



RSSC will provide 10 virtual workshops. <https://www.rssconsulting.org/>  
<https://www.rssconsulting.org/resources>

**Timeline:** Beginning March 2023, ending December 2023 or sooner as preferred by the college

## Cultural Responsiveness

Audience - Faculty

### Workshop Descriptions

#### **Decolonizing the Classroom Workshop Series**

None of us are exempt from much of the pervasive socialization and normalization of racial hierarchization. That is a mouthful, but it boils down to the idea that race was invented, hierarchized, justified with pseudoscience, and used to establish the country, the educational system and every other societal system and institution – justice, economic, educational, health, religion and political. Sanctioned by centuries of laws and practices, the hierarchy deifies whiteness while gradually subjugating all other “races” as the content of the melanin in the skin increases. Traditional teaching and learning practices are no exception as they were founded upon and grounded in eugenics – the supremacy of the White race.

Increasingly faculty and students are interested in going beyond such practices – beyond the idea that knowledge is owned by any particular group or that the traditional or canonical approach that overwhelmingly privileges the works, achievement, and intellect of White men is academically and intellectually superior. Dr. Chanelle Wilson of Bryn Mawr College reminds us that knowledge is marked by power relationships. Such power is quite evident in classrooms and traditional pedagogical practices. However, more and more faculty and students are engaged in co-creating knowledge, deconstructing traditional practices, interrogating long standing approaches such as grading and interrupting habits of hierarchizing whiteness that often prioritizes White comfort over the suffering of people of color. These workshops begin to get at the ways people in positions of power in the classroom can disrupt the dynamic of hierarchies in the classroom and in the academy, in the classroom.

#### **A. Decolonizing the Classroom – The Foundation.**

In this workshop, participants explore key components for re-thinking the college classroom, including the Syllabus and Equity Statement, Classroom Rules and Bias, and Rethinking Bias in Grading. These components are key



because they are components that faculty have direct control and decision making over and can be changed prior to teaching a course. Additionally, these are areas where many faculty are often unaware of the way bias impacts their decisions and unintentionally harms students of color.

**B. Decolonizing the Classroom - The Environment.**

This workshop focuses on the learning environment faculty create and the prior racialized experiences students of color bring with them when they enter the college classroom. This includes, the Miseducation of Students of Color in the K-12 system, Getting Real with Your Classroom Data, and Building Rapport with Students of Color. Participants will have an increased understanding of ways students of color experience classroom environments, ways faculty can decrease implicit biases, and ways faculty can create learning environments that are safe and support student success.

**C. Decolonizing the Classroom: Teaching and Learning**

This workshop addresses key pedagogical approaches with proven success for students of color. This includes, Integrating Equity Based Support in the Classroom, and an evaluation of four (4) pedagogical methods that teach to the learning styles of students of color and create a dynamic classroom environment that centers students interests and the student voice.

**Racial Literacy      Audience – Classified Professionals, Faculty and Administrators**

**Principles of Equity Literacy - Becoming a Culturally Responsive Educator**

It is not possible for a singular individual to become an expert in the myriad of cultures that are represented on one's campus, however, there are competencies that can be gained by educators who seek to address issues of inequity. Becoming culturally literate requires a commitment beyond being a mere technician; it requires an immersion what it means to use one's leadership role to create a culturally responsive educational environment that takes the needs of minoritized students into consideration at every level. Participants will learn of Paul Gorski's foundations of equity literacy - "(1) a commitment to deepening individual and institutional understandings of how equity and inequity operate in organizations and societies, and (2) the individual and institutional knowledge, skills, and will vigilantly identify inequities, eliminate inequities, and actively cultivating equity. At the individual level, when we embrace equity literacy, we learn to become a threat to the existence of inequity and an active cultivator of equity in our



spheres of influence.” This workshop considers common terms and ideas to support basic equity and racial literacy.

### **Who am I? Who is “The Other”? -The Social Construction of Race**

Too often, current dialog about race matters is devoid of even basic historical understanding. At the completion of this workshop, the participant will become more aware of the application of common terms and principles of racial and equity literacy and the way unconscious bias is rooted in historical racial constructs that are continually reified in American culture. The participant will have the opportunity to become more personally aware of their own tendencies to rely on false constructs while simultaneously hearing directly from colleagues who will break myths and thus deepen the understanding of who “the Other” is.

### **Student Cultural Assets - Reframing Student/Teacher Identity**

Students present with an array of life circumstances that make them high potential, under-resourced students. They are capable and resilient yet must navigate significant obstacles and hurdles – some of which may originate from outside of the school and others may originate from within. Traditional notions and popular culture reinforce the ideas of predominantly White educators saving the “damaged” Brown and Black students. Reinforced by popular cultural experiences such as Michelle Pfeiffer’s *Dangerous Minds* movie where the young White teacher goes in and tames all the gang infested, drug dealing, bad working class (read Black and Brown) teenagers and transforms them into achieving students. She saves them using the centrality of whiteness in the educational system. The workshop will work to support educators in shifting their view of themselves as saviors and students as damaged people that need to be saved to one that recognizes student strength, cultural wealth, resiliency, and potential. Educators can be held accountable for developing a habit of mind and the supporting strengths-based nomenclature that permeates the school and its operations, leadership, curriculum, and parent outreach. At the completion of this workshop participants will know how to recognize and interrupt deficit-based perceptions of students served and reframe students’ identity as high potential, resilient, culturally rich students.

### **Communication (Audience – Classified Professionals, Faculty and Administrators)**

We all face situations in which having a difficult conversation is either inevitable, necessary, or essential to our work life and well-being. This workshop enables participants to create a toolkit to have and facilitate difficult discussion. Participants explore how to plan effectively for these conversations and to create a safe space for



these conversations to unfold. In addition, participants discuss the importance of conflict and discover ways to assure that conflict is resolved in ways that are respectful and defined by restorative practices.

### **The Elephant in the Room: Whiteness and White Fragility**

To address issues that disproportionately impact people of various racial groups, it is imperative that educators engage in the conversation around whiteness and white fragility. Whiteness as a construct, not to be confused with people classified as White, has a history and an intent. White fragility is the discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a White person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice. Participants in this workshop will engage in the conversation about the construct of Whiteness and participate in exercises designed to address the initial defensive reaction some have when challenged around the impact of this phenomenon of non-white peoples. This workshop is based on the work of Dr. Robin DiAngelo.

## **Leadership**

**(Audience: Administrators)**

### **Equity Minded Leadership**

None of us are as racially literate or culturally fluent as we want to be. It is not possible for a singular individual to become an expert in the myriad of cultures that are represented on one's campus, however, there are competencies that can be gained by educators who seek to address issues of inequity. Becoming culturally literate requires a commitment beyond being a mere technician; it requires an immersion of what it means to use one's leadership role to create equity in the educational environment that takes the needs of minoritized people into consideration at every level. This workshop is based on the F.A.I.R. Leadership Framework developed by Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud.

### **Leadership Hiring Practices to Diversify the Workforce**

Hiring faculty and staff stands to have a significant impact on the outcomes and experiences of the students served. So much of hiring has been reduced to mind numbing, creative robbing series of bureaucratic steps and processes that result in systematically excluding people of color in positions in the academy that hold differentiated status, power, and opportunity. This workshop will focus on strategies hiring leadership can employ to support equitable hiring and the acquisition of incredibly talented faculty and staff.

