



educating for cultural literacy  
and mutual respect

## 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 8: Manifestations of Racism: Interpersonal Racism**

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## Introduction

Lesson 8 is the first part of a two-lesson series on the contemporary manifestations of 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 will also focus 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. Through this lesson, students will become familiar with the various manifestations of interpersonal racism (including implicit bias and microaggressions) by watching a video, observing a PowerPoint presentation, reading an article, and performing Implicit Association Tests.

**Theme:** Systems of Power

**Disciplinary Area:** General Ethnic Studies

**Ethnic Studies Values and Principles Alignment:** 1, 5, 6

## Relevant Curriculum Standards

California's [Literacy in History/Social Studies Standards](#):

- **Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies: RH.9.10.2; RST.11.12.9; RST.9.10.9**
  - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
  - Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
  - Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- **Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: WHST.9.10.4; 9.10.2.b**
  - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Develop [a] topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

## Background Information for Educators

Interpersonal racism refers to prejudice and discrimination between individuals.<sup>1</sup> While many people associate racism with overt, conscious acts of bias (such as the use of racial slurs or violence), interpersonal racism often takes the form of covert, unconscious attitudes or actions.<sup>2</sup> For example, our internalized biases can impact whom we choose to help, how we address people, and even how we grade students.<sup>3</sup> This insidious nature of interpersonal racism can make it hard to recognize and address it when it happens.

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<sup>1</sup> "Interpersonal Racism: Conceptualization," Health Psychology (American Psychological Association, February 6, 2012), <http://www.intergroupresources.com/rc/APA-interpersonal.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "Overt and Covert Racism - R-Squared," Race & Religion (R-Squared, August 16, 2020), <https://www.r2hub.org/library/overt-and-covert-racism>.

<sup>3</sup> David M. Quinn, "How to Reduce Racial Bias in Grading," Education Next, October 26, 2020, <https://www.educationnext.org/how-to-reduce-racial-bias-in-grading-research/>.

A central part of interpersonal racism is implicit bias, which refers to unconscious prejudice against a group of people. Psychological research has shown that our minds unconsciously associate certain attributes or attitudes with things that are commonly presented together through the media, education, or government rhetoric.<sup>4</sup> As previous lessons have covered, non-white ethnic groups are often presented with disparaging attributes. By frequently consuming these dominant narratives, our brains create implicit associations between minority groups and negative stereotypes.<sup>5</sup>

One way that implicit bias manifests itself is through microaggressions. Microaggressions are subtle and unintentional instances of prejudice or discrimination against members of a marginalized group.<sup>6</sup> For example, asking a non-white person where they are *really* from stems from a common bias that presumes non-white Americans were not born in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Although this question may not be intentionally hurtful, it can make members of nonwhite groups feel alienated or unwelcome.

## Learning Objectives

**Identity:** *How will my instruction help students learn something about themselves and/or others?*

- Students will be able to interrogate their own personal biases and understand where they come from.
- Students will be able to explain the impacts of bias and racism on themselves and others.

**Skills:** *How will my instruction build students' skills relating to the content?*

- Students will be able to interpret and combine information from multiple mediums to form a comprehensive understanding of interpersonal racism.

**Intellect:** *How will my instruction build students' knowledge and mental powers?*

- Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of complex concepts such as internalization, implicit bias, and microaggressions.
- Students will be able to connect their understanding of the consequences of dominant narratives to the interpersonal manifestations of racism.
- Students will be able to explain the difference between overt and covert racism.

**Criticality:** *How will my instruction inform students' views of power and equity and the disruption of oppression?*

- Students will be able to analyze how interpersonal racism is one form of injustice and inequity that harms members of non-white ethnic groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Saleem Reshamwala, "Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism," The New York Times, December 16, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004818663/peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism.html?playlistId=100000004821064>.

<sup>5</sup> "Project Implicit | Frequently Asked Questions," Project Implicit, accessed December 5, 2020, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/faqs.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Limbong, "Microaggressions Are A Big Deal: How To Talk Them Out And When To Walk Away," NPR, June 9, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away>.

<sup>7</sup> Christina Zdanowicz and Tiara Chiaramonte, "No, Where Are You Really From?" CNN, accessed December 5, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2017/08/opinion/where-im-really-from/>.

## Guiding Questions

1. What is interpersonal racism and what does it look like?
2. How do dominant narratives influence implicit bias?
3. What is the difference between overt and covert interpersonal racism?

## Key Concepts and Terminology

- **Interpersonal Racism** - racism that occurs *between* individuals.
- **Implicit Bias** – unconscious prejudice against a group of people.
- **Microaggressions** - subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.
- **Association** - a mental connection between concepts, events, or people.
- **Internalization** - the nonconscious process of absorbing beliefs and attitudes of others.
- **Overt Racism** - a form of racial discrimination that is public or obvious.
- **Covert Racism** – a form of racial discrimination that is disguised or subtle.

## In-Class Activities

1. **The Hook** - Show the short New York Times video [“Peanut Butter, Jelly, and Racism”](#) to introduce students to the concepts of implicit bias, internalization, and overt vs. covert racism. Go around the room and ask each student to share one main point or takeaway from the video. Create a list of students’ responses on the board. Finally, ask students if there are any concepts or ideas that need further explanation.
2. **Main Activity** - The main lesson consists of a short PowerPoint presentation and an independent reading exercise. First, present the ICSB slides 21 and 22, which introduce students to the concept of internalization and implicit bias. These topics explain to students how dominant narratives contribute to individual and interpersonal prejudice and racism. Next, ask students to independently read the article [“Overt and Covert Racism”](#) and to highlight three to five main takeaways. Students will use the Cornell Notes worksheet (page 7) to take notes while reading.
3. **Class Discussion** - Break students into small groups of three to five students to discuss the Discussion Questions (page 5). The Discussion Questions focus on helping students connect what they learned in the PowerPoint with the information from the article.
4. **Reflection** - Ask students to independently write 1 or 2 sentences on each of the lesson’s Guiding Questions (page 4). Have students share their answers with a partner or with the class as a whole.

5. **Extension Activities** - Here are some ideas for further student exploration:
  - Show the New York Times video [“Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias”](#), which introduces students to the importance of consciously recognizing our personal biases and how they may impact others.
  - Students read about the [Four Levels of Racism](#) and discuss the resource’s Small Group Questions.
  - Students create [concept maps](#) to visualize the aspect of interpersonal racism that they explored in class.

## Discussion Questions

1. How do dominant narratives contribute to interpersonal racism?
2. What is internalization? Do people intentionally internalize messages and attitudes?
3. What does it mean for something to be subconscious?
4. Even if someone does not explicitly try to discriminate against someone, how can implicit bias impact their interactions with members of marginalized groups?
5. How does covert racism differ from overt racism? What are some examples of covert racism?
6. What are microaggressions and how do they impact non-white ethnic groups?
7. If implicit bias is often subconscious, how can we begin to address and combat it?

## Homework

Students should read the article [“The Bias Beneath: Two Decades of Measuring Implicit Associations”](#), which discusses how researchers have used the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to study implicit bias. The IAT is an implicit cognition measurement tool that psychologists developed to assess the degree to which people’s brains associate concepts with one another. For example, the tool measures whether you’re quicker to link white faces with positive words like “good” and nonwhite faces with negative words like “bad.” While the IAT is one of the most popular measures of implicit bias, it has been criticized for not being an accurate measure of individual bias but rather only capable of revealing trends across large groups of people.<sup>8</sup>

After reading about the test, students should take several [Implicit Association Tests](#) themselves and answer reflection questions about it. By participating in the IAT, students will be prompted to critically think about their own hidden biases and where they come from. Students will use the IAT Reflection Worksheet (page 8) to reflect upon their experience with the test.

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<sup>8</sup> Beth Azar, “IAT: Fad or Fabulous?,” American Psychological Association, 2008, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2008/07-08/psychometric>.

## Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

- Refer to steps 3-4 of the In-Class Activities section

## Additional Resources

- The Kirwan Institute, “Understanding Implicit Bias” - <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>
- TEDx Talks - “Implicit Bias -- How it Affects Us and How We Push Through” by Melanie Funchess - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr8G7MtRNlk>
- Rodney D. Coates, “Covert Racism in the U.S. And Globally” - [https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004207011/Bej.9789004203655.i-461\\_013.xml](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004207011/Bej.9789004203655.i-461_013.xml)
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice, “Lesson Plan: ELA - Hate Crimes, Microaggressions” - <https://advancingjustice-la.org/what-we-do/leadership-development/untold-civil-rights-stories/lesson-plan-ela-%E2%80%93-hate-crimes>

## Student Worksheets

### Cornell Notetaking Sheet

**Lesson:** Manifestations of Racism: Interpersonal Racism

**Class:**

**Date:**

<p><b><u>Key Words</u></b></p> <p><b>Overt Racism -</b></p> <p><b>Covert Racism -</b></p> <p><b>Implicit Bias -</b></p> <p><b>Microaggressions -</b></p> <p><b>White Privilege -</b></p>	<p><b><u>Notes</u></b></p> <p>Examples of overt racism</p> <p>Examples of covert racism</p> <p>White silence is...</p> <p>Racial profiling is...</p> <p>Colorblindness...</p> <p>White privilege is...</p>
<p><b><u>Questions</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Key Takeaways</u></b></p>



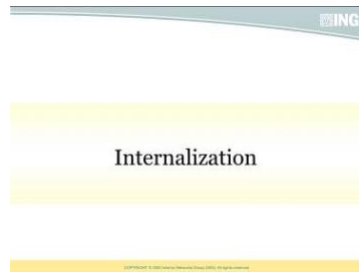
## IAT Reflection Worksheet

Take two or three Implicit Association Tests and write down your results. Then answer the questions below.

Test	Result

1. What do your results tell you?
2. Did you expect these results? Why or why not?
3. What do you think played a role in your results? (hint: Think about your environment.)
4. What do you think some of the limitations of this test are? (hint: Do the results of one test determine if you are racist or not?)
5. What do you want to learn more about?

## PowerPoint Presentation Slides



### Slide 21: Internalization

- The long history of racialization as well as the narratives and policies it has produced have had a huge impact on how we view certain groups as well as how these groups view themselves.
- This is called internalization or implicit bias, which we will talk about next.



### Slide 22: Internalization

- The term internalization refers to the adoption of stereotypes (both good and bad) about an entire group of people.
  - These beliefs are often subconscious and therefore may produce a visceral reaction towards other groups such as viewing Muslims as un-American or potential terrorists, fearing Blacks as dangerous, or suspecting that Latinx are undocumented.
  - The subject group also consciously or subconsciously internalizes these beliefs which are prevalent in popular culture.
- Internalizing beliefs about people on the basis of race, religion, culture, or other factors produces attitudes toward those groups that are usually unconscious; this is called “implicit bias,” as opposed to “explicit bias,” which is conscious. Virtually everyone has implicit bias toward others; a growing number of studies show that people’s subconscious biases can override their values and impact their behavior.<sup>9</sup>
  - These cases clearly show that even if you don’t believe that you’re biased or racist, your subconscious can make you behave in biased or racist ways or predict our behavior more accurately than our conscious values.
  - This is especially true in times of fear or stress.

<sup>9</sup> For example, a study from the University of Toronto and Ryerson University shows that equally qualified applicants with “Asian” names — i.e. names perceived as originating in India, Pakistan, or China such as Ali Saeed or Hina Chaudry or “Lei Li” or “Xuiying Zhang”— were 28% less likely to get an interview at Canadian companies than applicants with “Anglo” names like Greg Johnson or Emily Brown. <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/study-ethnic-sounding-name-employers-fewer-calls-back>, A University of Connecticut study found that Muslim job applicants received 42% fewer calls and 32% fewer emails responding to job inquiries. <https://today.uconn.edu/2014/06/great-resume-too-bad-about-your-religion/>