

Creating Inclusive and Equitable Communities – A Call to Action

Understanding the origins and impact of bigotry in the U.S. today and what we can do about it

Lesson Plan Descriptions

Lesson 1 - Introducing Narratives

The first lesson introduces students to narratives, or accounts of an event or series of events, usually in the form of a story. Students will learn how authors use language, tone, and selective information to influence how audiences interpret a narrative's messages. Students will also analyze how an authors' preconceived knowledge and personal biases influence a narrative.

Lesson 2 - Introducing Dominant Narratives

In Lesson 2, students will learn how to identify and critically evaluate dominant narratives they encounter in their daily lives. A dominant narrative is a story or account that is told to bolster the dominant social group's interests and ways of life. This lesson also addresses the role of power in perpetuating dominant narratives and determining who benefits from or is harmed by the persistence of these narratives.

Lesson 3 - Colonial Origins of Contemporary Dominant Narratives

Lesson 3 examines the colonial roots of dominant narratives about ethnic groups. Students will trace the genealogy of dominant narratives and uncover how these narratives were crafted to justify the subjugation, dispossession, enslavement, and murder of non-white groups by European colonial powers.

Lesson 4 - Countering Racialization and Racism

Lesson 4 explores the impact of racialization on racial and ethnic minorities through the 19th and 20th centuries. This lesson asks students to examine race as a social construct. In order to exploit and discriminate against people, groups in power had to first create ways to distinguish themselves from others. By inventing racial groups and then assigning negative attributes to groups that they considered non-white, white Americans and European actors were able to create a hierarchy that placed whites at the top and subjugated non-white bodies.

Lesson 5 - Dominant Narratives in Education

Lesson 5 introduces students to dominant narratives in textbooks. While textbooks and other curricular material are often presented to students as objective sources of truth, this lesson encourages students to critically engage with the information they learn in textbooks. In this lesson, students will examine the political and economic forces that shape textbook representations and the consequences of dominant textbook narratives about ethnic groups.

Lesson 6 - Dominant Narratives in The Media

In Lesson 6, students will identify dominant narratives about ethnic groups in mainstream media platforms, including news outlets, TV shows, and movies. In order to combat harmful portrayals of ethnic minorities, students must first be able to recognize these dominant narratives so that they become less susceptible to internalizing the effects of biased popular culture and are better equipped to design effective ways to combat media prejudice. Lesson 6 highlights the dominant narratives of Arabs in American media (TV, film, and news) as a case study for helping students develop skills in content analysis and media literacy.

Lesson 7 - Dominant Narratives in Government Policy

In Lesson 7, students will identify dominant narratives used by the United States government to justify discriminatory policies. From mass incarceration to the southern border wall to the Muslim Ban, members of the U.S. government have relied on stereotypes and harmful portrayals of minority groups to persuade Americans to support policies meant to maintain a system of racial hierarchy. This lesson teaches students how to identify dominant governmental narratives like “maintaining law and order” and “protecting our borders” that mask racist policies in seemingly neutral language. By examining these narratives through case studies on governmental discourse about African Americans, Lesson 7 will help students become more civically engaged and critically attentive to government rhetoric and policies.

Lesson 8 - Manifestations of Racism: Interpersonal Racism

Lesson 8 introduces students to the concept of interpersonal racism, or racism that occurs between individuals. Students will learn how the internalization of dominant narratives can lead to interpersonal racism. This lesson also focuses on debunking the idea that racism only exists as extreme acts of violence or discrimination. Rather, interpersonal racism often takes the form of *covert* racism, not *overt* racism.

Lesson 9 - Manifestations of Racism: Structural Racism

Lesson 9 considers the consequences of structural racism. Sometimes known as institutional or systemic racism, structural racism is defined as public policies and institutional practices that perpetuate racial group inequality. In this lesson, students will examine the causes and effects of structural racism and white privilege.

Lesson 10 - Introducing Counter Narratives: Panels of Speakers

Lesson 10 accompanies a panel of guest speakers from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds who will deliver counter narratives to the dominant ones that the students have been studying. Counter narratives are messages that challenge dominant narratives. Counter narratives highlight the voices and lived experiences of people whose stories have often been sidelined or marginalized. This panel is a live opportunity to engage with and bring to life both some of the content covered in

previous lessons as well as new content. In particular, the panel will illustrate how different storytellers interpret and portray the events or people they are talking about.

Lesson 11 - Comparing Dominant Narratives With Counter Narratives

In Lesson 11, students will compare counter narratives with dominant narratives and explore ways to challenge and rewrite harmful dominant narratives. Dominant narratives about non-white ethnic groups continue to influence society's perspectives and attitudes towards these groups. Viewing Latinx as illegal, African Americans as criminals, and Arabs and Muslims as terrorists are some of the most common dominant narratives that still permeate society today. In recent decades, historically marginalized groups have increasingly pushed back against these hegemonic and one-sided narratives in a variety of ways that assert their perspectives and identities. Merely telling their stories is a means of resistance to the oppression of those in power because it challenges the idea that there is only one narrative, and that only those in power can dictate the narrative of those who are powerless.

Lesson 12 - Responding To Racism: Individual Action

Lesson 12 empowers students to identify and apply strategies to counter racism as individuals in their personal sphere, whether at home, at school, with friends, or in society at large. All members of society have a shared responsibility to challenge racism and counter prejudice and discrimination when it occurs. Some strategies covered in this lesson include recognizing one's own privilege, educating oneself about the history and current issues faced by marginalized communities, amplifying marginalized voices, engaging in difficult conversations about race and racism in our homes, schools, and with friends, and joining in protests and other large-scale activities.

Lesson 13 - Call To Action: Collective Action

Lesson 13 calls upon students to explore past collective actions as well as brainstorm current actions which they can join or even create themselves to combat racial, economic and other injustices. From protests to social media posts to more long-term strategies such as joining organizations that focus on specific issues of racial and economic injustice, collective actions both empower and are energized by participants. This lesson is designed to transcend the classroom by encouraging students to commit to at least one collective action and by inspiring them to continue engaging in activism in their adult lives.

Lesson 14 - Final Reflection

The final lesson of the series is dedicated to reflection. Each of the lessons in this curriculum introduced students to complex concepts and asked them to critically engage with and interrogate their own experiences, biases, and environments. Lesson 14 will ask students to reflect upon the significance of the information they learned and to tie together the various knowledge and skills they acquired. Lesson 14 focuses on empowering students to use all they have learned to commit to continuous personal reflection and civic engagement.