### Part 1: Identity Reflection

Explore the significance of at least one of your identity markers in the context of your role as the teacher of your students.

From kindergarten through fifth grade, I attended racially diverse schools, of which the composition was equal parts black and white, with much smaller portions of the population of other races. After sixth grade, I attended a private Christian school through high school, as well as a private college with deep Southern Baptist roots. In middle and high school as well as college, I was surrounded by students who were largely like me in identity markers: white, upper-middle class, and Christian. As a member of the dominant class, my narrative is the one that is told time and time again, and therefore I don’t find a constant disconnect with the narrative of society as it pertains to my race or class. This was reinforced by my schooling and socialization as a child and young adult given the homogeneity of my school and my social circles.

Now, consider my school context. Most of the teachers at my school are over 40 years old (many are close to retirement), most grew up in the city or even in the school’s neighborhood, and only four out of fifty or so staff members are white. I stand out for my age, and I stand out for coming from elsewhere, but I think it’s my whiteness that is most important in this context.

---

1 All collaboration should be verbal in nature and each teacher should submit unique, individual written work for each assessment. Any additional resources consulted should be listed at the end of the assessment. The primary volume of your work should be yours and yours alone.

---

Comment [Exemplar1]:

**PROFICIENT**

Row 1, strand a: IDENTITY REFLECTION: The teacher explores the significance of (at least) one of her identity markers in the context of her role as a teacher of her students.

In this part of the reflection, the teacher explores the significance of her whiteness not only in the context of her own identity development (e.g., “As a member of the dominant class … I don’t find a constant disconnect with the narrative of society as it pertains to my race or class”) but also in the context of her work as a teacher of her students (see the final paragraph).
My students have a lot of questions about my race. As first graders, many of their questions are about physical traits: Are my eyes "real?" What does my hair feel like? I wonder if my students see me as white before they see me as a teacher, and I don't know what the implications of that might be. Certainly, they bring their own notions of whiteness to our classroom, which are different from mine, since – as a member of a dominant racial and class group – I have spent so little time thinking about what it means for me to be white. Although I spend all day with them every day, the distancing I feel as a result of racial difference and the discomfort I sometimes feel even trying to name these feelings are real hurdles for me in building authentic relationships with my students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2: Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Name a race or class-related bias/commonly held belief you have (see below for examples), and make explicit connections between that bias/belief and your identity markers, culture(s), or experiences.

From a very early age, I was taught that it’s "impolite" to discuss race. The word "colorblind" was never used explicitly, I don't think, but I remember being told "shh" once when we were out at a restaurant and I mentioned that one of my classmates was black. I was probably in third grade at the time. I also remember being told frequently to treat everyone "the same" in spite of differences of any kind – this "rule" would've applied to more than just race, but it served to nurture tendencies of colorblindness in me anyway. This is extremely problematic for me now, as I need to be able to move toward, not away from, discussions of race and racism in my everyday work and in my reflection on my own practices. I know I have other biases about race and class beyond just colorblindness, and I get hints of them from time to time in split-second judgments I make or fear I try hard to swallow and then excuse as being about "something else." If I'm ever going to be able to move the needle on these deep-rooted stereotypes and biases – so many of which could and perhaps already are negatively impacting my relationships with my students – I'll first need to work toward becoming "color brave" instead of "colorblind" (Hobson, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3: Self-Monitoring and Unlearning Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Select two strategies from 4.4 Taking Action – one for self-monitoring bias and one for unlearning bias –

Comment [Exemplar2]:
PROFICIENT
Row 2, strand a: BIAS:
The teacher names one of her own race or class-related biases or commonly held beliefs and makes explicit connections between that bias/belief and her identity markers, culture(s), or experiences.

Comment [Exemplar3]:
PROFICIENT
Row 3, strand a: SELF-MONITOR AND UNLEARN:
The teacher proposes observable ways to self-monitor and unlearn her bias or commonly held belief.

The teacher selects two strategies from Activity 4.4: Action and describes how she will apply them in the context of her specific bias and her specific teaching situation.
and explain how you will apply them in order to self-monitor and unlearn your bias/commonly held belief. Ensure your response is specific to your bias/commonly held belief and your teaching situation. I want to start with these two strategies in particular:

- **Self-Monitoring Strategy: Corrective Action Patterns/Invite a Critical Friend.** This is huge for me. I’m very self-aware of the fact that I’m having more classroom management issues than some of my colleagues, and it isn’t lost on me that of my 20 students, I’m struggling most with two of my African American girls. When I read the part in the online work about patterns in referrals for “insubordination” and “disrespect,” I felt like someone had been sifting through the log I keep of phone calls to M.’s and B.’s parents. I know I need to keep managing my classroom – ignoring their behaviors would be lowering expectations. But it’s clear that the way I’m engaging with them isn’t working, and really, I don’t have a good relationship with either of them. I do have a really good relationship with my co-teacher, and if she’s open to it, I’d like to ask her to notice my interactions with them and be a critical friend to me. This would include my specifically naming the race and gender pattern I see, too, which I’m hoping pushes me to have more conversations with her about race and bias, thereby working to make me less colorblind in addition to tuning me in to the ways I am (or am not) engaging with them. (Note: I want to be wary of the pitfall of expecting the “other” to teach me, but that won’t be an issue here. G. is white and, although she is older than me, she comes from a pretty similar background.)

- **Debiasing Strategy: Education to Raise Awareness.** Given my struggles with colorblindness, and my worries about race-related (and potentially gender-related) bias I’m seeing in my practice, I want to read these texts over the winter break:
  - **Chapter on white identity development in particular:** Tatum, B.D. (1997). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?” and other conversations about race.
I have two roommates who are also teachers, and I’m hoping I could discuss these with them as I’m reading. My hope is that these texts will help me to find my voice in talking about race and racism (i.e., help me to be less colorblind) while also teaching me more about some of the biases that I have that my colorblindness has thus far prevented me from acknowledging.

References:

Race and Class-Related Biases & Commonly Held Beliefs:
1. Not seeing oneself as a racialized, ethnic participant in a culture (Howard, 2010)
2. Tending to retreat to a position of color-blindness (Howard, 2010; Warren, 2010)
3. Struggling to believe that one has biases about race and class (Sue et al., 2007)
4. Believing racism or systemic racism are things of the past (Warren, 2010)
5. Believing students’ struggles in school are related to poverty, not race (Warren, 2010)
6. "Poor people are unmotivated and have weak work ethics" (Gorski, 2008)
7. "Poor parents are uninvolved in their children's learning, largely because they do not value education" (Gorski, 2008)
8. "Poor people are linguistically deficient" (Gorski, 2008)
9. "Poor people tend to abuse drugs and alcohol" (Gorski, 2008)
10. "Ascription of intelligence: Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race" (Sue et al., 2007)
11. "Myth of meritocracy:" Hard work and high achievement in school "level the playing field" (Sue et al., 2007)
12. "Assumption of criminal status:" Assuming people are dangerous, criminal or deviant (Sue et al., 2007)
13. "Pathologizing cultural values:" Assuming that dominant (i.e., white, middle-class/wealthy) values and communication styles are ideal (Sue et al., 2007)
14. "Assumption of shared experience:" Assuming that the shared identity markers of race or class will result in automatic trust (1.1: Sociocultural Consciousness)