

# My Multicultural Self

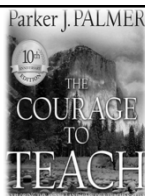
Dr. Jeff Sapp

**“When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”** *Adrienne Rich*

Parker J. Palmer

## *The Courage to Teach*

The question we most commonly ask is the “what” question – “What subjects shall we teach?” When the conversation goes a bit deeper, we ask the “how” question “What methods and techniques are required to teach well?” Occasionally, when it goes deeper still, we ask the “why” question – “For what purpose and to what ends do we teach?” **But seldom, if ever, do we ask the “who” question – “Who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form – or deform – the way I relate to my students, my subject, my colleagues, my world? How can educational institutions sustain and deepen the selfhood from which good teaching comes?”**

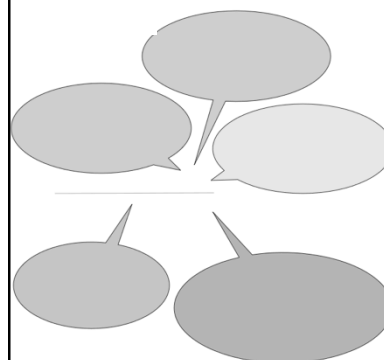


What is culture?

## WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture is a shared system of meanings, beliefs, values and behaviors through which we interpret our experiences. Culture is learned, collective and changes over time. Culture is generally understood to be “what we know that everyone like us knows.”

My Multicultural Self



My  
Multicultural  
Self

My Multicultural Self

**White**

My Multicultural Self

My Multicultural Self

**White Appalachian**

My Multicultural Self

My Multicultural Self

**White Appalachian**

**Male**

My Multicultural Self

My Multicultural Self

**White Appalachian**

**Male**

**Father**

My Multicultural Self

**White Appalachian**

**Male**

**Gay**

**Father**

My Multicultural Self

My Multicultural Self

**White Appalachian**

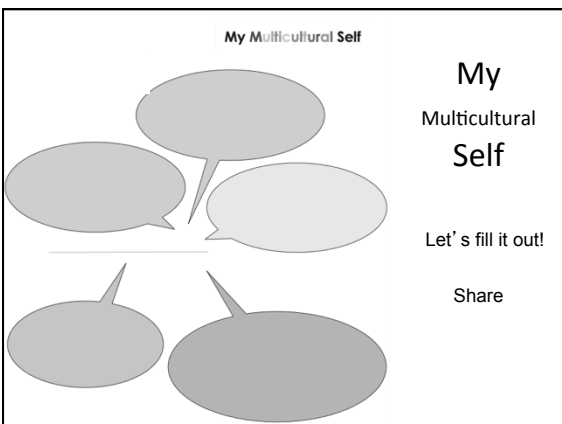
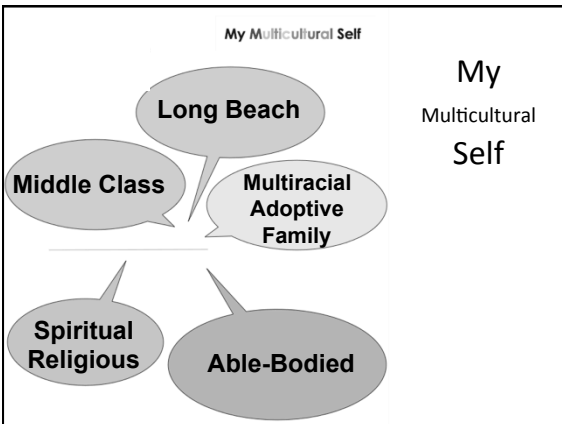
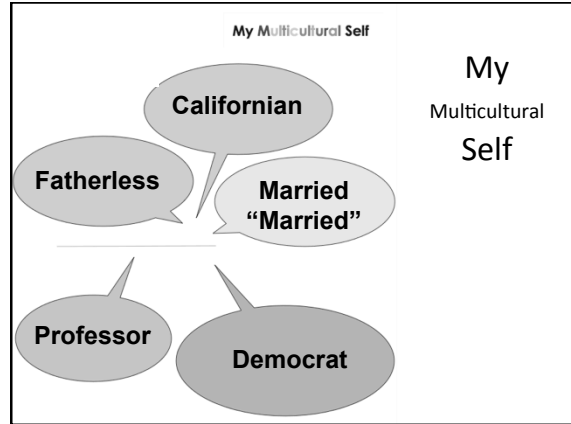
**55**

**Male**

**Gay**

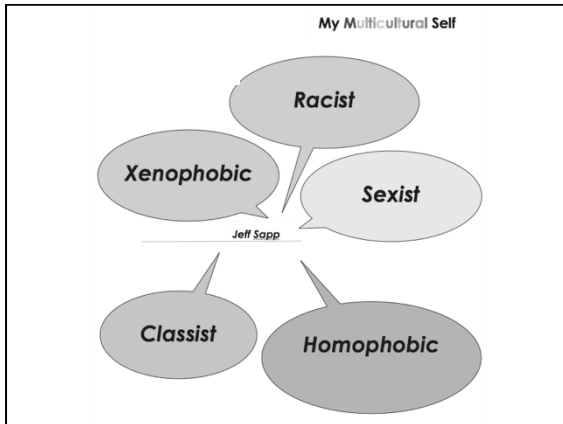
**Father**

My Multicultural Self



Reflection

- How would you feel if someone ignored one of your multicultural identity bubbles?
- Can you see how ignoring one of your identity bubbles could cause miscommunication? Can anyone give an example?
- How does it feel when someone makes an assumption about your identity? Can you give an example?
- Do you have more than 5 identities?
- If your 5 identity bubbles are communicating with a group of 5 others, how many identities are interacting?



## Conscious Racial Bias

- Conscious racial bias is the bias we know we have and we will admit to. For instance, a majority of white people (58%) admit that they believe at least one stereotype about Blacks (that Blacks are generally aggressive or violent).

## Unconscious Racial Bias

- But racial bias isn't just about the things we'll admit to, the things we know we believe. Researchers now know that bias can lurk in our subconscious. Even if we believe in equality and that racism is wrong, we can still have unconscious racial bias.

## Unconscious Racial Bias

- Psychologists at Harvard, the University of Virginia and the University of Washington created "Project Implicit" to develop Hidden Bias Tests - called Implicit Association Tests, or IATs in the academic world - to measure unconscious bias.

## Unconscious Racial Bias

- 75% of whites show an unconscious preference for white people over Black people. And 48% of African-Americans show a pro-white bias too.
- These kinds of hidden biases may live in our unconsciousness, but they have real-world implications.

## Unconscious Racial Bias

- Health care - Doctors' hidden biases affect the way they treat patients and help create health disparities between Black and white patients.
- Employment - Hiring officers show an unconscious preference for white candidates when making decisions about whom they should interview.
- Legal System - Hidden biases can lead judges and jurors to remember the facts of a case in racially biased ways.



**Our identities are NOT static!**

- A parent dies and this reshapes the way we see the world.
- We fall in love and this reshapes the way we see the world.
- We fall out of love and this reshapes the way we see the world.
- We experience an act of violence and this reshapes the way we see the world.

**Key Points**

- Social group memberships inform who we are and how we view the world.
- What we once knew to be true about our selves and others can change over time.
- For this reason, we try to **suspend judgment**, ask questions of others and talk with those different from us as much as possible.

**My Multicultural Profile**

My Environment	Native American	African American	Latino American	Asian American	Indian American	Jewish American	Irish American	Arabic American	European American	Other (Which?)
I am										
My co-workers are										
My supervisor is										
My elementary school was mostly										
My high school was mostly										
My teachers were mostly										
My faith community is mostly										
My close friends are										

**Jeff's Multicultural Profile**

My Environment	Native American	African American	Latino American	Asian American	Indian American	Jewish American	Irish American	Arabic American	European American	Other (Which?)
I am										
My co-workers are										
My supervisor is										
My elementary school was mostly										
My high school was mostly										
My teachers were mostly										
My faith community is mostly										
My close friends are										

## My Multicultural Self

- Before endeavoring to develop cultural knowledge and awareness about **others**, we must first uncover and examine **personal** social and cultural identities.
- This exercise explores the roots of cultural learning by naming aspects of identity important to each of us. It highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities and addresses the importance of self-identification.

## Having a Teachable Spirit

- The important thing to remember is that we are students of ourselves first. Continue to learn about yourself.
- Continue to learn about your audience and embrace a learner attitude. We can't possibly know everything, but we can always be curious and learning.

Since our identities are **fluid**,  
so is the language we use to  
describe our identities.

## Identity Politics & The Fluidity of Language

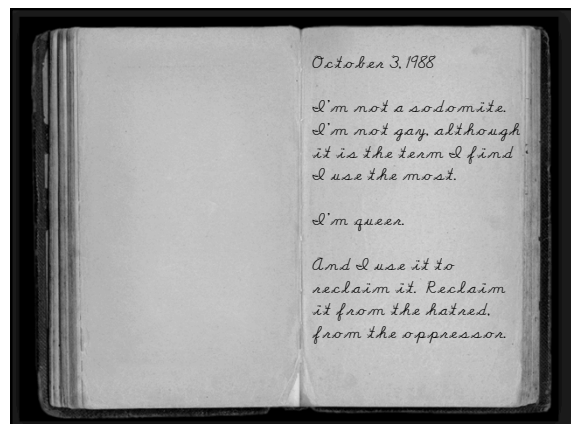




### What is it?

Wp9f !? !f;

- A politics of liberation...
- It has roots in a lot of the movements...
- An aspect of which is naming...
- Language = Politics (Broadway Play)
- What would you add from your own understandings?



The gays are getting married!

"Husband," "Partner,"  
"Boyfriend": What's in a Word?  
By Michelangelo Signorile  
Huff Post, August 28, 2013

"Partner," as cold as it is, does connote equality, doesn't mark gender and doesn't imply possession."



African-American

Black



Latino



Hispanic



African-American

Black



Latino



Hispanic



Adoption

### MOT Language Guide

#### Old Language

- Girls, Ladies, Gals, Females

#### New Language

- Women, Young Women
- In writing "womyn"

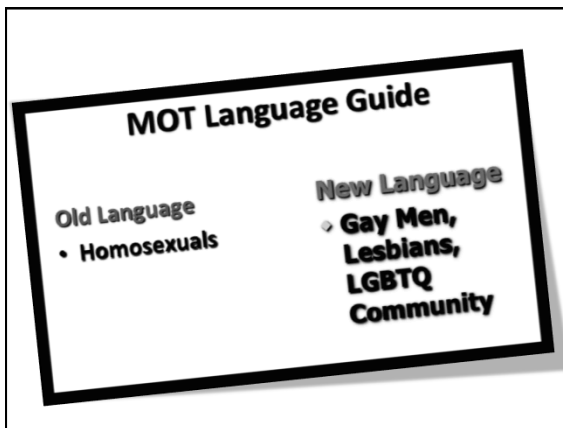
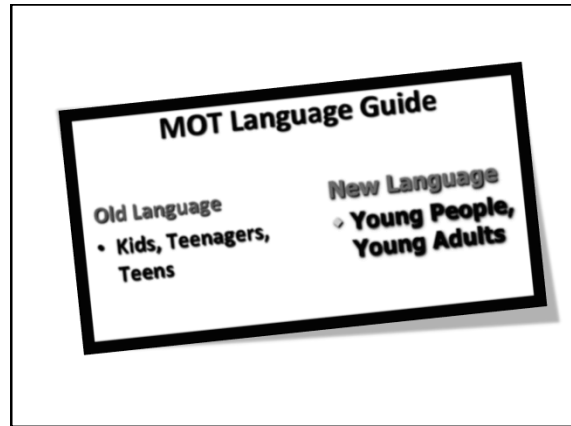
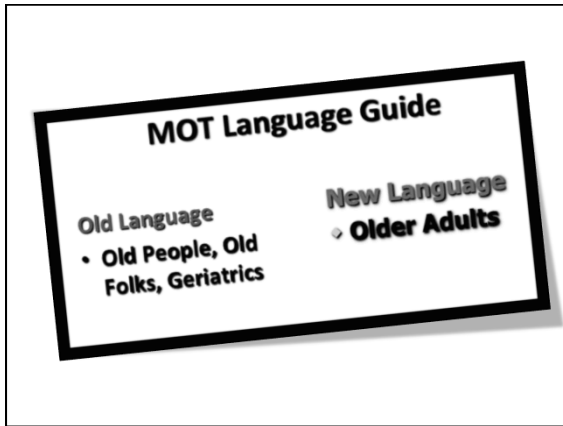
### MOT Language Guide

#### Old Language

- Handicapped, Crippled, Special Education Student/Child

#### New Language

- People First Language
- Person with a Disability, Student with Special Needs, Differently Abled



**An example of the fluidity of identity language:**

- **LGBTTIQQ2SA**
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, 2 Spirited, Allies**

**Genderqueer**

- Genderqueer is an umbrella term for anyone who identifies as a gender besides man or woman? What?! There are genders besides boy or girl? Well, yeah. In a world where your hair, eye, and skin color can be any combination of things, not to mention body height and size, plus all the different ways people construct their identities with clothes, tattoos, and hair styles, is it really that weird to think gender contains more than two options?

**Trans Man/Trans Woman**

The words aren't trying to trick you – a trans man is a man, a trans woman is a woman. Simple!

Some people have a hard time thinking of someone as a man or a woman until they look a certain way, or have undergone certain surgeries. But think about it – you'd be offended if you met someone, told them your name, and then they asked to show them your junk before they called you "he" or "she."



## Transgender

A term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

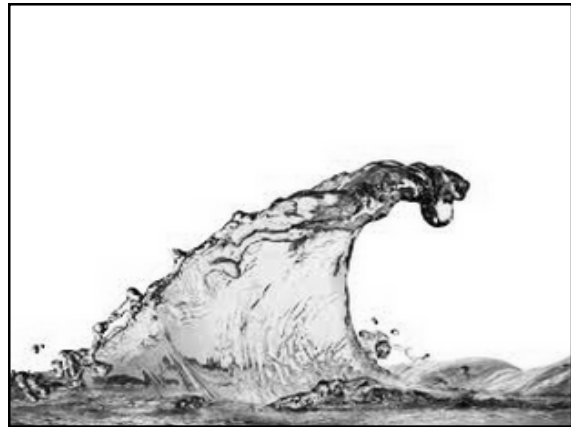
Transgender people don't want to be, and aren't pretending to be, men or women. Transgender people are men or women (or both or neither) and transition in order to better reflect that internal sense of who they are.

## Cisgender (Cissexual; Cis)

Someone who is not transgender. An individual whose self-perception of their gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Agender

Not identifying with any gender, the feeling of having no gender.



### MOT Language Guide

#### Old Language

- Sexual Preference,  
Sexual Choice

#### New Language

- **Sexual  
Orientation**

### MOT Language Guide

#### Old Language

- Hispanic

#### New Language

- **Latino/a**

**MOT Language Guide**

<b>Old Language</b>	<b>New Language</b>
• American	• <b>U. S. Resident, Citizen of the United States</b>

**MOT Language Guide**

<b>Old Language</b>	<b>New Language</b>
• WASP, Caucasian, Anglo	• <b>White</b>

**MOT Language Guide**

<b>Old Language</b>	<b>New Language</b>
• Oriental, Asian	• <b>Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Asian Pacific Americans</b>

**MOT Language Guide**

<b>Old Language</b>	<b>New Language</b>
• Colored, Negro, Afro-American	• <b>African American, Black</b>

**MOT Language Guide**

<b>Old Language</b>	<b>New Language</b>
• Minorities, Non-White	• <b>Refer to specific national or cultural background, People of Color</b>

POC

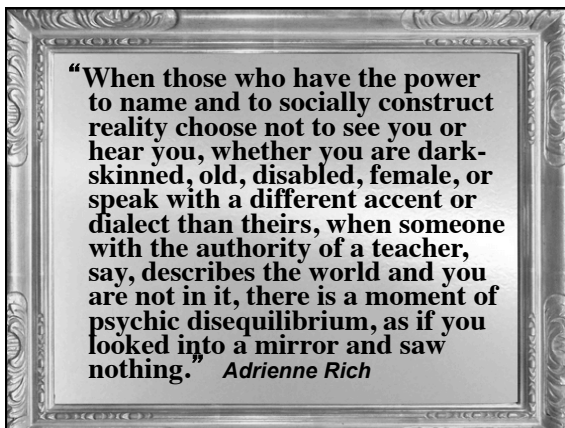
How do we acknowledge the very limits of the term “people of color” and the way it can mask our actual racial situations? For example, why do we keep using the phrase “communities of color” as targets of police and state violence when we primarily mean Black and Latino folks? What races are we trying to contain in the word “brown”?

Um...what do you mean, exactly?

- Urban students
- Inner-city students
- At-risk students

Here is the point...

As educators, **we are situating ourselves to be heard.** If we knowingly offend someone because we aren't educated on proper identity terminology, they may miss what we say because they're thinking about how you just used the wrong term to name them.



So what can we take away?

- Be students of self
- Be sincerely curious about others, even those we think we know well
- There is a lot to learn still
- Have lots of conversations across social boundaries
- Make lots of mistakes
- Question assumptions
- Think

What is a personal commitment you can make? A professional one?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Audre Lorde

***"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."***