"SKIN DEEP"
Facilitator's Guide

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INTRODUCTION

by Frances Reid

Skin Deep was produced in response to the growing wave of racial hatred and violence in this country. It was made out of the belief that talking about racial issues, both in interracial dialogue and in homogeneous groups, is a necessary first step towards taking action to undo the racial inequities that permeate our institutions and communities and that affect us all deeply as individuals. The film was designed to stimulate that

dialogue, and the students in "SKIN DEEP" were chosen for their ability and willingness to speak candidly about a subject that is often difficult for people to address honestly.

To talk openly about race and racism means being willing to take risks. This booklet has been compiled to help facilitators guide discussion participants through those risks. The first eight pages of the guide are filled with practical suggestions for leading discussions. These are followed with several pages of background material that will help equip facilitators with information that may be useful during discussions. We have tried to provide you with as much information as we can as briefly as possible. Because the issues surrounding race, racism, diversity, and multiculturalism are very complex, we encourage you to do further reading and, to that end, we have included a reading list at the end of the guide.

While the focus of "SKIN DEEP" and of this guide is on college students and the campus environment, we have found that the film works equally well in many other situations, including with high school students and with adults in community groups, in corporations and other work place situations, and as in-service training for educators, law enforcement officials, social workers, etc. We have written this guide with enough flexibility so that the information in it may be used in a variety of situations, and there is a specific section of suggestions for working with faculty and staff of educational institutions.

The most important first step one needs to take in preparing to lead a discussion of "SKIN DEEP" is to think about your audience and what their needs will be. Who are they? Is it a multi-racial or a homogeneous group? Is it intergenerational or all one age group? What is the worldview and life experience they will be bringing to the discussion? Secondly, you need to assess what your goals are for the discussion, and to direct your questions and comments accordingly. This guide has been designed to help you with those questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The types of questions you pose to the group to stimulate discussion will depend largely on your goals. Such goals might include (1) increased participant self-awareness, (2) increased empathy and understanding with the experiences of others, (3) creating strategies or goals for change (personal or institutional), (4) learning more about how to be allies (for

white students) across race and (for students of color) how to work with whites toward change. These goals will determine different directions for the discussion and ways of facilitating discussions, as well as the selection and ordering of the questions themselves. To move people from talking about the film to talking about their own experiences and building understanding with others in the group, start with questions about the film, then move to questions about the participants. Move from "low risk" to "high risk" questions, from thoughts to personal disclosure.

Examples of such questions might be:

* What stands out for you most right now about the film?
* Whom did you most identify with in the film?
* Whom did you have the most difficulty relating to? Why?
* What feelings did the film bring up for you, and why?
* Where did you see people change over the weekend covered in the film?
* Who changed and in what ways?

And, moving from focus on the film to focus on personal experiences:

* What has been your experience with racism?
* Can you think of a time that you did something to interrupt racism?
* For Whites: What does it mean to be an ally to People of Color? For People of Color: What has been your experience of working in coalition with Whites/Caucasians/European-Americans?

End the discussion with a move towards action or next steps, on a personal, community or institutional level:

* What does this film (or discussion) make you want to do? What is a next step you feel ready to take for ending racism, within your sphere of influence? What will you need to meet that goal?

Before the group adjourns assess the supports and the challenges they might encounter in taking these next steps. Brainstorm action strategies and encourage participants to build support networks for working against racism. (See *Strategies & Resources for Follow Up and Ongoing Activities*)

USING REFERENCES FROM THE FILM

Throughout the discussion you can refer back to statements made in the film, using them to further your particular goals. Using the following quotes from the film, if you are trying to develop empathy you might ask such questions as What do you think these statements were trying to communicate? Why would x say...,Why might x be feeling that way? Does this reflect what other people in this situation might feel? Why do you think they might be feeling this way? If you are wanting to develop self-awareness you might ask Have you ever had this experience, felt this way? Or, How has your experience differed from this?, etc.

Mark: "Growing up I can't remember hearing anything positive about Black people."

Brian: (Speaking about going to college amidst diverse groups) "I couldn't bridge both worlds if it comes to a choice I'm going with my people..."

Tammy: "My neighborhood is all white and I never really thought about that until I came here (to college)."

Lisa: "In ethnic studies classes I feel self conscious of my color, like I don't belong ...walking on eggshells..."

Judith: "I got into school because of affirmative action and I'm not ashamed to say that because no one else is doing my homework..."

Gordon: (Speaking about growing up Black) "You are brought up and shaped into a non-thinking, violent, unintellectual being... then they put you into a university... they know you're going to fail."

Brian: "One of my friends, he hates white people with a passion... I feel sorry for him because of the way society is, he's lost a piece of himself... I'm worried that will happen to me."

Freda: "Even if you can't change someone's mind you can introduce new ideas."

Dane: "No way I can step back and change that (great grandparents fighting in the confederacy)."

Khanh: "White people...you were taught to love yourself."

Judith: "I will not be less angry I'm not here to tell you pretty things, that it will be all right..."

Mark: "(You) can't keep blaming me...don't categorize all white people, or you're just doing the same thing right back"

Duane: "If I go out and shoplift, white people around will say 'oh, they all shoplift,' and every Black person there will say 'damn'...because what one Black person does has an effect on 22 million other African-Americans."

Freda: (In response to White students not wanting to be held responsible for what their ancestors did) "I don't want to be held responsible for what somebody before me did...but I need you to claim it...the fact is you still benefit from it to this day and those who were oppressed by it are still oppressed to this day."

Tammy: "My family taught me an honest day's work, an honest day's pay.. but I've come to realize that for some cultures in our society that's not true they have to work twice as hard and are being taught they can't do something."

Dane: "I don't know if you know what it's like having a strong bigot in your family, and it's tough choosing what's right and choosing your family."

Brian: "My idea of action is your life has to become a have to you have to interact 365 days a year you have to wake up and say this (racism) has got to end."

FACILITATION GUIDELINES

The role of the facilitator is to create an atmosphere where everyone can express their thoughts and feelings, and listen to and learn from the different perspectives offered sby each participant. Facilitators are also responsible for helping to clarify discussion goals and for maintaining safe, respectful group processes. What follows are facilitation recommendations that help create such an atmosphere.

- Ask the group to make the following agreements: Listen to each other with respect; Use "I" statements; Speak about your own thoughts, reactions, feelings, and experiences, not those of others; Do not debate

someone else's experience. If they say ____ happened, do not argue with their statement.

- To insure that the person speaking is not interrupted, have those who wish to speak raise their hands. Or use the "talking stick" tradition. (Using any item available a marker, paper cup, or rolled up piece of paper establish the rule that those who wish to speak must have this item in their hand. After one person speaks, the item gets passed to the next person who wants to share).

- Watch for domination in the discussion by persons who generally have a voice on these issues (men, whites, etc.).

- At the beginning of the discussion, and at appropriate places throughout, break out into two person "dyads" so that everyone has an opportunity to say aloud what is on their mind. Often times people will feel more safety in a one-on-one interaction. Dyads should be short, with time divided between the two participants to talk and to listen. Instruct the group that one person will talk while the other listens; the listener does not interrupt or ask questions; the facilitator keeps time and lets the group know when to switch from speaker to listener.

- Gradually move the group from talking about the film to their personal experiences with racism.

- When/if the discussion lags ask questions about specific sections of the film. (See *Using References From the Film.)*

- Allow for moments of silence.

- Do not simply go from one person to the next. When you hear something that is moving to you, something that you think may be a good point for the group to discuss, ask the person speaking to say more (go deeper with their comment).

- Plan your agenda. If possible schedule 2-3 hours for the film showing and discussion. A sample agenda might be as follows:

- Opening remarks setting the stage
- Participant introductions (if group is small)

- Dyad: "What do you want to have happen today?"
- Have a few people share their answers
- Give background information on the film
- Show film
- To allow participants a low-risk opportunity to share their immediate emotional response, start the discussion with the dyads
- Open discussion in large group
- End the discussion by going around the group and having participants answer the question, "What is your next step for ending racism; what did you learn today?" (Remind participants that they can pass if they don't wish to answer).

- To help the participants not feel overwhelmed or too discouraged by the magnitude of racism it's important to help them frame the issue in a personal context. Emphasize that any effort at change is meaningful and that what may be easy for one participant may be risky for another.

- Whenever possible work with at least two facilitators. This allows one co-facilitator to focus upon emotional or group process while another is paying attention to content and activities or is keeping track of the discussion. Working in pairs also helps build a pool of facilitators by partnering novice facilitators with those more experienced.

- Make every effort to have your pairs of facilitators be racially mixed. This will create more safety in mixed groups and help participants speak from their own racial perspective. It also (ideally!) models trust, cooperation, and alliance behaviors between the facilitators, as well as modeling differences of perspective based on different life experience.

WORKING WITH CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Racism is often difficult to talk about in our culture. It elicits strong feelings and very different perspectives. The following are suggestions for ways to respond effectively to situations that might occur.

Contributed by Sheri Schmidt (from the "Talking About Race" Facilitation Guide)

Arguments: Interrupt the argument and take this opportunity to point out that this difference of opinion comes out of different life experiences and represents what we mean by "diversity." Remind participants that we all see things from different perspectives and although this can get in our way at times, this difference of perspective is also one of the most valuable parts of diversity. Remind the group about the discussion ground rules, which they all agreed upon. Then allow the discussion to continue.

Dominating the Discussion: Intervene and point out that the discussion should benefit from the input of many people. Mention that any discussion about differences is most valuable when many perspectives are expressed. You could suggest several strategies including having a different person answer each time.

One-sided Discussions: If you sense that there are opposing views which participants are reluctant to express, but could benefit the discussion, welcome them to share by making a comment like, "I could really see how someone might feel that..."

Speech-making: Try not to allow participants to ramble and preach to the rest of the group. One way to handle this is to direct the participant to express what they have learned from this experience, to deal with the here and now.

Unclear Statements: Encourage the participant to elaborate on their point by asking him or her to cite specific examples.

Emotional Outbursts: Allow the participant to express her or himself, and then validate what they have said by restating what you heard.

Difficult Questions or Comments *(contributed by Hugh Vasquez)*: Often during discussions questions or comments will be raised that are

challenging to us as facilitators. The following are examples of comments made by audiences that may be difficult to handle. Of course, what is challenging for one facilitator is not necessarily difficult for another. What was easy for you to handle yesterday might be hard today. It is important for you to think about what might be difficult for you before it occurs and think about your responses. Use the following to stimulate your thinking about what might be difficult for you. *(Reading the section of this guide on "Background on Issues" may also help equip you with responses.)*

Possible challenging comments:

"This makes me realize we haven't come very far in this society... all the work done in the civil rights days was a waste."

"The film made me feel guilty."

"I'm so tired of hearing about how bad people of color have it."

"This film is too focused on white people, it's always the white people who have to change what about racism from people of color towards whites?"

"I agree with the white students who said they should not be held responsible for what their grandparents did I should not be blamed for the past either."

"This brought back painful memories of being taught that I (as a person of color) was not good enough."

"I could have heard the point better if he/she hadn't been so angry if he/she would just say it differently, then I could hear it."

(Preaching) "I think we all just need to overlook our differences and just treat each other like human beings."

Finally, here are two examples from people who have been working with SKIN DEEP of possible responses:

When White people say that the film makes them feel guilty: "With teenagers I will say that it isn't the intention of the film to make them feel guilty, and at the same time, some guilt may be normal because they may be seeing that things are more unfair than they'd realized for people of

color. And the idea is not to get stuck in guilt, but to see if it's covering up some other painful feelings. The goal is to be able to move forward and to think about what action we can each take to fight racism. For adults, depending on the audience, I will address the fact that we can't undo the past but that we do still currently, daily, benefit from racism."
-From Lorie Hill, Berkeley, CA

When people are disturbed that the film doesn't give them solutions but instead just leaves them hanging at the end: "What I tell people is that the film is a documentation of the thoughts and feelings of a group of today's college students. The goal of the film is to allow us to learn from these students so that we may then go out and help develop the solutions. There is no one solution to racism in this country. We each need to contribute to the solution in our own way."
-From Sheri Lyn Schmidt, Texas A&M University

<u>BACKGROUND ON ISSUES RAISED IN THE FILM</u>
In discussions of "SKIN DEEP" questions will come up about issues which are often complex and difficult. Here we have provided short "briefings" for some of those issues. While there is not space in this guide to fully explore them, we have tried to at least define them and to provide some references for further reading. (Full references are provided in *References for Further Reading.)*

Affirmative Action
contributed by Hugh Vasquez

Affirmative action is meant to respond to past and present discrimination of "minority" groups. Without it, on-going, ingrained societal prejudice would impede efforts of minority groups to rise on their own. It attempts to guarantee that education and jobs are accessible to qualified persons. Affirmative action originated in 1961 with an Executive Order by President Kennedy. The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination based on race, sex, or nationality.

Generally, there are three types of affirmative action: (1) Recruitment of minorities, (2) Making sure qualification criteria does not exclude certain groups and (3) Establishing goals for bringing in those from underrepresented groups. There are many myths about affirmative action including Affirmative action violates color blind acceptance based on merit; beneficiaries of affirmative action are less qualified; whites and

men are the victims of reverse discrimination and affirmative action damages self esteem.

Some believe that affirmative action has been a very small bandage on a gaping wound that it was never designed to really work. Attacks on it generally come from believing the myths or misinformation circulated throughout society. One needs to keep in mind and be educated on the institutional realities where preferential treatment continues to be given to whites and men. For example, unemployment rates continue to be higher for Blacks and Latinos than for whites; poverty rates are higher for women, Blacks and Latinos than for men and whites; whites are more likely to hold management positions than people of color or women and white high school dropouts earn more than black males with two years of college.

If everything is equal in society, the above conditions would not exist. If societal discrimination is the explanation for these conditions, then a societal cure is needed that involves the educational, economic and employment institutions. Affirmative action is one attempt at this cure.

For further reading: Wise, *Little White Lies*

"Balkanization," "Reverse Discrimination" and Individualism
contributed by Troy Duster

Sometimes the most disarmingly simple questions can produce the most penetrating insights. At UC Santa Barbara a student asked his instructor, "Why is it that when we see eight white students having lunch together in the commons, we just see students having lunch...but when we see eight African American students having lunch together in the same dining room, we call it a 'balkanized racial enclave'?" The answer is embedded in the question, and deeply mired in the cultural practices that generated the question.

On most college campuses in the United States, white students are the overwhelming majority and, as such, are "unmarked." The changing gender composition of American law students over the last three decades dramatically demonstrates this "marking" phenomenon. In 1965 only four percent of all law students in the entire nation were females. Being a white male student, studying law in the 1960's was to be "unmarked," or to put it another way, "normal!" If those few and scattered women gathered together to have lunch they would be noticed as self-

segregating or "clannish," while their male counterparts would "just be having lunch." By 1995, just three decades later, women constituted 44 percent of the law students in the country. Now they just have lunch too. Well, not really. Because some males now experience the loss of their previous domination of law school admissions, when women gather, they still can seem like "balkanized gender enclaves" of activists mobilizing to maintain their gains.

Of course, "balkanized enclaves" are not usually perceived as such by those inside them. The closer one is to a group, the more likely one is to see internal differences. This poses an interesting paradox. Namely, while observers from the outside are likely to impute "sameness" and "self-segregation," the group in question may be struggling with tremendous internal differentiation and with great effort attempting to forge a common identity. For example, groups such as the Asian Business Association and the Black Engineering and Science Student Association meet only a few hours a month. They have a hard time getting membership to come for just these few hours. Yet they see themselves described in the media as a coherent force that excludes others from attendance.

Citing their fears of "reverse discrimination" students often say they just want to be seen and judged as individuals. Of course we are all individuals, but we aren't only individuals. Each of us is also a member of a group that identifies us among other individuals, and which shapes our fate. This usually includes such concentric circles as family, community, religion, nation-state, social class, gender, and race. These circles then dramatically determine our "individual" access to resources.

When it comes to a consideration of the race and ethnicity of "marked" individuals for special entitlement based upon prior exclusion, the most effective and most frequently cited argument against special consideration revolves around the idea of fairness and most particularly, around fairness to the individual. Here the rhetoric is seamlessly simple and the surface representation is flawless: We are presented with two individuals, one white male and one Latina from the same high school. The white male has a GPA of 4.0 while the Latina has a 3.5. Applying to the same university, she gets in and he does not. How can that be fair? Since he did not personally discriminate against anyone, at least one-on-one, how can he be blamed for acts of racial discrimination committed long before he was born? As long as the question of fairness to two individuals is so framed, as long as the dialogue is thusly set so that

there is no other context to these two individuals save their disembodied existence as high school GPA's, this is not a debate, but a rhetorical exercise in which individual fairness will always win out.

But are two individuals and their test scores ever the whole story of fairness in any society? At the extreme let us take the current situation in South Africa. For the last half century whites created and implemented laws that permitted themselves, as whites, to accumulate wealth and land and power, to have access to universities and corporate boardrooms, to have wages five to ten times that of Black workers doing the same labor. After 45 years of official apartheid, the white monopoly on access to good jobs and good education came to an end, but not before whites had accumulated more than ten times the wealth of Blacks. The new government has issued guidelines to redress some of these past grievances. And already critics of initiatives that would place Blacks in positions held exclusively by whites for the last half century are now dubbing such programs "neo-apartheid." "It's reverse discrimination" complained a spokesman for the Mine Workers Union, a union that still bars blacks from joining!

What has this to do with the United States? Even in this country we are not only individuals but also members of certain groups that shape our fate. Financially, the biggest difference between Whites and African Americans today is in their median net worth. In 1991 the median net worth of white households was more than ten times that of African-American households. This financial difference is also then reflected in the quality of education and other variables that affect academic performance. If we are to judge "fairness" only on an individual basis without taking such variables into account, the only possible outcome is the maintenance of an historically discriminatory status quo.

For further reading:

- "Understand Self-Segregation on the Campus" in Brown, *Efficient Reading*.
Stanley Fish "How The Right Hijacked the Magic Words" New York Times, August 13, 1995
"Individual Fairness, Group Preferences, and the California Strategy" *Representations*, Summer, 1996.

White Privilege
contributed by Frances E. Kendall

Privilege, particularly White or male privilege, is hard to see for those of us who were born with access to power and resources. It is very visible for those to whom privilege was not granted. Furthermore, the subject is extremely difficult to talk about because many White people don't feel powerful or as if they have privileges that others do not. It is sort of like asking fish to notice water or birds to discuss air. For those who have privileges based on race or gender or class or physical ability or sexual orientation or age, it just is – it's normal. The Random House Dictionary (1993) defines privilege as "a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most." In her article, "White Privilege and Male Privilege," Peggy McIntosh (1995) reminds us that those of us who are white usually believe that privileges are "Conditions of daily experience…[that are] universally available to everybody." Further, she says that what we are really talking about is "unearned power conferred systematically" (pp. 82-83).

For those of us who are White, one of our privileges is that we see ourselves as individuals, "just people" part of the human race. Most of us are clear, however, that people with skin other than white are members of a race. The surprising thing for us is that even though we don't see ourselves as part of a racial group, people of color generally do see us in that light.

So, given that we want to work to create a better world in which all of us can live, what can we do? The first step, of course, is to become clear about the basics of white privilege, what it is and how it works. The second step is to explore ways in which we can work against the racism of which white privilege is such a major foundation stone.

For further reading:
-Kendall, *Diversity in the Classroom*, pp. 45-49
Kivel, *Uprooting Racism*., pp. 28-35
McIntosh, "White privilege and male privilege"
Terry, *For Whites Only*

Allies
contributed by Hugh Vasquez

What is an ally? An ally is someone who interrupts or intervenes to stop the mistreatment from continuing. Anyone can be an ally, but generally an ally is seen as someone from the dominant group who is intervening on behalf of the group being mistreated. For example, in terms of racism, white people are allies to people of color; on sexism, men are allies to women; with anti-semitism, gentiles are allies to Jews; on heterosexism, heterosexuals are allies to gays, lesbians, and bi-sexuals, etc.

What do allies do? An act of alliance can be a thought, feeling, or action. If you witnessed mistreatment and thought to yourself, "What happened was wrong," you were an ally in thought. In addition, if you witnessed something and felt awful inside (sadness, anger, guilt, despair), that is an act of alliance. And, it is an act of alliance to take action and do something to stop the mistreatment.

Allies must first become aware and knowledgeable of the conditions that have some people receiving privilege while others receive mistreatment. Allies must learn how and where they have privilege and be able to articulate it, notice where privilege exists around them. Allies need to adopt the attitude that it is their role to fight oppression. For example, white people must decide that it is their place to work to end racism. Too often allies say "I just don't know if it is my place to intervene." It is everyone's right to fight for justice for all others.

What do allies do? They listen, interrupt jokes, make mistakes, introduce new policies, insist on multicultural education, march at rallies, call legislators, boycott businesses that practice mistreatment, and work with other allies to become more effective at stopping the mistreatment. Allies do not give up the fight when they are on the receiving end of anger, disappointment, or hopelessness from the very folks they are fighting for. In other words, white people do not give up fighting to end racism when a person of color gets angry at them for being privileged.

Allies are open to hearing the stories from those who are mistreated, even if the stories involve frustration, pain, or sadness. Allies communicate that they can be approached they create space for people to say what has happened to them.

What can allies expect? Ultimately, allies can expect to feel proud that they worked to eliminate some form of mistreatment. Allies can look forward to rich relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, to new friendships, inspiration and an expanded community. However, taking a stand can also result in you being targeted by others in the same way the very people you are in alliance with are targeted. You may get the message that it is none of your business to be concerned with this issue. You may suddenly feel very alone in the struggle.

It is critical that allies support each other. Many have given up the fight simply because they felt too tired and alone to go on. This is called "alliance fatigue." Know that there are many allies around you and work to build connections with these folks. Many allies are "underground" not letting people around them know how they feel. At your homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, religious settings, etc., start conversations that give you information on who else around you is an ally.

For further reading:
-Kivel, *Uprooting Racism*
-Vasquez & Femi, *No Boundaries*

Political Correctness ("PC")
contributed by Hugh Vasquez

Is it ever appropriate to use language that hurts another human being? The answer is an emphatic NO. Language is one of the institutions that serve to perpetuate racism. The language we speak serves to help mold our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about others. Language is how we learn to navigate throughout society. Language is part of the glue that helps us make meaning of life. Thus, language is a critical element in eliminating the mistreatment of any group.

Political correctness is a fairly new phrase. It has come about as legal struggles around our constitutional right to free speech increased. Some believe that anything people say should be left alone simply because we all have the right to free speech. Many college campuses have been at the forefront of this battle. The challenges to political correctness tend to come from those who want to be able to say anything without repercussions.

But the societal context for oppression must be looked at as these challenges arise. Language was a prime factor in forming attitudes in Hitler's Germany, which allowed for the murder of 6 million Jews. People were indoctrinated to see Jews as evil. And how were they indoctrinated? In part it was through the use of language. One only needs to look at the dictionaries we use to see examples of this. Take a moment sometime to look up the words "white" and "black" in the dictionary. What you will see is one word (white) full of positive connotations while the other word (black) is mostly negative.

Should we be "politically correct?" Of course we should if what we mean by this is eliminating language that is part of how mistreatment is perpetuated. We should all be outraged at any language that mistreats others.

Internalized Oppression
contributed by Hugh Vasquez

Internalized oppression is taking on and believing the stereotypes or lies that are told about you and people in your group. In terms of racism, internalized oppression affects people of color. It is believing that you are not good enough, smart enough, beautiful enough, deserving enough, etc. It is believing that you or others in your group are less than the dominant group. All people targeted for mistreatment and discrimination to some degree internalize the oppression.

Internalized racism is an involuntary reaction to racism. It is a reaction to the racism that originates outside the group. No one voluntarily adopts negative beliefs about one's self or group. They do so only because racism exists outside the group. We are trained to internalize these lies and this training begins before we are able to screen out the lies. However, all people of color fight valiantly to resist taking on the effects of racism, but eventually, through no fault of their own, they begin to wear the scars of racism by believing the misconceptions.

How can you recognize internalized racism? It looks like:

* self hatred of how one looks and acts
* self doubt of one's abilities, worth, goodness
* fear of one's own power
* an urgent pull to assimilate or "prove them wrong"
* not doing something because it is "acting white"

* isolation from one's own group
* self blame for lack of success
* dependency
* changing how one looks, acts, or talks to be more accepted by dominant culture
* mistreating, judging others in your group for not being Black enough, Latino enough, etc.
* blaming others in your group for being victims of racism
* colorism within the group valuing those who have lighter skin over those with darker skin
* fighting over the smallest slice of the economic pie

WORKING WITH FACULTY AND STAFF

contributed by Maurianne Adams & Mathew Ouellett

Setting the context: Why should faculty be concerned about racism on campus?

College and university student bodies nation-wide are increasingly diverse racially and ethnically, while the faculties and staff remain predominantly white. Given that faculty and staff tend to remain the most stable population in their campus communities, their values and assumptions are important in defining the culture of the campus. For these reasons, it is important for faculty and staff to acknowledge their culturally-derived values and assumptions, to assess their comfort and skills in various cross-cultural campus situations, to take responsibility for gaining empathy with all of their students, and to become aware of the impact of their own socialization on their interactions with students whose social and cultural backgrounds differ from their own.

Primary learning goals for faculty and staff development workshops using "Skin Deep" may be (1) increased awareness of one's own racial identity and the assumptions and values that are embedded in that identity, (2) increased empathy with one's students' racial identities and the different perspectives that may result from their different life experiences and opportunities, and/or (3) better understanding of the dynamics that occur between faculty or staff members and students whose racial-ethnic heritages are different.

General Principles of Practice:

What general considerations of group process can help facilitators plan for effective faculty and staff development workshops?

- Anticipate that faculty are likely to prefer intellectual over emotional interaction. Without an adequate explanation or rationale, they may resist self-awareness as a worthwhile learning goal. For example, they may prefer to focus upon their own students or the students in "SKIN DEEP." These distractions to their own self reflection may skillfully be brought back to their own responses and experiences.

- Agree upon definitions of key terms that are, if left undefined, likely to lead to confusion and conflict. Key terms include "diversity" as differentiated from "social justice," and "race" and "racism" as distinct from "ethnicity."

- Don't assume that faculty academic achievement equates with self-awareness on issues of race or racism. Most faculty and staff are likely to have grown up and/or currently live in monocultural environments. Attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are often not acknowledged as reflections of a particular racial group (white), ethnic heritage (European) or gender orientation (male). Although faculty and staff are not responsible for the culture-specific beliefs with which they grew up, they are surely responsible for examining and questioning them as adults and as educators. The implication of this for staff development workshops is to focus upon self-awareness as a major learning goal.

- Be aware that discussing race and racism may be just as emotional and difficult for faculty and staff as it is for students. Faculty and staff may not know the history or social context of racism. They may also have considerable prestige and credibility at stake in acknowledging their lack of knowledge or understanding.

- Acknowledge that discussions will be works in progress. We hope, and expect, that participants will change their thinking as a result of the discussion and gain a perspective that differs from the perspective they brought to the beginning of the discussion.

- Maintain a balance between practical strategies and exploration of feelings. Some faculty or staff may also want "the answer," practical

things "to do," or look for uniformity of opinion. Facilitators need to be ready to acknowledge this frustration while helping participants stay open to the ambiguities, which naturally accompany the complexity of addressing race issues and racism.

- Assess the likely personal risk-levels for participants. Do not expect faculty or staff participants to engage in high risk activities, or to make themselves vulnerable in a group setting, unless there is adequate time and opportunity to build trust, to debrief high risk or personal-sharing activities.

Specific Suggestions for Use of "SKIN DEEP"

- Faculty and staff participants might be interested in this video either as a stimulus for their own self-awareness and empathy with their students or as a teaching tool for their own classes. It is important for staff development workshops to achieve clarity with participants about their interests and expectations.

- “SKIN DEEP” can be used for staff and faculty across any disciplinary focus. Even so-called "neutral" disciplines (hard science or Engineering, for example) are beginning to address the diversity of staff and students assembled in the classroom. This video can be useful in facilitating discussions that increase skill and comfort levels and enhance classroom dynamics. Faculty for whom racism content is likely to be an established or formal part of the curriculum (for example, Women's Studies, African American or Ethnic Studies, Social Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, or Education) are more likely to see the applicability of this film to their curriculum as well as to their teaching processes.

- For faculty who are not comfortable with large group discussions or personal disclosure, reflective writing exercises may also be more effective and closer to faculty ways of knowing. Discussions may be usefully interspersed with short reflective writing exercises that inform discussion but which are kept private.

- “SKIN DEEP” can usefully be viewed in disciplinarily homogeneous or mixed groups. Staff development organizers may want to consider some of the trade-offs in these different formats. Mixed groups allow participants to follow their own levels of interest, without waiting for departmental colleagues to share their interest. There

may also be greater safety & privacy outside one's department, especially for junior or pre-tenure faculty. It is often interesting for faculty and staff to note that similar issues of racism occur in classrooms across campus and across disciplines, and also that effective teaching strategies can be quite similar across disciplines. Same-discipline, homogeneous groups of faculty and staff can allow for more in-depth discussions of curricular or classroom innovations.

Follow Up

Paying attention to issues of race and racism can greatly enhance teaching and staff effectiveness in working successfully with all students. Faculty and staff need to consider their own socialization as it interacts with that of their students, before they try to plan appropriate classroom or campus strategies. Their willingness to take action, usually following upon their increased self-awareness and empathy with others who are different, can lead to planning for a more inclusive curriculum and teaching strategies.

Some general principles for follow up may include:

* Encourage participants to set concrete, action-based goals
* Keep goals achievable within a limited time-frame
* Encourage participants to build support networks
* Remind participants that change takes place one step at a time and that change requires a life-long commitment
* Provide follow-up resources such as bibliographies and videographies. Well-prepared, accurate, resource materials will help faculty and staff make the transition from their responses to “SKIN DEEP” to their interactions with students.

Strategies & Resources for Follow Up and Ongoing Activities

Organize weekly or monthly "brown bag lunch" discussions. These meetings could be used to investigate in more depth particular issues that have come up during the screening discussion, or they could be used as support and strategy sessions for individuals and groups doing anti-racism work. (At Evergreen State College, following a screening of Skin Deep, the college instituted monthly lunchtime discussions. Each

discussion was started by screening a brief 2-3 minute segment from "TALKING ABOUT RACE", the companion video to “SKIN DEEP” for information on "TALKING ABOUT RACE" see below.)

Support the formation of a campus or community organization to work on issues of racism and multi-cultural alliance building. Or do the research to find out what organizations already exist and make this information available to participants. (After a screening of “SKIN DEEP” at Valdosta State College in Georgia, the students met to form a multi-cultural organization that would include sponsoring retreats similar to the one depicted in the film. They are currently working to gain recognition as an official campus organization.)

For more in-depth activities, exercises, and discussion points concerning the issues raised in Skin Deep, consult our companion piece, “TALKING ABOUT RACE". “TALKING ABOUT RACE" consists of 2 short (12 & 13 minutes) videos containing excerpts from “SKIN DEEP,” arranged by topic, and a comprehensive facilitation guide. Besides being very effective for follow up discussions “TALKING ABOUT RACE” is also useful for classroom screenings and other situations where time is limited.

For information on ordering “TALKING ABOUT RACE” or “SKIN DEEP,” please call 800/343.5540 or order online at www.irisfilms.org.

For information about speaking engagements with the Director of “SKIN DEEP,” Frances Reid, please call Iris Films at 510/845.5414

The workshop portrayed in SKIN DEEP was conducted by TODOS: The Sherover Simms Alliance Building Institute. For information on TODOS please call 510/444.6448

We always like to know what sort of outcomes have resulted from screenings of Skin Deep. We encourage you to contact us at Iris Films by mail, fax, or phone to let us know of your experiences. Your feedback will help inform our work and allow us to modify suggestions we make to future discussion leaders.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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This study guide is written by Hugh Vasquez, with contributions from Maurianne Adams, Mathew Ouellett, Frances Reid, Troy Duster, Frances E. Kendall, Sheri Lyn Schmidt and Lorie Hill.

The publication of this study guide is made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation.