



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Achieve International Excellence

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

Presented By
Malcolm Fialho

Senior Diversity Officer

Equity and Diversity
The University of Western Australia

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EQUITY & DIVERSITY
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The Compact

Four Commitments

- 1. Remain connected*
- 2. Honesty is the best policy!*
- 3. Discomfort is Okay!*
- 4. It's a Marathon, not a sprint!*

Four Conditions

- 1. Keep the spotlight on Race*
- 2. Connecting through your story*
- 3. Make complexity your friend!*
- 4. Acknowledge Whiteness and Privilege*

FIRST CONDITION

Keep the spotlight on Race

To what extent does race have an impact on your life?

Race in my life = ? %

- Race permeates everything in modern Australian society 100%.
- **Racial unconsciousness** is defined as the difference between your “race in my life” figure (above) and 100% (i.e. if your figure is 30% then your racial unconsciousness is 70%).
- The goal is to practise skills that increase **racial consciousness** and to enhance your ability to understand the racial reality of those with whom you interact. Racial consciousness ensures authentic interaction in interracial interactions.
- **Courageous Conversations** seeks to close the **gap** between racial unconsciousness and racial consciousness.

As staff continually strive to build their own racial consciousness they can begin to address effectively the impact of race both in higher education and the broader community.

Some Common Assumptions or Misconceptions About Race

1. Everyone should be treated equally and judged solely on the basis of merit and their accomplishments. Race/cultural background are irrelevant.
2. Talking about 'differences' creates the problem - we are all part of the human race. We should be emphasizing similarities, not differences. Besides, I don't see colour or difference any more.
3. Most Australians practise a 'fair go' and anyone can achieve their goals and dreams. Things are much better here than in countries like China and the Middle East.
4. Higher Education, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, organisations with high cultural diversity - they all understand diversity so don't need to have this 'conversation'.
5. I shouldn't have to accept responsibility for 'past' mistakes in the Race area. In some cases, I was not even born and did not make those decisions.
6. They (minority group members) often manufacture the 'problem' because they have a chip on their shoulder and attribute everything negative in their life to Race. They never take personal responsibility.
7. I come from a diverse culture but have fairer skin than my relatives and look "Australian". I have also experienced racism and discrimination but no-one recognises my experiences.
8. It is not important to use affirmative action to achieve a more equitable representation of visible minorities in Parliament and in senior positions in the higher education, corporate and public sector. It will come about eventually and naturally.
9. The time has come to stop pandering to demands from minority groups.
10. Political correctness and tougher racial vilification laws just drive racism 'underground' - it's counter-productive. We should accept, recognise and acknowledge freedom of speech and expression.
11. Surely there's nothing wrong with asking someone who looks 'different' where they are from. I'm just making conversation.
12. 'Special' entry for minorities from culturally diverse backgrounds lowers the bar and erodes Australia's standards.
13. We need to have more stringent border control policies to stop being inundated by 'boat people' who jump the queue - they can afford to pay people smugglers, surely they can afford to go through legal channels.
14. Australia does more than its fair share of taking in refugees. The people in overseas refugee camps should be settled in that country.
15. I have (insert minority racial group) friends who make fun of members of their own community. They also agree that boat people should be stopped, Indigenous people get excessive 'special' treatment and racial minority groups should just get on with it and stop whingeing. When jokes about other cultures are made, they laugh along and don't mind.
16. I am developing an employment participation program targeting the African community in my district. I have consulted a member of that community in developing the program.

Understanding the 'Language' of Race

Race – The *socially constructed* meaning attached to a variety of physical attributes including but not limited to skin and eye colour, hair texture, bone structure and accent of people in Australia and elsewhere.

White – Both a race and a culture. “White” is charged with the learnt notion that white is normal and negative judgments of those that deviate from white norms are defensible. From this definition the phrase “White Privilege” has emerged. “White” can range from Anglo through to Mediterranean to middle European to English-speaking visible minorities and many combinations in between. The significance of these “shades” are in relation to race and white privilege, but the intersection between race and other factors (class, gender, sexuality) should always be borne in mind.

Visible minority – Used widely in Canadian public policy. It refers to those communities whose racial characteristics are different to the dominant ‘white’ majority in modern Western liberal democratic societies. ‘Minority’ and ‘majority’ are not dependent upon numerical realities – a smaller population numerically can still be the ‘majority’ in terms of social dominance (e.g. South Africa, California).

People of Colour – Originated during the civil rights movement in the USA, this term is still widely used. While it referred initially to African-Americans, it is now used to refer to a range of visible minorities in the US.

Culture – The ways of living built up by a group of human beings, passed on from one generation to another. Culture is dynamic but core elements are preserved that connect a person’s identity to one or more cultures. Culture includes a person’s beliefs, their performance of everyday activities, what is practised and what is valued. Culture influences how people define themselves and thus a person may have many levels of cultural identity.

Ethnicity – The identity of groups based on shared characteristics such as language, culture, history or geographic origin.

Racial Identity – The term utilised to denote how an individual psychologically identifies in terms of race and/or culture. It cannot be ascribed or prescribed. A common fallacy is to ‘label’ based on skin colour and other physical characteristics but identification is far more complex.

Racialisation - To impose a racial interpretation on or to place someone/thing in a racial context. To perceive, view, or experience in a racial context or to categorise or differentiate on the basis of race.

Racial Prejudice – to hold an opinion, generally negative, about another group(s) based on racial characteristics (extending to religion, culture and ethnicity). This prejudice can be acted out between the visible majority and a visible minority as well as between visible minorities e.g. Indigenous Australians against white people, Vietnamese-Australians against Indigenous Australians, Anglo-Australians against Afghani-Australians etc.

Racism – Belief, and an enactment of beliefs, that one set of characteristics is superior to another e.g. white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes are more attractive than brown skin, eyes and hair. That is, it assumes power and dominance of one person/group over another based on race. Any person that perpetuates these beliefs intentionally or even unconsciously perpetuates racism and is being racist.

Prejudice + Power = Racism

Individual racism refers to the conscious or unconscious enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group of individuals against another individual or group of individuals perceived to have lower racial status.

Systemic racism (aka Institutionalised racism) refers to institutional policies, practices and systems that result in the unjustified negative treatment and subordination of members of a racial or ethnic group. This mistreatment can be conducted by people who have been conditioned by the society to act, consciously or unconsciously, in harmful ways towards a visible minority. It occurs when practices appear to be neutral or fair because they appear to treat people the same way, but adversely affect a higher proportion of people from one race, culture or ethnic group. It can occur even when there is no intention to discriminate.

It is important to note that for these acts to become systemic, they must emanate from the dominant race. Other groups do not have the racial power, presence and position necessary to maintain the prejudicial acts over time and across society e.g. Indigenous people, Chinese-Australians, Iraqi-Australians can be prejudiced towards Anglo-Australians as individuals. But, collectively, they do not have the social, political, or economic power in Australia to alter the collective racial experience of Anglo-Australians.

Equality and Equity – Equality assumes that everyone should be treated the same i.e. ‘one size fits all’ approach. Equity, on the other hand, acknowledges and values difference.

SECOND CONDITION

Connecting through your story

RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Ainslie

My childhood was spent in suburban Fremantle, pre-America's Cup when most of the town was working class and majority migrant factory workers and fishermen. My parents were first generation migrants (ten-pound Poms) and in our immediate neighbourhood we were the only English-speaking first-generation migrants around. We were also the poorest and had ten children to raise. We had almost no extended family in Australia. By contrast all the families in our neighbourhood who were of Italian, Portuguese, Yugoslav and Spanish descent had large extended families and vibrant cultures. We felt very different and isolated.

Before I understood about "White Privilege" I would have disagreed that my family as white English speakers of British descent had any particular advantage in our neighbourhood. We had such reduced means that all the migrant families around us were better off. Despite being poor, I understand now that what gave us privilege was entrée to the System and a home environment that valued and promoted the approach to education that would ensure our future in Australian society. By the time I had completed high school there were six of us at home, my father had retired and we were living in State Housing. As a white person with access to education and cultural currency to navigate the education system I had the opportunity to change my social situation. In other countries race is not the only determinant of whether a person can make it educationally; in many places a college education is extremely expensive. What I'm saying is that given that finances were not an obstruction to me becoming educated, the fact that I was from an Anglo family afforded me cultural privileges I might not have otherwise enjoyed.

At the end of High School I went to Malaysia. I lived with a Hokkien Chinese family of seven in a three-room concrete house in the middle of a rubber plantation. I was there because I had become friends with their daughter my age through a pen-pal column. This visit was probably the defining cultural and racial moment of my life. West Malaysia where we lived was quite rural then and there were almost no white people there – or at least I never saw any. I went to a Muslim school with my Chinese "sister" and I learnt Malay, but everywhere I went there were people pointing, staring and commenting. I was somewhere between a celebrity and a freak. I was totally different, but people admired me and treated me in such an open and loving way. Whenever I went out with my "sister" we would be stopped by the police because they thought I had money and she was not dressed appropriately in a Hijab (she was Chinese but constantly mistaken for a Malay as her skin is dark). I witnessed discrimination in their society and in my school. The Chinese had to do twice as well as the Malays to get half as far. The Indians had to do three times as well to get a third as far. When I voiced my sense of injustice about this my non-Malay friends shrugged and said "it's their country". They didn't like it but they seemed to accept it. I was engaged for a while to my pen-pal's older brother. He owns a company that has to have a Malay "director" who is paid and named as such, but does not actually work there. If they did not have him the company would find it hard to exist and impossible to win government bids for funding. I felt guilty about the way people were treated and I sensed my "power" as well as a certain responsibility to do something about it. I thought the answer was to treat people equally – to see and treat everyone the same. I was so naïve. I was motivated by not wanting to be accused of doing the wrong thing rather than wanting to do the right thing. Later in my life other things happened to move me towards thinking differently, but the catalyst for that was my relationship with my Malaysian "sister" coupled with my later experiences of systemic racism. Once I came to appreciate that I needed to *listen* to and appreciate another person's perspective, instead of assuming I already understood, I finally began to see rather than just *treat* others as equal.

Throughout the eighties many catch-words associated with race emerged. It was the age of "multiculturalism", "assimilation" and "melting pots". When I studied Education at University

these were the terms and ideals that were promoted. In one University class we had a panel of people representing different cultures to address us and tell us how to behave with cultural sensitivity in the field. There was a quite prominent Aboriginal lady whose sister was on the panel. When her sister began to speak the lady stood up and began yelling about historical and current injustices towards her people. She pointed her finger at all the teacher trainees in the room and accused us of genocide. She said white people should never teach her people – that we had no right to “shove our values down their throats”. She continued on for a long time to a dumb-struck audience. The faculty staff handled the situation by allowing her to finish and then making an announcement that anyone who felt uncomfortable could leave. Practically the entire lecture theatre emptied out. Afterwards many of the students spoke about the lady as if she were representative of her race. On my ESL teaching prac I watched teachers patronise and be condescending to new migrant families – often these teachers were ESL staff. They made snide remarks and generalisations in the staff room about certain groups of students and introduced “no speaking your language” rules in the playground. In the early 90s I accepted my first post as a teacher in a country town. I had a class that consisted entirely of Vietnamese students – mostly girls – who spoke little or no English. The Head of English actively campaigned to have my class moved to a pre-fab at the far end of the school away from the mainstream classes. She cited their native language, their smell and their high-pitched laughter as compelling reasons to move us.

In Malaysia and in Geraldton I thought I was the minority. Even though Geraldton is a majority white community I taught, lived and socialised with the Vietnamese. I helped the community with their English, their farming, their celebrations, their police interviews, their medical appointments and their visits to Centrelink. I almost thought I had become one with them and their culture and had little to do with my own. However, I was always a visitor and an outside observer. I was in the minority only in terms of numbers. I still belonged to the majority culture. The reason I could help them was because I could use my membership in the “white club” to their advantage.

Cultural filters run deep and just when I think I have escaped from the assumptions of my culture which lead to prejudice I have an experience like the one I had a few months ago. I was struggling with a trolley at my local supermarket. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a dark-skinned hand and without really looking at the man I assumed he was one of the African trolley collectors that work there. I did not really look up but said something like “oh good, you’ve come to relieve me of my trolley”. Then I did look up and I saw that the man was a distinguished Indian man in business dress who had also come to return his own trolley. He said “no actually” and smiled wryly at me. I was so apologetic and ashamed. I am sorry for what I did but it made me realise how deep the veins of cultural assumption run. It is my privilege and my responsibility to own up to these moments and to be a strong and vocal advocate for breaking down racism within myself as well as around me. I also recognise that the path to cultural competence is a journey – even when your intentions are right you have to work on achieving and maintaining that competence daily.

What I focus on now is racial equity not racial equality. Equity recognises and values difference and makes the world more interesting and vital. In the words of a race scholar I respect, “equity allows me to give to others what they are individually entitled to regardless of their race. Authentic within myself, I can treat others authentically.”

RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Glenn Singleton

I grew up in an entirely Black community in Baltimore, where the only initial images of Whiteness I saw were on television. By fourth grade, I was attending YMCA camp for two weeks in the summer, where I recall being fascinated by the hair texture and different bodily odours of White campers. There was in my young mind a difference between White kids and Black kids, but I never gave it too much thought. My family loved Hilton Elementary School, so much so that when we moved out of the attendance zone, they continued registering me as a student there by using my grandparents' address.

Today, I realise how important it was to my educational success that we would often see my teachers in the shopping centres, at social events, or at church on the weekends. As a student then, this form of omnipresent accountability brought distress to me when I was caught misbehaving in school. Most of my teachers were not shy about "airing the classroom laundry" to our parents, and our families truly welcomed the information and responded accordingly. Never did I question whether my teacher understood me, my family, or our Black culture as this was a shared experience.

By fifth grade, Baltimore was required to desegregate public schools. The entire community was abuzz about the possibility of our having to be bussed away from Hilton Elementary and leave our highly qualified Black teachers behind. Fortunately for us, Hilton was an experimental site where some teachers rather than the students were forced to relocate. My fifth grade teacher, Fran Finnegan, became the first of many interracial relationships in which I would be involved. Mrs Finnegan was said to be a wonderful suburban teacher, but in retrospect, she clearly lacked the cultural proficiency necessary to advance our gifted class. She said it did not matter to her what colour we were, but unfortunately, we could not share her perspective. She was really White in our eyes and subject not only to our curiosity but also to our childish malice. I guess the many years of family and community members returning from their workplaces having unfavourable experiences with "the (White) man" – who I later discovered could also be a White woman-had sunk into our consciousness creating a sense of distrust of and dislike for our struggling White teacher.

As a class, we were quite aware of Mrs. Finnegan's racial foibles, and we also knew from experiences with Black teachers prior to fifth grade what it felt like to have a teacher who truly knew and liked us! To her credit, when most of the White teachers departed Hilton after little more than a semester, Mrs. Finnegan felt an unexplained need to hang around. But when the White teachers vacated, Mrs. Finnegan was forced to get to know the Black teachers, which I believe enabled her to begin figuring us out and improving the quality of her instruction. What a shock it was to hear my mother refer to good old Fran as "Sista Finnegan."

Given our success at Hilton Elementary School, I often wonder why I was "strongly encouraged" by my mother to attend a private high school. I recall feeling torn between the excitement of Park's extravagant campus and a desire to walk to school with my neighbourhood friends. The message I received explicitly from home and implicitly from the Park School community was "If it ain't White it isn't Right." My best friend, Jimmy, and I were sent together, so I wasn't alone, except for the fact that Park School administrators never allowed us to be in the same classes. It seemed to me that Jimmy was responsible for diversifying one half of our class, and I the other. We would huddle for lunch each day and for class photos once a year. Jimmy's

athletic prowess eventually earned him distinction as he could adapt his football and baseball skills to soccer and lacrosse, the only options available to Park students.

The theatre called out to me when I was forced into summer school before seventh grade. Performing arts brought all kinds of lasting identity changes and transformed me into a dancing cowboy in Oklahoma and a racist White gang-leader in West Side Story. These were the major productions as I cannot recall the numerous short acts, in all of which I needed to discover a new White persona. In the classroom, mastering the advanced curriculum mirrored the theatrical requirement that I *think and act* White. Park was quite impressed with my ability to imitate their culture so precisely in such a short time. I received the highest award for my contribution to life on campus. My award in my family and neighbourhood was a feeling of alienation and internalised White supremacy creating long-lasting self-hate.

By senior year, my family was convinced that I would be the first to attend college, but beginning a Black college tradition at Morehouse, Morgan, or Howard was out of the question as my counsellor felt an Ivy League university such as Penn, Brown, or Cornell would bring greater prominence to Park School and, in their minds, my family. I was indeed proficient in Whiteness and ready for the next level.

At Penn, I made the choice to embrace the White community and neglect all things Black. I befriended White students and eventually pledged a “very White” fraternity, Sigma Chi. I found nothing wrong with shouting “All Honour to His Name” as my overtly racist White fraternity pledge master read the names of the known White supremacist founders. My initiation was just short of a Klu Klux Klan rally complete with white hooded robes, fire-lit torches, and a cross burning- defined as the blazing symbol of the fraternity.

In my first job as an advertiser in New York, I received a painful wake-up call from my slumber in Whiteness. My boss, Fred Dubin, recognised my talent and wanted to see me promoted on a prestigious account. Our client, however, did not share my boss’s vision for my future. Although I was told that I was not promoted because of my age, Fred allowed me to listen in on a conference call as the client revealed that my colour was the concern. The client couched his racism in terms of economics, and specifically that he feared the “market-place” might not respect my colour. I left advertising soon after this incident but was still in denial about my ability to achieve Whiteness. In retrospect, I believe I returned to Penn to be an admissions director because I knew how **to be White** at the university.

Travelling to New England to recruit for Penn served as a second wake-up call. Not only did the largely White high school educators and Penn alumni disrespect me racially, but I was often not considered to be the “real” Ivy League admissions director. I watched talented students of colour come to Penn and not fit in culturally.

Five years later when Penn moved me to California, I initially believed the hype surrounding the wonderful diversity in California. I guess I was amazed to see how close together the different races lived, worked, and played. I also learned quickly that it was not “politically correct” to talk about race in the Golden State. Although the East was incredibly segregated by comparison, I felt safer being Black in Philly, Baltimore, and New York City. In California, I could never quite figure out how people felt about me racially.

Since my move to the West, I can name thousands of times in which race has dramatically impacted the outcome of a situation. From attending Stanford, to purchasing my first house, to buying cars, to being seated in restaurants...those

situations I once believed would no longer happen once I earned my degrees and entered the middle class. Some friends are still quick to suggest to me that I am “playing the race card.” Today, I just get quiet when these occasions arise. In my mind, I know that if I were truly playing the mythical race card from a deck of 52 cards, I would have played all of my cards by the end of seventh grade!

Race and Power (Shaushann Movsessian, 2004)

Whiteness has definitely not been representative of numbers in high schools that I’ve worked in, in inner and southwest Sydney. At one boys’ school in the outer west, the ethno-cultural diversity of students was 97%. Yet the senior boys in positions of power were still predominantly white or second-generation immigrants who had been *assimilated* into the mainstream. To start our day of training in ‘cultural diversity awareness’ and anti-racism we asked the group to identify issues that they thought were serious in their school. One of the first boys to speak was the school president, who was white. He started by saying he was ‘Australian’ and that his main issue was the need for boys from ‘other cultures’ to stop speaking in their language of origin. He said he found it rude, and that English was the language to be practised in their school. He also expressed feelings of discomfort and exclusion when the other boys spoke their first language, particularly since he felt they were speaking about him.

Despite being in a minority position this boy held a certain amount of official power as school president. His request implied that speaking English was the norm, despite differences in numerical representation. The boys unwilling to adapt to this were viewed as *disturbers* and expected to change. They had a strong reaction to the school president’s request and it could be argued that speaking their language of origin was a way of claiming power in a disenfranchised position within the school system.

Individuals or groups who are unwilling to adapt or assimilate to the norm of the mainstream tend to be viewed as disturbers, and are usually marginalised.

THIRD CONDITION

Make complexity your friend!

RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Christine

I am Chinese-Singaporean, and have always lived in Singapore. English is my first language. As my parents were from Malaysia, they studied Malay and English, rather than Mandarin. My family is Catholic and influenced by the western ideologies of our religion. I attended schools with an English background and heritage. Until recently, western culture has been more influential in my life than Chinese culture - my '*Chineseness*' has been limited to whatever Mandarin I needed to get by in school and the celebration of Chinese festivals e.g. Lunar New Year.

At the schools I attended, there were subtle undertones in the student culture that it was 'not cool' to be Chinese. The students comprised largely English-educated upper and middle class Singaporeans. While our common 'Englishness' bonded students across racial lines, it came at a cost to our diversity. Students from these schools were notoriously bad at their mother tongue and we Singaporean-Chinese even saw ourselves as a different race from students from mainland China.

Chinese form the racial majority in Singapore, with Malays and Indians comprising the minority. The impact of multiracialism on Singapore society is difficult to define. The Government advocates 'multiracialism' because it is necessitated by our multiracial population and sensitive geo-political situation: predominantly Chinese Singapore is surrounded by much larger Malay-Muslim countries. The Government's influential brand of multiracialism pervades most aspects of public life and has given Singaporeans a 'common' culture beyond race differences. The result is that while racial lines have successfully been blurred, Singaporeans have been accused of losing their individual cultural identity. Further, this focus on 'similarities' has neglected the importance of substantive equality through catering to difference.

Growing up in Singapore, I experienced "romantic multiculturalism". We have four national languages, we study about past racial riots and we even celebrate "Racial Harmony Day". I equated anti-racism with racial blindness. I believed that our education and public service systems were firmly merit based, simply because I hadn't heard anything to the contrary. Racism was the stark White-Black divide in the US and other western countries, not the reality of Chinese, Malay, Indian and other ethnic groups living in such close proximity in Singapore.

International experiences triggered my racial awareness and desire to develop my Chinese identity. In doing community service in Kolkata, India I went from being in a majority of yellow-skinned people to being surrounded by dark-skinned people. I was actually surprised I noticed the sensory difference because I had thought of myself as racially 'blind'. I met international volunteers from a variety of racial backgrounds and enjoyed interacting with them. I slowly became aware that they saw me as representative of my race. When I could not adequately answer some of their questions about my cultural heritage, I was deeply embarrassed.

Attending the World Youth Day in Sydney was a similar international experience, but on a much larger scale. Surrounded by all the world's races, I was excited whenever

I met many Chinese people. I recognised that we had many commonalities despite living in different countries. Finally, I was proud to be Chinese.

I did not expect to go through any culture shock in Perth. After all, western culture was not foreign to me. However, when I found myself surrounded by a predominantly white population, I started to feel very conscious of my Asian appearance and my Singaporean accent. I instinctively gravitated towards fellow Singaporeans and other international students. Interestingly, I realised that what intimidated me was not that I was of a different race to others, but that I was in the minority. I could interact easily with students of a different race than me who were also ethnic minorities in Perth. Even after being here for some time, I still find sitting at 'white' tables in the dining hall somewhat intimidating.

My experiences with 'Whiteness' in Perth vary widely. There are those who are welcoming and interested in my culture, those who are racially 'blind', those who simply are not interested and those who are only comfortable with me and my friends if we're being 'white'. I once travelled as part of a group that comprised Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Egyptian and Caucasian people. As we travelled, we listened to music at a high enough volume such that other cars could hear it. When we switched from English songs to Iranian songs our Anglo Australian friend was so uncomfortable that he insisted that we switch back to English songs. I was very surprised because he had never shown any race-related discomfort in our interactions.

Being in the racial minority in Perth has engendered a sense of pride when others ask about my cultural heritage. I feel a sense of belonging when I relate to Chinese people (regardless of nationality). While I was in the racial majority, I had no need for a racial identity and prided myself on racial blindness. I think that the cultural apathy of the majority and contrasting racial pride of the minority are the basis for systemic racism. Cultural apathy on the part of the majority leads to an inability to appreciate the value of diversity and the systems put in place by the majority 'pressure' the minority to fit in with the dominant culture. The process of achieving racial equality requires committed effort on both sides - by individuals in the dominant race simply because they can get by without racial 'consciousness' and the minority race has to avoid defensiveness that results in prejudice towards the dominant race.

The first time I encountered the concept of systemic racism was in a unit I undertook at UWA. Initially, I identified with the ethnic minority, because it was presented to us in the context of White dominance. I remember thinking that Singapore was more multiracial than Australia because I had never experienced systemic racism, nor heard any complaints from my friends of other races. I realised later that my perception of Singaporean *equality* was defined by my limited (privileged) racial experience: thus it was flawed in the same way as that of an Anglo-Australian in Australia or an Anglo-American in America.

Informally polling my Singaporean friends suggested that friends from minority races were more acutely conscious of race while most Chinese friends were racially apathetic. I started questioning the notion of 'merit'. I realised that even though the education system was accessible to all, some races do better than others because the values of the system are defined by the values of the dominant race. In this way, though overt racism is scarce in Singapore, true merit is elusive. The dominant race becomes the dominant class, and a vicious cycle of systemic racism results

FOURTH CONDITION

Understanding White Privilege

Respond to each question with a 'Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe' depending on how true you believe the statement is for yourself as a member of the racial/cultural group assigned to you: Indigenous Australian, Anglo-Australian, recently arrived Iraqi/Afghani Australian (Muslim) or Chinese-Australian.

<i>Because of my race or colour</i>
I can be pretty sure of renting/purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live and my neighbours will be neutral or pleasant to me at all times.
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 the newspaper and see people of my race widely represented in a positive manner.
When I am told about our national heritage I am shown that people of diverse cultural backgrounds (including my own) made it what it is.
I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that reflect their race and / or cultural background.
I can go into supermarkets and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions; I can purchase make-up that more or less matches my skin tone.
I can count on my skin colour not to work against the assessment of financial reliability when applying for a loan.
I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from racial/cultural harassment.
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/cultural group.
I can discuss/criticise our government's policies and behaviour without being seen as a cultural <i>outsider</i> .
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/culture
If a traffic cop pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my skin colour.
I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, children's magazines featuring the people of my race/cultural background.
I can take a job with an equal opportunity employer without having colleague's suspecting that I got it because of my race/cultural background.
I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race/cultural background will not work against me.
I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" colour and have them more or less match my skin.

RACIAL DIVERSITY WORKPLACE AUDIT TOOL

Structure of the Tool (Brigid Tannery & Yin Parides, 2010)

SECTION 1	ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE	
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Section 1 provides a profile of the organisation in terms of organisational commitment and valuing of diversity and the extent to which the organisation creates a welcoming environment for people from diverse backgrounds.

SECTION 2	DIVERSITY PLANNING	
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Section 2 considers overall organisational planning to support diversity and reduce race-based discrimination in the workplace.

SECTION 3	ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES	
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Section 3 section considers available organisational resources to support workplace diversity and anti-discrimination.

SECTION 4	COMMUNICATIONS	
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Section 4 considers processes and guidelines for communications in relation to people from diverse backgrounds.

SECTION 5	HUMAN RESOURCES	
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Section 5 considers human resource practices, including recruitment, selection, management and retention, training and exiting processes to support diversity and anti-discrimination in the workplace.

SECTION 6	DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING	
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Section 6 considers data collection and monitoring activities to support workplace diversity and anti-discrimination.

Additional Reading

Privilege and 'Whiteness' (Lilian Holt, 2006)

Psssst...I Wannabe White

Don't ask me how I knew it. I just knew it. I knew from an early age, that *white* was ...somehow...was about being...right...being bright...and having might on your side.

I knew from my primary school days when kids like Richard C*** used to call out 'Gooday, Blackgin'. He said it with such a grin. Ouch, it wounded and scalded as I tried to get him back. I knew that anything other than white was not quite right at about eight years old when a white kid gave me a lolly one day and I obligingly said 'Ta'. That kid laughed at me and said: 'Tar's black, so take it back'!

In my early teens, I began to suspect that white was not only right but racist when I was booking my seat at the local picture show and Tubs B*** one of my white classmates, piped up and said: 'Don't worry about booking a seat, Lillian, because no one would want to sit next to an ugly blackgin like you'. Pause...I had just turned 14.

I was devastated and humiliated. I was to be awakened to whiteness through many remarks like that. Hence, I intuitively came to know that I was part of the 'otherness' which whiteness in this country both overtly and covertly defined or ignored.

My teens were traumatic as I searched for signals that said I was OK. But lo, there were no magazines that had women or girls with my features and colour.... Whiteness was applauded and accorded Goddess status and statement through endless pages of women with white skin, blue eyes (usually), thin European noses, and mostly blond hair. Not that they were all like that. Deviation was all right if your skin was white. Thus brown eyes and hair was more than acceptable in the lightness of whiteness. Whiteness, I realised, was like a flashing sentinel signalling all those who could pass through. It aided and abetted, especially those polished, varnished white women, with porcelain skin and features, all taking pride of place in the beauty and popularity stakes.

By the 1960s when I was a teenager, even the first black models out of the States were acceptably European looking in both features and colour. No broad noses or black skins. Heaven forbid! The correctness and mightiness of whiteness saw to that.

My now deceased cousin, Gloria Huggins-Murphy, and I used to joke about not making it into the Surfie Stakes of the 1960s. There was no glass ceiling to exclude us from the sand, the surf, the sun, where the blond, bold and beautiful surfie girls and boys played. It was more the stares and glares, as it was elsewhere when people of colour or 'otherness' strayed over the line. And, oh yes, despite what feminists would like to believe, white women were implicated too in that they were both the messenger and the message. Just like the blokes. I found, too, that fear, in white women-disguised as smugness-was part of whiteness.

As for the cosmetic counters at the big stores, their darkest foundation, as the white girls behind the counter kindly pointed out, was ...well...'the darkest they had'. Whiteness acknowledged whiteness even in the cosmetic industry for this so-called 'darkest shade they had' was unquestionably light and for white girls. They were apologetic and unnerved as they went on to the next customer, and we coloured girls giggled and moved on...having known beforehand what the response was going to be.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With grateful acknowledgement to the following:

'Courageous Conversations about Race'. Singleton, G.E and Linton, C. (2006).

This model is adapted from this source.

'Understanding White Privilege'. McIntosh, P. (1989)

'Unmasking Whiteness' – Race Relations and Reconciliation, McKay, B. (2004)