



Welcome to **Week 2 of Cultivating Justice: A Quest Toward Racial Equity**. Last week you had the opportunity to listen to the stories and experiences of people who live right here in the Cedar Valley. This week you will be (re)introduced to terms and concepts that will help you “engage and support community anti-racism coalitions and initiatives” ([Racial Equity Tools](#)).

WELCOME: [Watch this video](#) by Cedar Falls Mayor Rob Green as he welcomes you to the Quest and discusses the issue of racism.

MISSION: Visit the “[Define](#)” page on the Quest website. What definitions were new to you? Are there disagreements in our community around the definitions of terms? Consider how definitions aid or limit racial justice work in your community.

CONTEMPLATE: Language matters. It reflects and shapes how we see people, places, and things. It directs our attention, asking us to notice certain things while evading others. In an essay on [why words matter in the struggle for racial justice](#), Senior Fellow Jennifer S. Vey and Senior Research Analyst Hanna Love explain,

“Journalists, practitioners, and researchers...often employ short-hand labels such as ‘distressed places,’ ‘struggling neighborhoods,’ ‘high-crime areas,’ or any such combination of ‘deficit’ plus ‘geography’ to describe communities impacted by racism, disinvestment, physical destruction, and economic exclusion. But just like the labels we attach to people, such language reduces these communities to only their challenges, while concealing the [systemic forces](#) that caused those challenges and the [systemic solutions](#) needed to combat them.”

How do people in the Cedar Valley use language to describe places that have been affected by racism? What is the impact of this language on our communities? How does it conceal or reveal racism? How can you commit to using more just language to describe places?

COMMUNITY ASSIGNMENT: Intersectionality is a theory of identity *and* of oppression. [Kimberlé Crenshaw](#) (1989), a lawyer and legal scholar, was the first to use the word *intersectionality* to describe how the oppression faced by Black women was distinct from oppression solely from race or sex. Read this [explanation of intersectionality](#) extracted from UNI Professors Catherine H. Palczewski, Victoria DeFrancisco, and Danielle Dick McGeough’s book

Gender in Communication: A Critical Introduction. Then [watch this video](#) created by Interactive Digital Studies students Mac Vos, Darnell Eveleth, and Jacob Chaplin that uses music as a metaphor for the concept of intersectionality.

REFLECT & DISCUSS:

1. Which explanation of intersectionality helps you understand it most: the mathematical, musical, or baking explanation? Based on your understanding, how would you describe intersectionality?
2. Identify five key ingredients and/or notes that make up your intersectional identity. Reflect on how they intersect with each other. Consider how power relations influence them.
3. What are ways that people resist intersectionality? In other words, how do people, language, laws, or systems try to keep race, sex, gender, and class separate? Who benefits from this separation? Why must we insist on an intersectional approach to understanding social injustices?
4. How was intersectionality present in the stories you listened to during Week One of the Quest? How does understanding the concept of intersectionality change your understanding of that material?