Using Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Practices to Promote Pre-Literacy Development

Educational Equity Institute

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POLL: Who is here today?

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mother of a 17-year-old son

- Collect African American Barbie dolls

- Love Shrimp & Grits & Sweet Iced Tea

- Favorite TV shows This Is Us, Black-ish & HTGAWM

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mother of three boys (ages 16, 14, and 10)

- Love singing and Broadway musicals

- Diehard UNC fan

- College basketball season is my favorite time of the year.

Participant Outcomes

After taking part in this training, participants will be able to:

1. Describe culturally responsive anti-bias practices

2. Explain the rationale for implementing specific strategies and practices

3. Identify ways to incorporate culturally responsive anti-bias practices to improve literacy instruction.

Brave spaces to discuss, exchange, learn and be vulnerable

Speak Your Truth

Lean into the discomfort and lean into each other for support

Commit to Non-Closure

Assume Positive Intent

Seek intentional learning

Establishing Our Group Norms

We *all* believe that a student's skin color should not fate him or her to negative outcomes.

Discussing equity and race is uncomfortable.

Creating discomfort without providing effective strategies is not productive.

In discussing equity and taking steps, we will make mistakes.

Assumptions

Reflecting on Culturally Diverse Children, Families, and Communities

How can I better serve culturally diverse children, families and communities?

What do I need to become a culturally competent and responsive practitioner?

What does my program need to be more inclusive of diverse children and families?

What barriers exist that prevents me or (my program) from being more inclusive and equitable?

Difference between Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

Diversity: people are represented

Inclusion: people are empowered their voices are heard

Equity: results from policies, practices, and programs

Equity and Disciplinary Practices

- 5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and nearly 2,500 were suspended a second time (2014)

- *Black preschoolers:* 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers (2016)

- *Boys:* 49% of the preschool population, but 82% of all suspensions (2014)

- *Girls* make up 20% of preschool female enrollment but represent 54% of female preschoolers suspended more than once (2014).

Studies spanning 40 years show that Black children are up to four times more likely to be suspended than White students.

(Bradshaw et al., 2010; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Milner, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011)

Equity and Instructional Practices

- Students of color tend to experience lower quality **instructional practices** than their White peers (Phillips et al., 1994; Pianta et al., 2002)

- Black children generally experience lower quality activity settings and **receive fewer rich, stimulating experiences** than White children (Early et al., 2010)

Equity and Teacher-Child Relationships

Black children tend to have relationships with their teachers that are less positive than those formed with White children

(Walker, Alter, & Landers, 2013)

Black children have more negative and conflictual relationships with teachers than White children

(e.g., Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Kesner, 2000; Murray & Murray, 2004)

"Cradle-to-Prison Pipeline"

- Preschool-to-prison pipeline was coined to describe the disproportionate number of young Black children who are suspended or expelled from early learning environments.
- Exclusionary practices:
  - Result in interrupted education
  - Increase the likelihood that Black children experience repeated suspensions and expulsions both in early childhood and beyond
  - Are related to later academic achievement and school dropout rates
  - Entrance into the criminal justice system

Current Equity Work is Grounded in Colorblindness

- Belief that there is no racial hierarchy

- Failure to consider the permanence of race's role within our nation's institutions

- Reliance on band aid interventions or approaches

- Sustains White as the norm and ensures this cultural frame of reference for all behaviors, interactions, and experiences *as well as the establishment of policies and practices*

Colorblindness actually prevents us from thinking critically about race.

It allows to avoid talking about racial inequity in schools.

Colorblindness actually leads to more biases.

Colorblind Ideology

Guiding Principles for Achieving Equity

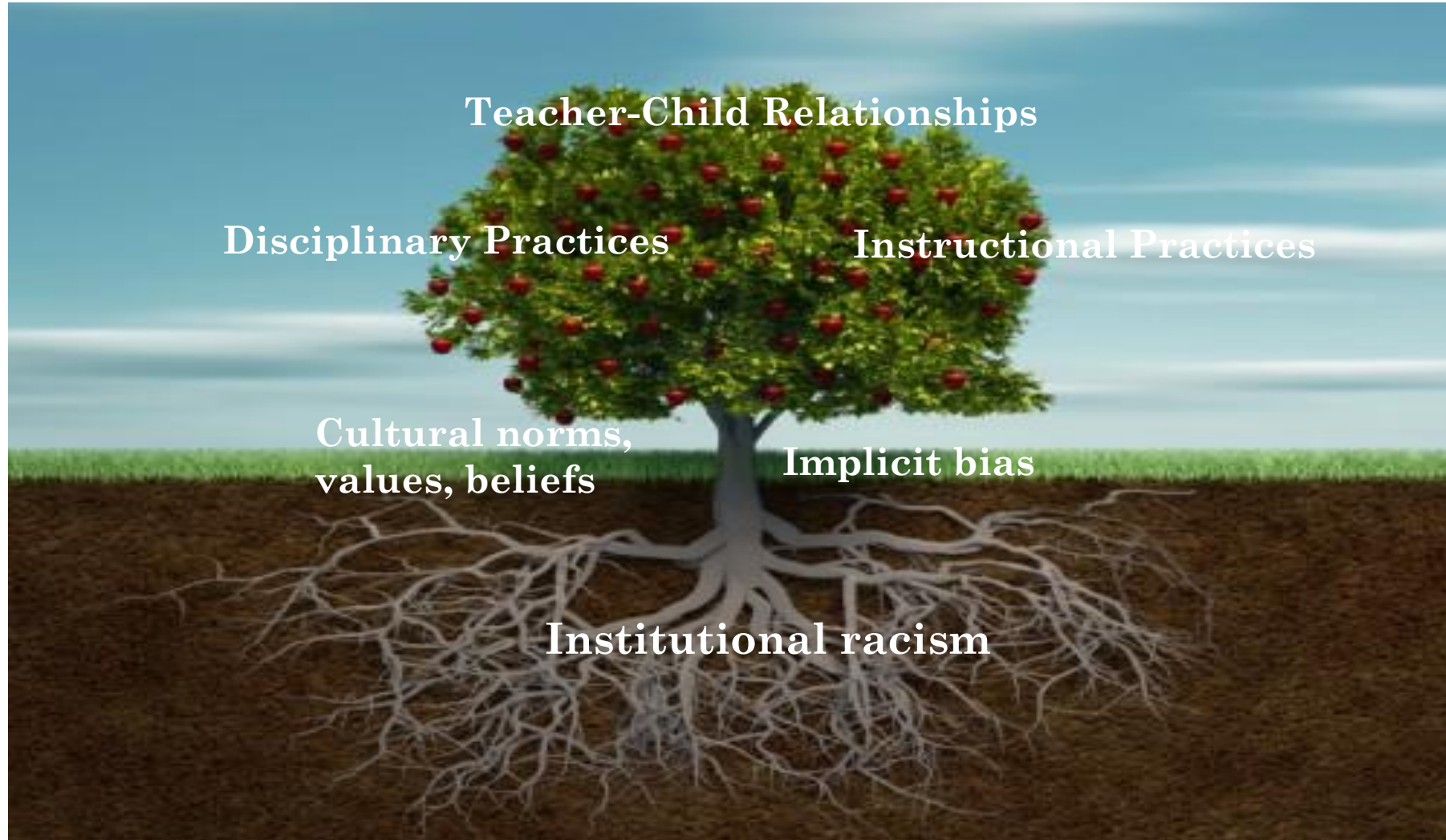A paradigm shift will be needed to change the way we view education for all children.

→

It will be necessary to build the skills, knowledge, and willingness to challenge beliefs within the workforce.

→

Supports and resources will be needed to build capacity.

White European Ideology about Education

Achieving Equity in Early Childhood Education

- Focus on outcomes is important, but we also must:
  - Examine the root causes of inequities, including what they look like in everyday practice.
  - Eliminate policies, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate disparate outcomes.
  - Enact policies and practices that address the root causes of inequity *and* promote better outcomes.

(National Council of Teachers of English, 2016)

Cultural Disconnect between Home and School

- European American culture greatly influences early childhood. Content of teacher education programs often based on White American-European theorists(Wardle, 2013).

- Majority of early childhood teachers:

  - Are white-monolingual especially in K-3 settings
  - Lack experience and exposure to children from diverse backgrounds
  - Unaware of white privilege
  - Often view children from other cultures from a deficit lens
  - May not be comfortable discussing race

Cultural Disconnect

Culturally diverse students are *less* likely to have their:

- academic and social needs meet
- cultural experience and backgrounds affirmed & validated
- cultural qualities honored and respected

They are *more* likely to be measured by White middle-class standards

Cultural Disconnect

- Young children of color enter early learning programs that were not designed for them.

- Whiteness (i.e., "white is the norm") has dictated what children learn, how children should learn, and what a high-quality early learning program looks like.

- Children of color bring experiences and socialized patterns of behavior that often are not valued in early learning programs.

- We expect children of color to morph to the "whiteness" of early learning classrooms rather than altering programs to fit all children.

Cultural Disconnect and Building Pre-Literacy Skills

- Pre-literacy instruction is based on European American paradigms that have defined appropriate socialized academic behaviors (Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, & Tlusty, 2000).

- Curricula and instruction mirror the majority society and often reflect reading experiences of middle income suburbia.

- When children of color do not acquire certain skills, they are deemed "at risk" or "non-responders," rather than critically examining the instruction and/or curriculum.

Characteristics of European American Culture

Characteristic	Description
Time	Clock conscious, concerned with being on time
Future orientation	Emphasis on the future rather than the present
Thinking style	Knowledge is fixed; logical, sequential thinking
Learning style	Continuous improvement and progress through problem solving
Individualism	Personal freedom, choice, and autonomy
Self-responsibility	Responsible for own behavior and management of it

York, 2017

Differences between Current and Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Practices

Sullivan, 2016

Principles of Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Pedagogy

Children's cultural references included in all aspects of learning

Learning within the context of culture

All children are welcomed, supported, and provided with the best opportunities to learn

Positive for children's self-concept

Focus on teaching equity and social justice

Benefits of Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Education for *All* Children

- Encourages a true sense of self by helping children from all cultural backgrounds engage in positive identity development

- Promotes healthy development of all children

- Prepares children for the future by helping them develop cross-cultural skills that will be needed to fully participate in society

- Prevents social isolation

Goals of Anti-Bias Education

Demonstrate

Comfort and joy

Recognize

Empower

Components of Culturally Responsive Practices

"Culturally responsive anti-bias education reflects the most current thinking about how to provide a comprehensive approach to multicultural education" (York, 2016).

Learning Preferences and Styles

Learning through moving, doing, seeing, engaging, touching	Creative expressions	Connected to family, community, friends
Relationship-based learning	Straight forward in questioning	Using expressive language

Intrinsic Motivation Framework

- ***Establishing inclusion***—creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another

- ***Developing attitude***—creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice

- ***Enhancing meaning***—creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values

- ***Engendering competence***—creating an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value

Multi-Modal Learning

- Teacher provides instructional content using a variety of methods to facilitate understanding and learning (e.g., auditory, visual, movement opportunities).

- Multimodal learning in education means teaching concepts using multiple **modes**.

- **Modes** are channels of information, or anything that communicates meaning in some way, including pictures, illustrations, audio, speech, writing/print, music, movement

- *Visual*: learn best by **seeing**, responding to visual cues like images, graphs or charts

- *Aural*: learn best by **hearing**, responding to auditory cues like verbal instruction, discussions or songs

- *Read/Write*: learn best by **reading and writing**, responding to written cues like written instructions, books and cue cards

- *Tactile/Kinesthetic*: learn best by **doing**, responding to tactile cues like movement, actions and real-life examples

Different Learning Styles

Planning Activities for Different Learning Styles/Preferences

Learning Style	Potential Strategies
Visual	Use diagrams, pictures, charts, visual directions, color code materials, provide carpet squares during whole group instruction
Aural	Repeat directions and/or concepts several times; use songs to convey directions or during transitions; allow for group discussions; provide activities with music
Read/Write	Label materials with words; use simple, written directions; create cue cards for songs
Tactile/Movement	Use gestures when giving directions, model use of skills, provide hands-on activities, give children something to hold during large group instruction, allow children to move around freely

Helping Children Identify Their Strengths

Teacher talks with individual children to help them identify their own strengths (e.g., "What do you like most?" "What are you really good at?" "What's your favorite thing to do in school?").

Children who can identify their strengths will be more likely to build on them to improve their areas of growth.

They will develop a greater sense of motivation and will be more self-confident.

Promoting Pre-Literacy Skills with CRAB

- Read and provide non-stereotypical books that are meaningful to children and reflect their hair, skin tones, and experiences.

- Offer meaningful discussions about the content of the book, including similarities and differences between children in the class.

- Provide instructional experiences that are meaningful to children and include their cultural frame of reference.

- Be responsive to children's home languages and allow them to exist within the classroom.

- Read and provide books in children's home languages.

- Use choral reading that includes predictability, rhyming, and repeated phrases.

- Retell and dramatize using books and props (e.g., felt stories, puppets).

- Set up a literacy center that includes non-stereotypical books that reflect the diversity in the classroom, as well as felt stories and taped stories).

Social Action Approach

- Select culturally diverse books that allow children to identify social problems.

- Discuss the problems and how the main character(s) made decisions and took action to solve the problem.

The Importance of Culturally Diverse Books

- Helps children realize that all ethnic groups have roots in the past and a strong heritage that is part of their culture.

- Knowing about others from a similar culture encourages a sense of pride that builds positive self-concept.

- Others from their own culture made significant contributions to society.

- Children who encounter multiethnic literature benefit academically and learn the social values and behaviors of people in society.

Racial Identity

A collective identity with a particular racial group

Includes the extent to which individuals use race as a reference to guide their thinking, feelings, and actions

Positive racial and ethnic identity have been linked to higher resilience, self-efficacy, self-esteem, grades, standardized test scores, and reduced risky behaviors.

Positive racial identity can serve as a buffer for Black children against prejudice and discrimination.

Positive Identity Development for *All* Children for *All* Children

Racism affects White children.

- Denial of reality
- "White is the norm" for experiences within society
- Can internalize messages of false superiority

Racism affects Black children.

- Prejudice, discrimination, and microaggressions
- Different learning experiences than White children
- Shame, anger, and rage

They're not too young to talk about race!

0	1	2	3	4	5	6+

At birth, babies look equally at faces of all races. At 3 months, babies look more at faces of their own race. (Kelly et al. 2005)

Children as young as two years use race to reason about people's behaviors. (Hirschfeld, 2008)

By 30 months, most children use race to choose playmates. (Katz & Kofkin, 1997)

Expressions of racial prejudice often peak at ages 4 and 5. (Aboud, 2008)

By five, Black and Latinx children in research settings show no preference toward their own groups compared to Whites; White children at this age remain strongly biased in favor of whiteness. (Dunham et al, 2008)

By kindergarten, children show many of the same racial attitudes that adults in our culture hold—they have already learned to associate some groups with higher status than others. (Kinzler, 2016)

Explicit conversations with 5–7 year olds about interracial friendship can dramatically improve their racial attitudes in as little as a single week. (Bronson & Merryman, 2009)

Young children notice and think about race. Adults often worry that talking about race will encourage racial bias in children, but the opposite is true. **Silence about race reinforces racism** by letting children draw their own conclusions based on what they see. Teachers and families can play a powerful role in helping children of all ages develop positive attitudes about race and diversity and skills to promote a more just future—but only if we talk about it!

Do some learning of your own to get ready for conversations with children. Here are some good places to start:
- Raising Race Conscious Children — raceconscious.org
- Teaching Tolerance — tolerance.org
- Embrace Race — embracerace.org
- Teaching for Change — teachingforchange.org

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Do's and Don'ts of Talking to Young Children about Race

- **Don't:**
  - get defensive (even if you are offended).
  - silence or shush children.
  - react (even non-verbally).
- **Do:**
  - have open conversations with children.
  - affirm children's questions/comments about race.
  - link children's feelings to the conversations.
  - talk about fairness/unfairness.
  - push through your discomfort.

ACTIVITY | Be Bold and Brave!

1. Think about your current role as a home visitor, early childhood teacher, program manager, community member or other, **what is your role in promoting equity? And why?**

2. **What is your approach?** What strategies/steps are needed?

3. How do you **hold yourself accountable** for addressing these inequities?

4. What **resources of materials** (people, space, information, etc) are available to achieve equity?

5. What **risks** are involved? How do you **address those risk?**

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