

**White Teachers in Minority Schools:
Understanding Their Own Racism as A Prerequisite**

By Elissa Vinnik

“Given America’s history, why should anyone be surprised to find white privilege so woven into the unexamined institutional practices, habits of mind, and received truths that Americans can barely see it?” –Michael K. Brown, White Washing Race

“Blacks are often confronted in American life, with such devastating examples of the white descent from dignity; devastating not only because of the enormity of white pretensions, but because this swift and graceless descent would seem to indicate that white people have no principles whatever.” – James Baldwin

“But I also know that when there comes into being a critical mass of people who, though they look white, have ceased to act white, the white race will undergo fission, and former whites will be able to take part in building a new human community.”-Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey, Race Traitor

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Society benefits from the education of all its children, whatever their racial or ethnic backgrounds. Yet, it was not until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s that the public education system was held accountable for the education of all students, black, yellow, brown, and white. Nonetheless, education of urban minority students consistently remains inferior to education of suburban, affluent, and overwhelmingly white students. While many factors contribute to this disparity, urban schools struggle to attract and retain committed and competent teachers. While drawing upon minority teachers is desirable, and indeed necessary, current teacher demographics preclude minority recruitment as the sole solution.¹ Therefore, in addition to being well versed in their subject matter, white teachers must be better educated and better prepared to confront race and racism in themselves, their classrooms, schools, and society. More than that, teachers must know how to examine their own cultural frame of reference and

¹ Ladson-Billings, Gloria. The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers,1994.) x.

understand how social inequality is reflected and reproduced in schools.² Multicultural educator and author Gary Howard offers a framework through which white teachers can explore their own racial identities, including concepts of white privilege and white dominance, which will enable them to be better teachers to their students of color. This paper carries his ideas one step further by proposing a specific teacher-training program for new white teachers in minority urban schools.

Student and Teacher Racial Composition

The white student majority in America's public schools is vanishing. While whites composed 73% of the student population in 1982, their proportion fell to 63% just ten years later.³ Present predictions suggest that this trend will continue; white students may barely compose the majority or will, in fact, become the minority. One study conducted by educational researcher Pallas et al expects that white students will be just over half of the student population in 2020 while Garcia and Gonzalez of the *Teachers College Record* suggest that by 2026, the percentage of students of color in America's public schools will reach 70%.⁴ Already, as of 2001, students of color constituted the majority of public school students in all but two of the country's twenty-five largest cities.⁵ Similarly, as of 1994, 14% of school age children live in households in which English is not the primary language.⁶

In contrast to this increasing number of racially and ethnically diverse students, teachers of color made up only 10% of public school teachers in 1993, while white

² Weiner, Lois. Urban Teaching: The Essentials. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999). 19.

³ Parker, Walter C. Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003) 77.

⁴ Parker, 77.

⁵ Landsman, Julie. White Teacher Talks About Race. (London, Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001.) ix.

teachers comprised 90%.⁷ Landsman suggests that these percentages are expected to remain constant in the coming decades; there may even be some further decline in the percentage of minority teachers, as decreasing numbers of college-educated people of color choose to become teachers.⁸ These demographics preclude the majority of students of color access to minority teachers' classrooms. Thus, white teachers, who are generally products of education in white neighborhoods and white universities, will comprise the majority of educators in minority classrooms. Many of these teachers feel ill prepared or incapable of meeting the educational needs of students of color.⁹ The question that must be addressed is how to make these white teachers better able to teach diverse student populations that are fundamentally different from themselves. In other words, how can we make people who are part of the majority optimal teachers for minority students?

The Power of Whiteness in Education

Many white teachers, particularly those attracted to working with minority students, come to teaching with desires to impart knowledge and foster social change. However, most lack a clear understanding of the white dominance, white power, and white privilege in which American education is deeply rooted. They are similarly unaccustomed and often unaware of the effects of having one's racial identity defined by others.¹⁰ The language of the Constitution, after all, ascribes equal rights only to "white male property owners."¹¹ This white privilege was furthered by the paternalistic nature of Christianity, the dominant religion among whites, and its emphasis on "the singularity of

⁶ Howard, Gary R. *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools.* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.) ix.

⁷ Landsman, x.

⁸ Landsman, x. And Ladson-Billings, Gloria. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.) x.

⁹ Ladson-Billings, 130.

¹⁰ Landsman, xi.

truth and its infallibility.”¹² White educators have historically viewed diverse students as “other” [or foreign], and have perceived their role to be that of “helping minority students” to be more like whites, ie them.¹³ Only recently, have white educators begun to look critically at the changes and growth required in themselves to effectively work with issues of diversity that would allow them to empathically teach, engage, and understand students of color.¹⁴

Examining White Teachers’ Identities

White teachers must be charged to explore the power of this history and its inherent assumptions. This includes an in-depth inquiry of their own racial and cultural identities, which often generates considerable fear and discomfort, largely derived from fears of their own racism.¹⁵ Brutal honesty about these racial identities and what these identities mean in the classroom and the overall school environment is difficult. Nor is it easy to establish safe havens in which whites can talk about their own racism without defensiveness or guilt. However, veteran white teacher of students of color Julie Landsman argues, “It is the most important thing I can do.”¹⁶ By being honest and empathic with themselves, it is hoped that personal awareness and understanding of their own white identity can be translated into greater racial sensitivity in the classroom.¹⁷ It is equally important, however, that white educators not be overwhelmed by whiteness solely as oppression; such a view only undermines a positive racial identity and promotes hopelessness rather than recognition of social injustice and a commitment to social

¹¹ Howard, 51.

¹² Howard, 55.

¹³ Bolgatz, Jane. Talking Race in the Classroom. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005.) 26.

¹⁴ Howard, 3.

¹⁵ Landsman, xii.

¹⁶ Landsman, xi.

¹⁷ Howard, 69 and 72.

change.¹⁸ Indeed, authors Bolgatz and Lorde argue that guilt is a waste of time; it has little use other than indicating the presence of a wrong that must be fixed.¹⁹

White Identity Orientation Model

Gary R. Howard's book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, makes a major contribution to the field of multicultural education by offering specific guidelines and categories for this personal exploration of white racial identity. His model provides a concrete conceptualization of white racial identity development that is otherwise difficult to define and understand. Based on the assumptions that multiculturalism is possible, desirable, definable, and teachable, he conceptualizes three distinct white identity orientations: fundamentalist, integrationist, and transformationist (See Attachment 1).²⁰ Movement along this continuum from left to right is both encouraged and desirable. Each category is different in terms of thinking, feeling, and acting; change may occur in one of these areas and not in another.

Of the three identity orientations, the fundamentalist is the least multiculturally enlightened whereas the transformationist is the most multiculturally informed; integrationists straddle in between. The fundamentalist maintains a single world truth that is ignorant to the powers of whiteness. Threatened by others' races and backgrounds, fundamentalists are angered and hostile when confronted with discussions of personal racism. They further white dominance, believe that all students should be treated the same, and maintain a Eurocentric worldview.²¹ Relationships and contact with others who present alternative views and perspectives that challenge

¹⁸ Howard, 111

¹⁹ Bolgatz, 7.

²⁰ Howard, 100.

²¹ Howard, 100.

fundamentalists' preconceived notions are integral to the eventual development of an integrationist. Unlike the fundamentalists, integrationists acknowledge multiple approaches to truth and accept differences, though they are more likely to think that "we're all really the same under the skin."²² Indeed, integrationists are more likely to advocate for assimilation than fundamental inclusion.²³ Similarly, although they acknowledge the existence of inequality, they do not wholly realize the systemic institutionalization of social inequality. No longer hostile to discussions of racism, integrationists are emotionally torn because they are terrified of anything that challenges their non-racist self-perception.²⁴ Integrationists mean well, but sidestepping confrontation with their own white privilege allows them to externalize racism as others' problem.

Only after personal explorations of whiteness are internalized and the individual begins to question the very institutions that further white dominance, can he or she move to the transformationist category.²⁵ Transformationists seek to understand all perspectives and understand that real truth is composed of a multitude of personal experiences; they are continually self-reflective. While they accept white complicity in oppression and dominance, they also claim a positive connection to white cultural identity and ethnic roots. This self-confidence welcomes the personal growth that is fostered by meaningful relationships and interactions with non-whites; it also encourages continued challenges to one's own perceptions. The transformationist is a constant learner who is committed to social action as a means of dismantling domination and striving for equality. While not

²² Howard, 103.

²³ Howard, 104.

²⁴ Howard, 104.

²⁵ Howard, 106.

all white teachers of minority students will achieve a transformationist racial identity, they can be encouraged to embrace internal change and to move as far towards that goal as possible.

Implementation of Howard's Model

Although white teachers may learn about multiculturalism in classrooms and curriculum during their teacher preparation coursework and student teaching, many of them are not prepared to confront their own racial identities, a fundamental first step in teaching students of color. While Howard provides an innovative road-map to describe these white racial identities, he does not provide details about the implementation of his ideas. The following section outlines a teacher-training program that is designed to move new white teachers towards transformationist racial identities during their first year as teachers. It is designed to create safe spaces in which new teachers are free to discuss issues of race and class, a process that rarely occurs in schools today.²⁶

The program is scheduled to take place one hour and fifteen minutes before school starts once a week for the first month and thereafter, biweekly. It is to be led by a trusted, highly culturally relevant, community aware, and inspired white teacher who is eager for a challenge. Initially, the group of new white teachers will take a pre-test whose content is lifted directly from Howard's model. The teachers are asked to answer honestly and given space to write comments, ideas, and concerns outside of the multiple-choice boxes. The test results are entirely confidential and will be placed into sealed envelopes for viewing at the end of the semester. Discussion about feelings and reactions following the test are encouraged. At this point, an email system or online post is established in order to allow teachers to share classroom experiences or seek feedback

throughout the coming year. The leader of the group is always available for private consultation. All participants in the project agree to maintain strict confidentiality; similarly, respect for multiple perspectives is non-negotiable.

Although not all white teachers will come to teaching with fundamentalist white identities, inevitably some will. Because this program's central focus is based on the potential to examine all aspects of whiteness and to ultimately relinquish racist views, the approach will begin at the model's left. In keeping with these fundamentalist views, the new teacher sessions will be conducted solely for a group of white teachers during the first semester. I write this hesitatingly because it reads so much like racism. However, the goal of these meetings is to create the most comfortable space for discussions of race, especially among those who are consciously or unconsciously committed to the assumption of white supremacy, color-blindness, harsh judgment, and rationalization of dominant constructions. Without this racial homogeneity, these new white teachers of minority students may be less likely to express their views, much less change and confront their own conceptions. Certainly, it is expected that new teachers of color will be offered support networks as well. It must also be noted that the new white teachers are *always* encouraged to seek out other nonwhite teachers in the school; this program does not aim to devalue all that their nonwhite colleagues have to contribute.

The first four meetings among new white teachers will discuss issues central to fundamentalist beliefs. Difference of thought, race, and class will permeate discussions and teachers will be encouraged to express themselves honestly. The discussion leader will lead frank conversations about color-blindness and treatment of all students as the same. Because directive and autocratic classroom management; judgment of students;

²⁶ Wiener, 32.

fixed and cemented construction of truth; western-centric and Eurocentric ideas; and assimilation are basic tenets of the fundamentalist way of thinking, teachers will be asked to observe the ways in which these themes may influence students' experiences within their classrooms. They will also be asked to explore ways in which students may not benefit from these influences. Finally, they will be asked to read Paula S. Rothenberg's collection of essays on whiteness entitled "White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism" to accompany their discussions.²⁷

MENTORING

Like any new teachers, new white teachers need role models and mentors. Landsman writes that prospective white teachers who assert that they know what teaching their own classroom will be like, simply "don't."²⁸ These young teachers must learn, she writes, to be open to learn all they cannot yet know from their fellow older teachers.²⁹ Following the idea that white teachers need safe spaces in which to express and explore challenges and perhaps uproot fundamentalist views, the new teachers will be assigned to veteran white transformationist teachers as mentors for the first semester. These mentors will offer the new teachers many years of experience, shared struggles and challenges, and an abundance of knowledge over informal weekly hour-long conversations. The new teachers will be asked to draw from their mentors' experiences to add depth to their weekly group meetings. Certainly, the time commitment is demanding, but after the first month, these mentor-meetings will become a bi-weekly commitment. Should additional meetings be desired, the new teacher and mentor can always elect to meet more frequently.

²⁷ Please see attachment 2 for sample discussion questions.

²⁸ Landsman, 124.

Howard suggests that transition from fundamentalist to integrationist requires a powerful experience to shed the fundamentalist white identity. Thus, the new teachers will be asked to discuss experiences that changed their perceptions of their social reality. They will also be asked to share and draw from their mentors' own teaching histories. While the program itself cannot promise powerful experiences for each individual, it is hoped that daily interactions with students, other faculty, and staff will help facilitate the transition of new white teachers to an integrationist identity. Because this learning process is fluid, fundamentalist ideas may still be voiced and need to be discussed. However, it is hoped that by October, most of the new teachers will be more solidly placed in the integrationist identity category. Given current university education programs, the great majority of these teachers are likely to have been exposed to concepts of student diversity and multiculturalism; many will probably enter teaching with this racial identity already.

At this point, the group meetings will decrease in frequency. Their biweekly discussions will focus on further interrogations of whiteness, both internal and external, because, as Howard writes, "Integrationists have begun [this] process...yet they remain ambivalent in their conclusions."³⁰ Having acknowledged the historical reality of white dominance, they will be asked to look for its continuing effects in contemporary institutions as well as discuss possible changes to achieve true equity among races.³¹ The feelings of the integrationist are the most indecisive, torn, and complex emotions of the three stages. Indeed, "although they have acknowledged their complicity in racism at the intellectual and collective levels, they still want to distance themselves from racism at the

²⁹ Landsman, 124.

³⁰ Howard, 103.

personal emotional levels, but they are far more unconscious than the attitudes of the fundamentalists.”³² Howard describes them as well-meaning individuals open to cross-racial interactions, but with thoughts that are highly paternalistic. Indeed, although they respond to diversity, “we” still refers to “whites” and “they” still refers to people of color.³³ Supplemental informal conversations with other adults at the school including the office secretaries, janitors, and administrators should also be arranged at this time, to allow the individual to learn more about the school, the surrounding community, and the student body.

By November, mentors will join the new teachers in their biweekly group meetings. These sessions should be relatively unstructured. Teaching experiences, with an emphasis on the ways in which racism pervades the classroom, will be integrated into continuing discussions of racial identity, with hopes that further movement towards the transformationist identity will have begun. At the beginning of the second semester, the new teachers will also be assigned nonwhite mentors. Their experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of white teachers will prove essential to the development of the transformationist white identities in their mentees. Certainly, these mentors of color may be woven into the process before January if the group leader feels that the new white teachers are able to integrate the ideas, feelings, and experiences of these veteran nonwhite teachers.

Thus, new white teachers of minority students will have access to multiple resources: each other, veteran white teachers, and veteran teachers of color. The spring months will also require biweekly meetings with their new mentors and bring all

³¹ Howard, 103.

³² Howard, 103.

preceptors and trainees together at informal potlucks every six weeks or so. Through these social gatherings, a larger, more diverse community of teachers will be formed, and a safe space for the continued discussion of race, schooling, and privilege will be maintained. Simultaneously, all of the teachers will be enriched by opportunities to develop deeper personal relationships with one another, and learn more about each others' backgrounds and lives. In addition, all new teachers will be required to attend several community events throughout the year in groups of two or three. These community explorations may be as informal as going to mass at a church that many of their students and students' families attend. These visits will offer these teachers a deeper understanding of where their students come from and how they spend their time outside of school, and will further stimulate white teachers' understanding of the community and of themselves.

Inevitably, culturally relevant teaching will be addressed as classroom experiences are shared and discussed. It is hoped that by the second semester, the new white teachers will be sufficiently aware of their own racial identities that they can both accept white complicity and dominance, but also embrace an authentic, self-reflective, and antiracist understanding of their whiteness.³⁴ They will then see their commitments to social action and teaching as a means of dismantling the dominant paradigm because they understand the liberation process of others as integral to their own liberation.³⁵ Obviously, this project marks the beginning of a life long endeavor. If participant interest in this program is high, it might be extended into the next academic year. Similar programs might also be offered to other white teachers at the school. New

³³ Howard, 103.

³⁴ Howard, 106.

teachers who have completed the original program on white identity might serve as mentors in subsequent programs for both new and more experienced white classroom teachers.

Final Notes

Obviously, this program requires a great deal of time and commitment from all participants. However, it is designed to develop and keep good teachers where they are needed most. It targets urban schools that experience great difficulty retaining white teachers. It cannot be the sole mechanism to retain white teachers, nor can it be the only opportunity for teacher development. Teachers of color will clearly not have their needs addressed by this program. Implementation of this program must also be balanced against the other needs of the school and its student body. With so many pressing problems facing our urban schools, one could argue that this program is simply another program that caters to whites even in a minority setting. However, if white teachers comprise the bulk of available teachers, they need to be the best teachers they can be for their students of color. Without a better understanding of their own racial identities, these white teachers are destined to be less successful. Students of color will be the ultimate losers. Howard's model and this paper's proposed implementation of his ideas offer an opportunity for white teachers to be total and true activists for their students, to "...offer these students an education that expects great things from each student and respects and welcome potential in all of them."³⁶ Let's give it a try!

³⁵ Howard, 107.

³⁶ Landsman 119.

Bibliography

Bolgatz, Jane. Talking Race in the Classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 2005.

Howard, Gary R. We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

Landsman, Julie. White Teacher Talks About Race. London, Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001.

Weiner, Lois. Urban Teaching: The Essentials. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Attachment 1 [Gary Howard's Map of White Identity Transformation]

Attachment 2

Questions for Thinking, Writing, and Discussion from White Privilege³⁷

1. Harlon Dalton suggests that most white people tend not to think of themselves in racial terms. What does he mean when he says this? Do you agree with him?
2. Several of the writers are concerned with what they call "the invisibility of whiteness." How can something be invisible if it's everywhere?
3. Why do the authors believe that it is important to study whiteness?
4. Drawing on some of these essays, construct the most powerful argument you can in support of the claim that white privilege has been institutionalized and protected by US government policy over the years. Then go on to agree or disagree with the argument you have made.
5. What does it mean to claim that whiteness has been socially constructed?
6. What is privilege? What forms or systems of privilege operate in US society and how do they relate to each other?
7. Select several sites or institutions in which you participate and analyze how privilege operates within each of them. For example, you might choose to examine several different classroom situations in which you have found yourself as a teacher and a student both in college and earlier grades; you might look at privilege within your family and the families and friends of your relatives; you might examine how privilege operates within a religious community to which you belong.
8. What does author Allan G. Johnson mean when he refers to the "paradox of privilege"? How does this paradox help explain why it is possible to be privileged without feeling privileged?
9. Peggy McIntosh, Robert Jensen, and Tim Wise all discuss the privileges they enjoy in this country as white people in today's American society. How did feel about these sections? Did you find any one of them more or less persuasive than the others? Why?

³⁷ Rothenberg, Paula S. White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism. New York: Worth Publishers, 2005.

Annotated Bibliography

Note: Although several of these sources were cut from earlier drafts, each of the following books proved helpful in broadening my research and my own understanding of white teachers in multiracial and multicultural classrooms. I hope they will prove useful as additional resources for the reader, as well.

Bolgatz, Jane. Talking Race in the Classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 2005.

Bolgatz's book is designed to help educators facilitate thoughtful and accessible classroom discussions about race. From basic definitions of race, prejudice, and discrimination to creating classroom environments that are comfortable and conducive to discussions of race and assessing major challenges, the author draws upon a helpful combination of anecdotal and classroom research material. A quick read, *Talking Race in the Classroom* proves more helpful for the transformationist teacher in a largely homogeneous white classroom who wants to introduce students to concepts of race, but the information on "Social Dynamics in the Classroom," and "Cultivating Racial Literacy" may also be useful for teachers whose students confront issues of race far more regularly.

Corbett, Dick, Wilson, Bruce, and Belinda Williams. Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms: Expecting—and Getting—Success with All Students. Washington, D.C: National Education Association Professional Library, 2002.

With the hope that the book's research will provide insight into achievement gap between races and income levels, *Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms* is focused on surveys, classroom observation, data, and interviews that examine urban teachers' assumptions about the capabilities of low-income students as learners and how these assumptions influence both classroom instructional activities and student performances. This book is helpful because it addresses the nuances among different meanings that "All Children Can Succeed." It also engages discussion about expectations that teachers and parents hold for one another. Following these chapters, the authors use two schools for case studies and explore their applications of views on student success. If one agrees that transformationist individuals and culturally relevant teachers of all colors must believe in the success of their students, this book is very relevant and offers a concluding chapter that offers support for those educators who hold themselves entirely responsible for their students' success.

Howard, Gary R. We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Because Howard's book frames the majority of this essay, I highly recommend this book for further reading, although the white identity model has already been mostly explained. This book, too, is dotted with personal experience and, indeed, the author often looks to his own personal transformation and newfound understanding of whiteness. Educators, particularly those on the west coast, may be interested in getting involved with Howard's multicultural-training organization REACH that is based Seattle. Teaching training programs may also find this book to be of particular interest, although the challenge lies in teaching the identity transformation process that Howard prescribes and assessing its worth.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

Both reflective and empirical, Ladson-Billing's book is centered on the stories and pedagogical practices of eight excellent teachers who teach intellectually rigorous and challenging classes in a low income and predominantly African American school district. The narratives, reflections, and interviews make this book a lively and engaging read. Ladson-Billings' discussions of culturally relevant teaching

requirements and suggestions for implementing these teaching practices and recruiting teachers who can learn this models are also very helpful for new teachers. Mostly, however, the joy of the teachers featured and the pride and hope in their students is uplifting are cause alone to smile and have hope in the successful education of students of color.

Landsman, Julie. White Teacher Talks About Race. London, Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001.

Veteran teacher Julie Landsman leads her readers through a day of teaching and reflection at an alternative public school in Minneapolis where her students hail from all kinds of backgrounds and cultures. She speaks honestly about issues of race, poverty, institutional responsibility, and her own white privilege by engaging the reader in her experiences in the classroom with her remarkable students. Her book gives voice to the complexities of teaching in our country today and stands as an example of a teacher who gives voice to whiteness within her own identity and her classroom honestly, adeptly, and with the knowledge that she can, will, and has made mistakes.

Moses, Michele S. Embracing Race: Why We Need Race-Conscious Education Policy. New York:

Teachers College Press, 2002.

Much of Moses' book engages the reader in the following controversial educational "hot topics:" bilingual education, affirmative action, multicultural curriculum, and remedial education. This book probably best suits those of the fundamentalist white identity category, because it challenges notions that education policy should be color-blind. The author does not examine teacher experiences, but it offers clear and concise insight about the broader policy world, which teachers may or may not find applicable to their immediate work.

Palmer, Parker J. The Courage to Teach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

Parker's book presents readers with powerful lessons of human beings as constant embodiments of teaching and learning. Powerful, thoughtful, compassionate, Parker deepens the readers insights about connections between education, community, spirituality and vocation. Relevant for anyone engaged in some capacity of the education system, the book also proves useful for those seeking to be effective organizer of social change. Although it does not fully engage discussions of race, *The Courage to Teach* really gets to the heart and soul of what it means to be a teacher.

Rothenberg, Paula S. White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism. New York:

Worth Publishers, 2005.

I suggest this book as a reader for the new white teachers in the program because it is a relatively short collection of key essays and articles that seek to make whiteness visible, to analyze the nature of white privilege and to offer suggestions for using that privilege in order to combat racism. Many of the essays are manageable and lack complex theory and are therefore very conducive to community-based study groups, like our own, who facilitating dialogue about racism, race, and privilege. Further, in a shameless plug as an American Studies major, I think that all people who identify as white should read this book!

Weiner, Lois. Urban Teaching: The Essentials. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Although the cover design of this short book invokes negative stereotypes associated with urban schools today, Wiener's book offers frank and concise descriptions of urban school's setting, institution, students, classroom management, and advice. Her own experience punctuates much of her instruction and discussion. The goal of this book is to present perspective urban teachers for the realities of what they will confront in their schools and is sometimes more cynical than the other teacher accounts on this list. Therefore, if the reader is considering such a career, this book will prove helpful, but should be relied upon as a soul source of information.