools, 32 high schools, 14 K-8 schools, 3 6-12 schools, 3 Special Program/Alternative schools, and 1 K-12 school. Thirty-four percent of CMS students attend a low poverty school, 36% attend a moderate poverty school, and 31% attend a high poverty school. When this data is broken down by race it looks a little different for Black students 16% attend a low poverty school, 44% attend a moderate poverty school, and 40% attend a high poverty school. For Hispanic students, 17% attend a low poverty school, 36% attend a moderate poverty school, and 47% attend a high poverty school. For white students, 68% attend a low poverty school, 26% attend a moderate poverty school, and 6% attend a high poverty school. In high schools, the enrollment of low poverty schools is 54% white whereas in high poverty schools white students make up 3% of the student body and 90% of the student body is Black and Hispanic.¹

¹ “Breaking the Link.” *Breaking the Link*. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, May 2019.
<https://4.files.edl.io/612a/06/04/19/194431-a5a8d5ab-3ac2-40a1-902c-f295b0d36a8d.pdf>

Garinger High School (9-12) is a Title 1 high school and is located in East Charlotte on the corner of Sugar Creek and Eastway. The area is known in Charlotte as one of the poorest areas of town. Redlining and gentrification has ensured that this area remain high poverty. Because of redlining and gentrification, the make-up of the student body is much like you would expect to see in an area affected by such issues. There is a high concentration of “minority” students and very few white students. There are approximately 1800 students at Garinger High School. The student body of Garinger is made up of students who are 46.9% Hispanic, 40.6% Black, 6.4% Asian, 4.4% White, .1% Pacific Islander, .1% American Indian and 1.5% two or more races. 47% of the student body is female and 96% of the school is eligible for the Free Lunch Program. To graduate from high school in North Carolina students are required to obtain 22 credits. Four credits must be English, 4 math, 3 science, 4 social studies, 1 health/physical education, and 6 credits of elective.² The class I teach, Math 1, is a course that is required to graduate in addition to being an End of Course, EOC, tested subject. In the most recent School Report Cards released by the state (2017-2018), Garinger has a score of 59, which is a C. The academic growth, at a score, of 100 (the highest growth score possible) exceed expected growth for the school. According to the report card 8.4% of the incoming freshman came into the school year proficient. Part of these growth scores come from students growth on the EOC tests at the end of each school year. I teach 79 students in three classes throughout the day, all of whom will be required to take an EOC at the end of the year.

Unit Goals

The goal for this unit is to bring to students’ attention the inequities in the education system for people of color. It seems as though my students “feel” the differences between their school and schools who have a much higher population of white students. However, I do not think they know why that difference exists and the history behind how, as an education system, we got here. By analyzing the math test results and demographics of high poverty schools, moderate poverty schools, and low poverty schools in their own school district students will see the data behind the inequity they have “felt” for so long. With this data and conversations about the history of how white privilege came to be in this country, I hope to teach students that while these inequities exist, we need to work to not just overcome the inequity in our district and across the country, but also fight for the equity that every child in the district and the country deserves.

Content Research

What is white privilege? While there are many differing definitions the definition I most reference when considering white privilege is that people who are white don’t have to worry about many of the things people of color do. As a white women, when I am pulled over by a police officer I am not worried about whether or not I will be shot or arrested. I cannot say that is the case for all people of color. That is an example that is extremely prevalent in society today. White privilege is also microaggressions and situations such as my being able to go to any store and easily be able to find hair products I can use or bandages that match my skin tone. Growing up in a predominately white town, racism was viewed as individual and intentional acts

² “K-12 Standards, Curriculum and Instruction.” Graduation Requirements. Accessed September 20, 2019. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/graduation/>.

of being mean toward a person of color and being white was “normal.” Because of this outlook, those who have grown up as I have may not be aware of the “othering” they did to people of color or that just because they were never overtly hateful to a person of color they didn’t commit racist acts. “It’s not so much that being white confers privilege but that not being white means being without rights in many cases.”³ Just as important as white privilege is white priority. Sullivan defines white priority as “white people’s sense of coming before people of color.”⁴ White priority is seen in schools with the distribution of resources to schools with a higher population of white students. A common trend around white privilege and white priority is the denial that white people have that these situations exist.⁵ In Chapter 12 of *Race as Phenomena* Shannon Sullivan states “Most white people find it personally and socially difficult to think of themselves as engaging the world in ways that perpetuate unjust advantages for white people”⁶

Most white people, when they hear “white supremacy” think of groups like the Ku Klux Klan, or Aryan Nation groups. “White supremacy more precisely describes and locates white racial domination by underscoring the material production and violence of racial structures and the hegemony of whiteness in settler society.” Settler, meaning the “permanent occupation of a territory and removal of indigenous peoples with the express purpose of building an ethnically distinct national community.”⁷ It is safe to say that many white people do not see the inconsistencies of privilege that comes with race. Sure, they may see overt racism, but the subtleties that come with racism can be difficult to see unless you work to do so. “White skin privilege affords racial obliviousness.”⁸ Obliviousness to see, in the case of this unit, the differences between schools of high poverty, moderate poverty, and low poverty. It seems that as a society people are working to bring these inconsistencies to light and it is my hope that this work continues and brings with it solutions to close the achievement gaps between schools of high poverty and low poverty.

Today people of color are considered “equal” to white people. While most laws make it appear that this is true, it is far from the case. “Middle class and poor blacks in the United States

³ The New York Times. *The New York Times*, November 5, 2014.

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/11/05/what-white-privilege-really-means/>.

⁴ Sullivan, Shannon. “White Priority.” *Critical Philosophy of Race* 5, no. 2 (2017): 171–82.

⁵ DiAngelo, Robin J. *White Fragility: Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2019.

⁶ Lee, Emily S. *Race As Phenomena: Between Phenomenology and Philosophy of Race*. Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019.

⁷ Bonds, Anne, and Joshua Inwood. “Beyond White Privilege.” *Progress in Human Geography* 40, no. 6 (October 2016): 715–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515613166>.

⁸ Rothenberg, Paula S. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. New York: Worth Publishers, 2008.

do less well than whites with the same income on many measures of human well-being.”⁹ Between the lack of resources that people of color receive for schooling and mass incarceration schools are set up to feed the school to prison pipeline. According to the ACLU the school to prison pipeline is a “national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the criminal justice system.” “For most students the pipeline begins with inadequate resources in public schools. Overcrowded classrooms, a lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient funding for ‘extras’ such as counselors, special education services,” and even instructional resources like textbooks or access to online curriculum. Because of this failure to meet the basic educational needs, there is increased disengagement and dropout rates, which later increase the risk of involvement in the court system.”¹⁰

This pipeline stems back to enslavement and how the education and criminal justice system were set up after the “abolishment” of enslavement. In this time period, we begin to see the incarceration of black men and women rise. An Alabamian planter was quoted as saying: “We have the power to pass stringent police laws to govern the Negros- this is a blessing- for they must be controlled in some way or white people cannot live among them.” This sentiment wasn’t rare for the south, the economy post-enslavement was beginning to dwindle because those enslaved were now walking away from the plantations they were, sometimes literally, chained to. After enslavement was abolished white supremacists were eager to find a way to continue to control the former enslaved. Black codes were adopted by Southern legislatures. According to William Cohen, “the main purpose of the codes was to control the freedman, and the question of how to handle the convicted black law breakers were very much at the center of the control issue.” Vagrancy laws were adopted among many of the Southern states. These laws basically made it a crime to be out of a job and was enforced specifically with people who were black. Many of those states also passed laws that allowed for plantation owners to hire out of county prisoners who were forced to work for little to no pay.”¹¹

During enslavement, enslavers did not allow the enslaved to learn to read for fear that if they became educated they would cause problems in the status quo. A rebellion in the South sent a message to planters that literacy of those enslaved was dangerous to their lifestyle. There was speculation that led planters to believe these enslaved people read news that announced the rebellion, this led to laws being passed that banned the education of Africans and African Americans. “Learning to read in spite of the law was a powerful act of resistance.” Across the country, but specifically in the south, “literacy and education were the means to freedom for those who did not possess it.” This ideology of education for freedom was what sparked the first schools to develop in southern states. Those now freed organized schools to make their freedom a reality and used education to make that happen. “The understanding that literacy would lead to

⁹ The New York Times. *The New York Times*, November 5, 2014.

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/11/05/what-white-privilege-really-means/>.

¹⁰ “School-to-Prison Pipeline.” American Civil Liberties Union. Accessed October 15, 2019. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline>.

¹¹ Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2020.

freedom ultimately provided the political will needed to prompt the southern states to adopt a public system of education.” In fact, W.E.B DuBois, and others, have stated “Public education for all at public expense, in the South, was a Negro idea.”¹²

During the Civil Rights movement, in the 1950s and 60s, after years of fighting for equality, we saw schools begin to become integrated. *Brown v Board of Education* was the landmark case that paved the way for desegregation. The “decision actualized the ideal of freedom promised since Reconstruction.” While this case was a victory for those who were looking to have equal access to education, white segregationists were fiercely resistant to desegregation with lawmakers and legislators vowing to avoid it at all costs. Mississippi Speaker of the House, Walter Sillers stated “If a non-segregated system of school were established, the white race would be mongrelized. [I would] gladly give up my property and my life if necessary to preserve the integrity of segregation. But it isn’t necessary, we can do it by law.” Desegregation was viewed, not only by politicians, but also by the majority in the south as a challenge to their way of life. Courts in Mississippi chose to delay the desegregation of schools as long as they possibly could. For families of color, Sullivan again states in *Race as Phenomena*, “integration meant (and often still means) assimilation, which entailed blending in and becoming ‘just like us,’ that is, becoming as much like a white person as possible.”¹³ What that means is that while students of color, specifically black students, were now legally allowed into schools originally made for only white students they still had to adjust to the white way of life. Because of the difference in their skin color, attention was drawn to the black students. Many white people had no shame in bullying and degrading the black students integrating schools. Most black students didn’t want even more attention drawn to them which meant living life in school as “white” as they could and not allowing the differences of the race to be seen, other than the differences in the color of their skin.

Desegregation throughout the south took some time. In Charlotte, schools were desegregated in 1957 when Dorothy Counts enrolled at Harding High School.¹⁴ She, however, only attended Harding High for a week before her dad withdrew her and moved them to Philadelphia. Seven years later, in 1964, the Swann family attempted to enroll their son in one of the few integrated elementary schools in Charlotte but were denied enrollment. On the family’s behalf, the NAACP sued and won. In 1971, the US Supreme Court upheld the decision and led to Charlotte being the model city across the United States for school integration for almost 30 years. In 1999, a white family sued Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) because they believed their child was not accepted into a magnet school because of their child’s race. After an

¹² Hale, Jon. *Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*. Place of publication not identified: Columbia University Press, 2018.

¹³ Lee, Emily S. *Race As Phenomena: Between Phenomenology and Philosophy of Race*. Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019.

¹⁴ “Dorothy Counts Enrolls at Charlotte's Harding High School, 1957.” NC DNCR, September 4, 2016. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2014/09/04/dorothy-counts-enrolls-at-charlottes-harding-high-school-1957>.

appeal to the federal court, bussing ended in 2001 leading students to now attend schools in their neighborhood.¹⁵ In a 2005 report on the failing North Carolina school system, Judge Howard Manning said of CMS “The most appropriate way for the Circuit to describe what’s going on academically at CMS’s bottom ‘8’ high schools is academic genocide for the at-risk, low-income children.”¹⁶

It is not a stretch to say that schools where the student body is predominantly made up of students of color perform less well than schools where the student body is predominantly white. They question that needs answered, though, is “Why?” Most research shows that this is not based on academic ability but on race. According to Hart, equity in schools and even more specifically mathematics, requires an “equitable distribution of resources to schools, students and teachers; equitable quality of instruction; and equitable outcomes for students.” Because of a lack of equity in resources, instruction, and outcomes data indicates white students outperform students of color on basic skills, problem solving, and applications. Hart outlines a few areas of concern of which I will focus on one, belief. Love outlines three beliefs that help us understand the assumptions that hinder the ability to attain equity in math education. Love inspects the nature of intelligence and how students learn, learning potential of students of color, and nature of mathematics. In an effort to make schools more equitable, educators have worked to assess students’ ability early on in their educational careers. In testing students and labeling them so early educators think they are doing what is in the best interest of the student when in reality “testing and labeling regarding intelligence and potential for learning can have devastating effects for lower socioeconomic status students, students of color, and female students.”¹⁷ There tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy here. Students of color, specifically those of high poverty start school behind when they come in to the K-12 system. Lack of family funds typically means less access to pre-kindergarten programs, which in turn, starts the child off behind their white peers in kindergarten.

When looking at mathematics education it appears that the gap is even larger. “Excellence in mathematics education requires equity - ...raising expectations for students’ learning, developing effective methods of supporting the learning of mathematics by all students, and providing students and teachers the resources they need.” There are many conditions that lead to inequity and among those low expectations, access to quality mathematics, allocation of

¹⁵ Smith, Clint. “The Desegregation and Resegregation of Charlotte's Schools.” *The New Yorker*. The New Yorker, June 19, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-desegregation-and-resegregation-of-charlottes-schools>.

¹⁶ “Report from the Court: The High School Problem.” *Report from the Court: The High School Problem*. State of North Carolina. Accessed September 9, 2019. https://web.archive.org/web/20051223184327/http://www.ncforum.org/resources/collateral/052405_manning_report.pdf.

¹⁷ Alleksaht-Snider, Martha, and Laurie E. Hart. “‘Mathematics for All’: How Do We Get There?” *Theory Into Practice* 40, no. 2 (2001): 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4002_3.

material and human resources are extremely important.¹⁸ According to Gutierrez, those within the field of mathematics education have convinced themselves that the goal for “equity” is strong enough when really the goal should possibly be a revolution. She continues that equity causes harm to mathematics education because it assumes that mathematicians don’t promote dialogue or creativity, mathematicians only achieve equity when we are still far from the ultimate goal, it tends to show that teaching and learning are universal and doesn’t address power, and the term is used habitually throughout history. “We cannot claim our goal to decolonize mathematics for students who are Black, Latinx, and Aboriginal while also seeking to measure their ‘achievement’ with the very tools that colonized them in the first place.” For equity in mathematics to be considered valid many steps need to be taken. The power dynamics need to be deconstructed, authority challenged, peace and dignity restored, settler colonialism needs to be repaired, and new questions need to be asked. “Mathematics education as a broad field has tended to be complacent” and many documents recommend similar grade level scope and sequences. Each discuss the processes for learning and pay attention to promoting equity, however there is very little that actually “acknowledge the role of mathematics education as a field that creates the very inequities it seeks to address.”¹⁹

The Association for Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE) are more direct in addressing power. AMTE states:

“Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics understand the roles of power, privilege, and oppression in the history of mathematics education and are equipped to question existing educational systems that produce inequitable learning experiences and outcomes for students... They are prepared to ask questions as needed to understand current policies and practices to raise awareness of potentially inequitable practices. These practices are particularly important related to students who are Black, Latinx, American Indian, emergent multilingual, or students living in poverty.”²⁰

The history of mathematics is getting much more attention in many curriculums because of the acknowledgement that the system has failed people of color in their mathematics education. Even so, the standards are still not written in a way that puts students of color first. Doing so, would require a complete overhaul of the mathematics education system.²¹

¹⁸ Berry, Robert Q. “Introduction: Building an Infrastructure for Equity in Mathematics Education.” *The High School Journal* 88, no. 4 (2005): 1–5.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40364251>.

¹⁹ Martin, D B. “The Collective Black and Principles to Actions.” *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education* 8 (2005): 17–23.

²⁰ “Standards for Preparing Teachers of Mathematics.” AMTE. Accessed November 5, 2019.
<https://amte.net/standards>.

²¹ Gutierrez, Rochelle. “Why Mathematics (Education) Was Late to the Backlash Party: The Need for a Revolution.” *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education* 10, no. 2 (December 2017): 8–24.

Schools in Seattle are working to challenge these issues by starting conversations and in doing so are facing criticism. Wayne Au, a professor at the University of Washington, Bothell, helped lead the initiative for Seattle Public Schools (SPS). He stated “When students can see themselves in curriculum and see diversity in curriculum they responded better. And, it can help white students understand themselves better. Structural racism in the country has mistaught what people about themselves that they don’t have culture, that they don’t have roots.” The ethnic-studies program manager, Tracy Castro-Gill, of SPS said that “It’s not that the formulas and equations taught in current math classes are racist, it’s about how they’re used in daily life...as a tool for oppression.”²²

Instructional Implementation

Depending on the curriculum required to teach based on your state’s math standards and your school’s preferences you may be able to add activities or you might have to skip some activities from this Curriculum Unit. There is a lot of background knowledge, history, and conversations to be had with students before diving into conversations of race, equity, and white privilege. This Curriculum Unit is to serve as a guide into having those conversations and teaching those lessons. I choose to begin with the historical background knowledge before diving into the racial inequities of schooling. It is important, to me, that my students understand that these inequities have been in effect for years and though people work to diminish those inequities, they still exist because of the deeply rooted history. I will be spending the majority of the math content away from the topic of white privilege. That being said, those lessons will not be included in this curriculum unit. In this Unit I will spend more time on lessons of white privilege and inequality to ensure that students understand and see what goes on in our world. The majority of the lessons and activities in this unit are not related to math but are related more toward history and reading. The assessment, however, is a math project based on the math standards learned concurrently to our discussions and activities on equity and white privilege. I will be using data collected from the district to show the inequities my students face in school. In order to keep the bias at a minimum I will be keeping the names of the schools I use anonymous on student assignments. To do this I will assign each school I use a letter of the alphabet. With a topic as deep and as heavy as race, equality, and white privilege it is important to take breaks. A lot of students haven’t really dug deep into topics such as this in their classes and allowing them to take breaks to process will be extremely important. I suggest doing 1 activity each week, relating it back to the first which will be a discussion and journal prompt.

Teaching Strategies

While there are many teaching strategies that I use in my classroom, I will be highlighting the most used for this curriculum unit. Some of the main teaching strategies that I will be focusing

²² Takahama, Elise. “Is Math Racist? New Course Outlines Prompt Conversations about Identity, Race in Seattle Classrooms.” *The Seattle Times*, October 10, 2019.
<https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/new-course-outlines-prompt-conversations-about-identity-race-in-seattle-classrooms-even-in-math/>.

on are visualization, cooperative learning, inquiry based instruction, and technology. Visualization is relating what we are doing in class to a real world context. White privilege and equity are very much a real-world concept and asking students to think of examples in their lives, or what they experience daily, or what they see on TV be it the news or on shows can be very powerful in helping guide them to see the inequalities people experience on a day-to-day basis. Cooperative learning is working through activities as a small group or whole class. The desks in my room are in groups to promote discussion and collaboration and while the topic of white privilege and equity requires a lot of self-reflection, there are also a lot of opportunities to discuss with others the many facets of the topic. I use inquiry-based instruction as often as possible. In inquiry-based instruction, thought provoking questions are asked which lead and inspire students to think for themselves and to become independent learners always wanting to know more. On the topic of white privilege, there are many questions to be asked that are thought provoking that will lead to a lot of reflection and learning. Technology is an essential part of my classroom. Our school is 1 to 1 with chromebooks and each child is assigned a chromebook for the year that they can take home. We also provide students without internet access hotspots so they can complete any schoolwork at home. My entire Math 1 curriculum is entirely online. With the exception of when my students take notes in class, every activity/assignment we do is online. For this unit, I will be using the computers less than I typically do but I will still be incorporating them into the curriculum unit.

Lessons/Activities

Class Discussion/Journaling

To introduce this topic, I choose to discuss inequalities. In math, we use an inequality symbol in place of an equal sign to explain the range of answers that are possible. When we first introduce inequalities into Math 1 at the beginning of the year I write the word “inequality” on the board with a picture of all of the symbols, “ $<$ ”, “ $>$ ”, “ \geq ”, and “ \leq ”. By the time they reach high school these symbols and this term should be familiar to them. I ask the students to forget about math for a second and ask for a few examples of what inequality means outside of just math. If a few students are willing to share out I allow them to do so, if not I provide examples starting with examples unrelated to race such as “If I give one half of the room cupcakes but not the other half is that equity.” I may provide two or three examples like this before I start to bring in race. Because it is well known that in Charlotte the makeup of race in the southern part of the city is predominantly white I use “A high school in south Charlotte is given money to buy brand new chromebooks for all of their students but Garinger does not receive any money to get any new chromebooks. Is that equity?” I move to “I, your white teacher, am pulled over for going 75 miles per hour in a 35 mile per hour zone and given a warning and our principal, a black woman, is pulled over for going 50 miles per hour in a 35 mile per hour zone and is given a speeding ticket. Is that equity?” At this point students may become getting frustrated and starting to think of all of the times that have seen inequities in their life. Give them paper and 20 minutes to write about a time, or many times they were on the receiving end of inequity and how it made them feel.

White Privilege Survey

For this activity, I use a survey I found online that pulls scenarios from Peggy McIntosh's White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. The students will not have to turn these in, but I do want them to see some of the differences between what white people get to avoid thinking about on a day-to-day basis and what people of color have to endure on a day-to-day basis. This can be a very personal realization for some students so they will not have to turn in their surveys, but they will write a reflection based on the prompt "What is one of the scenarios on that survey that you have experienced? How did it make you feel? Why do you think you felt that way? What is one of the scenarios on the survey you have never thought about? Why do you think you've never thought about this?" See [Appendix 2](#) for survey.

Privileged Reading

For this activity, students will read "[Privileged](#)" by Kyle Korver, an NBA basketball player who acknowledges the privileges he has as a white man. While students are reading the article, I ask that they write down questions that they have. This can be questions about the article or questions about white privilege. These questions will be addressed later in a Socratic seminar.

Shut the Door

On CommonLit there is a speech by Senator Ellison DuRant Smith from 1924. This speech, titled "Shut the Door" refers to the influx of immigration in the early 1900s. I took this speech and formatted it into worksheet form that includes the speech, vocabulary, and questions. This Senator, from South Carolina makes a speech arguing to restrict immigration. I will first, read the speech to students and have them just listen. After reading the speech, I will ask for first reactions. After hearing input from a few students I will pass out the speech in worksheet form with key vocabulary defined, and questions that go along with the text. The students will work individually on analyzing the text and will discuss in their predetermined groups how this speech from 1924 parallels 2019. See [Appendix 3](#) for worksheet.

Socratic Seminar

In a Socratic seminar, the teacher takes a back seat to the students. For this activity, I suggest using the questions students wrote while reading "Privileged" and starting with those as topics of discussion. If your students have never done a Socratic seminar, I suggest doing a few on topics less sensitive before one discussing race, equity and white privilege.

Jig Saw

Students will be placed into groups of four. This will be the students' "home group". Within the groups students will number themselves off numbers one through four. Once numbered off students will move to the corner of their room that corresponds with the number they chose in their home group (each corner should be labeled with the number "1," "2," "3," and "4.") These new groups are their "expert groups." Within the expert groups, students will read the assigned page from the [Breaking the Link Document](#) (Group 1 page 5, Group 2 page 12, Group 3 page 14,

Group 4 page 16) and fill in the worksheet for their expert group. After 10 minutes, students will go back to their home groups and share the information gathered from their expert groups. When this activity is complete, students will have read one page of the text, but will have learned about the other three pages from the “expert” on that specific page. See [Appendix 4](#) for worksheet.

Privilege Walk

This is an [activity](#) I would only use toward the end of the unit and only if your students trust you and one another and you have made your classroom an extremely safe space, free of judgement. In the privilege walk the teacher will read statements and the students will step back or forward based on their responses. Because this activity is based around white privilege, some of the questions could be very emotional for some students. I highly suggest giving students time to decompress and reflect silently before processing the activity with the provided questions.

Assessment

Analysis of Schools

For this activity, I have chosen high schools from each of the poverty levels as outlined in the CMS Breaking the Link document. To keep anonymity of the schools, I have renamed them “School A,” “School B,” etc. Students will use data from each of the school’s Math 1 EOC scores to analyze the differences in grade level proficiency and college and career readiness based on North Carolina’s Math 1 standards for statistics. After analyzing the data, students will write a one-page statement about how they feel they have been affected by white privilege in their district. See [Appendix 5](#) for activity.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

NC.M1.S-ID.1 Use technology to represent data with plots on the real number line (histograms, and box plots)

NC.M1.S-ID.2 Use statistics appropriate to the shape of the data distribution to compare center (median, mean) and spread (interquartile range, standard deviation) of two or more different data sets. Interpret differences in shape, center, and spread in the context of the data sets.

NC.M1.A-REI.3 Solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable.

NC.M1.A-REI.4 Solve for the real solutions of quadratic equations in one variable by taking square roots and factoring.

White Privilege Survey

Because of my race or color...

- ☐ I can be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- ☐ If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of hassle-free renting or purchasing in an area 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.
- ☐ I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the newspaper and see people of my race widely and positively represented.
- ☐ When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my race made it what it is.
- ☐ I can be sure that my children (or children from my family) will be given curricular materials that testify to the contributions of their race.
- ☐ I can go into most supermarkets and find the staple foods which fit with my racial/ethnic traditions; I can go into any hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
- ☐ Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- ☐ I can arrange to protect my children (or children from my family) most of the time from people who might mistreat them because of their race.
- ☐ I can swear, dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
- ☐ I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
- ☐ I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
- ☐ I can remain oblivious to the language and customs of people of color without feeling, from people of my race, any penalty for such ignorance.
- ☐ I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a racial outsider.
- ☐ I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
- ☐ If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

- ☐ I can conveniently buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
- ☐ I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied-in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, feared, or hated.
- ☐ I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
- ☐ I can choose public accommodation (hotels, restaurants, etc.) without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the place I have chosen.
- ☐ I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- ☐ If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
- ☐ I can comfortably avoid, ignore, or minimize the impact of racism on my life.
- ☐ I can speak in public to a powerful group without putting my race on trial.
- ☐ I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match the color of my skin.

Examples adapted from Peggy McIntosh, *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*

Appendix 3

Shut the Door Speech

Name:

<p>It seems to me the point as to this measure—and I have been so impressed for several years—is that the time has arrived when we should shut the door. We have been called the melting pot of the world. We had an experience just a few years ago, during the great World War, when it looked as though we had allowed influences to enter our borders that were about to melt the pot in place of us being the melting pot.</p> <p>I think that we have sufficient stock in America now for us to shut the door, Americanize what we have, and save the resources of America for the natural increase of our population. We all know that one of the most prolific causes of war is the desire for increased land ownership for the overflow of a congested population. We are increasing at such a rate that in the natural course of things in a comparatively few years the landed resources, the natural resources of the country, shall be taken up by the natural increase of our population. It seems to me the part of wisdom now that we have throughout the length and breadth of continental America a population which is beginning to encroach upon the reserve and virgin resources of the country to keep it in trust for the multiplying population of the country.</p> <p>I do not believe that political reasons should enter into the discussion of this very vital question. It is of greater concern to us to maintain the institutions of America, to maintain the principles upon which this Government is founded, than to develop and exploit the underdeveloped resources of the country. There are some things that are dearer to us, fraught with more benefit to us, than the immediate development of the undeveloped resources of the country.</p> <p>I believe that our particular ideas, social, moral, religious, and political, have</p>	<p>Encroach: to go beyond the usual or proper limits; to gradually intrude on the rights or property of others</p> <p>Exploit: to make full use of; to benefit fully from</p>	<p>1. What door do you think Smith is referring to?</p>
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<p>demonstrated, by virtue of the progress we have made and the character of people that we are, that we have the highest ideals of any member of the human family or any nation. We have demonstrated the fact that the human family, certainly the predominant breed in America, can govern themselves by a direct government of the people. If this Government shall fail, it shall fail by virtue of the terrible law of inherited tendency. Those who come from the nations which from time immemorial have been under the dictation of a master fall more easily by the law of inheritance and the inertia of habit into a condition of political servitude than the descendants of those who cleared the forests, conquered the savage, stood at arms and won their liberty from their mother country, England.</p> <p>I think we now have sufficient population in our country for us to shut the door and to breed up a pure, unadulterated American citizenship. I recognize that there is a dangerous lack of distinction between people of a certain nationality and the breed of the dog. Who is an American? Is he an immigrant from Italy? Is he an immigrant from Germany? If you were to go abroad and some one were to meet you and say, "I met a typical American," what would flash into your mind as a typical American, the typical representative of that new Nation? Would it be the son of an Italian immigrant, the son of a German immigrant, the son of any of the breeds from the Orient, the son of the denizens of Africa? We must not get our ethnological distinctions mixed up with out anthropological distinctions. It is the breed of the dog in which I am interested.</p> <p>I would like for the Members of the Senate to read that book just recently published by Madison Grant, The Passing of a Great Race. Thank God we have in America perhaps the largest percentage of any country in the world of the pure, unadulterated Anglo-Saxon stock; certainly the greatest of any nation in the Nordic breed. It is for the preservation of that splendid stock that has characterized us that I would make this not an asylum for the oppressed of all countries, but a country to assimilate and perfect that splendid type of manhood that has made America the foremost Nation in her progress and in her power, and</p>	<p>Inertia: a tendency to do nothing and remain unchanged; inactivity</p> <p>Assimilate: to conform to the customs, attitudes, and habits of a group or nation</p>	<p>2. According to Smith, what is the difference between Americans and foreigners?</p> <p>3. Why does Smith think America is special?</p>
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<p>yet the youngest of all the nations. I myself believe that the preservation of her institutions depends upon us now taking counsel with our condition and our experience during the last World War.</p> <p>Without offense, but with regard to the salvation of our own, let us shut the door and assimilate what we have, and let us breed pure American citizens and develop our own American resources. I am more in favor of that than I am of our quota proposition. Of course, it may not meet the approbation of the Senate that we shall shut the door—which I unqualifiedly and unreservedly believe to be our duty—and develop what we have, assimilate and digest what we have into pure Americans, with American aspirations, and thoroughly familiar with the love of American institutions, rather than the importation of any number of men from other countries. If we may not have that, then I am in favor of putting the quota down to the lowest possible point, with every selective element in it that may be.</p> <p>The great desideratum of modern times has been education not alone book knowledge, but that education which enables men to think right, to think logically, to think truthfully, men equipped with power to appreciate the rapidly developing conditions that are all about us, that have converted the world in the last 50 years into a brand-new world and made us masters of forces that are revolutionizing production. We want men not like dumb, driven cattle from those nations where the progressive thought of the times has scarcely made a beginning and where they see men as mere machines; we want men who have an appreciation of the responsibility brought about by the manifestation of the power of that individual. We have not that in this country to-day. We have men here to-day who are selfishly utilizing the enormous forces discovered by genius, and if we are not careful as statesmen, if we are not careful in our legislation, these very masters of the tremendous forces that have been made available to us will bring us under their domination and control by virtue of the power they have in multiplying their wealth.</p> <p>We are struggling to-day against the organized forces of man's brain multiplied a million times</p>	<p>Desideratum: something that is needed or wanted</p>	
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<p>by materialized thought in the form of steam and electricity as applied in the everyday affairs of man. We have enough in this country to engage the brain of every lover of his country in solving the problems of a democratic government in the midst of the imperial power that genius is discovering and placing in the hands of man. We have population enough to-day without throwing wide our doors and jeopardizing the interests of this country by pouring into it men who willingly become the slaves of those who employ them in manipulating these forces of nature, and they few reap the enormous benefits that accrue therefrom.</p> <p>We ought to Americanize not only our population but our forces.</p> <p>We ought to Americanize our factories and our vast material resources, so that we can make each contribute to the other and have an abundance for us under the form of the government laid down by our fathers.</p> <p>The Senator from Georgia [Mr. Harris] has introduced an amendment to shut the door. It is not a question of politics. It is a question of maintaining that which has made you and me the beneficiaries of the greatest hope that ever burned in the human breast for the most splendid future that ever stood before mankind, where the boy in the gutter can look with confidence to the seat of the Presidency of the United States; where the boy in the gutter can look forward to the time when, paying the price of a proper citizen, he may fill a seat in this hall; where the boy to-day poverty-stricken, standing in the midst of all the splendid opportunities of America, should have and, please God, if we do our duty, will have an opportunity to enjoy the marvelous wealth that the genius and brain of our country is making possible for us all.</p> <p>We do not want to tangle the skein of America's progress by those who imperfectly understand the genius of our Government and the opportunities that lie about us. Let us keep what we have, protect what we have, make what we have the realization of the dream of those who wrote the Constitution.</p>	<p>Skein: a length of thread or yarn</p>	<p>4. What does Smith propose the US Government should do?</p>
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<p>I am more concerned about that than I am about whether a new railroad shall be built or whether there shall be diversified farming next year or whether a certain coal mine shall be mined. I would rather see American citizenship refined to the last degree in all that makes America what we hope it will be than to develop the resources of America at the expense of the citizenship of our country. The time has come when we should shut the door and keep what we have for what we hope our own people to be.</p>		<p>5. Why is Smith so motivated to stop immigration to the US?</p>
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<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/shut-the-door-speech>

Appendix 4

Name:

	Introduction pg 5	Distribution of Schools pg 14	Enrollment pg 16	Summary of Findings pg 12
2 Statistics				
Something that surprised you				
One sentence summary				
One idea you would give to the Superintendent				

Appendix 5

Name: _____

Percentage of Math 1 Students Who Are Grade Level Proficient

The table below shows the percentage of students at schools of different poverty levels who are grade level proficient based on Math 1 EOC scores.

- What are the summary statistics for the data?
- Construct a graph comparing the data.

Low Poverty		Moderate Poverty		High Poverty	
School A	92	School E	65	School I	39
School B	85	School F	67	School J	34
School C	86	School G	59	School K	27
School D	87	School H	57		

- Describe the distribution of the data, citing both of the plots and the numerical summary statistics.

Name: _____

Percentage of Math 1 Students Who Are College and Career Ready

The table below shows the percentage of students at schools of different poverty levels who are college and career ready based on Math 1 EOC scores.

- Calculate the mean, median, standard deviation, and interquartile range for each class.
- Construct an appropriate graph to compare the two classes.

Low Poverty		Moderate Poverty		High Poverty	
School A	88	School E	59	School I	28
School B	84	School F	56	School J	23
School C	78	School G	49	School K	16
School D	74	School H	46		

- Write several sentences to compare the class grades in context.

Name: _____

Using the data from above, and what you've learned about how white privilege has impacted education. Write **one page**, double-spaced, about how you think your education has been influenced by white privilege. Make suggestions to the school board and superintendent about how to ensure that all students, no matter what school they are attending in our district, receive and equal opportunity for education.

Student Resources

Privileged

“Privileged: By Kyle Korver.” The Players' Tribune. Accessed November 1, 2019.
<https://www.theplayerstribune.com/en-us/articles/kyle-korver-utah-jazz-nba>.

Privileged is an article written by NBA player Kyle Korver in the Player's Tribune. Kyle is a white man writing about the realization that he has had the choice to discuss race or not. He discusses several incidents that have happened in his time in the NBA that have left him with a discomfort that he couldn't shake. He discusses his guilt and the responsibility that he feels to hold others accountable.

Shut the Door

“Shut the Door' Speech.” CommonLit. Accessed November 17, 2019.
<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/shut-the-door-speech>.

Shut the Door is speech given in 1924 by Senator Ellison DuRant Smith. This Senator from South Carolina is giving a speech against immigration. This speech was delivered to Congress in support of the Act of 1924 prohibiting the number of immigrants allowed into the United States. This speech is largely regarded as racist.

Breaking the Link

“Breaking the Link.” *Breaking the Link*. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, May 2019.
<https://4.files.edl.io/612a/06/04/19/194431-a5a8d5ab-3ac2-40a1-902c-f295b0d36a8d.pdf>.

This document is a report released by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools in May 2019. This report examines the equity within the schools of the district. The report discusses the reasons for the report, the distribution of schools based on race and poverty, enrollment by race and poverty, and a summary of the findings. The report also shows the data points for all levels of school for math, reading, attendance, and suspension rates.

Teacher Resources

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." *Peace & Freedom Magazine*, 1989.

In this article, Peggy McIntosh examines how her life has been shaped by white privilege. She examines what white privilege means and what she, and others, can do to better acknowledge and potentially end it. In the article, she lists several scenarios in which she has recognized her privilege and how she has benefited from being white.

White Fragility

DiAngelo, Robin J. *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2019.

This book is highly recommended for any teacher looking to understand more about race and equity. She explains that racism does not equate to being a bad person and that the emotions felt such as guilt and shame are what shapes what fragility and the prevention of meaningful dialogue between white individuals and individuals of color.

Privilege Walk

"The Privilege Walk Exercise." Accessed October 27, 2019.
https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/activities/pdf/privilege-walk.pdf.

This activity was designed to challenge the thinking of college students and provide an opportunity for them to learn and acknowledge the differences in privilege among different social identity groups in the United States.

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