

Introduction

1. Tatum explains her perception of the need for this book on page xv. Would you agree and why or why not?

Chapter One – Defining Racism

1. Read Wellman’s conception of *racism* on page 7. Would you agree or disagree and why?
2. Tatum suggests that *racism* and *prejudice* are not the same, nor should they be essentially linked. Can these two concepts be separated in reality? How do you know?
3. Using Tatum’s text, provide your thoughts on the question, “Are all Whites racist?” Define your answer in terms of the text as well as any other supporting evidence.
4. After considering Tatum’s text, can people of color be racist? Why or why not?

Chapter Two – The Complexity of Identity

1. Tatum explores what she refers to as the “dominant racial category” (p. 27) as well as “subordinates” and their interaction. How do advantage, privilege, and power enter this exploration? You may wish to refer back to Wellman’s definition of *racism* (“a system of advantage based on race”). Is this possible in the United States?

Chapter Three – The Early Years

1. As Tatum discusses the early development and initial recognition of race and racial differences, she mentions emotions, language, and social dynamics to frame her points. Based on her discussion, posit some ways educators might specifically address these issues with children to help them understand their race-related observations and conceptions. Is it even necessary to “help” children in this area? Why or why not?
2. Given Tatum’s suggestion that we not avoid but confront the realities of our racial past, what are your thoughts about this? For example, should we confront head-on the issues of slavery and reparations in an age-appropriate classroom? Should we have a class discussion about race and relationships in an early childhood

classroom should the need arise from some specific interaction? Why or why not? Can White teachers handle this the same way as teachers of color? Why or why not?

Chapter Four – Identity Development in Adolescence

1. How does Tatum answer, “Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?” Do you think her answer is sufficient? Why or why not? Are there other possibilities? What are they?
2. Marcia’s framework for identity development or “statuses” (p. 53) outlines a clear progression of thought and emotion. How might this affect not only racial identity but gender identity or any other aspect of identity? What are the implications?
3. What is an “oppositional social identity” as described by Tatum (p. 60-61)? How does it manifest itself in adolescents, and what could teachers do in response to it (if anything)? (*Racelessness*, “*acting White*”, and other theoretical constructs are included in this question.)

Chapter Five – Racial Identity in Adulthood

1. Tatum suggests that racial identity development is not linear but circular (i.e., “a spiral staircase”), p. 83. What does she mean by this and what might be examples?
2. Read the extended quote on pp. 85-86 and provide an analysis.

Chapter Six – The Development of White Identity

1. Can a person of color really define “White identity?” (Juxtapose this question to the thesis that a White person cannot really understand or define a person of color.)
2. Analyze Janet Helms’ process of racial identity development in Whites. Compare and contrast it to William Cross’ theory for racial identity development in Blacks.

Chapter Eight – Critical Issues in American Indian, and Asian Pacific American Identity Development

1. Tatum presents Jean Phinney’s model of adolescent ethnic identity development. Compare and contrast this model to Cross’ and Helms’ models. Would Phinney’s model apply more to American Indian and Asian Americans than the other two? Why or why not?

Chapter Nine – Identity Development in Multiracial Families

1. Given the developmental theories presented by Tatum and the historical and cultural context of racism in the United States, what do children of multiracial families content with in school and culture? Do you foresee this changing? Why or why not?
2. What does Tatum suggest (and what do you see) as the primary challenge for children who are biracial (or multiracial) at each of the following stages:
 - a. Transition into school
 - b. Emerging into adolescence
 - c. Emerging into adulthood

General Questions about the Book

1. How successful has Tatum’s book been in increasing your understanding of “the role of racial or ethnic identity in young peoples’ development (p. xv) and of “what racism is, how it impacts all of us, and . . . what we can do about it”? (p. ix) To what extent is an understanding of racial identity development important for every member of every ethnic group?
2. If someone were to ask you about Tatum’s book, how would you respond and why? Is your response, at least in part, a function of your own experience and racial identity?