

Dismantling White Supremacy in Education Part 2

Dismantling White Supremacy in Education | Noelle Picara | TEDxYouth@UrsulineAcademy

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L80Zed1wMzc> (May 2019 [10 mins.])

Speaking to youth, Noelle Picara, a white woman explains how she talks non-stop about White Supremacy to her colleagues and roommates. As she states (a year before George Floyd was murdered), the time is now. We are in an “Era of Urgency” where white people, in her case, white educators, need to understand their unconscious role in sustaining white supremacy. Her [white] roommates, friends and family often discover that—once they realize that Picara is not going to stop talking about racism—there is a relief; they (other white people) understand what she is talking about because they too “have experiences that are similar to mine that they never felt they could talk about and unpack.” Ms. Picara describes how she as a white person can challenge instances of White Supremacy from a position of privilege and power, and, in addition to uncovering her own stories, it is exactly her responsibility to do so. Picara quotes the disparities in education: on average \$2000 more per child is given each year to support the education of white children over the education of Black and Brown children. While the inequities are massive, Picara reminds us all that in addition to interrupting past harms where students of color have been marginalized, we all need to imagine a world where the assets [the gifts and strengths] of Black and Brown individuals and communities are centered for everyone.

How Can You Fight Racism at Your School?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7soCyte1RE> (May 12, 2021 [13 mins])

Myles Jess, journalist and host, Above the Noise

#studentvoice produced in collaboration with PBS NEWSHOUR and Student Reporting Labs

YouTube description: “If racism wasn’t a problem in schools, then students of color and white students would have the same probability of attending a highly resourced school, graduating, getting suspended, or being expelled.”

Inspired by Oak Ridge High School youth in Conroe Tx, this video exploring racism in schools is directed towards a youth audience. Hosted by Myles Jess, journalist and host, the episode lifts Lowell High School (San Francisco) youth voice to highlight the problem and activism. Jess begins by pointing out that just as America has a long history of racism, there is a long history of racism in schools. The first step to addressing racism is acknowledging that it is happening; we can’t solve problems that we don’t think we have. He quickly Googles “racism in school” to point out the rolling lists of racist acts that pop up. School racism takes many forms: “discriminatory dress codes; microaggressions; absence of BIPOC from curriculum and classrooms; racist jokes; biased beliefs; people of color receiving harsher discipline; racial bullying. This is all on top of institutional racism.” The youth use social media to shed light on what is happening in schools and to bring collective efforts to address racism. One adolescent voices her support for ethnic studies. Jess elaborates: “Ethnic studies is a class that studies ethnic conflict in the United States. And research from the National Education Association demonstrate that they, ‘help foster cross-cultural understanding among students of color and white students, and aid students in valuing their own cultural identity while appreciating the differences around them.’”



Students also are demanding accountability when racial bullying happens—which, lacking enough power, they can't achieve alone. There is trauma when racism occurs, and it taps into past racial trauma. BIPOC students have little power in an institution where adults—who are overwhelmingly white—hold it. Students cannot be expected to address school racism without significant adult support.

“Calling out” a teacher is especially challenging (as is evidenced by the recent event at the RCSD School of the Arts when in a social studies class, Black students were expected to pick cotton while white students could opt out). <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.rochesterfirst.com/news/local-news/rochester-city-school-district-teacher-accused-of-making-students-pick-cotton/amp/>
Teacher Suspended for Telling Students to Pick Cotton in Slavery Lesson <https://nyti.ms/3F9Rvf9>

Jess suggests four areas of focus to address racism in schools:

- Comprehensive anti-racist policies
- Recruit more Black and Brown teachers
- Teach Culturally Responsive content
- Don't tolerate racist slurs and acts

Additional Resources (provided under the Above the Noise YouTube description):

What the Research Says about Ethnic Studies (National Education Association)
<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/fil...>

Locked out of the Classroom: How Implicit Bias Contributes to Disparities in School Discipline (NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.) https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/LDF_Bias_Report_WEB-2.pdf

History of Institutional Racism in U.S. Public Schools (The Edvocate)
<https://www.theedadvocate.org/history...>

Reducing Racism in Schools (UConn Center for Education and Policy Analysis)
<https://education.uconn.edu/2020/09/2...>

Dismantling Systemic Racism in Schools 8 Big Ideas (Edweek)
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/dis...>

7 Steps Toward Building an Equitable School Culture (Edutopia)
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/7-st...>