

**Privilege** is a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor (Merriam Webster, 2020). It is “a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group” (Ferguson, 2014) or lack of a specific disadvantage. Privilege is a right or exemption from liability or duty granted as a special benefit or advantage.

**Oppression** is the result of the use of institutional privilege and power, wherein one person or group benefits at the expense of another.

It is important to consider the institutional power of privilege and oppression in our schools. For example, consider the **achievement gap**, or the “gap in grades and scores between white (and some Asian American) students and most students of color . . . For the gap is not a natural phenomenon. It is the measure of constructed difference, a difference that pretends that the racial and class privilege in America is simply a matter of objective meritocracy” (Ayers, 2018, para. 2).

It is critical that special education practitioners acknowledge and consider these kinds of differences. We must do the hard work and self-reflect on our role within this institution. Then, we can better be prepared to start dismantling it.