



## Striving for A More Perfect Union: Resources and Tools for Demystifying “Critical Race Theory”

### Critical Race Theory (CRT)

CRT is not a diversity and inclusion “training” but a practice of interrogating the role of race and racism in society that emerged in the legal academy and spread to other fields of scholarship. Crenshaw—who coined the term “CRT”—notes that CRT is not a noun, but a verb. It cannot be confined to a static and narrow definition but is considered to be an evolving and malleable practice. It critiques how the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers. CRT also recognizes that race intersects with other identities, including sexuality, gender identity, and others. CRT recognizes that racism is not a bygone relic of the past. Instead, it acknowledges that the legacy of slavery, segregation, and the imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continue to permeate the social fabric of this nation. – American Bar Association

### Ways to Prepare

- Invest in trusting relationships with families in your community
- Familiarize yourself with your district’s equity policy, goals, and work
- Have BIPOC student/family/staff perception, feedback data ready to utilize (see Local or District data to cite)
- Ask youth their thoughts, feelings, behaviors: capture qualitative data
- Practice using strategies for responding to Concerns (3 Skills & a Rule) (See page 2)

### Additional Resources

#### Critical Race Theory in Education:

- [https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=eu&M=60288810&U=&UUID=3a3e61cd1615f8f564f780c479eee969](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=60288810&U=&UUID=3a3e61cd1615f8f564f780c479eee969)
- <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2021/may/26/erin-lipsker-and-cyndi-parris-teachers-must-have-t/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/us/politics/critical-race-theory.html?referringSource=articleShare>
- [https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-critical-race-theory-isnt-a-curriculum-its-a-practice/2021/05?utm\\_source=nl&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=eu&M=60509651&U=&UUID=3a3e61cd1615f8f564f780c479eee969](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-critical-race-theory-isnt-a-curriculum-its-a-practice/2021/05?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=eu&M=60509651&U=&UUID=3a3e61cd1615f8f564f780c479eee969)
- <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/02/1001055828/the-brewing-political-battle-over-critical-race-theory>

#### Historical context of color blindness

- <https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/relationships-love/a32824297/color-blind-myth-racism/>
- [https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/Racial%20Color%20Blindness\\_16f0f9c6-9a67-4125-ae30-5eb1ae1eff59.pdf](https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/Racial%20Color%20Blindness_16f0f9c6-9a67-4125-ae30-5eb1ae1eff59.pdf)
- <https://kappanonline.org/confronting-colorblindness/>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/color-blindness-is-counterproductive/405037/>
- <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/The-Myth-of-Racial-Color-Blindness-Intro-Sample.pdf>

#### Additional Resources on Race and Equity in the US

- [10 Uncomfortable Truths About U.S. Education](#)
- [Critical Thinking: An evidence based guide](#)
- [Inside the Practice of Reviewing Videos From Perspective of a Sports Coach](#)
- [Poverty and Race Through a Belonging Lens](#)
- [What Happens When Students Have Ownership Over Their Success](#)

### Data to Cite

#### National

- [Demographic Shifts Reshaping Suburban Schools](#)
- [Disparities in Wealth by Race and Ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances](#)

#### Local District or School Data to Cite Student, Family, and Staff Voice and Need

- Student, family SEL & perceptual data focused on sense of belonging, teacher/student relationships, and physical and emotional safety.
- Staff SEL & perceptual data (experiences of BIPOC, LGBTQ staff; perceptions of capacity, knowledge & resources to teach equity issues)
- Discipline data disaggregated
- Harassment Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) data disaggregated
- Engagement/Attendance data disaggregated
- Dropout rates of students identified
- Change in demographics for your school community alongside educator demographics

#### Washington State Laws

- [Bill 5290 to Address School to Prison Pipeline](#)
- [Bill 5044 Requiring Cultural Competence Training for All Educators in WA](#)

### Organizations Challenging CRT

- Parents Defending Education
- No Left Turn in Education
- Bainbridge Island Republican Women
- Conservative Ladies of Bothell

# Strategies for Responding to Concerns

## Dr. John Gottman's 3 Skills and 1 Rule to Navigate Sensitive Conversations

- o **1 Rule:** Understanding and listening to what the other person is saying must come before the response or advice. Those who are reaching out want to feel heard.
  - Restate their concerns in different words
  - Summarize their main points
- o **3 Skills to utilize in the conversation:**
  1. Put feelings into words – validate and affirm emotions by identifying them
    - o “You are concerned about your student’s experience in class.”
    - o “You are confused about why we have to talk about race in schools.”
  2. Ask open-ended questions
    - o “What have you heard about the prevalence of Critical Race Theory in schools?”
    - o “Tell me more about your concerns for our school/your student’s class, etc.”
  3. Express empathy
    - o “I understand that you want your student to feel safe being themselves at school.”
    - o “I agree that none of our students should feel shame or embarrassment for their background or the history of their ancestors.”

## Potential Questions

## Potential Responses

• “Why are you teaching about racism?”

• “You’re trying to make my white child feel bad/guilty”

- “If our students understand our history, they can be empowered to create a more perfect union”
- “Even in our community, demographics are shifting” (Cite if possible)
- “Diversity will continue, your student will be best prepared for 21st century workforce and relationships if they can work alongside people from multiple perspectives and backgrounds”
- “We know from educational research that heterogeneous groups are most effective for all students’ learning”
- “We are preparing youth to be global citizens, the world is getting smaller.”

• “There’s no such thing as racism!”

• “Why are you changing your curriculum to teach racism?”

- “Traditionally, textbooks have primarily told the perspectives of white men. We are ensuring that our history and literacy is reflective of multiple perspectives”
- “Our history as a nation has not been fully told, for example: Black Wall Street & Tulsa Massacre, many of us just learned about this event. Here are some examples of structural/institutionalized racism from that event that you may not be aware of:”
  - o Homeowner/business owners in Tulsa were denied insurance claims after the destruction
  - o Homeowner/business owners in Tulsa were denied loans to rebuild
- “We’re bound to repeat history if we don’t know it”
- History of dissent is patriotic:
  - o American Revolution
  - o Workers’ rights- labor movement
  - o Allied Forces Resistance to Facism (WWII)
  - o Women’s rights

• “Why are you forcing my kids to learn about racism?”

• “You’re a racist for bringing this up.”

- Cite district equity policy if available and state laws (if supportive)
- Explain that no student is being forced to do anything
- “Our staff are asking for help to respond to student’s questions and needs. We want to give them evidence based, state mandated tools to ensure they are equipped”
- Reflective nature of learning- connection to sports analogies
- “Why do we review sports footage?”
  - o Make adjustments to the team, plays
    - Example: If the pitcher is left-handed and the batter is right-handed, change stance
  - o We are similarly adjusting and ensuring that our game is strong for all students

• “Why do we need to see color?”

• Color blindness as a desired, taught & reinforced value

- “We are hearing from our students of color... that they feel unsafe, are not being treated fairly...”
- Color Blindness- “We love the ideal of being color blind, but the data tells us that our society is not color blind, and our students of color report that they are made aware of their color by peers, teachers and society regularly” (refer to other resources)

• “According to my sources, racism doesn’t exist and Critical Race Theory will alienate my child .”

- “I’m curious to learn more from your sources. Do you mind sharing from where you learned that information?”
- “Are there any primary sources that you can share (ie- not opinion, blog,)”?

