**Toxic Words of Ignorance**

One of my classroom management strategies is the collaborative construction of the *words of ignorance*. Ask the students to work in groups to name the derogatory words used to describe different groups of people.  Identify these words as The Words of Ignorance”.  Have the students make a poster and put it up in your room. You will not hear these words in your room and I hear it reduces usage in other venues because oftentimes, people do not know what they actually mean.

**Gender Based or Homosexual Term**

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| Bitch | -a critical reference to females-referring to female canines who accept any male suitors and are very grouchy |
| Butch  | -refers to a lesbian who appears to have male characteristics – haircut , dress, mannerisms |
| Butt buddies | -used to describe gay males |
| Butt Pirate | -term used to assume homosexual males will rape any male they find attractive. |
| Cunt | -a critical reference to females |
| Dyke | -lesbian with male characteristics |
| Fairy | -a homosexual usually a male with female characteristics |
| Fag, Fagot | -a homosexual usually a male with female characteristics. |
| Fag Hag | -reference to a homosexual male’s closest female friend. |
| Fruitcake, Fruitcup | -a homosexual usually a male with female characteristics. |
| Gay | -homosexual male and lesbians- also used to express displeasure in something |
| “Gay as AIDS” | - saying something was extremely lame or foolish. |
| Gaytard | -a word used to describe someone who is acting silly or foolish or idiotic |
| Gay Bashing | -expression used to designate a verbal confrontation with , denigration of, or physical violence against people thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. |
| Lesbo | -refers to a woman who is a lesbian |
| Light in the Loafers | Refers to a homosexual male |
| Sissy | -A male who is thought to have female characteristics or behavior |
| That’s so Gay | -some situation or behavior that has homosexual tendencies |
| Rug muncher | -used to describe someone who is a lesbian |
| Rule of Thumb | -originated as a law by Sir Francis Buller in 1886 saying that a man could beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. |
| Slut | -a sexually loose person, typically female |
| Queer | -derogatory term for a homosexual person |
| Whore | -someone who has sex for money, drugs, or other favors |

**African American Terms**

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| African booty scratchers” | -means Africans are primitive, they “scratch their booty on trees”  like animals. |
| African round ball –     (Basket ball) | -refers to basketball because commonly played game with African Americans |
| Afro- engineering, Afro American Ingenuity  | -Similar to nigger rigged |
| Black Mark | -a mark representing something bad or wrong made next to someone’s name |
| Boy | boy (in reference to an adult African American)- whites referred to blacks (adult men) as boy to suggest they where not equal |
| Brooklyn Dark for  Brooklyn Park MN | -refers to the dominant Black population of this first ring suburb of Minneapolis MN |
| Brown Town | -refers to a section of North Minneapolis on West Broadway |
| Coon | -A black person-   A building constructed to hold slaves-   Portuguese barracoos (possibly) |
| Cotton picking time, Cotton picker | -referring to someone being slow |
| Cotton Top | -diminutive reference to old black people with white hair (Q-tip) |
| Hood Rat | -a black prostitute on crack cocaine |
| Jaywalker | -An offensive term describing African-Americans, used by white people, when they do not want African-Americans to know they are talking about them. Term was formed in Northeast Atlanta. Probably because of African-Americans tendency to not use crosswalks when defiantly crossing busy roads.-Someone who crosses the street illegally(urbandictionary.com) |
| Money in the Middle | -a childhood game that refers to “keep away” or the act of keeping an object away from a person in between two other individuals |
| Nigger, Nig, Nig Nog | -A black person-   may be used to refer to any person of darker skin color -   derived from Negro which means black in a number of languages |
| Nigger Head | -refers to having rocks in their heads for lower intelligence |
| Nigger-Knocking  | -refers to the act of ringing a person’s doorbell and running away before the door is answered.  Also has been referenced to mean “when people in a vehicle stick a board out the window and knock down a black person who is walking along the road”. |
| Nigger knots | The curly hair at the back of a neck line |
| Nigger Rigged/ Jerry-rig/Jimmy-Rig | -something fixed or created without a plan or direction-   stuck together without  thought |
| Nigger Toes | -Brazil nuts thought to look like a African’s big toe |
| Oreo Cookie | -refers to a person who is black on the outside but white on the inside-refers to black people who act white |
| Pickaniny | -Black child-derived from Spanish term peque nino meaning little boy-in South Africa picannin is used |
| Porch Monkey | -refers to an African American person who is lazy and sits on his/her porch all day |
| Saggin | -“Niggas” spelled backwards. Derogatory term for African Americans –also implies pants that sag down. |
| Shiner | -refers to the appearance that of an African American’s skin |
| Slope Head | -refers to a head shaped like that of a “cave man”, insinuates a large head and a small brain. |
| Smellian | -derogatory term used for people of Somalian descent. Insinuates that they smell bad. |
| Tootsie | -refers to black people from Tootsie Pop |
| Twist-Cone | -refers to a person who is biracial (African American and White) |
| Uncle Toms | -term used for African Americans, Latino or Asian who pander to White people-   A “sellout”  taken from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* |
| “Jones” a cigarrette | -refers to the “Jones” being a common last name for blacks and that blacks are always being given handouts |
| Ghetto | - One who lives in low income areas |
| Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Moe, Catch a Nigger by the Toe | -Children’s game referring to catching an escaping slave |

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| **White American**Blonde Moment | -referring to women particularly with blonde hair as being stupid |
| Cracker | -poor Southern-   poor white trash-   1st used in 19th century to mean white people of European descent (blonde hair – blue eyes) |
| Drive White | -refers to driving poorly |
| Free White and 21 | -refers to white privilege being white, free and over the age of 21 |
| Gringo | - a white person from the United States, term used by Mexicans because for them “American” does not only refer to United Stateans but to everyone from Alaska to Argentina. Sometimes but not always derogatory (note tone & context). |
| Honky | -offensive term used to refer to a white person-   derived from hunkie or honky-talk or the perceived nasal quality of speech compared to black speech |
| Milk | -derogatory term meaning white person |
| Red Neck, Hick | -derogatory term or name generally used to refer to a white person who acts in a certain manner |
| WASP | -White Anglo Saxon Protestant |
| White Boy | -as in play that funky music white boy, which can refer to someone as being uncool, square, or in general, a bad dancer |
| Whiter than white | -referring to someone who is very pale or ghostly white |
| White trash | -an unrefined white person usually low income and poorly educated |
| Wigger | -White person acting like a black person |

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**European Decent**

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| Polish Road Block | -Yelling at two cars driving the same speed side by side down the freeway is a Polish roadblock |
| Bo hunk | -   refers to a person of eastern central European descent .-   Commonly used to refer to Ukrainian immigrants during early 20th century. |
| Frog | -   A French person-   comes from the French recipe for eating frog’s legs-   Also used in Canada to refer to both French and French Canadians |
| Go Dutch | -   the female pays or-   each pays for their own-   refers to Dutch being cheap |
| Kraut | -   Derogatory US and British term for a German person-   used mostly in World War II |
| Mick | -   used to refer to an person of Irish descent-   from the prefix Mc or Mac meaning son commonly found in Irish surnames |
| Polack  | -   a person who from Poland or Polish descent a Pole  |
| Wop | -a racial term used to refer to a aperson of Italian decent-derived from Italian word “guappo” meaning thug |
| Yankee | -a term used derogatorily toward white people who are from the north or “like black people too much.” |
| Guido | -a term used to refer to people of Italian descent |

**German**

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| Hun | -referred to the German barbarians |
| Fritz | -a derogatory term for Germans used by the British in WWII |
| Heinie | -modification of the anem Heinrich, could be intended to mean idiot or moron |
| Jerry Rig | -To fix an object (usually mechanical) to a working condition in a haphazard way. Also known as doing a MacGyver on it. This can apply to any non working thing, to fix it in a nonconventional way. This term was created during WW2, in reference to the Germans who were referred to as "Jerries" as slang. Allies often came across hastily repaired objects left by the Germans hence the term Jerry-Rig came to be. (urbandictionary.com) |
| Kraut | -based on German’s preference for sauerkraut |
| Nazi | -based on history, often used to reference those who exert absolute control |

**Muslim**

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| Arabic Shower  | Referring from refraining from showering during times of fasting and just using perfume/ deodorant |
| Camel Jockey | -refers to a person of Middle Eastern descent – Muslim male |
| Ham Sandwich | -derogatory term for Muslims |
| Rag Head/Towel Head | -an ethnic slur against people who wear traditional or cultural head covering-   examples turbans, hijib, keffiyehs |
| Sand Niggers | -derogatory or pejorative term for any person of middle eastern descent |

 **Asian**

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| Asian Invasion | -refers to a general majority change of incoming personnel (or any group) being of Asian heritage. |
| Bag | -refers to girl of Asian descent with large chest (urbandictionary.com) |
| Chinese Fire Drill | -a large confused action by a group of individuals accomplishing nothing |
| Chink/Chinaman | -refers to people of perceived Chinese descent-   Contraction of Chinese-   describes the shape of the eyes –chinks-   considered extremely derogatory\-   although at least one US school used the term as a sports mascot in the 1980s |
| Gook | -An Asian person  by extension of terms ‘hangook’ and ‘migook’-   Can be used to indicate an enemy-   Example term used to refer to Korean people in Korean War or-   Vietnamese people in Vietnam War |
| Jap | -short for Japanese-Lower level of offensiveness |
| Nip or Nippon | -highly derogatory term for someone of Japanese descent-   Shortened version from Nipponese from the Japanese name for Japan – Nippon |
| Orientals  | -an Eastern Asian Person-   term considered offensive by some Asians because they consider thing Oriental such as rugs, art, etc and people are Asian |
| Pan face | -The facial features of Asians seem to be flatter than other races- looking as if they were hit by a pan |
| Rice burner | -The term rice burner refers to automobiles that have the appearance of high performance but possibly with little or no functional mechanical modifications. The "rice" refers to the fact that many of these modified cars are of Japanese origin and owners or drivers are often but not necessarily Asian. Drivers of rice burners are known as "ricers" or "rice boys". These terms are often used as a pejorative or ethnic slur. (slangdictionary.com) |
| Slant-Eye | -a term used to describe an Asian person’s eyes when they are closed |
| Zipperhead | Coined by US Soldiers during the Korean War, if Asians were shot in the head with high powered weapons- their heads split as if you were unzipping them. |
| Ricer | -Souped-up japanese cars that were favored by some of the hmong population as "ricers", |

 **Native American**

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| Acting Like an Apple | -refers to a Native American appearing red on the outside and white on the inside |
| Another Dead Indian  | Referring to an empty booze or beer bottle. |
| Eskimo  | - an offensive term to Inuits, and that it was similar to calling a Native Indian "redskin". I've never used it, but I've only heard it used for someone who likes/lives in the cold. |
| Geromino  | -the mission to find Osama Bin Laden was called, derogatory towards Native Americans to use a name of someone from their history they are proud of to capture a terrorist. |
| Hold Down the Fort | This saying could be seen as negative and racially offensive to some people because it originally meant to watch and protect from "vicious" Native American intruders. |
| Indian Burn | - when you grab a persons fore arm with both your hands and then twist in opposite directions.  Maybe it's because it leaves your skin red?  |
| Indian Giver/Indian Giving | -  Slur against Native Americans implying dishonesty but is applied to any individual from any racial background-to give something then want it back |
| Indian summer | -referencing the Native American disregard for finish (due)dates |
| Indian Time | -no regard to scheduled time or appointments examples late to work, start the meeting late |
| Indian Song | One Little, Two Little , Three Little Indians...... |
| Geronimo | -war cry-   a cry to say before doing something dangerous |
| Let’s Powwow | -Let’s talk-   Let’s party |
| Low or high on the totem pole | -used to describe something or someone importance or aptitude  |
| Prairie Nigger | -A Native American Indian – Lakota |
| Rez Car | -used to describe a beat up, old, car. Insinuates that a car in this condition would belong to an American Indian on a reservation. |
| Savage | fierce, ferocious, or cruel; untamed: *savage beasts.*uncivilized; barbarous: *savage tribes.*enraged or furiously angry, as a person.unpolished; rude: *savage manners.*wild or rugged, as country or scenery: *savage wilderness.* |
| Squaw  | -offensive term referring to an Indian woman’s vaginal area |
| Sitting Indian Style | -Sitting cross legged |
| The Natives are Restless | -refers to people who can’t sit still and focus -   refers to people getting ready to fight |
| Timber Nigger | -refers to Native American tribe of Ojibwa |
| Too many Chiefs and not enough Indian | Phrase used to claim there are too many bosses, not enough workers, but also used to lament the over-education of the "masses," who should realize their place. Usually uttered by yuppies or their parents, quite confident that no one in their circle will end up a mere "Indian." |
| Wild Indians | - refers to children who are out of control |
| Wandering Off the Reservation | -refers to leaving one’s comfort zone. “I didn’t want to wander off the reservation.” Implies that American Indians have more discomfort leaving their homes (or locality) than any other heritage.  |

 **Hispanic, Mexican, Latino**

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| Beaner | -derogatory term for someone of Latino/Latina descent  |
| Brazil Nuts  | -refers to waxed male genital area (urbandictionary.com) |
| Mexican Bath or Puerto Rican Overhaul | Not bathing but putting on deodorant  |
| Mexican Chrome | Duck Tape |
| Little Mexico | -Hispanic, Latino of Mexican ghetto, neighborhood or low income area |
| Spic | -a person of Hispanic descent-   term perceived as very offensive if used by person other than Latino descent in any context-   derivation (1) no spik English, (2) from sprig in turn from spiggoty (3) Common belief abbreviation from of Hispanic although probably an anachronism. |
| Wetback | -derogatory term for a person who has immigrated illegally into the US. -   Commonly referring to Mexicans who have swam or waded across the Rio Grande River to enter the US illegally therefore getting their back wet. |
| Mexi Pack | When one loads up a car, for instance a 4-door sedan with 5 seats, so that there is a minimum of 8 people in the car. The more the Mexi-er. (urbandictionary.com) |

 **Obese/Overweight/Underweight**

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| Chunky | Too much weight |
| Eat a Sandwich | derogatory remark directed toward people who are super skinny |
| Fatty | Too much weight |
| Gordo | Spanish word meaning fat |
| Porker | Too much weight |
| 200 Pounder | Too much weight |

 **Jewish**

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| Jewbag | A slur for Jewish people |
| Getting Jewed, Jew down | -refers to stereotype that people of the Jewish faith are tight with their money-   If a person is ‘jewed’ they are outsmarted by someone who is better with money than you are |
| Heebie Jeebies | -“Heebs” = Hebrew or Jewish, heebie jeebies meaning to feel uncomfortable by someone or something |
| JAP | -abbreviation for Jewish American Princess-   meaning affluent spoiled Jewish women-   Stuck up and spoiled females of any age  does not have to Jewish may be used to describe any female persons behavior |
| Jew Fro | -hairstyle worn by people of jewish descent. It consists of curly hair and is often large.  |
| Jew town | -reference to a Jewish ghetto-   reference to an area where there is a large population of Jewish people |
| Jewed | -Cheated or outsmarted in a business deal |
| Pizza | -refers to the way those of Jewish faith were placed in ovens to be killed. |
| St. Jewish Park | -Refers to the predominant population of Jewish people in St. Louis Park MN a first ring suburb of Minneapolis |
| Kike  | -a Jewish person-   derived from kikel Yiddish word meaning circle -   Immigrant Jews signed legal documents with an O (similar to X) |
| “That’s jewish” | It was very common for students at our high school to say "that's jewish" when they meant something was stupid. |

**Toxic Words Pertaining to Anyone**

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| Above ground and out of jail | -   refers to someone who is still alive and not in jail that continue on with their life |
| Airhead | -   refers to people who are not smart-   suggests head are full of air |
| Bag | -to get someone to sleep with you-refers to someone you would only sleep with if they had a bag over their head(urbandictionary.com) |
| Bastard | -a term that refers to someone with an illegitimate father. Used as “lazy” bastard often times. |
| Bitch | -a critical reference to females-   referring to female canines who accept any male suitors and are very grouchy |
| Blue Hairs | -old women -   refers to old people |
| Cake Eaters | Those of a higher socioeconomic status |
| Coconut | -refers to a person of Pacific Islander descent |
| Crack head | -a person on crack -a moron(urbandictionary.com) |
| Cunt | -offensive word-   refers to genitals – vagina-   woman of low morals and intelligence |
| Dinks | -Couple with income and no kids |
| Dirka Dirka | -mocking term towards Middle Eastern descent people and the way they speak |
| Do me a solid | -Help out a friend. (urbandictionary.com) |
| Don’t drink the kool-aid | -meaning don’t give into something or believe everything you hear-derogatory towards those that were part of the Jamestown Massacre, who were lead to their suicide by drinking “kool-aid” laced with cyanide. (Wikipedia.com) |
| Dork or Dweeb | -referring to someone who is intelligent and may have interests pertaining to school or studying.  Also can be interchanged with nerd or four-eyes. |
| Douche bag, D-Bag, Douche | -a critical reference to males |
| Drunken Sailor  | -refers to the drinking behaviors of men in the Naval branch of the armed forces when they are on leave-   drunkenness |
| Drive Like an Old Lady | -Someone who drives poorly |
| EMO | -a subculture of teens that are described as full of angst and turmoil |
| FOB (Fresh off the boat) | -refers to recent immigrants and insinuates a lack of common sense |
| Geez or Jeez | -Derivative of Jesus. |
| Getting gypped or jipped | -comes from gypsy-   meaning someone who is trying to take advantage of another person or cheat them |
| Ghetto | -term that is used to describe something that is bad or poor such as an area, neighborhood or behavior |
| Grow a pair | -telling someone that they should get up the guts to do something |
| Gyp or Gypped or Jipped | -refers to gypsy who through stereotype are considered thieves and dishonest, cheaters |
| Homey/hood/Holmes | -a friend from your demographic neighborhood-   someone from the same gang |
| Lame | -just plain stupid, un-original, or lifeless. Barbed wire tattoos, butterflies, and tribal tattoos are lame, they say a lot about the person who gets them. (urbandictionary.com) |
| Like a Girl | -negative term used to denote anything that is done with less skill especially physical aptitude-   Example such as when a male throws a ball like a girl |
| Man up | -telling someone to be brave |
| Mental | when something is crazy |
| Mighty Whita Ya | -racist and white supremacy attitude that nice things are done for others by white people. |
| Pasta Puttanesca | “in the style of the whore”refers to an actual dish,  a sauce invented and made by prostitutes, it is said that pasta puttanesca was designed to lure customers with its aroma. |
| Queer | -a person who is not “right” or mentally imbalanced in some way-   a person who is gay or lesbian |
| Right-Hand Man | -referring to a person who sits beside someone powerful and is useful to that person.  Referring to slavery or a servant |
| Retard, Tard | -originally a term used to identify a person who is mentally challenged or developmentally delayed |
| Ring Around the Rosy | -song about children dying of the bubonic plague |
| Rule of Thumb | The actual meaning was derived when men could beat their wives and children with a switch as long as it was not any larger than their thumb.   |
| Schmuck | -metaphorical meaning: a prick, an asshole, etc (urbandictionary.com) |
| Screwed | -To be in serious trouble. - A word describing something in a state of disrepair. - A word to describe a person who is heavily under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotic material, to an extent where it affects their behavioral patterns.-describes someone who just had sex -the position that is a result of a problem or bad situation that seems impossible to solve/get out of (urbandictionary.com) |
| Senior Moment | -refers to senior citizens as absent minded, forgetful, dementia |
| Shaggin Wagon | -Derivative of, Love Wagon, which usually refers to a VW Camper. (urbandictionary.com) |
| Short Bus/Tard Cart/Sped Sled | -Refers to slow thinking, someone not as bright- as in the rode the shorter bus to school usually reserved for students who have special needs. |
| Such a Pussy | -similar to like a girl-   meant as a derogatory statement of calling someone – a male out as a feminine |
| That’s Ghetto | -some situation or behavior that has lower class or poverty tendencies |
| That’s Retarded/ That’s Gay/ That’s Crazy/ That’s Mental/That’s psycho/ He/She is bipolar | -some situation or behavior that refers to lower mental capacity -being dumb or stupid |
| Tracks | -refers to “Wrong side of the tracks” indicating people from the poor side of town |
| Trailer Trash | -refers to people who live in a trailer home and presumably have less money and/or live in poverty-   Also the name of a Twin Cities band |
| Tree-Huggers | - people who are active in the environmental movement |
| USA | Chanted to mean “You Suck Ass” |
| Wife-Beater T-Shirt | -an article of clothing worn by someone who lives in a trailer and beats his spouse or significant other |
| Whoring Around /Hoe/skank/skeet/hoochie | -a person who engages in sexual activity in exchange for money-   sexual promiscuity  or suspected by the way the person dresses |
| Window Licker | -a mentally handicapped person who licks the windows of the “short bus” (see above) |
| Your Mom | Term used when you can't think of anything else to say. Usually funny, although some people find it offensive. It usually doesn't make any sense. (urbandictionary.com) |
| Yuppie | -Young Urban Professional or young upwardly mobile professional-   characteristics include self-reliant, financially secure, well educated, individualists |

Andrew Bocchi Feb 14, 2011 6:04 PM

I believe that something is only offensive if somebody is offended. While it is true that there are some outdated sayings out there that offend certain people, I feel that more often than not, the offense was unintentional.

Language is a living entity, which, like any living thing, evolves over time. Thus, old words tend to acquire alternative meanings. The offensive words in these old sayings become synonyms for something else, and the word gradually becomes disassociated from its original definition.