CREATING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: ADDRESSING
BIAS, MICROAGGRESSIONS, AND
MULTICULTURALISM IN
THE CLASSROOM

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By
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DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my parents, my advisor, and to all teachers looking to create a brighter, inclusive future for all their students.
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First, I would like to thank my advisor for inspiring me to do this project. Without him and his classes, I would not have found a topic that I was truly passionate about to complete an entire thesis project on. He helped me mold and shape this project to fruition and helped myself and my project reach its full potential. Thank you, Steven, for your countless hours of help and guidance.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction to the Project</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Question</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Core Concepts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Literature Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconscious Bias &amp; Microaggressions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpacking Privilege</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Education</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Description of the Project</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the Project</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Implementation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Professional Development Presentations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Scholarship</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
Appendices

A. Professional Development #1 ................................................................. 40
B. Professional Development #2 ................................................................. 55
C. Professional Development #3 ................................................................. 76
ABSTRACT

This project aims to help teachers identify and confront the biases, whether conscious or not, and privileges that they may bring into the classroom so that they can better create a multicultural, inclusive environment. The project is broken up into a three part professional development series. The first two parts focus on self-reflection, while examining unconscious bias and microaggressions in the first session, and privilege in the second session. The third and final session focuses on ways to create a multicultural, inclusive environment in the classroom. By the end of the professional development series, teachers should gain a better understanding of themselves and how they can create a more inclusive classroom.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

According to the Department of Education (2016), “The elementary and secondary educator workforce is overwhelmingly homogenous (82 percent white in public schools).” This fact, paired with the National Center for Education Statistics prediction that “white students will represent 46 percent of public school students in 2024, a drop from 51 percent of the student population in 2012” shows the discrepancy between teacher and student populations (Department of Education, 2016). This discrepancy between teachers’ homogeneity and a growingly diverse student population has the potential for problems in teachers knowing and supporting diverse groups of students.

A lot of work to bridge the demographic difference between teachers and students begins with self-recognition. Understanding oneself, the privileges, and biases that one may carry throughout their everyday life is important in supporting diverse groups of students. This is a concept that many may not realize or begin to work on until adulthood. However, this is an area that needs to be addressed more in the education system. Inclusive classrooms start with teachers learning about themselves and then being able to carry this knowledge into their classrooms. Scholarship has highlighted how self awareness is needed to create a more inclusive environment that is multicultural and welcoming to students from all walks of life (Adams et al., 1997).
Statement of the Problem

As people, and teachers, one can walk through life wanting to believe that one is inherently good (Stark et al., 2020). Especially in today’s climate of a heightened awareness and work towards equality, one may believe that they could never be discriminatory or racist in any way and may in turn feel defensive when this is questioned. However, it is this attitude and ignorance that can lead to a perpetuation of those in power over minority groups. Moule (2009) stated it best when he said that “Individuals need to become less focused on feeling very tolerant and good about themselves and more focused on examining their own biases” (p. 325). This defensiveness and denial has leaked into school systems, because teachers are people too, susceptible to bias (Stark et al., 2020). Such realities can result in the alienation and denial of those with less privilege and keeping those with privilege in power. The pernicious and subtle ways in which unconscious biases, judgments in favor of or against one concept, and microaggressions, play out in school settings need to be addressed.

Despite the current beliefs in education that schools in the US create inclusive environments, minorities and marginalized populations are still being oppressed and not recognized for their full potential (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). These types of oppression can be as small as a teacher continuously mispronouncing a student’s name. As stated by Kohli & Solórzano (2012), these subtle instances “support a racial and cultural hierarchy of minority inferiority. Furthermore, enduring these subtle
experiences with racism can have a lasting impact on the self-perceptions and worldviews of a child” (p. 15).

A possible cause of this problem is that too many teachers are unaware of how their prejudices, expressed as unconscious biases or microaggressions, are affecting their students. Castagno (2008) has argued that, “even though issues of race are always present and are often at the surface of school related discourse, practice, and policies educators are consistently silent and socializing students to be silent about them” (p. 314). Also, with trends showing an increase in the diversity of student population, “These trends are important for policymakers and educators to consider in regards to teacher preparation and curriculum development” (Matias and Mackey, 2016, as cited in Wiggan & Watson, 2016, p. 769). In the world of education, it is said that it is inclusive, but when it comes to the topic of race, this is a very taboo topic that can be “uncomfortable” for many, that is an area of growth for many teachers.

Guiding Question

The guiding questions for this project was, how can teachers identify and confront the biases and privileges they bring into the classroom in order to support a diverse student populous?

Overview of the Project

The purpose of this project is to help teachers recognize their own biases and privileges that they may be bringing into their classrooms and equipping them with ways to create a more inclusive environment. The project consists of a professional
development series that is broken up into three, one-hour sessions. The first two sessions will help teachers grapple with self-recognition by understanding microaggressions and unconscious biases, and then privilege. The third session will translate to what teachers can do in the classroom to create an inclusive environment by examining practices of multiculturalism.

**Definition of Core Concepts**

**Microaggressions.** Verbal and nonverbal slights or insults that can be intentional or unintentional that send derogatory or negative messages

**Bias.** A particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned

**Unconscious bias.** Prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one concept, person, or group as compared to another, in a way that is usually considered unfair

**Prejudice.** Learned prejudgment toward social others and refers to internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and assumptions based on the groups to which they belong

**Discrimination.** Take action based on prejudices toward social others; acting on prejudgments (i.e. ignoring, avoiding, excluding, ridicule, jokes, slander, threats, and violence)

**Privilege.** A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group

**White privilege.** Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.
**Intersectionality.** The concept that people can be privileged and have advantages in some ways and not be privileged and have disadvantages in other ways

**Inclusive.** Including everyone, especially: allowing and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability)

**Oppressed.** Malicious or unjust treatment or exercise of power, often under the guise of governmental authority or cultural opprobrium.

**Minority.** A group of people whose practices, race, religion, ethnicity, or other characteristics are fewer in numbers than the main groups of those classifications.

**Summary**

This chapter has identified discrepancies in teacher and student demographic populations as possible sources of oppression. Additionally, the first chapter proposed a project designed to address bias and microaggressions while promoting inclusivity in the classroom. Chapter 2 will consist of the Literature Review on topics such as microaggressions, unconscious bias, privilege, inclusivity, and multiculturalism. Chapter 3 gives a more in depth project description of the professional development series. Chapter 4 describes how the project will be implemented or could be implemented by others. Chapter 5 concludes the document by reiterating the project components and its purpose, connects the project to educational stakeholders, and provides suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

All teachers bring biases and privilege into their classroom, whether aware or not. These biases can take form unconsciously as microaggressions. Biases may also take form as privilege and silence about race and other social phenomena. This literature review will begin by defining and examining unconscious bias and microaggressions. Next, a review of literature regarding privilege and the “silence” that surrounds race in schools will be presented. Last, the review will address multicultural education, its impact on students, and how teachers can create a more inclusive environment.

Unconscious Bias & Microaggressions

Public schools are meant to support all students. One reality public schools in the United States face is the mismatch between the demographic makeup of teacher and student populations. Ingersoll et. al (2018) have noted while the teaching workforce has rapidly grown more diverse racially-ethnically, it remains a predominantly white, non-Hispanic workforce. This imbalance can lead to teachers demonstrating unconscious biases against students and contributes to an unwillingness to learn and be receptive to identifying and recognizing these biases. These unconscious biases can then lead to microaggressions. However, “understanding our own biases is a first step toward improving the interactions that we have with all people and is essential if we hope to build deep community within our schools” (Moule, 2009, p. 321). This
section will begin by defining and explaining unconscious bias. Next, the section will define and explain microaggressions.

**Defining Unconscious Bias**

Defining and explaining unconscious bias requires an examination of stereotypes that Americans are socialized in, that can lead to prejudice and discrimination. These aspects of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are what form the unconscious biases that a person may demonstrate. The prejudices that some hold are more based around personal experiences and usually begin as stereotypes. Weinstein and Mellen (1997), define stereotypes as “a simplistic image or distorted truth about a person or group based on a prejudgment of habits, traits, abilities, or expectations.” Stereotypes often refer to cultures, gender, races, groups of individuals (i.e. goths, blondes, teenagers, politicians, etc.), and sexual orientations. Some examples would be “Boys love blue and girls love pink,” “Asians are good at math,” “Black people love watermelon” (Serrani). Stereotypes are stories that individuals and groups possess which can influence behavior by means of prejudice.

The prejudices that some hold are more based around personal experiences and usually begin as stereotypes. It is when people give value by confirming or believing stereotypes that leads to prejudice. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) stated that prejudiced is defined as “learned pre judgement toward social others and refers to internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and assumptions based on the groups to which they belong” (p. 75). For example, a teacher might have a negative attitude towards
students that struggle, while possessing a positive attitude towards those that finish on time. This would be considered prejudice.

The danger with both stereotypes and prejudice is when they manifest as discrimination. However, this may not always happen, and a person can be prejudiced without experiencing discrimination. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) define discrimination as “when we take action based on prejudices toward social others. When we act on our prejudgments, we are discriminating” (p. 78). Some examples of discrimination would be grading the student that did not turn it on time more harshly or unfairly compared to those who did finish on time. In this, a prejudgment has resulted in a discriminatory act.

Socialization plays a role in prejudices and biases. Socialization is the process of learning the meanings and practices that enable us to make sense of and behave appropriately in that culture. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) describe a useful metaphor that compares our culture to a pair of glasses. These authors describe culture as, “The frames are the ‘big picture’ (macro norms) - what everyone is taught from birth” (p. 67). An example of this would be the thought that girls should wear pink and boys should wear blue. Part of this process is making it understood that every social group has an opposite. For example, rich and poor, or male and female. These are oversimplifications of reality, but that is part of the process. These “glasses” also contain lenses, which are the “individual (micro) perspective” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 67). This pertains to unique personal experiences such as birth order, family, and personality. Being reflective about this socialization process requires
understanding “the interplay or relationship between your frames and your lenses” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 70). For example, a teacher may react negatively or “snap” more quickly at a student in a marginalized population as a result of socializations around stereotypes or prejudices linked with the marginalized population.

Unconscious biases are rooted in the stereotypes and prejudices that one possesses (Moule, 2009). Unconscious biases are the beliefs that we hold against different groups of people without being consciously aware of it. For example, a white woman standing in an elevator may tighten her grip on her purse when a Black man enters without consciously knowing about her action. Another example might be that a male teacher calls on male students more frequently in class than female students.

Identifying and grappling with unconscious bias can be a struggle for some people to identify with because people want to believe that they are inherently “good.” The result of this process is that it can make people more resistant to working at recognizing their own behaviors. Moule (2009) has argued that “individuals need to become less focused on feeling very tolerant and good about themselves and more focused on examining their own biases” (p. 325). Possessing these unconscious biases can affect relationships. In education, teachers interact in highly nuanced ways with students, parents, administration, and/or other teachers. The biased interactions between a teacher and a student has an impact. Moule, (2009) reminds us that “children internalize our society’s biases and prejudices, as have all of us; they are
just a little less able to hide it” (p. 322). Recognizing and becoming more aware of one’s prejudices and unconscious biases, has the potential to lead one to become a supporter of diverse groups of students.

**Defining Microaggressions**

Microaggressions are a direct result of unconscious biases. However, someone could still have unconscious bias without actually demonstrating microaggressions. Microaggressions are the verbal and nonverbal slights or insults that can be intentional or unintentional, that send derogatory or negative messages to people of minorities and marginalized groups (Sue, 2010). When working to understand microaggressions, people need “to recognize when a microaggression has occurred and what message it may be sending” (Sue, 2010, p. 1). Often, the sender of the message is unaware of the offensive message. There are many different themes or types of microaggressions. Each has their own nuanced form of offensive meaning. This meaning stems from categories of biases such as “colorblindness,” “second class citizen,” “denial of individual racism/sexism/heterosexism,” and more. An example of “denial of individual racism/sexism/heterosexism” would be someone stating that they ‘could never be racist because they have a black friend.’ The message that this microaggression sends is “I am absolved from racism because my best friend is black” (Moule, 2009, p. 321). When a person is able to recognize that they may possess a certain bias against a person or group, it may allow them to closely examine their possible response (Moule, 2009, p. 322).
Microaggressions are harmful. Obear (2018) describes some of the potential impacts of microaggressions on minorities as uncertainty, self-doubt, constantly vigilant, feeling like an outcast, feeling to assimilate, etc (2018). Therefore, recognizing and being aware of biases can help to create a more inclusive environment and reduce microaggressions.

Unpacking Privilege

Scholars have argued that teachers possess and are advantaged by various privileges in the classroom and that an ideology of colorblindness is rooted in privilege (Gillborn, 2019). This section will begin by defining privilege and how it operates in the classroom context. The next section will describe the need for teachers to understand privilege in the classroom and what teachers can do to support diverse groups of students.

Defining Privilege & Related Concepts

Privilege is a broad-reaching term and is related to several other terms. Privilege can be thought of as the unspoken advantages that one is afforded. For example, research shows that “white teachers (whatever their conscious intent) tend to treat Black children as having less than average ability but presenting a heightened disciplinary challenge” (Gillborn, 2019, p. 113). In this situation, white students in the classroom possess privilege as a result of the prejudice held by their teacher. Privilege is also related to core concepts found in the classroom, such as meritocracy, “racist vs. not racist” orientation, and intersectionality.
A prominent ideology in the United States, which is reinforced in school, is that of meritocracy. Meritocracy is the idea that an individual's success is solely based on their own will and work ethic (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Essentially, meritocracy is the belief that life outcomes are based on individual merit and the thought that if someone works hard enough, then they will achieve success. Meritocracy is related to privilege. For example, someone of privilege might see their success as the result of their hard work. They then might believe that those who did not succeed, as not having worked hard enough. What is missing is an understanding of the ways that social injustices, inequities, and disadvantages played in the outcome of the situation. Stated concisely, “the assumption that people get ahead as a result of individual effort or merit conceals how social, economic and cultural privileges facilitate the success of some groups of people but not others” (Applebaum, 2006, p. 286). For example, a person that graduated from college likely did so as a combination of hard work and privilege. They may have worked hard in school in preparation for entrance exams. However, their family may have also had the financial means to pay for tutoring sessions that other less privileged students did not have access to.

There are other types of privilege besides just skin color such as citizenship, class, sexual orientation, gender, and ability, to name only a few. Some examples of white privilege are being able to turn on the TV or look at the newspaper and see people of the white race widely represented, or history books that teach predominantly about the heritage of whites (McIntosh, 1988). Being able to recognize
privilege “simply means being aware that some people have to work much harder just to experience the things you take for granted (if they ever can experience them at all)” (Crosley-Corcoran, 2014).

Another aspect to privilege is that of intersectionality. Intersectionality is a concept which argues that people can be privileged and have advantages in some ways and not be privileged and have disadvantages in other ways. Intersectionality can be difficult to believe for some people who experience other forms of societal oppressions. For example, white people that live in poverty may lack some advantages compared to that of other whites. They may then view their world as that of constant oppression or lack of privilege. However, “being born with white skin in America affords people certain unearned privileges in life that people of another skin color simply are not afforded” (Crosley-Corcoran, 2014). This means that although they have disadvantages compared to that of middle class white people, they may possess advantages over other marginalized people in certain contexts, like school. McIntosh (1988) describes intersectionality best when she states that she has “come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant' to remain oblivious” (p. 1).

The orientation of “racist vs. not racist” is also related to privilege. This is a belief system in which a person only looks at extremists as example of racists (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 146). For example, a teacher might be willing to identify members of the Ku Klux Klan as racist, but not their superintendent of schools, who has a policy of course tracking which benefits white students over other racial and
ethnic groups. Instead of being willing to openly listen and learn, many teachers who follow a “racist vs. not racist” ideal could get caught up in denying that they could be any form of racist. The oversimplification of complex social phenomenon makes it easy to deny that an individual is racist or contributing to a racist system. When the concept of racism is looked at as racist versus not racist, individuals who consider themselves “not racist” may believe that there is no further action needed to be taken to support diverse students. Sensoy & DiAngelo, (2017) argue that as a result, “This guarantees that as a member of the dominant group, I will not build skills in thinking critically about racism, or use my position to challenge racial inequality” (p. 146). The correlation to education is that a teacher may think they are “not racist” and therefore do not need to make any changes to reach and teach diverse students. They may dismiss indicators of bias towards groups as coincidence, as opposed to a systemic pattern of discrimination. Additionally, the drastic oversimplification of the racist vs. not racist dichotomy tends to promote the idea that minor forms of racism, like microaggressions, do not count and are not worthy of addressing.

“Silence” in Schools About Race

Often, there is a “silence” surrounding race in schools. This mean that race is often not an area of open discussion and can be uncomfortable for some. This “silence” can be difficult and somewhat confusing for many students because they use their race and identity to make sense of their world. Teachers contribute to that silence by socializing students to be silent pertaining to the topics of race. Polite & Saenger (2003) argued “many studies have shown that even very young children are
aware of the powerful effects of race in our society or any society” (p. 275). Teachers also exert their authority and white privilege when they silence students and shut down race related comments. For example, if a race related concept comes up organically in class, a teacher might stop the conversation by saying things like “don’t say that,” “what’d I say about that comment,” etc. This conveys the message that those types of topics and comments have no place in school. Castagno (2008) has documented such actions noting “data illuminates that most White educators are reluctant to name things that are perceived as uncomfortable or threatening to the established social order” (p. 315). Essentially, teachers want to maintain a level of comfort in what they know and their own ideological world. However, these choices have an impact on student experience with school.

This silence around race also further perpetuates whiteness, especially when teachers utilize the idea of colorblindness. Colorblindness is the act of being colorblind or “not seeing color,” meaning a person chooses to ignore certain physical characteristics of another such as race-ethnicity (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 150). Gillborn, (2019) has argued “in practice, however, color-blindness has become an argument to ignore race inequality and silence critical discussion of racism in all but its most crude and obvious forms” (p.113). This colorblindness perpetuates white privilege by benefiting those in power and continuing the advantage that they have over minorities. Advocates of color blindness look at themselves as acting morally correct. When put into action, colorblindness is really contributing to the silence of race and racism, especially in the classroom.
Teachers can also assert the position that “everyone is different.” Similar to colorblindness, this position too perpetuates “silence” on race in the classroom. Polite and Saenger, (2003) have noted “the truism that ‘everyone is different’” snaps a lid on the subject when a child is struggling to understand the implications of these differences” (p. 277). This response then shuts down the topic of race by providing a reality that everyone is different and therefore we cannot know anything about any group of people. Such a position dissuades talking about groups instead of opening honest conversations about the experiences of groups of people up to learning. Silence on race related topics ignores individuality and takes away the differences, perspectives, and experiences that each student brings into the classroom.

**Action for Teachers**

The actions that teachers can take to identify their privileges and open up discussions about race, need to be examined. The starting point for teachers is first educating themselves. This may begin with recognizing their own privilege and disadvantages based on their own race. There is a level of self-recognition and awareness that needs to happen. Many tools to facilitate thinking about identity and privilege exist, including: personal identity wheels (LSA Inclusive Teaching, 2022), social identify wheels (Scripps, 2005) and assemblages (Drouin, 2015). This may begin with a teacher asking hard questions about “whether the silence comes more from us or from the children” (Polite & Saenger, 2003, p. 277). Teachers can benefit from recognizing how their actions, such as microaggressions, may be influencing
their students in unintended ways. Furthermore, teachers may benefit from recognizing that further learning is likely necessary.

    Teachers can also utilize experts to identify their privileges and open up discussions about race. The studies performed by Yu (2018) and Wiggan and Watson (2016), both show a positive impact on the social, cultural, and academic achievement of students when schools work with experts in addressing privilege and race in schools. Outside expertise can be helpful in bringing like-minded colleagues together to address issues like race and privilege. Other ways that teachers may involve experts is to look for schools that may be participating in educational movements, reach out to communities that may experience some of these racial problems/inequities (i.e. black and Latinx communities), and engage local communities as members in the educational setting.

    As teachers, it takes courage to address the current issues in the world that surround race, but we “can be role models of activism and concern. We should never forget the power of the roles we play in children's lives, for good or ill” (Polite & Saenger, 2003, p. 278).

**Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education is a philosophy and pedagogical approach used by many educators to support diverse groups of students. However, multicultural education is complex, controversial, and often misunderstood. Many believe that just the one or two “multicultural” activities every so often means that they have created an inclusive environment for all students. Instead, multicultural education is more of a
way of approaching education as opposed to a “one and done” action. This section will begin by defining multicultural education. Next, scholarship that addresses the impact of multicultural education will be presented. The final section will address what multicultural education looks like in the classroom.

**Defining Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education refers to teaching that incorporates aspects from an array of different cultural backgrounds. The goal of multicultural education is “the acknowledgment and recognition of existing cultural differences” (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013, p. 180). Teachers need to be willing to have ideas and beliefs challenged by others, especially ones that differ from that of their own. This may start with a teacher admitting the limits of their knowledge. Such an endeavor can be hard for teachers because teachers are often looked at as “all knowing.” Control, power, and aspects of professional identity are all linked with knowledge for teachers. As such, it can be hard for a teacher to give up one’s belief, that they know it all, because for many it may be tied to their identity as a teacher. However, this is not to say that a teacher has to give up their beliefs to embrace multicultural education. On this topic, Wheatley (2002) has noted, “we don’t have to let go of what we believe, but we do need to be curious about what someone else believes. We do need to acknowledge that their way of interpreting the world might be essential to our survival” (p. 1). Essentially, there needs to be a willingness to understand that another way of thinking or doing, may be better. Wheatley (2002) concluded that “sometimes we hesitate to listen for differences because we don’t want to change” (p. 2). There is an array of
interpretations on any and every topic, therefore there should not just be one approach.

Scholars have framed multicultural education for comprehensibility. While James A. Banks (1988) is viewed as the father of multicultural education and approaches, Jenks et al. (2001) describes how Banks' four different approaches to multicultural education are essential for teachers, but especially white teachers. The authors state that “the primarily white and middle-class teachers in our nation’s schools are ill prepared in knowledge, skills, and attitude to teach for equity and excellence in multicultural classrooms. They cannot teach cross-cultural competency when they lack it themselves” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 99). Banks’ (1988) four approaches are contribution, additive, transformative, and social action.

A contribution approach is essentially scratching the surface level in that it does not go beyond to educate about “issues of power and disenfranchisement” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 96). A contribution approach acknowledges the contributions that minorities have made to society and acknowledges special holidays and heroes from other cultures. For example, a teacher may read a story about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during Black History Month. The additive approach adds on multicultural materials to existing curriculum without changing the curriculum. For example, a teacher may add a lesson about black soldiers to a unit on the Civil War. The transformative approach actually works to change the structure of the curriculum to include the experiences of different minority groups. The goal of a transformative approach “is a transformation of students’ perspectives regarding issues of equity and
justice” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 97). For example, a teacher might turn a unit on Thanksgiving into a unit exploring cultural conflict. Instead of just adding to the curriculum, the teacher reformats the entirety of the class to focus on diversity of knowledge and perspectives. Last, is the social action approach which essentially takes the transformative approach and puts it into action through research/action projects that initiate change. The purpose of this approach is that it “calls for student action to deal with injustice and inequity” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 98). An example of this would be after exploring a concept from multiple perspectives, students write letters to senators, Congress, and newspaper editors to express their opinions about a new policy. Being able to understand each of these approaches and look at what “level” one is at as a teacher, will help one to examine how exactly multicultural education is being implemented in the classroom.

Impact of Multicultural Education on Students

There are many effects that multicultural education has on students. One important aspect of multicultural education is that it “improves equality by establishing anti-racism norms” (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013, p.180) and discusses the effects that it has on the victims. In doing so, this helps teach children the differences among cultures in order to promote positive acceptance of one another. For example, Verkuyten and Thijs’ (2013) work showed that “children reported fewer personal experiences with ethnic discrimination when there was a shared classroom perception that children would tell their teacher about ethnic victimization and that the teacher would react” (p. 183). When there is an inclusive environment created where children
feel safe, there is overall better growth personally and academically. Wiggan and Watson (2016) have found that “students show academic gains when they receive high quality instruction from a culturally responsive teacher” (p. 769). In another study, the results showed that “culturally relevant pedagogy” not only enhanced students’ attitude towards school, but also improved achievement in math and science (Yu, 2018). Working to create an inclusive environment that is centered around multicultural education helps to have a positive domino effect surrounding many aspects of race and in helping kids to understand empathy.

**Multicultural Education in the Classroom**

Multicultural education implementation in the classroom has been shown to be challenging. An important aspect of multicultural education is making sure that all opportunities surrounding race are being used as teachable moments for students of all ages. Often teachers shy away from student comments or remarks that may be racially charged, but “classroom practices like teachers addressing ethnic victimization and discussing the need for equality and fairness help to establish an anti-racist, inclusive norm within the classroom that improves ethnic attitudes” (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013, 186). Teachers cannot let moments like these slide by without any recognition or discussion.

Another way to help foster multicultural education is through the use of read alouds. These read alouds can be used to start discussion on race because whether the book is culturally inclusive or not, there are teachable moments. For example, a text might use language like “We” and “They” in ways that are referring to race. Moreno
(2015) used read alouds to read different versions other than just classic Western versions of stories such as Cinderella. Moreno has read books such as the *The Persian Cinderella, Big foot Cinderella*, and many where Cinderella rescues the prince. Moreno stated that in doing this, “it immediately sparks conversations and questions” and “opens up critical discussions in other subject areas” (p.153). Books are a great way to give students the “experience with curricula that affirm their cultural identities, regardless of whether those materials reliably reduce prejudice for majority or minoritized youth” (Grapin, Griffin, Naser, Brown, & Proctor, 2019, p. 159). Such scholarship highlights the power of read alouds as a tool of multicultural education.

Cooperative learning is also a great strategy for helping students build relationships with one another in the multicultural classroom. This strategy consists of students working together towards a common goal. An example of an activity that utilizes this is the jigsaw classroom’ where “students are given pieces of a lesson plan and asked to work collaboratively to solve the ‘puzzle’ and to create a clear understanding of lesson content” (Grapin, Griffin, Naser, Brown, & Proctor, 2019, p. 157). Using this strategy in the classroom helps to promote team building, problem solving, perspective taking, social skills, and more.

Another tool to promote multicultural education is the entertainment intervention. This strategy utilizes “the use of books, radio, television, film, and other forms of media to construct narratives about individuals from diverse backgrounds” (Grapin, Griffin, Naser, Brown, & Proctor, 2019, p. 157). This strategy is especially effective when used to show lives, hardships, and perspectives of other cultural
groups. Such experiences give students access to views that are different from that of their own. An activity that could also be tied into some form of entertainment intervention is an assemblage. This is a project where students are asked to create an “assemblage” which represents their cultural identity through a collection of different items/artifacts in some type of container (Drouin, 2015, p. 60). Teachers can choose to leave it at this, or depending on the grade level, can add extension pieces such as writing essays about one another's presentations or from the point of view of another student to examine how students make sense of their own identity and how they are perceived by others. This type of activity allows students the opportunity to share about themselves with classmates. Additionally, such sharing can help build relationships among peers and with the teacher, as they learn about themselves and one another. It also provides a more inclusive environment that gives every student the platform to express themselves and “who they are.”

These were just a few examples of how teachers can incorporate more multicultural aspects into their classroom, but there are still many more strategies and tools that could be used. Multicultural education is a complex topic that has many different aspects that need to be taken into consideration when examining it in a classroom. Gorski (2001) states that “the accuracy and completeness of a multicultural curriculum is achieved, in part, through the inclusion of diverse perspectives and sources, including those representing traditionally unheard or underrepresented individuals or groups” (p. 43). While the above strategies are all important and useful, the idea of multicultural education still goes beyond just the
activities in that it’s “a way of viewing reality and a way of thinking, not just content about various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups” (Banks, 2015, p. 8). To have a classroom that is fully inclusive and multicultural, teachers need to be fully engulfed in this “view of reality.”

**Summary**

Through this literature review, multiple important aspects were unpacked about what teachers need to recognize in themselves and in their classrooms. Teachers that are able to recognize their own unconscious biases, can help to diminish microaggressions and stereotypes in their classroom. Understanding privilege and being able to openly discuss race in the classroom, helps teachers to help their students shape and make sense of their own world. Once teachers can unpack these complex yet essential aspects of the classroom, they can then begin to foster an environment that is both inclusive and multicultural for all students.
CHAPTER III
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to help teachers recognize their own biases and privileges that they may bring into their classrooms. Additionally, the project aims at equipping teachers with ways to create a more multicultural and inclusive classroom environment. This chapter will be an overview of the three-part professional development series. Each session has a different focus that will ultimately be able to help teachers create a multicultural classroom.

Description of the Project

This project is intended to be implemented in three separate parts that will each consist of a one hour professional development session. Each session has a different focus consisting of: unconscious bias/microaggressions, privilege, and multicultural education. This project will be appropriate for teachers of all grade levels but will be slightly geared more towards elementary level teachers.

Session one focuses on unconscious biases and microaggressions. The session starts with defining and identifying stereotypes and how they lead to microaggressions. Participants will then define microaggressions and identify what those may look like in our daily lives. After identifying these two topics, participants will examine unconscious bias, what it is, and what it may look like in the classroom. The last thing participants will discuss in this session is the importance of
understanding personal unconscious biases and how these biases may play a role in their own classroom.

Session two focuses on privilege. Participants will begin with discussing their own first memories of race and then identify what the level of discussion surrounding race is in their own classroom. This will lead into the discussion of the “silence” surrounding race in schools and how this “silence” perpetuates “whiteness.” This “silence” takes away students' individuality and does not help them to make sense of their identity, and kids use the discussion and/or lack of, to make sense of their world. The topic of this “silence” will lead into the idea of colorblindness where participants will define it and then discuss the two ideals of meritocracy and “racist vs. not racist” that further perpetuate colorblindness. This discussion will lead into the ideal of intersectionality, define it, and discuss examples of it. Participants will then complete a handout to help them identify some of their own privileges, and the session will come to a close with a discussion about what teachers can do moving forward to address some of the issues that were discussed in their own classrooms.

Last, the third session presents the idea of multicultural education. Participants will define multicultural education and examine Banks’ four approaches to multicultural education. Participants will look at examples and define which of the four approaches are being used as well as examine their own classroom practices to identify which approach is most commonly being used. Participants will discuss the strategies and activities that are currently being used in their own classrooms, as well
as given a few more ideas about how to effectively create an inclusive, multicultural environment.

**Summary**

This chapter described the purpose and major pieces of the project. The next chapter, chapter 4, presents how the project will be implemented and how others could use aspects of the project in their own classrooms.
CHAPTER IV
IMPLEMENTATION

This professional development series was created due to the rising rates of diversity amongst student populations and the discrepancy with teachers. Teachers that are working to create an inclusive multicultural environment amongst their students, may first need to start with self-recognition and understanding the biases and microaggressions that one may carry throughout their everyday life. The purpose of this professional development series is to help teachers recognize what they bring into the classroom, knowingly or unknowingly, so that they can take and apply that knowledge back into their own classrooms. Once teachers understand themselves better, they can create a much more inclusive environment that is welcoming to all their students, and can ultimately lead to building better relationships with their students. This chapter will outline how I plan on implementing the professional development presentations and then provide suggestions for how others might utilize the professional development presentations.

Using the Professional Development Presentations

There are several ways in which I plan on utilizing these professional development presentations. I understand that earning a masters is about assuming an identity as an educational leader. As such, I plan on sharing my presentations with both my school and district leadership teams. My aim is to have an opportunity to run these sessions at my school site for my colleagues or at a district professional learning
session. If such opportunities are not embraced, I plan on sharing them with my colleagues. I recognize that reading the presentations is not the same as experiencing them, but believe there would still be benefits. Finally, my own practice as a teacher has largely been influenced by the knowledge found within the presentations, and I plan on continuing to adapt my curriculum and learning environment.

Others might utilize these presentations in a variety of ways. The presentations were created with the intent to be presented to teachers, however, one could also participate in the presentations in an asynchronous manner so that it is a learning experience for themselves instead of a teaching experience. In the scenario, it’s being used the way that it was originally intended and being presented to other teachers, each session has a different focus that one would need to make sure they are familiar with before presenting to others. The first session addresses unconscious bias and microaggressions, the second addresses privilege, and the last pertains to creating an inclusive multicultural environment. There are many different ideas discussed in the presentations such as microaggressions, bias, unconscious bias, prejudice, discrimination, privilege, intersectionality, inclusive, oppressed, etc. These are all areas that one would want to be well versed in before presenting to others. The presentation also uses the platforms Nearpod and Google Slides; therefore, the presenter would also want to understand how to use both of these programs.

Stakeholders such as teachers, instructional coaches, and district administrators would likely all benefit from this professional development series. All these stakeholders can use the presentations to further educate themselves and then
use it as a teaching tool for other stakeholders in the education world. The presentations would be very beneficial to districts that are taking on initiatives about teaching to diverse student populations and working to create an inclusive environment.

**Conclusion**

This professional development series was initially designed to be presented to teachers, but could also be used asynchronously for an individual learning experience. Next, will be chapter 5, which will bring a close to this project document.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter brings closure to this document. The chapter will begin by summarizing the project. Next, the chapter will provide recommendations regarding the project and outline areas for future scholarship. Finally, the chapter will conclude this document.

Summary

The growing discrepancy between the diversity of students and teachers (Department of Education, 2016), provides a want and need to create a culturally inclusive environment in classrooms. There are many issues of race often being presented in schools (Castagno, 2008. p. 314), and people want to believe that they are not discriminatory or racist in any way causing some to feel defensive when those intentions are questioned. In response to these issues, this professional development series aims to help teachers and others in the educational field recognize the biases and microaggressions that they may carry throughout their everyday life and into the classroom. The professional development series is broken up into three parts consisting of unconscious bias and microaggressions, privilege, and creating a multicultural/inclusive environment.

Recommendations

One recommendation would be to make sure that teachers and any other participants are prefaced with the topics of the professional development series.
Therefore, they can have an understanding of the types of discussions that will be had throughout the series. Along with this preface, it would be beneficial to encourage teachers and other participants to have an open mind, as well as let participants know that this will be a safe space to discuss these topics, free of judgment.

Another recommendation would be to make sure that all participants have a laptop or device that they can participate in the Nearpod exercise with so that they are able to actively engage and participate with all aspects of the presentations. However, if this is not possible, make sure that all participants have access to paper and pencils so they can still brainstorm and jot ideas down.

The last recommendation would be that although these presentations can be shared digitally and participants could go through them asynchronously, it would be most beneficial to present synchronously, ideally with a presenter, to a group of educational workers. In doing so, it allows the participants to ask questions, as well as discuss and learn from one another.

**Future Scholarship**

Robust scholarship exists on the topics of bias, microaggressions, and multicultural education. However, there are a few areas which would benefit from further study. These areas may include, but are not limited to, specifically the effect of white educators’ unconscious bias and microaggressions on students in the classroom, the effects of white teachers that create multicultural inclusive environments on students of color, and the academic effect of students who learn in a culturally inclusive classroom.
Conclusion

As we are seeing an increase in the population of diversity amongst students, there is a growing need to create multicultural, inclusive environments. Alongside this increase in student population, there is a growing discrepancy amongst teacher and student diversity. Taking these realities into consideration, there is a need for teachers to gain a better understanding of themselves and what kind of bosses and privilege they may bring into the classroom before they can truly create an environment that is inclusive to all students. After teachers and other educators take part in this professional development series, they should be able to better understand themselves and in recognizing their own unconscious biases and/or privilege that they may have been bringing into their classroom. Participants will also be given tools that they can take and use in their classroom that allows them to create a multiculturally inclusive environment for all students that in turn will help build better relationships.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT #1

Google Slide link:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1SFJy1CW8vyEYVK96ndxrlPCodYHsmyTAeL0HfNbU2xM/edit?usp=sharing

Nearpod Link:

https://app.nearpod.com/?pin=F11BDBDB003FA7BF01017A5E4A16169-1

Welcome!

Presenter: Cayla Donahue
Today's session will be part 1 of a 3 part Professional Development series.

The focus of today's first PD session is unconscious bias and microaggressions.

Our goals by the end of this session are:

- Define unconscious bias
- Define microaggressions
- Identify what unconscious biases and microaggressions look like in the classroom
- Be able to identify at least one personal unconscious bias and/or microaggression

A Little About Me

- Born and raised in Turlock
- Attended CSU Stanislaus for Bachelors, Credential, and Master's degree
- 6th grade teacher for the past 3 years in the Empire Union School District
- Lower SES/Title I school
Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. What grade do you teach?
2. What school/district do you teach in?
3. How long have you been teaching?
4. What does the student population of your district/school look like?

Question: What do you know or think you know about unconscious bias?
Understanding Unconscious Bias

Unconscious Bias Umbrella

Assumptions ➔ Stereotypes ➔ Microaggressions

Consider the following statements:

- Boys love blue and girls love pink.
- Asians are good at math.
- Black people love watermelon.
- Mexicans came to America illegally.
- All blonds are unintelligent.
- Any feminine man is gay and any masculine woman is a lesbian.
**Stereotype**

A stereotype is a generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group.

Stereotypes often refer to:
- Cultures
- Gender
- Races
- Groups of individuals (i.e. goths, blonds, teenagers, politicians, etc.)
- Sexual orientation

The previous slide were all examples of stereotypes
Based on some the examples that you read, how would you define a stereotype?
What are other examples of stereotypes present in society?

Being that we are all teachers, what are some more education-based stereotypes that you have seen and/or heard in schools and classrooms?
Understanding Unconscious Bias

Unconscious Bias Umbrella

Assumptions ➔ Stereotypes ➔ Microaggressions

Question: What level of background knowledge do you have about microaggressions?
Microaggressions

Microaggressions are the verbal and nonverbal slights or insults that can be intentional or unintentional, that send derogatory or negative messages to people of minorities and marginalized groups (Sue, 2010, p. 1).

Like stereotypes, microaggressions often refer to:
- Cultures
- Gender
- Races
- Groups of individuals (i.e. goths, blonds, teenagers, politicians, etc.)
- Sexual orientation

Examples of Common Microaggressions (Sue, 2010, p. 1-2)
- “Where are you from or where were you born?” or “You speak English very well.”
  - Message: You are not a true American.
- To a woman, “Wow! How did you become so good at math?”
  - Message: It is considered unusual for a woman to have strong mathematical skills.
- “When I look at you, I don’t see color” or “There is only one race, the human race.”
  - Message: Denying the significance of a person of color’s racial/ethnic experience and history.
- “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”
  - Message: People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Examine the following statement by considering the following questions. Is it true or false? How do you interpret this statement? How does it make you feel?

“I could never be racist because I have a black friend(s).”

The message that this microaggression sends is “I am absolved from racism because my best friend is black” (Moule, 2009, p. 321).

The reality is that you may not be a “racist” persay, but that does not mean that you can’t be racially insensitive and ignorant.
Examples of Education Related Common Microaggressions (Sue, 2010, p. 1-2)

- Continuing to mispronounce the names of students after the student has corrected the person multiple times.
  - *Message:* I'm unwilling to listen closely and learn about you and your background.

- Raising your voice or speaking slowly when addressing a blind student.
  - *Message:* A person with a disability is defined as lesser in all aspects of physical and mental functioning.

- Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in a school/work setting.
  - *Message:* There is not room for difference.
**Understanding Unconscious Bias**

Unconscious Bias Umbrella

Assumptions ➔ Stereotypes ➔ Microaggressions

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**So what is Unconscious Bias?**

Unconscious biases are rooted in the stereotypes and prejudices that one possesses (Moule, 2009, p. 321).

These are the beliefs that we hold against different groups of people **without** being consciously aware of it.
Collaborate Board

Based on everything that we have gone over up to this point, give an example of what unconscious bias may look like in classrooms and maybe even in your own classroom.

Unconscious bias in the classroom

It can often be race or gender related, but not always. It can also relate to socioeconomic status and personal relationships with students.

Pause and Think: Consider the student(s) in your class that consume a lot more of your time and energy, especially in the area of classroom management.

Does this child receive the same attitude, energy, patience, grading, etc. from you that other students do?
Importance

When a person is able to recognize that they “have a bias for or against a group, it may cause you to compensate and more carefully consider your possible responses or actions” (Moule, 2009, p. 322).

- Can help to create a more inclusive environment and reduce microaggressions
- Can affect relationships with students, parents, administration, and/or other teachers
Question: Based on today's PD session and our goals that we identified at the beginning, how well did you gain a better understanding of the following:
Question: Was there anything that could have been done differently or better to enhance this PD session? Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

Thank you!
APPENDIX B

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT #2

Google Slide link:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QDQaHsdETLwYnrJEVaOQcXdmtwXdKEQz4pwU5owFtk/edit?usp=sharing

Nearpod Link:

https://app.nearpod.com/?pin=C25FDBC48EA6370535CF9410BE6BB257-1

Welcome back!

Presenter: Cayla Donahue
Today is the second session in a 3 part Professional Development series.

The focus of today’s PD session is privilege.

Our goals by the end of this session are:

- Define privilege
- Define colorblindness
- Define intersectionality
- Identify what privilege looks like in the classroom
- Be able to identify at least one personal privilege that you possess

My own first memory of race
What is your first memory of race?
In your own words, define privilege?

Unpacking Privilege in the Classroom

Discussions of Race ➔ “Colorblindness” ➔ Intersectionality
Question: Levels of discussion surrounding race in your classroom:

Collaborate Board

If there's a lack of discussion surrounding race in schools, what message do you think that this sends to students?
Castagno (2008) has documented such actions noting “data illuminates that most White educators are reluctant to name things that are perceived as uncomfortable or threatening to the established social order” (p. 315).

Essentially, teachers want to maintain a level of comfort in what they know and their own ideological world.

This silence surrounding race leads to the topic of “colorblindness” and also perpetuates “whiteness.”

Scholars have noted that an ideology of colorblindness is rooted in privilege.
What do you know or think you know about colorblind ideology as it relates to race?

**Colorblindness**

Colorblindness is the act of being color blind or “not seeing color.”
Impact of colorblindness

The reality is that this silence on race related topics ignores individuality and takes away the differences, perspectives, and experiences that each student brings into the classroom.

We have two ideals that perpetuate colorblindness:

- Meritocracy
- “Racist vs. Not racist”
Meritocracy

Meritocracy is the idea that an individual's success is solely based on their own will and work ethic.

Common example:
- Someone of privilege might see their success as the result of their hard work. Then they might see those who did not succeed as not having worked hard enough.

Collaborate Board

Based on the example in the previous slide, what aspects or factors are not being taken into consideration?
Understanding Meritocracy

Stated concisely, “the assumption that people get ahead as a result of individual effort or merit conceals how social, economic and cultural privileges facilitate the success of some groups of people but not others” (Applebaum, 2006, p. 286).

In other words, what’s missing is an understanding of the ways that social injustices, inequities and disadvantages played in the outcome of the situation.

“Racist vs. Not Racist”

A “racist vs. not racist” orientation is belief systems in which a person only looks at extremists as example of racists.

Common example:
- A teacher might be willing to identify members of the Ku Klux Klan as racist, but not their superintendent of schools, who has a policy of course tracking which benefits white students over other races.
Collaborate Board

Based on the ideal of "racist vs. not racist," how do you think this way of thinking effects individuals (i.e. mindset, willingness to learn, educating others, etc.)

Effects on Individual Mindset

Instead of being willing to openly listen and learn, many teachers who follow this orientation get caught up in denying that they could be any form of racist.

When the concept of racism are looked at “racist versus not racist”, then certain individuals that consider themselves “not racist” see that there is no further action that needs to be taken by them.
Role in Education

The correlation to education is that a teacher may think they are “not racist” and therefore do not need to make any changes.

Additionally, such a drastic oversimplification tends to promote the idea that minor forms of racism, like microaggressions, do not count and are not worthy of addressing.

Unpacking Privilege in the Classroom

Discussions of Race ➔ “Colorblindness” ➔ Intersectionality
Do you know what **intersectionality** is, have an idea about what it means, or have you heard of it before?

**Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is a concept which argues that people can be privileged and have advantages in some ways and not be privileged and have disadvantages in other ways.

This ideal can be difficult to believe for some people who experience other forms of societal oppressions.
Example of Intersectionality

White people that live in poverty may lack some advantages compared to that of other whites. They may then view their world as that of constant oppression or lack of privilege.

Now, although they have disadvantages compared to that of middle class white people, they may possess advantages over other marginalized people in certain contexts.

Now that you may have a better understanding of this ideal, what are some common forms of intersectionality that you see in your own classroom amongst your students?
Other forms of privilege include, but are not limited to:

- Citizenship
- Class
- Sexual orientation
- Sex
- Ability

Take a few minutes to complete the “Privilege and Disadvantage Inventory” handout
Collaborate Board

Give an example of privilege that you have experienced
or that you have witnessed

Common examples of white privilege

- Being able to turn on the TV or look at the newspaper and see people of the white race widely represented
- History books that teach predominantly about the heritage of whites
- Not having to educate white children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection
- Can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

(McIntosh, 1988)
What you can do as a teacher moving forward

Collaborate Board

Based on everything that we’ve discussed today, what’s an idea that you have about taking action in your own classroom to address some of these issues?
1. Educate yourself

   - You’re here today, listening and (hopefully) learning!

   - Recognizing your own privileges and disadvantages based on your race

   - Asking the hard questions such as “does the silence come more from us or from the children?”

2. Talk to the experts

   - Utilize experts that have knowledge that you or your school may not possess yet.

   - Find like minded colleagues and work together

   - Engage local communities as members in the educational setting.
3. Talk about race

- Once students understand that race is an “acceptable subject” at school, learning opportunities will pop up and flow more frequently.

- Have the courage to address the current issues in the world that surround race.

- Get comfortable with being uncomfortable!

Collaborate Board

Looking back, what is one big takeaway that you have from today’s session or something that you’re going to start doing in your own classroom?
Question: Based on today’s PD session and our goals that we identified at the beginning, how well did you gain a better understanding of the following:

- Defining privilege
- Defining intersectionality
- Identify what privilege looks like in the classroom
- Be able to identify at least one personal privilege that you possess

Question: Was there anything that could have been done differently or better to enhance this PD session? Your feedback is greatly appreciated!
Thank you!
APPENDIX C
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT #3

Google Slide link:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LyUvxbOuTMzR52ek45G-6D7xOSE6PwIr06d2pjSNg/edit?usp=sharing

Nearpod Link:
https://app.nearpod.com/?pin=2D4E86E8EE22207AFBDE50139D7BA9CC-1

Welcome back!

Presenter: Cayla Donahue
Today is the third and final session in a 3 part Professional Development series.

The focus of today’s PD session is multicultural education.

Our goals by the end of this session are:

- Define multicultural education
- Define the 4 approaches to multicultural education
- Identify which approach is most often used in your own classroom
- Be able to identify at least one strategy/activity that you can utilize in your classroom immediately

Define multicultural education in your own words?
Think of a class, PD, or a classroom that you have been in which was NOT multicultural and/or did not embrace notions of multiculturalism.

Why was it the way it was?

Multicultural Education

- A philosophy and pedagogical approach used by many educators to support diverse groups of students.
  - Teaching that incorporates aspects from an array of different cultural backgrounds
  - The goal of multicultural education is “the acknowledgment and recognition of existing cultural differences” (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013, p. 180).
Our Job as Teachers

1. Be willing to have ideas and beliefs challenged by others, especially ones that differ from that of our own.

2. “We don’t have to let go of what we believe, but we do need to be curious about what someone else believes” (Wheatley, 2002).

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The 4 Approaches to Multicultural Education

James A. Banks

1. Contribution
2. Additive
3. Transformative
4. Social Action
James A. Banks

The father of the 4 approaches to multicultural education.

Here is a link to one of his articles discussing the four approaches and a QR code:

Contribution

- Scratches the surface level in that it does not go beyond to educate about “issues of power and disenfranchisement” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 96).
- It acknowledges the contributions that minorities have made to society and acknowledges special holidays and heroes from other cultures.

Ex: Reading a story about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during Black History Month
What are some other examples of a contribution approach?

Additive

- Adds on multicultural materials to existing curriculum without changing the curriculum

_Ex: A teacher may add a lesson on black soldiers into a unit on the Civil War._
In this example, does changing this unit from A to B represent an Additive Approach? If yes, how so?

**Winter Music Unit**

A

1. Medieval “Gregorian Chant”
2. 19th Century “7 Blessings of Mary”
3. 20th Century “Deck the Halls”

B

1. Medieval “Gregorian Chant”
2. 19th Century “7 Blessings of Mary”
3. 20th Century “Deck the Halls”
4. Latin America “Feliz Navidad”

**Collaborate Board**

Other examples of an additive approach?
Transformative

- Works to change the structure of the curriculum to include the experiences of different minority groups
- The goal of a transformative approach “is a transformation of students’ perspectives regarding issues of equity and justice” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 97)

*Ex: A unit on Thanksgiving would become an entire unit exploring cultural conflict.*
What are some other examples of a transformative approach?

Social Action

- Takes the transformative approach and puts it into action through research/action projects that initiate change.
- The purpose of this approach is that it “…calls for student action to deal with injustice and inequity” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 98).

Ex: Students write letters to senators, Congress, and newspaper editors to express their opinions about new policies (Banks, 1999).
Collaborate Board

What are some other examples of a social action approach?

Kahoot Time!

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The winner will get a prize!

Link to Kahoot:
https://create.kahoot.it/share/pd-3/91a3ecc0-25a4-493f-8cad-d0a4b52e61cc
Question: Thinking about the four approaches to multicultural education that we just examined, which approach is being most utilized in your own classroom?

Ways to Foster an Inclusive Environment and promote Multicultural Education
1. Teaching Opportunities

- All opportunities surrounding race are being used as teachable moments for students of all ages.

- Often teachers shy away from student comments or remarks that may be racially charged, but “classroom practices like teachers addressing ethnic victimization and discussing the need for equality and fairness help to establish an anti-racist, inclusive norm within the classroom that improves ethnic attitudes” (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013, 186).
2. Read Alouds

- Read alouds can be used to start discussion on race because whether the book is culturally inclusive or not, there are teachable moments (i.e. “We” and “They” could be referring to any race).

3. Cooperative Learning

- A great strategy for helping students build relationships with one another because students are working together towards a common goal.
4. The Entertainment Intervention

- This strategy utilizes “the use of books, radio, television, film, and other forms of media to construct narratives about individuals from diverse backgrounds” (Grapin, Griffin, Naser, Brown, & Proctor, 2019, p. 157).

5. Assemblage

- A project where students are asked to create an “assemblage” which represents their cultural identity through a collection of different items/artifacts in some type of container (Drouin, 2015, p. 60).
While the above strategies are all important and useful, the idea of multicultural education still goes beyond just the activities in that it’s “a way of viewing reality and a way of thinking, not just content about various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups” (Banks, 2015, p. 8).

To have a classroom that is fully inclusive and multicultural, teachers need to be fully engulfed in this “view of reality.”
Question: Was there anything that could have been done differently or better to enhance this PD session? Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

Looking back at this entire PD series:

1. Was there anything that could have been done differently or better to enhance your experience?

2. Were there any topics/areas that you think require more time?

Did you feel that you gained a better understanding about yourself and your own teaching practices?
Thank you!