

Articles for Further Reading

**They Aren't Too Young:
Anti-Bias Education for All Children**



Understanding Anti-Bias Education: Bringing the Four Core Goals to Every Facet of Your Curriculum

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Anti-bias education is not just doing occasional activities about diversity and fairness topics (although that may be how new anti-bias educators begin). To be effective, anti-bias education works as an underpinning perspective, which permeates everything that happens in an early childhood program—including your interactions with children, families and coworkers—and shapes how you put curriculum together each day.

This article is an excerpt of the second edition of *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards. An NAEYC bestseller, this book helps early childhood educators fulfill their mission of helping all children reach their full potential. The new edition—with major updates to all chapters, including gender identity—will be available early in 2020.

The four core goals of anti-bias education

Four core goals provide a framework for the practice of anti-bias education with children. Grounded in what we know about how children construct identity and attitudes, the goals help you create a safe, supportive learning community for every child. They support

children's development of a confident sense of identity without needing to feel superior to others; an ease with human diversity; a sense of fairness and justice; the skills of empowerment; and the ability to stand up for themselves or for others.

Goal 1: Identity

- **Teachers will nurture each child's construction of knowledgeable, confident, individual personal and social identities.**
- **Children will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.**

This goal means supporting children to feel strong and proud of who they are without needing to feel superior to anyone else. It means children will learn accurate, respectful language to describe who they and others are. Teachers will support children to develop and be comfortable within their home culture and within the school culture. Goal 1 is the starting place for all children, in all settings.

Adding to early childhood education's long-term commitment to nurturing each child's individual, personal identity, anti-bias education emphasizes the important idea of nurturing children's social (or group) identities. Social identities relate to the significant group categorizations of the society in which we grow up and live and which individuals share with many others. Social identities include (but are not limited to) gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic class groups. (In the forthcoming book, social identity is described in detail in Chapter 2.) A strong sense of both individual and group identities is the foundation for the three other core anti-bias goals.

Goal 2: Diversity

- **Teachers will promote each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.**
- **Children will express comfort and joy with human diversity, use accurate language for human differences, and form deep, caring connections across all dimensions of human diversity.**

This goal means guiding children to be able to think about and have words for how people are the same and how they are different. It includes helping children feel and behave respectfully, warmly, and confidently with people who are different from themselves. It includes encouraging children to learn both about how they are different from other children and about how they are similar. These are never either/or realities because people are *simultaneously* the same and different from one another. This goal is the heart of learning how to treat all people caringly and fairly.

Some teachers and parents are not sure they should encourage children to “notice” and learn about differences among people. They may think it is best to teach only about how people are the same, worrying that talking about differences causes prejudice. While well intentioned, this concern arises from a mistaken notion about the sources of bias. Differences do not create bias. *Children learn prejudice from prejudice*—not from learning about human diversity. It is how people respond to differences that teaches bias and fear.

Another misconception about Goal 2 is that exploring differences among people ignores appreciating the similarities. Goal 2 calls for creating a balance between exploring people’s differences and similarities. All human beings share similar biological attributes, needs, and rights (e.g., the needs for food, shelter, and love; the commonalities of language, families, and feelings) and people live and meet these shared needs and rights in many different ways. A basic premise in anti-bias education is “*We are all the same. We are all different. Isn’t that wonderful!*”

Goal 3: Justice

- **Teachers will foster each child’s capacity to critically identify bias and will nurture each child’s empathy for the hurt bias causes.**
- **Children will increasingly recognize unfairness (injustice), have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.**

This goal is about building children’s innate, budding capacities for empathy and fairness, as well as their cognitive skills for thinking critically about what is happening around them. It is about building a sense of safety, the sense that everyone can and will be treated fairly.

Learning experiences include opportunities for children to understand and practice skills for identifying unfair and untrue images (stereotypes), comments (teasing, name-calling), and behaviors (isolation, discrimination) directed at themselves or at others. This includes issues of gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability, economic class, age, body shape, and more. These are early lessons in critical thinking for children, figuring out what they see and hear and testing it against the notions of kindness and fairness.

These lessons build on young children's implicit interest in what is "fair" and "not fair."

As children come to identify unfair experiences and as they learn that unfair can be made fair, children gain an increased sense of their own power in the world. Children cannot construct a strong self-concept, or develop respect for others, if they do not know how to identify and resist hurtful, stereotypical, and inaccurate messages or actions directed toward themselves or others. Developing the ability to think critically strengthens children's sense of self, as well as their capacity to form caring relationships with others.

Goal 4: Activism

- **Teachers will cultivate each child's ability and confidence to stand up for oneself and for others in the face of bias.**
- **Children will demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.**

Goal 4 is about giving children tools for learning how to stand up to hurtful and unfair biased behavior based on any aspect of social identity. Biased behavior may be directed at oneself or another. It may come from another child or adult or from children's books, television, and films. This goal strengthens children's development in perspective taking, positive interactions with others, and conflict-resolution education.

Actions of teasing, rejection, and exclusion because of some aspect of a child's social identities are a form of aggressive behavior. They are just as serious as physical aggression. The old saying "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" is false. Children's developing sense of self is hurt by name-calling, teasing, and exclusion based on identity. And children who engage in such hurtful behaviors are learning it is acceptable to hurt others, the earliest form of bullying. An anti-bias approach calls on teachers to intervene gently but firmly, support the child who is the target of the biased behavior, and help both children learn other ways of interacting.

Children’s growth on Goal 4 strengthens their growth on the other three goals. If a child is the target of prejudice or discrimination, she needs tools to resist and to know that she has worth (Goal 1). When a child speaks up for another child, it reinforces his understanding of other people’s unique feelings (Goal 2). When children are helped to act, it broadens their understanding of “unfairness” and “fairness” (Goal 3).

Guidelines for your curriculum

Just about every subject area in the typical early childhood program has possibilities for anti-bias education themes and activities. For instance, early childhood education themes of self-discovery, family, and community are deeper, and more meaningful, when they include explorations of ability, culture, economic class, gender identity, and racialized identity. So, too, issues of fairness (Goal 3) and acting for fairness (Goal 4) arise as children explore various curriculum topics.

Differences do not create bias. Children learn prejudice from prejudice—not from learning about human diversity. It is how people respond to differences that teaches bias and fear.

The ideas for specific anti-bias education content and activities come from three major sources. One is from children’s questions, interests, or interactions with each other that classroom teachers see as important to respond to and develop. Teacher-initiated activities are a second source of anti-bias activities, based on what classroom teachers and families think is important for children to learn. A third source is significant events that occur in the children’s communities and the larger world that classroom teachers think need to be explored with children.

Here is an example of an anti-bias education topic at snack time.

It is snack time in the 4-year-old room. The teacher sets a small pitcher of water on the table for children to pour and drink. Lupe, whose home language is Spanish, looks up and asks, “Agua?” Casey, sitting next to her, says with annoyance, “No! It’s water—not ahhgwa” (exaggerating the pronunciation). The teacher stops what she is doing and turns to Casey and says, “Lupe is right. What you call ‘water’ her

family calls ‘agua.’ There are many words for water, for crackers, for oranges, for everything! We all have words. We have different words. It’s pretty wonderful!”

At group time, the teacher follows up by asking children about the different words they have for people in their family. As the children call out Grandma, Oma, Pops, Daddy, Papa, Abuelita, and more, she writes them on a chart. She assures them that none of the words are wrong. They are just different. And they all mean someone who loves them.

Meet anti-bias goals in every corner of the classroom

The ongoing examination of how people are simultaneously the same and different provides children with a conceptual framework for thinking about the world they live in. For example, children playing with blocks can learn that although some children like to build tall towers and some like to build long, flat structures on the floor, all the children like to build. Art projects can show enthusiasm and admiration for blacks and browns along with all the other wonderful colors of the spectrum. The common curriculum topic of harvest time can include respecting and making visible the people who grow, pick, and transport our food.

Everyday activities offer opportunities for Goals 3 and 4 as well. Arguments over toys can include discussion of fairness and kindness. Exclusionary play, stereotypes in books, or teasing are experiences open to critical thinking about hurtful behavior and for problem solving toward just solutions.

Planning Anti-Bias Education Activities for Your Program’s Curriculum

An anti-bias education approach is not a recipe. Rather, teachers include anti-bias issues in their planning by considering the children and families they serve and the curriculum approach their program uses. Here are key questions to ask yourself as you and your colleagues plan learning activities and environments. Begin by asking yourself these questions for one or two activities a week, and see how they change what you do and how the children respond.

- Where do I best fit anti-bias goals and issues into my curriculum plans for the day and the week?
- Who might be left out of this curriculum? How will I use the topic to include each child, connecting to the diversity of their social identities and to their individual needs? How can I be sure no one is invisible or unnoticed?
- What ideas, misconceptions, and stereotypes might children have about this topic? How can I learn what these are and provide accurate information and counter misinformation and stereotypes?
- How can I use this topic to support and strengthen children's innate sense of justice and their capacity to change unfair situations to fair ones?
- What learning materials do I need to gather to incorporate an anti-bias perspective into this curriculum topic?

Use child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities

Children's questions, comments, and behaviors are a vital source of anti-bias curriculum. They spark teachable moments as well as longer-term projects. However, it is not sufficient to do anti-bias activities only when a child brings up a relevant issue. Teacher-initiated activities are also necessary—be they intentionally putting out materials and books to broaden children's awareness or planning specific learning experiences around issues that matter to families and the community.

You do not wait for children to open up the topic of reading or numbers before making literacy and numeracy part of the daily early childhood curriculum. Because you have decided that these understandings and skills are essential for children, you provide

literacy and numeracy discussions and activities in your classroom. A balance between child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities is as vital in anti-bias education as in any other part of the early childhood curriculum.

Here's an example of how a teacher begins with a children-generated teachable moment and follows up with teacher-initiated activities:

After a windstorm broke dozens of small branches off of the trees surrounding their preschool, several 4- and 5-year-old boys begin building a "club house" by dragging branches and bunches of leaves to a corner in the playground fence. Valeria (4 years old) starts dragging a branch to join them and the boys shout, "No girls allowed! No girls allowed!"

The teacher considers encouraging the boys to welcome their classmate into their play—but then she hesitates. There are larger societal issues embedded in this interaction. As an anti-bias educator, she decides she needs to address the underlying ideas, especially that girls can't or shouldn't engage in play that emphasizes physical strength or that "real boys" don't include girls in their play.

Deciding to find out what the children are thinking, the teacher asks, "Why do you think no girls are allowed?" She listens carefully to the boys' responses: "Girls can't move the big branches." "And they can't build high!" "We're going to be superheroes! Girls can't be heroes." And, finally, "We don't like girls." All these statements reflect commonly held stereotypes about girls. Additionally, she thinks, not seriously addressing the situation reinforces the additional stereotype that boys don't have to pay attention to the feelings of others.

Seeing an opportunity to expand their thinking, the teacher suggests testing these claims. She says, "Well, let's find out if girls can move the big branches and build high or not." Since many of the children are now gathering around, she invites

everyone to join in the challenge. “What do you think is going to happen?” she asks. With much laughter the children run and gather branches. Some girls are faster than some boys, some boys are faster than some girls. Everyone is able to add branches to the club house, which is suddenly much higher!

Bringing the children back together, the teacher says, “It looks like both girls and boys can lift big branches and build high. Thinking that boys would be better at these things than girls was a stereotype.” Several children repeat the word stereotype (preschoolers love big words!). Still holding their attention, the teacher clarifies and gives words to the program’s values: “Stereotypes are unfair. In our school we want everyone to be treated fairly. What can we do so that we can be sure that we play together fairly?” The next steps are suggested by the children. One suggestion is a sign that says “Everyone can play here.” “How about,” says one of the boys who began this episode, “how about if we want to play alone, we just say ‘you can have a turn in a few minutes’?”

Knowing that one interaction is never enough to help children think in new ways, the teacher plans and carries out further activities. She adds to the classroom library books in which female athletes and firefighters are strong and fast. At circle time, she reads books in which girls and boys play together in big muscle games. She invites a female carpenter in to help the children build with real tools. And she begins a curriculum on “Being a hero,” about all the ways boys and girls can be powerful helpers.

In the next staff meeting, the teacher relates what she has done and is planning to do, and why. She asks her colleagues to consider the frequency of gendered exclusionary play in the program and they agree to take the important step of identifying how (explicitly and implicitly) they may be supporting a binary view of gender (see Chapter 9 in the

forthcoming book) in their classroom. For example, how often do they call out “boys and girls” rather than “children”? Do they ask “strong boys” to help move furniture and big blocks? Do they comment on girls’ clothing or hair instead of asking about their interests and accomplishments?

Do they support boys’ tender, sharing, inclusive behaviors or mainly comment on their noisy, power-focused play? The teachers agree to observe each other as well as the children and see what changes they can make to avoid the damage that gender stereotypes have on children’s sense of themselves and of others.

Using a combination of child-initiated, teachable moments and teacher-initiated, pre-planned activities is the most effective way to expand children’s ability to grow in the four anti-bias education goals and to talk about, think about, and understand the world around them.

Pay attention to the realities of children’s lives

While the four core anti-bias education goals are the same for all children, specific activities should be relevant to the children’s backgrounds and their lives. Some children need support to resist messages of racial or cultural inferiority; others need guidance to develop a positive self-concept without absorbing social messages that they are the “normal” ones and other children are less than, strange, or negatively different. Children of wealthy families need help resisting the message that material accumulation defines their worth and that of others; children of families with fewer resources need support to resist messages that undercut their families’ worth. Some girls may need extra support to develop confidence and interest in experiences that are math and science related; some boys may require help to develop skills for having nurturing, cooperative interactions with their peers and to engage in play that reflects these attitudes.

Closing thoughts

As in all other areas of the curriculum, teachers tailor and scaffold anti-bias education materials and activities to each child's cognitive, social, and emotional developmental capacities. They plan and choose learning experiences that stimulate children to explore the next step of new ideas and skills and allow each child to apply new understandings and behaviors in his or her daily life.

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Audience: *Administrator (director or principal), Faculty, Student (higher education), Teacher, Trainer*

Age: *Early Primary, Infant/Toddler, Kindergarten, Preschool*

Topics: *Other Topics, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Equity, Anti Bias*



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Moving Beyond Anti-Bias Activities: Supporting the Development of Anti-Bias Practices

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Supporting the Development of Anti-Bias Practices

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“My dad is thiiiiis black!”

“Why does she wear that scarf on her head?”

“My mom makes me give toys I don’t like to poor kids who don’t have any.”

“Only girls can be nurses.”

These comments, while typical of young children, can stop a teacher in her tracks. How should teachers respond? Children’s comments can sometimes fluster both new and experienced teachers—even those who support equity and diversity in schools. While teaching at the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School at Tufts University, this article’s authors explored what it means to embrace an anti-bias stance every day. They found that adopting an anti-bias perspective requires more than implementing a few well-meaning activities. Instead, doing so asks educators to think differently about their work, take personal and professional risks, and put new ideas and beliefs into practice. The teachers at Eliot-Pearson developed a framework to guide their anti-bias work and support their anti-bias planning and practice as they moved forward (Kuh et al. 2011).

What is anti-bias education?

Anti-bias education is a way of teaching that supports children and their families as they develop a sense of identity in a diverse society. It helps children learn to be proud of themselves and their families, respect a range of human differences, recognize unfairness and bias, and speak up for the rights of others (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010). Children tell us every day via their comments, play, and peer interactions that they notice social issues, are curious about differences, and want more information. So what do schools and teachers need to do?

In many ways, anti-bias education may not be so different from the kind of teaching that educators already do. For example, when children notice butterflies in the garden, teachers might notice and respond to children's curiosity as an opportunity for extending curriculum, and then provide books and other materials about life cycles. But when it comes to talking about race, class, gender, family structure, or ability, teachers might consciously, or even unconsciously, avoid elaborating on these topics.

Anti-bias curriculum topics often come from the children, families, and teachers, as well as from historical or current events. Anti-bias education happens in both planned curriculum and natural teachable moments based on children's conversations and play. Teachers have to balance planned anti-bias teaching experiences, such as mixing paint to match skin color, with seizing emergent opportunities to engage children by responding to their questions and observations. This can be challenging, and requires the ability to see anti-bias work as an opportunity to teach (as opposed to overcoming a problem). Embracing an anti-bias stance helps teachers to develop innovative practices tailored to the populations they serve. It might be difficult to know where to start, and there is not always an easy answer. It is important for teachers to find a balance between addressing children's needs and not upsetting families, and at the same time to take a stand that may be socially or politically charged. Does all this belong in the early education setting? Is it part of teaching?

A framework for anti-bias teaching

The Eliot-Pearson Children's School's long-standing commitment to anti-bias education is part of its core values and mission. However, being intentional about anti-bias education across classrooms wasn't always easy. One year, as a curriculum strategy, each classroom focused on a particular issue related to its group of children. The teachers

shared documentation and questions about this focus at monthly professional development meetings, getting and giving feedback on curriculum and teaching practices. Topics included same-sex parents, skin color and racial identity, class and power, abilities and challenges, and cultural backgrounds.

To hold themselves accountable for anti-bias work, the program’s teachers developed a tool for keeping anti-bias issues alive in the curriculum (see “Framework for Anti-Bias Teaching,” p. 59). The work of three of this article’s coauthors—Lisa (pre-K), Heidi (kindergarten), and Margaret (mixed-age first and second grade)—illustrates curriculum development prompted by the framework and support for anti-bias work for individual teachers and for the school as a whole. The framework has been modified further and discussed in more detail in *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change* (Derman-Sparks, LeeKeenan, & Nimmo 2015).

Framework for Anti-Bias Teaching

| Entry points | Feeling | Thinking | Responding | Sharing |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| What are children, teachers, and families thinking about? | What feelings come up for you? | What might be meaningful to explore with the children? | How do you implement a curriculum that supports learning? | How do you share anti-bias learning by communicating process and outcomes? |
| Consider what you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See in children’s play ■ See in the news ■ Hear families talking about ■ Think about yourself ■ Need to do to listen carefully to children and families ■ Might document to determine possible entry points | Consider how you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feel initially ■ React initially ■ Respond based on your personal experiences ■ Feel about discussing a topic with children or families | Consider planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individually ■ With your team ■ With colleagues ■ By doing more research about a topic ■ By analyzing and reviewing documentation ■ Whether an issue feels appropriate to discuss with the program’s children and families | Consider how you could <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respond in the moment ■ Respond long-term ■ Revisit or expand on the issue with children ■ Make topics accessible to children | Consider the ways you can share with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children ■ Teachers (each other) ■ Families ■ Colleagues ■ The early childhood education field |

Entry points

Entry points include identifying, provoking, or uncovering themes children are thinking about or demonstrating in their play. An entry point may be something a family brings to a teacher’s attention or something a teacher knows about a family that a child brings to the setting. It may be a topic in the media—such as an election, a demonstration, or a film—that draws attention to a particular issue. In addition to recognizing entry points educators should understand that their responses to children’s queries don’t have to be instantaneous. They may not know right away how to respond—or whether they even want to explore a particular issue with a group—but the awareness of the topic is an

important first step. Identification of entry points is at the beginning of the road map for curriculum planning. It takes place with the understanding that anti-bias issues raised are not problems to be eliminated, but rather opportunities for teaching and learning.

Margaret's First- and Second-Grade Class

In this mixed-age inclusive class, teachers hear children saying things like “That’s not fair! She gets an easier sheet than me!,” “Why does he get to use a rocking chair at meeting? Can I?,” and “I am bad at reading.” Margaret knows that children’s notions of fairness and their perceptions of themselves and others as learners provide entry points to rich conversations. Ability differences and similarities are part of a conversation that starts on the very first day of school.

Heidi's Kindergarten Class

When Heidi hears kindergartners say, “This is my ramp. This is a private ramp,” and “You can go up any ramp, if you have a lot of money. People with a lot of money can go in anywhere they want,” she realizes that children are thinking about issues of ownership, resources, and power. This “a-ha” moment inspires her to pay close attention to the language and understandings children have about social class, wealth, and privilege. As the kindergartners play, she notes that the children’s attempts to assert themselves often reference possession (“I got it first”), ownership (“That’s mine”), status (“I am the boss”), and cultural capital (“If you don’t know this movie, then you don’t know how to play”).

Lisa's Pre-K Class

For sharing time, 4-year-old Julian, who is biracial, shows photographs of an experiment he did at home in which he added cream to his mother's coffee to try to match the color of his own skin. Later, 4-year-old Tywana tells her lunch tablemates, "I'm lucky because my mom is light and my dad is dark and I am in the middle—a mix!" Hearing this, Lisa and her teaching team realize that children are grappling with racial identity. The teachers decide to work with the class to help children learn language to talk about race together.

Feeling

For each potential entry point, it is important for educators to identify their feelings related to the anti-bias issue. Teachers may not necessarily know who to talk to about their feelings, and often this is where they get stuck. Their personal experiences may drive their responses, or they may experience discomfort and ignore the topic altogether. For example, Heidi felt overwhelmed and dismayed at the play she observed, based on her own class background. Teachers often change the subject when anti-bias topics come up or redirect children to distract them from the topic at hand. At Eliot-Pearson, the framework helps teachers address ambivalent feelings they have about a topic. Discussing their feelings about a topic with colleagues can help educators gain clarity about how to manage the curriculum.

Margaret's First- and Second-Grade Class

Margaret is upset that the children in her classroom are using ability to gain social power. It bothers her that differentiating curriculum based on children's skill levels seems to be provoking competition between students, sometimes hindering their self-confidence and willingness to take academic risks. Margaret worries that by exploring and discussing abilities, children will feel singled out by their differences. Would asking students to admit that they are challenged by some assignments be comfortable or productive? Would a particular child with obvious physical

differences be able to participate in the conversation, or would classmates see him as a mascot for inclusion rather than an equal member of the class?

Heidi's Kindergarten Class

Heidi struggles with the connections she sees between kindergartners' play and issues of access, possession, and power present in our society. While she feels excited and nervous as the children explore social class concepts, she also worries about approaching a subject that seems taboo even in adult conversation. As she explores her own feelings, she wonders, "What role do teachers play that might be supporting and reinforcing ideas of ownership as power? How do our own class backgrounds affect perceptions of children, and how might our backgrounds equip us, or not, to support the children as they expand their understanding of these ideas?"

For each potential entry point, it is important for educators to identify their feelings related to the antibias issue.

Thinking

Once the teachers at Eliot-Pearson considered entry points that identified areas of interest to the children and acknowledged their own feelings, they got down to the business of thinking about potential next steps. Documentation is crucial in inspiring teachers' thinking. The documentation process involves raising questions and closely documenting children's experiences. Teachers can take photographs, listen to and record conversations, and observe and videotape children's play. They can continue to bring questions to colleagues, using the documentation to ask questions such as "What are these children working on and why?" and "What can I do in my classroom to support children's exploration and understanding of this topic?"

Initially, the kindergarten teaching team was stuck—unsure about how to explore ideas of possession and power with children this young. Teachers shared their thinking with families and colleagues, learning about the values they thought were important. Teachers began to look at power as a way to consider acts of sharing and giving (rather than having and holding)—encouraging the children to “use their powers for good.” They developed activities that asked children to think about times when they had used possession or ownership to assert power, and to generate possible solutions to fairly distributing and using classroom resources and materials

Lisa’s Pre-K Class

Lisa and the pre-K teaching team review Julian’s coffee photographs and, with his parents’ knowledge and permission, talk with him further to explore the motivation behind his experiment. He says that he is mulatto (a term that refers to someone of mixed race), but because that term has fallen out of favor in the United States, some teachers feel uncomfortable hearing and using it. Teachers begin keeping track of children’s conversations about race and skin color at play, lunch, meeting, and outdoors. Children’s comments reveal confusion about what White and Black really mean in relation to skin color. They point to each other’s clothing, noting that someone has white pants or a black shirt. As a result, the teachers think about ways to broaden and clarify skin color vocabulary before starting any skin color paint mixing.

Responding

Much of the work up until this phase involved observing, reflecting, documenting, and questioning. In the responding phase, teachers plan and implement intentional, specific experiences. Teachers choose curriculum changes to implement in the moment and through long-term planning. Again, documentation plays a part, as analysis of children’s conversations can help teachers choose what to respond to and how to respond. Teachers also offer children the skills and tools they need for specific learning experiences. In the butterfly example (from the opening page), teachers might give children opportunities to

explore with magnifying glasses and clipboards before heading out into the garden. Providing children with initial materials and experiences can support their later engagement with deeper content. With anti-bias curriculum, these guided experiences might occur by simply mixing various colors of paint before beginning to explore skin colors.

Margaret's First- and Second-Grade Class

Over the course of two months, Margaret invites visitors into the mixed-age classroom to teach and share information about many kinds of ability differences. They discuss a range of ability differences, including physical, sensory, social, emotional, communication, and cognitive. An assistive technology teacher shows the students how some children who are developing expressive language skills use computers to help them communicate their ideas. A local university student tells the children about her own reading challenges and shares a strategy she uses for tracking words on a page. A former student with vision impairment engages the children using humor by animating his voice as he tells a story. Margaret and the children create a classroom book documenting these conversations with visitors. As they revisit the book, they reflect on the idea that everyone has things they are great at and things they are working on. The children ultimately include pages about their own abilities and challenges. One child writes, "I am great at math problems. One thing that is challenging is waiting and raising my hand."



Heidi's Kindergarten Class

During a planning session, the kindergarten teachers identify three phrases that are commonly used during the children's negotiation of play: "But I got that first. It's mine," "I have the [toy], so I have to be the boss," and "We should have a rule that the person who has a thing decides the rules for the thing." Heidi talks to the children about these phrases. Children and teachers spend two meetings telling stories about times when these phrases were used to assert power over others. Heidi then presents a provocation: "Should we use the words we talked about at meeting when we use the bikes?" The children immediately chorus, "No, no. Those rules are no good. They're not fair." Over the next three weeks, kindergartners debate and develop a plan for sharing the bikes and wagons, which includes having a sign-up sheet for sharing vehicles and considering the needs of preschoolers, who are often passengers.

Lisa's Pre-K Class

Lisa and the preschool team (two White teachers and one Black teacher) spend weeks engaging with the children in sensory- and art-inspired paint-mixing activities. In doing so, the children move beyond the novelty of color mixing to focus on systematically producing a color close to their own skin. Children name their various skin color shades—bologna being the most notable! Children also dramatize the Rosa Parks story to talk about White and Black as terms attributed to whole groups of people who really aren't that exact color, and they discuss the exclusionary practices associated with those terms.

Sharing: Process and outcomes

Teachers at the Eliot-Pearson Children's School regularly use documentation to make learning visible to children, families, and school visitors (Rinaldi 2006). Teachers wanted to share what was happening with the anti-bias work and created documentation to show the scope and depth of the children's learning. The school year culminated in an anti-bias exhibition and gallery walk that was open to the public. Each classroom team made a documentation board that illustrated the different sections of the framework and shared key outcomes of the children's experiences. Visitors could share questions and comments and add their own ideas by responding to several interactive bulletin boards through writing messages on sticky notes.

Margaret's First- and Second-Grade Class

Having documented classroom learning and shared the anti-bias work with families and school visitors, Margaret and her team now feel more comfortable discussing abilities and addressing unfair language in the classroom. Margaret notes the increase in children's use of the phrases "what he's [or she's] working on" and "just right" work to explain why different children have different assignments. Children share their diverse abilities with each other by writing comments on sticky notes in response to each other's pages in the classroom book. Margaret notes how children are able to take more

academic risks and how she differentiates tasks in heterogeneous skill groups more flexibly, often referencing the classroom book when differences arise.

Heidi's Kindergarten Class

The long-term planning time and subsequent use of the sign-up sheet enable kindergartners to plan for using classroom and school resources and to express and negotiate roles, story lines, and connections rather than arguing over who gets a turn and who gets to control the play. Teachers experiment with different ways to dismiss children at choice times, so that no one "got there first." Teachers' efforts to change some classroom structures, in tandem with the plans made for sharing bikes, support teamwork and problem solving in play.

Lisa's Pre-K Class

The preschoolers share their learning by inviting families or children's caregivers who have come to school to mix paint to match their own skin colors. With the children as expert color mixers, the classroom visitors create their skin color, experiencing the expanded vocabulary about race that the children developed. On their gallery walk panel, Lisa presents information from research about race so families can see how it connects to the work in the classroom.

Conclusion

It is important to note that throughout this exploration of anti-bias topics, the teachers at the Eliot-Pearson Children's School had some key structures in place that were vital to their ability to sustain the hard work of reflective teaching, especially as related to potentially controversial topics. The following structures were included:

- **Make a commitment to anti-bias work.** The school made anti-bias education a primary focus and was dedicated to trying out new ideas; integrating theory, research, and practice; and building a culture that allowed risk taking and making mistakes—essential components of anti-bias education. For some teachers—even those familiar with anti-bias work—their understandings of this approach broadened. One teacher reflected, “I initially thought anti-bias was about race, but I see that it can incorporate many different types of bias.” Another teacher said, “I realized how frequently spontaneous teaching moments occur in the classroom. I became a better listener and was able to use everyday situations as prompts for future whole group discussions.”
- **Use tools for staying on track.** Having a tool such as the framework for anti-bias teaching supported educators as they learned to consider anti-bias issues in deeper, more holistic and intentional ways. It also held teachers accountable for keeping anti-bias education in the forefront of their teaching repertoire—implementing purposeful curriculum to move the work in the classroom forward. The framework became a filter through which teachers could discuss, plan, and gauge their work. A second teacher noted, “I feel it is important to be intentional about discussions of difference—that way children are given language and support and teachers are not caught unprepared.” Additionally, the framework gave voice to new ways of thinking for teachers and children. One teacher reflected, “Children need language and experiences to broaden their understanding about diversity. The more experiences they have, the more easily they can take an anti-bias approach themselves.”

- **Gain administrative support and dedicated meeting time for anti-bias education work.** Making anti-bias education a priority for curriculum development and professional development means providing time, funds, and resources to this effort. Debbie LeeKeenan, the director of the school, made a conscious decision to dedicate staff meeting time to anti-bias work and, as a result, teachers were engaged in monthly professional development sharing and received regular feedback on anti-bias dilemmas. Teachers used a model of critical friendship and specific protocols to guide conversations and review dilemmas and students' work (School Reform Initiative 2012). Teachers then saw staff meetings as a place to “take our data and elicit feedback and reflection from colleagues, which influences our continued implementation of the curriculum.” This kind of embedded professional development created trust among teachers and was an important venue for sharing entry points, feelings, thinking, and planning.

Working through the movements of the framework can bring up feelings of discomfort and move teachers to question which topics are introduced and how they are covered in their teaching practices. One teacher admitted, “It is still so hard to set priorities and decide what aspects of all the potential discussions get my attention, air time, group time, and curricular development.” But teachers were adamant that the work was worth the effort. Another teacher expressed it this way: “I am a learner too. Curriculum should be about actively exploring a topic with each other. I learned that part of our job as teachers is to aid children and families in areas they may be struggling with. Though our ideas and beliefs may differ, it is still our job to negotiate through these.”

Doing this work was not always easy, but it was rich, it shifted practice, and ultimately it was satisfying. Observing children as they have their own “a-ha!” moments—noticing an injustice, developing a new connection to a peer, or building an understanding of the world around them and their own role in making the world a more just place—is inspiring. It is equally satisfying to teachers to have taken a risk and stretched our own learning as a means to provide a deeper and more inclusive education for all.

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Photos: 1, © iStock; 2, courtesy of the authors

Audience: *Teacher*

Age: *Early Primary, Kindergarten, Preschool*

Topics: *Other Topics, Equity, Anti Bias, YC*

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Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

The attached charts summarize several frameworks that have been developed to describe stages of racial and ethnic identity development. We found them mostly in the psychology and therapy literature. Some were developed as a way to expand on Erik Erickson's model of human development (which goes from infancy to old age), taking into account factors such as race, gender and sexuality. Some of the frameworks are used to help therapists understand their patients more fully. The models also have broader applications for understanding how individuals function in community, family and organizational settings.

Most of the frameworks carry the same few cautions. Not every person will necessarily go through every stage in a framework. Many of the authors specifically acknowledge that the stages might also be cyclical, that people might revisit different stages at different points in their lives.

The frameworks summarized here describe people who are situated in many different ways, but they do not describe all of the possibilities. We have listed a few different frameworks that focus on the experiences of people of color, biracial people and white people in the U.S. We think they can be useful tools for self-reflection and for building empathy and understanding of people who are situated differently from ourselves.

People of Color

- People of Color Racial Identity Model (William Cross, originally developed as the Nigrescence Model of African American Identity). This framework (referenced by Barbara Burke Tatum in the companion reading) focuses on the process by which African Americans come to understand their identity.
- Filipino American Identity Development, (Kevin Nadal). This framework focuses on Filipino Americans, highlighting the experience of cultural assimilation/acculturation of a distinct ethnic group.
- Ethnic Minority Identity Development (John W. Berry). This framework focuses on the experiences of ethnic minorities, particularly immigrants to the U.S.

Bi-racial People

- Biracial Identity Development (W. S. Carlos Poston). Stages of identity development of biracial people.
- Continuum of Biracial Identity Model (Kerry Ann Rockquemore and Tracey Laszloffy). Continuum rather than staged model.
- Resolutions of Biracial Identity Tensions (Maria P. P. Root). Description of possible positive resolutions of biracial identity tensions.

White People

- White Racial Identity Model (Janet E. Helms, reference in Tatum article). This framework identifies a continuum that leads to developing an anti-racist identity.

Integrated Model ([John and Joy Hoffman](#))

Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

- This framework begins and ends with stages that are thought to be the same for all people. In between, different stages are articulated for People of Color and White People.

Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

| PEOPLE OF COLOR | BIRACIAL PEOPLE | WHITE PEOPLE |
|---|--|--|
| <p><u>Black American Racial Identity (William Cross)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PRE-ENCOUNTER: absorbed many beliefs and values of the dominant white culture, including the notion that “white is right” and “black is wrong”; de-emphasis on one’s racial group membership; largely unaware of race or racial implications 2. ENCOUNTER: forced by event or series of events to acknowledge the impact of racism in one’s life and the reality that one cannot truly be white; forced to focus on identity as a member of a group targeted by racism 3. IMMERSION/EMERSION: simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one’s racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of whiteness; actively seek out opportunities to explore aspects of one’s own history and culture with support of peers from one’s own racial background 4. INTERNALIZATION: secure in one’s own sense of racial identity; pro-black attitudes become more expansive, open, and less defensive; willing to establish meaningful relationships with whites who acknowledge and are respectful of one’s self-definition 5. INTERNALIZATION-COMMITMENT: found ways to translate one’s personal sense of blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment to concerns of blacks as a group, which is sustained over time; comfort with one’s own race and those around them | <p><u>Biracial (Poston)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PERSONAL IDENTITY: sense of self unrelated to ethnic grouping; occurs during childhood 2. CHOICE OF GROUP: as a result of multiple factors, individuals feel pressured to choose one racial or ethnic group identity over another 3. CATEGORIZATION: choices influenced by status of the group, parental influence, cultural knowledge, appearance 4. ENMESHMENT/ DENIAL: guilt and confusion about choosing an identity that isn’t fully expressive of all their cultural influences; denial of differences between the racial groupings; possible exploration of the identities that were not chosen in stages 2 and 3 5. APPRECIATION: of multiple identities 6. INTEGRATION: sense of wholeness, integrating multiple identities <p><u>Continuum of Biracial Identity Model (Kerry Ann Rockquemore and Tracey Laszloffy)</u></p> <p>Does not seek to categorize individuals into a single identity; acknowledges continuum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people may choose to identify singularly with one of their identities; • Some may blend with a primary emphasis on one identity and a secondary emphasis on the other • Some may blend two (or more) identities with equal emphasis | <p><u>White Racial Identity Model (Helms)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CONTACT: In the first stage of contact, the individual adheres to the “colorblind” motto. They see racial difference but do not find it salient and in fact may feel that racism is in fact propagated by the discussion and acknowledgement of race as an issue. In this stage, there is no conscious demonstration of racism here. This seemingly non-racist position can cover unconscious racist beliefs. If the individual is confronted with real-world experiences or knowledge that uncovers the privileges of White skin, they may move into the disintegration stage. 2. DISINTEGRATION: In this stage, because the person has new experiences which confront his prior conception of the world and because this conception is now challenged by this new information or experience, the person is often plagued by feelings of guilt and shame. These emotions of guilt and shame can be modified when the person decides to channel these emotions in a positive way but when those emotions continue to dominate, the person may move into the reintegration stage. 3. REINTEGRATION: This stage is marked by a “blame-the-victim” attitude that’s more intense than anything experienced in the contact stage. They may feel that although Whites do have privileges, it is probably because they deserve them and in are in |

Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

| PEOPLE OF COLOR | BIRACIAL PEOPLE | WHITE PEOPLE |
|---|--|---|
| <p><u>Filipino American (Nadal)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ETHNIC AWARENESS: neutral or positive feelings about all ethnic groups, including one's own; little exposure to prejudice 2. ASSIMILATION TO DOMINANT CULTURE: views only whites as positive, negative toward other ethnicities 3. SOCIAL POLITICAL AWAKENING: negative views toward whites, positive toward other ethnicities 4. PAN-ETHNIC ASIAN AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS: partiality toward Asian Americans 5. ETHNOCENTRIC REALIZATION: views oneself and other communities of color as empowering 6. INCORPORATION <p><u>Ethnic Minority (Berry)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ASSIMILATION: valuing the majority culture over one's own culture 2. SEPARATION: preserving one's culture while withdrawing from the majority culture 3. MARGINALIZATION: losing cultural contact and identification with one's culture as well as the majority culture 4. INTEGRATION: valuing and integrating one's culture as well as the majority culture | <p><u>Resolutions of Biracial Identity Tensions (Maria P.P. Root)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acceptance of the identity society assigns: identifying with the group into which others assume the biracial individual most belongs, usually with family support 2. Identification with both racial groups: Identify with both (or all) heritage groups, depending on social and personal support 3. Identification with a single racial group: Choosing one group, independent of social pressure, to identify himself or herself in a particular way 4. Identification as a new racial group: Move fluidly among racial groups but identifies most strongly with other biracial people, regardless of specific heritage backgrounds | <p>some way superior to minority groups. If the person is able to combat these feelings, they maybe able to move on to the pseudo-independence stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. PSEUDO-INDEPENDENCE: This is the first stage of positive racial identification. Although an individual in this stage does not feel that Whites deserve privilege, they look to people of color, not themselves, to confront and uncover racism. They approve of these efforts and comfort the person as these efforts validate this person's desire to be non-racist. Although this is positive White racial identity, the person does not have a sense of how they can be both White and non-racist together. 5. IMMERSION/EMERSION: In this stage, the person makes a genuine attempt to connect to his/her own White identity and to be anti-racist. This stage is usually accompanied by deep concern with understanding and connecting to other Whites who are or have been dealing with issues of racism. 6. AUTONOMY: The last stage is reached when an individual has a clear understanding of and positive connection to their White racial identity while also actively pursuing social justice. Helms' stages are as much about finding a positive racial identification with being White and becoming an active anti-racist. |

Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

Integrated Model (John and Joy Hoffman)

CONFORMITY (Whites and People of Color): In the first stage of conformity, people of color and Whites feel that they are just “regular Americans.” Unconsciously, members of both groups strive to emulate Whiteness in actions, speech, dress, beliefs and attitudes because Whiteness is perceived as positive.



People of Color

DISSONANCE: Dissonance for people of color occurs when they want to get along and be Americans but discover that their race or gender may preclude them from the benefits that Whites or males get. They start to feel confused about the beliefs they held about America and themselves as they begin to see that racism and sexism may be impacting them.



IMMERSION: These questions and disillusionment can lead to the immersion stage where women and persons of color feel angry about racism and sexism. They feel that most White people and males are racists and sexists and thus part of the problem. What might people of color do with this anger?



EMERSION: The fourth stage for people of color is emersion where their anger about racism directed towards Whites leads them to feel that they can only belong with others in their own racial group which understands them. They avoid, as much as possible, contacts with Whites and seek out people of their own race or gender.



INTERNALIZATION: Internalization occurs when they realize that there are negative qualities among their own people and that all White people are not the enemy. They see racism and sexism as the enemy and as something that they can fight against. They also manifest the desire to have more control over who they want to be. They are more than just a person of color or a woman

White People

ACCEPTANCE: In this stage, Whites can still dismiss or diminish comments or actions that indicate that racism is alive. They express the view that that everyone has struggles and people should just accept the way things are and try to be American. They expect of color to “get over it” and go forward as Americans which really means be more like White people.



RESISTANCE: Whites move from their acceptance stage to the resistance stage where they profess that racism is a thing of the past. Whites often express their belief that there is a new racism and that is the racism that they perceive is against Whites. This is popularly referred to as “reverse racism.”



RETREAT: If their assumptions about people of color and their own lack of privilege are proven false, they may enter the retreat stage. They may feel guilty and ashamed by how hard life has been and still is for people of color. They are also frustrated by, annoyed, and impatient with other Whites who don’t get it.



EMERGENCE: After feeling guilty and ashamed, Whites may move into the emergence stage where they start to understand their privilege and how it has and continue to benefit them. They also now begin to take control over the type of White person they want to be like.



INTEGRATIVE AWARENESS (both): In the last stage of integrative awareness, Hoffman asserts that Whites and people of color both come to the conclusion that there is much more to them than their race or gender. Both groups are able to positively identify with their own racial group while also acknowledging that other aspects of their identity (their gender, their talents and abilities, their unique experiences) contribute to their personhood.

Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development

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