

Colorblindness**Aufgaben**

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Outline what the author says about the issue of colorblindness and how to address it. (Material)
(30 BE)
- 2 Analyze how the author conveys her message. Focus on structure and use of language.
(Material)
(30 BE)
- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:
 - 3.1 Discuss whether the cartoon is an appropriate illustration to be published with the blog entry by Austin Channing Brown.



Andrew Wahl: See the Problem? Offthewahl.com, 2005, URL: https://www.toonpool.com/cartoons/See%20the%20Problem%3F_17118 (abgerufen am 10.04.2023).

or

- 3.2 You are studying at an American high school, which celebrates Diversity Day with a festival. You are invited to give a speech, assessing the importance and possible ways of dealing with questions of diversity in school.

Write the speech.

(40 BE)

Material

Austin Channing Brown: CTRL + ALT + DEL¹ (blog entry, 2013)

There is no shortage of confusing and misunderstood topics when it comes to race. The preferred terminology for describing black people (or should I say African American), the perpetual assumption that Asians are immigrants, that forgotten chapter in American history where arbitrary borders changed the citizen status of people groups, and so on. When these topics come up, most people readily admit that there is much more learning that needs to be done. But there is one topic that seems to constantly and consistently elude us – colorblindness.

It seems many still believe colorblindness is the key to solving racism. Believing in the notion of colorblindness sounds like this, “I don’t even see color,” or this, “But we are all the same,” or this, “I’ve never looked at you as a (fill in the blank)”. These statements are usually followed by a sugary example of our sameness and ends with a quote by Martin Luther King Jr about character not color being what *really* counts. And it all sounds pretty good, until you run into someone who refuses to let you forget their race, “If you can’t see color, you can’t see me.” Simple. Hard-hitting. This statement typically stops the syrupy language that was flowing just a few seconds before. While I completely agree with wanting to be seen (and that being seen includes my race), we have not really given people the opportunity to unpack the complexity of colorblindness as a concept. So, I am going to try to address it on an interpersonal level today, without writing a whole book on the topic!

Ctrl – The first thing we have to do is get the myths surrounding colorblindness under control.

Myth 1: Colorblindness is the only option for recognizing my humanness. Believe it or not, it is possible to notice my race and still see me as human. Too many people have bought into the myth that to see color is to erase my humanity, my character, my individuality. When actually my race can give you clues into who I am, if I am given the chance to explain why my race matters. *Myth 2: To not be colorblind is to be racist.* Consider this, when I walk into a room and a man notices that I am female, I do not call him sexist. When a friend says my grandmother’s silver hair is beautiful, she is not being ageist. When I ask my Uncle if he is having trouble getting his wheelchair through the door, he doesn’t shout “Ableist!” Similarly, noticing my race does not make you racist. *Myth 3: Seeing color is seeing stereotypes.* There is no question that stereotypes about POCs³ are rampant – news segments, movies, magazines, family members, politicians – stereotypes are everywhere. However, just because we are spoon-fed stereotypes like toddlers, doesn’t mean we have to behave like toddlers. We can, in fact, reject stereotypes. Have you ever seen a child refuse to eat mushy green peas? Toddlers reject food with a-t-t-i-t-u-d-e. We can do the same with stereotypes – recognize them for the mushy green peas that they are and refuse to consume them. We can allow people to define racial significance for themselves.

ALT – But how do we do that exactly? Well, first we need an alternative to colorblindness. I would like to suggest we become color conscious instead. To be colorblind is to ignore or disregard race.

Color consciousness is to be aware of race, to no longer disregard it as meaningless or minute. People who are color conscious are comfortable noticing difference without ascribing superiority and inferiority to those differences. They can appreciate cultural differences and the diversity of thought, perspective and experience that race brings to the world. Color conscious people refuse to ignore race because they are too busy exploring it for all its beauty, quirkiness⁴, and yes, messiness.

¹ CTRL + ALT + DEL – combination of three keys on a PC keyboard (control/alternate/delete) that, held down simultaneously, closes an application that is not responding, reboot the computer, log in, etc.

² ableist – a person tending to regard people with a disability as incomplete, diminished, or damaged

³ POC – Person of Color

⁴ quirkiness – eccentricity, oddness

- 40 **DEL** – So we must delete this positive notion of colorblindness from our psyche. I don't want to
ignore that God gave me chocolate brown skin, thick hair, and a rich culture – you shouldn't ignore it
either. And let's be honest – colorblindness doesn't really exist. No matter how often I try, every time
I stand in front of a group, have them close their eyes, and ask if anyone has forgotten what color I am
– the answer is always the same – nope! So rather than desperately trying to disregard what you can
45 clearly see, open your eyes wide and delve into the significance of my race with me.

(747 Wörter)

Austin Channing Brown: CTRL + ALT + DEL, 08.07.2013, URL: <http://austinchanning.com/blog/2013/7/ctrl-alt-delete>
(abgerufen am 31.10.2021).