

ARJ: Case Study: Use of Racial Slur

A white male teacher receives a letter of reprimand for referring to a student as the “n” word. They contacted you for representation. The teacher claims that he was working with a student on a math problem, but the student was having a hard time grasping the concept. The student began to get frustrated, and the teacher stated that they would come back and help them when they had taken a few minutes to try and work through the problem again. As the teacher walked away, the student said loudly, “it’s not my fault I can’t solve this problem, you suck as a teacher!”. The teacher muttered under his breath, “I can teach, you “n”s just can’t learn!”

Background:

- The member is a high school math teacher
- The school is located in a predominantly upper-middle class neighborhood
- The class is predominantly white, with only 3 BIPOC students
- The statement was overheard by the student involved as well as the three students sitting at his table.

Table Work: From your perspective (affinity group identification)

1. Identify the problem or problems posed by the case
 - a. What does this scenario look like if you are an Actor?
 - b. What does this scenario look like if you are an Ally?
 - c. What does this scenario look like if you are a Coconspirator?
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
 - a. Think about how this scenario affects you personally?
 - b. In turn, how does that inform your response?
 - c. Think about how this scenario would impact you if you are a BIPOC staff person?
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
 - a. Think about how you would represent this employee.
 - b. Think about how you could support/educate this employee? Or could you?
4. Imagine equitable outcomes (beyond the individual member)
5. Brainstorm immediate short-term response
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action
 - a. How could this be addressed through bargaining?
 - b. How could this be addressed through local leader training?
 - c. How can the affiliate be better prepared to address the impact of racist acts on staff members?