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Complete List of Everyday Antiracist Strategies*

Remember That Racial Categories Are Not Biological Realities

Race categories are not biological or genetic realities. They are categories that humans made up.

- Teach students why race is an obsolete biological concept.
- Resist the programmed assumption that different racial groups have different intellectual abilities.
- Try not using the word “Caucasian.”

Get Ready to Talk about a Racialized Society

Teachers need to discuss the relevance of race in school with students, parents, and each other.

- Start developing the will, skill, and capacity to engage in courageous conversations about race.
- Start talking precisely about moving students to opportunity.
- Start thinking critically about what it means to “care” for students.

Remember That People Do Not Fit Neatly and Easily into Racial Groups

People do not fit easily and neatly into racial groups, even though they also often experience the world as racial group members.

- Try to follow children’s leads in conversations about race.
- Observe the complex ways that students interact informally.

Remember That People Are Treated as Racial Group Members and Need to Examine That Experience

Students (and teachers) need to process their experiences in the world as racial group members.

**This list compiles strategies and principles proposed in this book. Please extend it over time with your colleagues, your students, and their communities.*

- Create cocoons for strengthening identities.
- Be aware that students of color may need to heal from internalized oppression.
- Urge students to see and treat one another as equally worthy.

Emphasize Individuality

We must get to know one another as individuals, not just as “racial group” members.

- Refuse to see individuals as automatic representatives of “achievement gaps.”
- Cultivate a mindset of curiosity about your students as individuals.
- Cultivate individualized points of personal connection with your students.

Remember That Students Experience Racially Unequal Expectations about Their Brainpower

Educators must remember that students may have experienced unequal expectations based on their race. Educators need to counter student anxiety about unequal intelligence or potential.

- To promote persistent achievement among students of color, be a perfectionist, but help students meet high standards.
- When giving feedback to students of color, emphasize high standards and assert your belief in their ability to reach them.

Counter Racially Patterned Skill Gaps

Educators must give students skills they have previously been denied or failed to acquire.

- Never confuse teaching academic skills with holding low expectations for student achievement.
- Think carefully about how you use groups in detracked classrooms.

Help Students Gain Fluency in “Standard” Behaviors While Honoring the “Nonstandard” Behaviors They Already Have

Educators must help students to be successful on “standard measures”—even as we remember that often, students have and need far more skills than we may be assessing.

- Teach to standards, but also honor nonstandard knowledge.
- Do not disparage the nonstandard varieties of English students speak.
- Do not disparage students' own cultural codes; help them become fluent in multiple cultural codes.

Defy Racially Based Notions of Potential Careers and Contributions

Students may sense that their future careers and contributions are limited to certain “races,” and teachers must open up that sense of limited possibility.

- Challenge cultural messages of who can and cannot do science.
- Introduce students to “ordinary” role models; then have them practice what they learn.

Analyze Racial Disparities in Opportunities to Learn

If certain school practices are denying opportunity to students along racial lines, those practices must be shifted so that children are provided opportunity instead.

- Push for optimal learning opportunities for all children as if they were your own.
- Avoid disproportionately disciplining students of color, and always use discipline to reconnect students to the benefits of learning.

Create Curriculum That Invites Students to Explore Complex Identities and Consider Racial Group Experiences

Racial identities are always in flux and complex, never fixed or simple, and they should be discussed that way in the classroom.

- Use photography to wrestle with questions of racial identity.
- Encourage students to explore racial identities in their writing.
- Involve students in selecting reading materials.

Create Curriculum That Analyzes Opportunity Denial

Individuals live lives in racially unequal opportunity structures, and they must analyze those structures in order to challenge them.

- Teach critical analysis of systems of racial oppression.
- Include critical popular culture in your curriculum.
- Engage youth in participatory inquiry across differences.

Create Curriculum That Represents a Diverse Range of People Thoroughly and Complexly

Representations of groups must always be complex and thorough, never reductive or stereotypic.

- Interrogate Arab invisibility and hypervisibility.
- Consider how representations of communities in texts can be harmful, and invite community members to class to represent themselves.
- Teach representations of cultural difference in films without fixing the identity or reducing the complexity of “minority cultures.”
- Think twice about that poster.
- Take up the challenge of teaching racially sensitive literature.

Create Curriculum That Discusses History Accurately and Thoroughly

Inaccurate or limited information about racial groups’ histories and experiences must be replaced with accurate and thorough information.

- Make race relevant in all-white classrooms by teaching local history.
- Teach facts, not stereotypes, about groups’ experiences.

Investigate Learning Experiences in Your Classroom

No classroom interaction is necessarily racially harmful or unequal, but some classroom interactions might be. The educator must investigate, without forcing a racial lens on the interactions.

- Use student inquiry to investigate the learning experience.
- Interrogate the meanings of students’ silences.
- Question sweeping generalizations about cultural groups; instead, ask group members how they are personally experiencing your classroom.
- Keep trying to make predominantly white classrooms safe spaces for students of color.
- Consider when racially spotlighting and racially ignoring students in classrooms may harm them.

Spearhead Conversations with Students about Racism in Their Lives and Yours

Competing definitions of racism and antiracism should be discussed.

- Brainstorm and discuss racial incidents as a way to push toward deeper understandings of racism and antiracism.

- Debate racially charged topics directly and carefully in a structured format.
- Let students help define and debate the antiracist policies necessary for improving your school.

Talk Thoroughly with Colleagues about Race and Achievement

Since talking reductively about racial achievement patterns makes it impossible to solve those patterns, educators must talk thoroughly about causes and solutions instead.

- Cultivate a school-based discourse that emphasizes educators' responsibility for students' learning.
- Add structural analyses to cultural explanations of variations in student achievement.
- Talk about racial hierarchies when you assess school reforms.
- Discuss regularly with colleagues the many ideas and actions it will take to enrich the education of all students in diverse schools.

Analyze, with Colleagues and Students, How Your Race Affects Your Teaching

Educators need to discuss how their own teaching orientations might be linked to their experiences in the world as a racial group member.

- Discuss students' use of the "n-word."
- Engage in cross-racial dialogue with your colleagues.
- Identify who you are in relation to the curriculum.
- Notice how racial lenses shape ideas about "good" teaching.

Inquire Fully about Home Communities

Reductive or denigrating ideas about home communities must be replaced by thorough inquiry into home communities.

- Respect and seek to learn about students' home worlds.
- Start getting to know your students' communities.
- Help students to investigate and document their complex communities.

Discuss Parents' Experiences of Racially Unequal Opportunity

Parents, too, may experience educational systems as racially unequal; educators must engage parents in discussions about those experiences.

- Actively cultivate the trust of parents of color.
- Help parents who struggle against damaging stereotypes of their children.
- Undermine racially stratified tracking through minority parent involvement.

Struggle to Change a System That Is Unequal, While Working Within It

Everyday action inside schools is not the only way to equalize opportunity racially, but it is one crucial way.

- Create a context for collective, collegial responses to racism.
- Remember that even antiracist educators reproduce a racialized social system.
- Stay hopeful.