Implicit Bias and Racial Equity:

Cynthia Peters
April 13, 2021
“Literacy means liberation.” -- Septima Clark
This is first of three webinars

1. April 13 – Implicit Bias
2. April 20 – Classroom Materials and Practices (with Riva Pearson)
3. April 27 – Programs and the Field (with Carmine Stewart)

Also a separate space for interaction!
Welcome; acknowledge our historical moment
Implicit bias is real and it matters
Three ways we can address it:
  ○ raise our own awareness,
  ○ put up guardrails,
  ○ change the water we swim in
Resources, Handouts, Closing
Implicit Bias: a definition

*Implicit bias* includes attitudes and beliefs (positive or negative) about other people, ideas, issues, or institutions that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control, which affect our opinions and behavior. Everyone has implicit biases. However, people can work to combat and change these biases.

Source: Facing History and Ourselves (www.facinghistory.org)
Want to catch your brain making a mistake?

https://outsmartinghumanminds.org/module/illusions-at-work/
Has Anyone Taken the Harvard Implicit Bias Test?
Another source of LOTS of data:

According to many large studies:

- Referees favor home teams
- Referees show racial bias

National Bureau of Economic Research
https://www.nber.org/papers/w19765
What is your experience?
Please share one example of implicit bias that you have

1. witnessed,
2. experienced yourselves, or
3. expressed yourselves.
Where does implicit bias come from?

- Family and culture
- Media
- Life experiences based on circumstances you were born into
- Schooling/education
- Religious practices

Image from *Homework Helpers Vocabulary Development Workbook*, 2009, Carson Dellosa Education
Unconscious Bias Applies to All of Us

- We are hard-wired to make snap decisions about what is safe, comfortable, valuable.
- Like the referees, we all have countless discretionary moments in a day -- moments when we may be driven by bias.
- Our biases show themselves in various ways:
  - Micro-affirmations
  - Micro-devaluations
  - Affinity bias
  - Underlying worldview
Average Bias in a Community Matters

“Metro areas with greater average implicit bias have larger racial disparities in police shootings. And counties with greater average implicit bias have larger racial disparities in infant health problems.”

www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-think-about-implicit-bias/
Bias Yields Racial Disparities in Expectations

“Non-black teachers of black students have significantly lower expectations than do black teachers. These effects are larger for black male students and math teachers.”

research.upjohn.org/up_workingpapers/231/
Names that *sound* white & male get more responses

A recent *field experiment* conducted by one of us and colleagues found that the instructors of online courses were *nearly twice* as likely to respond to discussion-forum comments placed by students who were randomly assigned white-male names.

[www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/03/20/the-insidiousness-of-unc
conscious-bias-in-schools/]
Stereotype Threat

Studies show that just the **fear of being stereotyped** will cause students to de-identify with the school or the field of study, and it will lower test-takers’ scores.

psychnet.apa.org/record/1997-04591-001
How can we work to combat biases?

1. Raise our own awareness so we can change our attitudes

2. Slow down, put up guard rails to keep ourselves on track

3. Change the water we swim in
What can we do? Raise Awareness!

Remember the referees?

- May 2007, an academic study shows referees’ bias
- At first, study ignored by media. Referee behavior stays the same.
- Then lots of media attention. Referee behavior changes. According to the academic paper, “The bias completely disappeared.”
What does that look like for us? We can:

- **Build self-awareness:** Examine our biases so they shift from unconscious to conscious
  - Take an implicit bias test
  - Make a conscious effort to slow down and monitor our own beliefs/decisions/behaviors

- **Remember:** it’s not about whether you’re a “good” person or not. It’s hard to think about something if you’re feeling blamed or at fault. Everyone has implicit bias.
Build Guard Rails

“A lot of the strategies revolve around how to give yourself more time to think, and how to put guard rails on how you judge other people so that you’re less likely to act on your biases.”

From “Can You Train People to Be Less Biased?”
https://whyv.org/segments/can-you-train-people-to-be-less-biased/
What can teachers do to build guard rails?

- **Monitor your practice**
  - When do you ask students for “evidence”?
  - Materials: do they reinforce or interrupt bias?
  - Consider your perspective and how it shows up in your teaching

- **Invite feedback**
  - Collaborate with peers to create an observation protocol
  - Get student feedback through evaluation

- **Lessons**
  - Study the phenomenon of bias
  - Build listening skills
  - Develop lessons that surface underlying perspective
Why does it matter to notice how perspective shows up in our materials?
Find the underlying perspective of these 2 opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion 1</th>
<th>Opinion 2</th>
<th>Underlying Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants take our jobs and lower our wages.</td>
<td>Immigrants are good for our economy and do the jobs nobody else wants to do. Our food would be unaffordable if it weren’t for immigrant labor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Source: Showing Up for Racial Justice SURJ
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<td>Immigrants take our jobs and lower our wages.</td>
<td>Immigrants are good for our economy and do the jobs nobody else wants to do. Our food would be unaffordable if it weren’t for immigrants.</td>
<td>If immigrants aren’t good for the economy, we don’t want them. Their worthiness is determined by how they affect our economy. If a person doesn’t serve a purpose - provide a ‘good’ - they are disposable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What could you share in the classroom that would interrupt this narrow perspective?**
You can put up a guard rail against this perspective by listening to the voices of immigrants, talking about immigration…

From the “Immigration” Issue (#38) of *The Change Agent*: “I Left My Son and Daughter Behind” (p. 37)
...and talking about other things that matter.
“Immigrants are good neighbors. They are interesting and wonderful people.”
What can programs do to build guard rails?

- Support teachers and administrators to pause
  - Could anti-bias be part of lesson-plan template?
  - Provide classroom materials that support anti-bias perspective in the classroom
  - Integrate “addressing bias” into teacher evaluation rubrics and PD

- Build student leadership in your program and in the wider world
Example from the field

- The El Rio Learning Center at PIMA CC developed a Student Ambassador program.
- “Not just student-centered but student-driven.”
  -- Laura Porfirio
Change the water we swim in

- This part might be harder!
- We’re going to zoom out. What is happening with jobs and wages?
- Let’s look at *one aspect* of the “water we swim in” – the work world.
What do you notice about racial stratification in work? How might that contribute to the creation of bias?
Now let’s look at some statistics about work.
Fastest growing occupations by %, 2019-29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>% RATE OF GROWTH (PROJECTED) 2019-29</th>
<th>ANNUAL MEDIAN PAY 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wind turbine technicians</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>$52,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse practitioners</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>$109,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar photovoltaic installers</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>$44,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapy assts.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>$61,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statisticians</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>$91,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home health aides</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>$25,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm
### Most new jobs, 2019-29

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home health aides</td>
<td>1,159,500</td>
<td>$25,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast food/counter workers</td>
<td>460,900</td>
<td>$22,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks, restaurant</td>
<td>327,300</td>
<td>$27,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software developers</td>
<td>316,000</td>
<td>$107,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurses</td>
<td>221,900</td>
<td>$73,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General/operations mgrs.</td>
<td>143,800</td>
<td>$100,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[https://www.bls.gov/ooh/most-new-jobs.htm](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/most-new-jobs.htm)
Black New Yorkers Earn Less Than White New Yorkers in Most Industries

- Beauty Salons
- Sporting Goods Stores
- Dept. Stores
- Warehouse and Storage
- Postal Service
- Film and TV
- Newspaper Publishing
- Banking

Median wage, Black workers
Median wage, white workers

# Black Women’s Wage Equality by Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Black Women’s Earnings</th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic Men’s Earnings</th>
<th>Black Women’s Pay per $ of White Men’s Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school degree</td>
<td>$21,847</td>
<td>$36,480</td>
<td>60 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school degree</td>
<td>$29,468</td>
<td>$46,729</td>
<td>63 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>$36,409</td>
<td>$54,620</td>
<td>67 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>$46,694</td>
<td>$75,080</td>
<td>62 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>$56,072</td>
<td>$87,051</td>
<td>64 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racial Wealth Inequality is Rampant in the U.S. Median household wealth by race/ethnicity (1983-2024)
Covid-19 deaths per 100,000 by race/ethnicity through 9-10-20

How does this data connect back to addressing racial inequity in our classrooms?
My thoughts:

- The language we use -- “getting ready for jobs and careers” -- sounds race neutral. But working in the U.S. is profoundly NOT race neutral.

- Examining larger context makes us think twice about the deficit model.
Let’s take another stab at surfacing an underlying perspective. This one is about financial literacy.
What is the underlying perspective?

Students say they have money problems. As their teacher, you search for financial literacy resources to help them make sense of and address the challenges they face. You find one source that offers workshops such as:

- Tips for Managing your Money
- How to Make Informed Retirement Decisions
- Use Google Spreadsheets to Make a Budget
- Three Strategies for Saving for College
In other words, financial literacy looks something like this!
In an adult ed. program that was consciously taking on racial equity, financial literacy might look different:

- Yes, it would still include a focus on personal budgets and savings plans
- But it might not be race-neutral! It might acknowledge racial stratification and provide a civics lesson about how to counter it! This would equip our students with tools to make bad jobs better. And that is a profound way to defend black and brown lives.
Example from the field. In Massachusetts,

MCAE allied with Raise Up Massachusetts to raise the minimum wage and ensure that Massachusetts workers would have access to paid sick time.
Example from the field: In New York City,

the Literacy Assistance Center launched the Literacy and Justice Initiative with a mission to connect students to movements for racial, social, and economic justice.
Teach about unions and the history of labor movement

**Miami**
- **Non-union housekeeper:** $9.50
- **3 union hotels**

**Boston**
- **Union housekeeper:** $21.45
- **29 union hotels**
MAKE OUR ECONOMY WORK FOR WORKING PEOPLE
PASS THE PRO ACT
CALL CONGRESS: 866-832-1560
“A nice gathering like today is not enough.”
-- Ella Baker
Hope to see you for the next two webinars

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Remember: Check out this interactive space where we have collected some best practices, and where you can share your own experience.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mnsTxCC3rHo9K1kik49ghnBx3s7HW4trtiXGBqRUY/edit?pli=1

Questions/comments? Contact me at Cynthia Peters, cynthia_peters@worlded.org
Handouts

- Lesson Packet 10 – “Taking Action at Work” – a collection of mostly first person stories of students speaking up at work for better conditions, and wages, etc.  
  https://changeagent.nelrc.org/in-the-classroom/lesson-packets/#packet10

  https://changeagent.nelrc.org/in-the-classroom/lesson-packets/#packet17

- “Talking about Race” – this issue of *The Change Agent* is free this year.  
  Go to https://changeagent.nelrc.org/, fill out the form, and receive a PDF of the magazine, all the audio, and all the extras!
Resources

*The Change Agent* – students tell stories of taking action in micro and macro ways in school, family, community, and workplace. [https://changeagent.nelrc.org/](https://changeagent.nelrc.org/)

EdTech Center – [https://edtech.worlded.org/](https://edtech.worlded.org/)


NELRC: resources for civic engagement -- [https://nelrc.org/resources/#civic](https://nelrc.org/resources/#civic)

“Literacy and Justice” – blog by Ira Yankwitt from the Literacy Assistance Center, with link to Google doc of teaching resources: [https://www.lacnyc.org/lit-and-just-message.html](https://www.lacnyc.org/lit-and-just-message.html)

COABE Student Ambassador training – [https://coabe.org/student-ambassador/](https://coabe.org/student-ambassador/)

ProLiteracy Advocacy Toolkit – [https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/Advocacy](https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/Advocacy)

Read the word. Read the world. – Paulo Freire