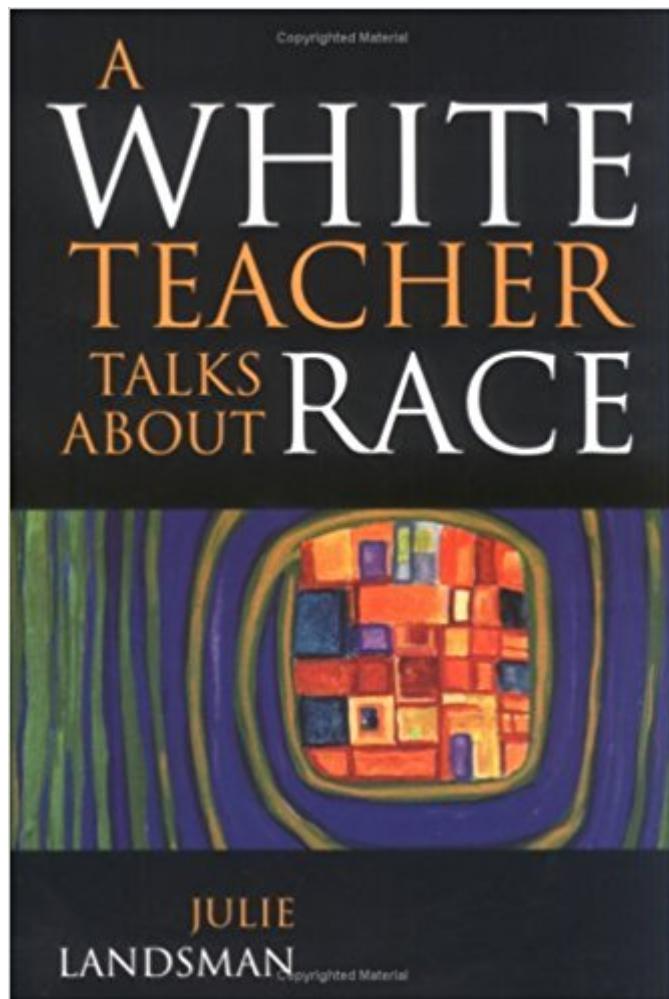


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# A White Teacher Talks About Race



## **Synopsis**

Veteran teacher Julie Landsman leads the reader through a day of teaching and reflection about her work with high school students who are from a variety of cultures. She speaks honestly about issues of race, poverty, institutional responsibility and white privilege by engaging the reader in the experiences of a day in the classroom with some of her remarkable students.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In this account of her years teaching in a multi-ethnic Midwestern high school, Landsman (Basic Needs) discusses the life lessons she learned from her street-smart, determined students: people of color often have to struggle with being the only representative of their race at a social gathering or in class; white people can never understand how it feels to be shadowed by suspicious store managers or prejudiced cops; simply showing up to class can be a monumental task when one is struggling to feed the baby or find a place to sleep at night. Given her self-confessed privileged background, Landsman's intellectual and personal rapport with her students is impressive; they seem wonderfully comfortable telling her about their relationships, aspirations, fears and failings. The reader craves more nuanced revelations from Landsman herself, however. While she gamely tells us that white teachers "cannot reach certain students the way someone of their own skin color or culture can reach them," readers may want to know if she ever catches herself feeling ambivalent about her students, doubting their abilities for a moment or questioning her own capacity for unbiased teaching. Readers drawn to this title may be disappointed that Landsman's observations

about racism in education generally reiterate arguments already established by other writers, such as Beverly Tatum in *Why Do All the Black Kids Sit Together in the Cafeteria?* Still, this balanced, quietly impassioned account affords insight into race relations in the classroom and will appeal to parents and educators who are struggling with these issues. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Experienced teacher and Minneapolis writer Landsman (*Basic Needs: A Year with Street Kids in a City School*) here describes a typical day in an inner-city, alternative high school program. She discusses the daily trials and triumphs of her students, 75 percent or more of whom are not of European descent and many with family difficulties, children of their own to support, and daily confrontations with violence and racism. Through her experiences, Landsman portrays some of the practices that work with "nontraditional" students, such as having them write from different perspectives and offering more inclusive lessons about history, and she points out the flaws of current "one size fits all" approaches to education. This readable book conveys its message simply and powerfully. A superb addition to public and academic libraries. Mark Bay, Indiana Univ.Purdue Univ. Lib., Indianapolis Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Great textbook for school!

*A White Teacher Talks about Race* is an outstanding book about the pleasures and challenges of teaching students in an urban alternative high school. Julie Landsman's powerful book follows a "day" in her life; Landsman writes honestly about her thoughts, struggles, accomplishments and those of the students she is teaching. This book, written about real people, is easy to read. I recommend this book enthusiastically. Marya R. Levenson

I found this book to be very practical, open, insightful, but above all, honest. It was a hard first semester of Education classes for me, however, after reading this assigned book, I felt not so much inspired, but informed. There are students and situations Mrs. Landsman speaks of that education classes and textbooks can't show or teach you. There are experiences and emotions she shares that really tie the book together. Just because you aren't a teacher--or aren't just yet--for me, I personally felt as if I learned more just by considering myself: my own views, my own understanding, and especially just how many roles a teacher can play and what a significance each role holds. My best suggestion for this book: while reading, keep an open mind. You may be

surprised at what you find within yourself.

This book is a must read for all teachers. As an African American teacher, I was impressed with her clear understanding of how she fits into the big picture. With the many students of color that are going through the K-12 system, teachers often are not forced to look at race issues. She avoids many of the common cliches, but is very direct in her view. She is also hopeful for the future, despite any negative experience that she may have had with a person of color. If you are a teacher in an area where you have even one student of color, READ THIS BOOK. If you have no students of color, READ THIS BOOK.

This is a raw and heartfelt book that turns over some rocks en route to the truth. This tells the story of a white teacher, someone who grew up with certain privileges, and how this person is forever linked to the world of a black man in America. Heartfelt stories of racism, prejudice, and also hopeful, courageous and positive stories as so many of these young blacks overcome these obstacles and lead productive lives. This is a tremendous book for our time that deals with race and especially important to those of us who may not understand or appreciate how the average black person in America lives and what he/she is forced to go through in America.

Julie Landsman creates words for what most of us think and feel. As an educator of educators, this book was hugely helpful in giving me words to help teachers see the importance of teaching a multicultural perspective in the classroom.

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