

### **Critical Consciousness Questions**

*Critical consciousness is an active and persistent curiosity and awareness that examines beliefs, practices, assumptions, and norms to detect how power and privilege operate to contribute to inequality and oppression (Freire, 1973)*

As Ontario educators it is our responsibility to affirm and embed the diverse lived experiences and social identities of Black people in Canada. Creating meaningful, authentic entry points that affirm Black identity are key in disrupting the dominant narrative that permeates the Canadian education system. Educators need to use critical consciousness when selecting resources, using examples and creating lessons to directly challenge Anti-Black Racism.

The purpose of these Critical Consciousness questions are to support the development of *Critical Consciousness* in school and classroom based planning. These questions can be used in all areas of pedagogical practice including, and not limited to, lesson planning, event planning, and engaging parent/guardian communities.

When using these questions as a guide, Black identities are honoured and all individuals are supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning where all needs are addressed. Black voices are considered and valued in the planning of any lesson or activity. All learning should foster critical thinking, value diversity, demonstrate respect for others and foster a commitment to establishing an anti-Black racism and anti-oppressive approach to teaching and learning.

As your knowledge base grows, Please consider ways in which you can rightfully contribute to this list of questions.

- When choosing resources and/or examples for lessons, have I made selections that affirm Black identity and disrupt deficit-based narratives?
- Did I involve Black community and Black community organizations to contribute to the planning community involved?
- Have I created opportunities to include members of the Black community into the physical space to increase opportunities for representation tied to the curriculum?
- Are authentic Black, Caribbean, African and diasporic voices and stories represented in my lesson?
- Have I involved students in suggesting resources that best represent their multiple identities and lived experiences?
- Are Black students' intersecting identities reflected in the materials/activities?
- Are all learning styles supported?
- Have I considered whose voices (perspectives, experiences and viewpoints) are excluded?

- Do the learning tasks I am planning challenge stereotypes of Black people?
- Do I ask students to understand how knowledge reflects social and cultural power positions of people in society?
- Have I created brave spaces to interrogate racism?
- Do the resources selected support students in thinking critically about anti-Black racism and issues within the community and the world
- Does the physical space I occupy display imagery where all students see themselves in the space
- What biases are present in the activities being planned and resources being used? Did I consider how I will counter those biases?
- Do I model democratic values and act against injustice, oppression, anti-Black racism, exploitation and discrimination?
- Does the learning include opportunities to model healthy relationships based on equality and respect, free from violence and harassment?
- In what ways have I introduced normalized the evolving language of inequality, equity and decolonization? (decolonization in my classroom) conversations around race and racism in my classroom?
- Have I ensured that every student has the background knowledge and context to engage in discussions that include Black Identity and perspectives?
- Do my lessons encourage students to take their learning beyond the classroom into the realm of social action?