

# First Year Experience

## How Talking Reflects White Privilege

*Lesson Inspired by 19 Jun, 2014 TED Talk by Jamila Lyiscott "3 Ways to Speak English"*

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*This lesson plan was created by Mollie Hand, University of Wyoming*

### LESSON PLAN

Students will recognize diversity and practice basic skills needed to contribute to a global society in a positive and ethical manner.

#### **Preparation:**

- Prepare one copy each of Social Identity Wheel
- Fill in one copy of the wheel for yourself as an example before class begins
- Find TED Talk and have it ready to share

#### **Opening Discussion:**

**What is "identity"? How many types of identities can you think of?**

(Some to add if they are not called out: order in family, race, religion, sexuality, health, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, language, legal status, geography, physical appearance)

#### **Social Identity Wheel Activity:**

Hand out one social identity wheel per student. Ask students to fill out the chart with identities that are most important near the center of the circle, and identities that are less important on the outside. Share your own example.

#### **Pair and Share:**

**In pairs, have students discuss the following questions (only those questions that students are comfortable answering):**

**Which aspects of your social identity feel especially meaningful to you and why?**

**Which aspects don't feel as meaningful and why?**

**Are there any that you hadn't thought of before today, and if so, why do you think that is?**

**What experiences have you had that make the identities in your inner circle more salient to you? Why do you think more about some of your identities than others?**

**Class Discussion:**

**Talk about the discussion questions as a whole class.**

**How easy/difficult was it to complete this wheel? Why?**

**How easy/difficult was it to share your identities with someone else? Why?**

**What is "privilege"?**

(after some ideas are elicited, read this definition: Privilege is a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group.)

**Name some examples of how people may be privileged based on identities.**

(some ideas: the eldest son in a family may be privileged and not have to share a room; money can get a child a tutor which can help that child get into a top university; men are paid more than women for some of the same tasks; ...)

**What is "White Privilege"?**

(after some ideas are elicited, read this definition: inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.)

**Watch Five Minute Video:**

["3 Ways to Speak English" TED Talk by Jamila Lyiscott](#)

**Video Discussion Questions:**

**Can you relate to Jamila? If so, how? If not, why not?**

**How does the notion of “White Privilege” relate to Jamila’s message?**

(People who speak with a Midwestern American “proper English” dialect, do not have to learn to code-switch. Those who do need to change dialects may be judged poorly in different situations for speaking even though they are able to navigate multiple dialects.)

**Check-Out Activity:**

Have students write down their thoughts about today’s class and/or what is on their mind as they leave class this week.

# Social Identity Wheel

*Adapted from Arizona State University*

Fill in your identity for each of the categories listed. In the inner circle, record the identities that are most important or salient to you. In the outer circle, record the identities that are less important or salient to you.

