

Racial Bias Test

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This reflection-based activity guides students in understanding their implicit racial bias. This activity promotes anti-racism and can support students in the development of their racial identity.</p> <p>According to Maryfield (2018), Implicit racial bias “can cause individuals to unknowingly act in discriminatory ways. This does not mean that the individual is overtly racist, but rather that their perceptions have been shaped by experiences and these perceptions potentially result in biased thoughts or actions.” All people have unconscious thoughts and actions, but “becoming aware of implicit racial bias creates an avenue for addressing the issue.”</p> <p>According to the White Racial Identity Development Model by Helms, as white students have experiences that confront their prior conception of the world, they are prompted to reflect on their own racial biases and are doing the work to move from the Contact Stage to the Autonomy Stage of their identity. Read more on Helms’s White Racial Identity Model. White students must experience discomfort and <i>sit with</i> guilt but be careful not to <i>settle into</i> guilt. For more information about White Identity Development, please refer to our Instructor Resource Guide: Racial Identity Development.</p> <p>The implicit racial bias test is one of many created by Project Implicit. Project Implicit uses the Implicit Association Test (IAT), a tool developed by Anthony Greenwald, Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington, and Mahzarin Banaji, Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard, to study prejudice in social contexts. The IAT assesses unconscious or implicit bias in the context of social identity. The test was later implemented in a study that is ongoing, Project Implicit, and is currently housed on servers at Harvard. To hear Dr. Greenwald and Dr. Banaji discuss this research, view this video.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To prompt students to think about their implicit bias in relation to race. 2) To explain implicit racial bias and how it is relevant to anti-racist teaching practices in all classes.
<p>Anti-Racist Pedagogy Principles</p>	<p>The following anti-racist pedagogy principles are incorporated into this activity. For a review of the principles, visit our Practicing Anti-Racist Pedagogy homepage.</p> <p>Principle 1: Anti-racist pedagogy acknowledges racism in disciplinary, institutional, and departmental contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this activity, students interrogate how bias shows up in their lives as students, in their relationships on campus, and in projects, research, or assignments in their field of study.

Principle 3: Anti-racist pedagogy disrupts racism whenever/wherever it occurs

- By exploring implicit bias in relation to race in this activity, instructors and students are taking steps to critically self-reflect on how implicit bias impacts their perspectives and actions.

Principle 4: Anti-racist pedagogy seeks change within and beyond the classroom

- In this activity, students reflect on how implicit bias impacts their experiences in the classroom and on campus.

Principle 6: Anti-racist pedagogy focuses on the importance of process over time

- This activity is not intended to be a one-off lesson. As mentioned in the **Implementation** section, revisiting this activity throughout the semester is encouraged. Students also reflect on how they can continue learning about and interrogating their implicit bias beyond this activity.

Implementation

This activity can be implemented at any point throughout the year. However, beginning the year with a reflection activity can set the tone for an anti-racist and inclusive classroom. Returning to this activity throughout the semester promotes regular reflection on implicit biases we carry and how they impact our day-to-day lives. Revisiting this activity also reinforces the mindset that anti-racism is not an achieved state of being or boiled down into one activity, but rather it is intentional everyday actions, behaviors, and thoughts.

It is recommended that before you implement this activity, you take an appropriate amount of time reflecting and learning about inclusive and anti-racist teaching practices. Without the proper guidance and context for this activity, students can become defensive, shut down, or be triggered by the content or other students. Be sure to read through the recommended readings included in this overview, completing the activity for yourself, and viewing our resource guide on Implicit Bias for additional context.

Inclusive teaching and/or anti-racist pedagogy requires that we put in the work of critically self-reflecting on a topic before introducing it to students. Instructors should complete this activity on their own before implementing it in class. Additionally, instructors should be regularly reflecting on their relation to systemic racism on an internal, interpersonal, and institutional level. For additional insight into these different levels of racism, review our [“Definitions as a Starting Point”](#) page. If you are new to this topic or are looking for a way to start, our resource guide [“Doing One’s Own Personal Work on Privilege and Oppression”](#) offers insights, readings, and strategies to begin this critically important self-reflective work.

It is also recommended that instructors review the following guides for additional insight and context:

- [Applying Dialogic Techniques](#) (Resource Guide)
- [Examining Privilege and Oppression](#) (Activity Guide)
- [Implicit Bias](#) (Resource Guide)

- [Identifying and Addressing Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture](#) (Resource Guide)
- [Invisible Knapsacks](#) (Activity Guide)

It is our goal that our [activity guides](#) and [resource guides](#) are not used in isolation from one another. Engaging in inclusive and/or practicing anti-racist pedagogy is an ongoing process that requires consistent engagement and reflection. Be sure to review the many resources that are provided on the LSA Inclusive Teaching website.

This activity is best integrated as an independent reflection activity followed by small group debriefs. See the “Session Sequence” below for greater detail.

Challenges

Some researchers and media personalities have questioned the validity of implicit bias after one of the originators of the IAT acknowledged problems with the test. Critics claim that because the test is imperfect, implicit bias must not exist. Notably, however, there is a significant body of research on implicit bias that does not use or rely on the IAT. This body of work shows conclusively that implicit bias is a significant problem, particularly in STEM education. See, for example, this review article about women leaving academic research settings because of unconscious bias:

Easterly, D.M., Ricard, C.S. (2011). [Conscious Efforts to End Unconscious Bias: Why Women Leave Academic Research](#). *Journal of Research Administration*. 42, 61-73.

Doing anti-racist work “asks people to consider information and perspectives that challenge their self-concepts and worldviews (Goodman, 2015).” Discussions regarding implicit bias, race, and privilege can become emotional and draw resistance from white students. Resistance “is rooted in fear and anxiety” and white students tend to become defensive when they feel threatened. Facilitators should not prioritize “being nice” or making white students “comfortable”; however, there are strategies that facilitators can use in an anticipatory manner to promote an engaging and productive activity. The following readings offer insight into addressing pushback from students when discussing topics such as implicit bias. For additional insight into potential eruptions of tension in the classroom, review our [“Hot Moments” resource guide](#).

Recommended Readings:

Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From Safe Places to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice. In *The Art of Effective Facilitation* (1st ed., pp. 135–150). Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing. Retrieved from <https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/012438120>

Beckwith, B. (2014). In the Face of Resistance – a Lay Facilitator’s Experience. *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege, Special Issue: Resistance to Teaching Antiracism*. Retrieved from <https://www.wpcjournal.com/article/view/12324>

Goodman, D. (2015). Can You Love Them Enough to Help Them Learn?: Reflections of a Social Justice Educator on Addressing Resistance from White Students to Anti-Racism

	Education. <i>Understanding and Dismantling Privilege</i> . Retrieved from https://www.wpcjournal.com/article/view/12208
Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Desktop/laptop computers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One for each student 2) Background context video <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Choose one from “Related Videos” listed below 3) Race Task IAT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is listed under “Race IAT” 4) The Atlantic article: Nordell, J. (2017, May 7). <i>Is this how discrimination ends?</i> Retrieved from The Atlantic: Is This How Discrimination Ends? A New Approach to Implicit Bias - The Atlantic 5) Small Group Reflection Questions
Related Articles	<p>Banaji, M.R., Greenwald, G.G. (2013). <i>Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People</i>. New York: Bantam.</p> <p>Dee, T., Gershenson, S. (2017). Unconscious Bias in the Classroom: evidence and opportunities. <i>Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis</i>.</p> <p>Nordell, J. (2017, May 7). <i>Is this how discrimination ends?</i> Retrieved from The Atlantic: Is This How Discrimination Ends? A New Approach to Implicit Bias - The Atlantic</p>
Related Videos	<p>“Understanding unconscious bias” A 3-minute explanation of how implicit/unconscious bias works. Created by The Royal Society.</p> <p>Implicit Bias Video Series form UC Berkeley.</p> <p>“How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them” An 18-minute TED Talk by diversity advocate Verna Myers.</p>
Citations	<p>Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html</p> <p>Maryfield, B. (2018). Implicit Racial Bias. <i>Justice Research and Statistics Association</i>.</p>

Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Pre-Class Reading		Prior to class, have students read the article “Is This How Discrimination Ends? A New Approach to Implicit Bias” from The Atlantic. The article is linked in the Materials section above.
Introduction	5-10 mins	<p>The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will critically consider their implicit bias related to race, reflecting on how implicit bias shapes their perspectives and experiences as students.</p> <p>The instructor will play a video, providing background context and/or eliciting prior knowledge on the topic of implicit bias.</p>
Article Debrief	10 mins	<p>Lead a short debrief regarding the assigned reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What stood out to you from the assigned reading? 2) What did you know about implicit bias prior to the reading? What new information did you learn? 3) How would you define implicit bias?
Completing the Race Task IAT and Written Reflection	20-30 mins	<p>The instructor will provide background information on the IAT: About the IAT (harvard.edu)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Implicit Association Test (IAT) measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy). The main idea is that making a response is easier when closely related items share the same response key. 2) The IAT measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT may show that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about. For example, you may believe that women and men should be equally associated with science, but your automatic associations could show that you (like many others) associate men with science more than you associate women with science. 3) Today, we will be taking the Race Task IAT and reflecting on our experience. 4) If you feel it necessary, review the steps to the IAT found in the “About the IAT” section, which is linked above.

		<p>Students will take the IAT and journal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) After completing the IAT, students will write a short reflection about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Their results and experience taking the IAT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. How do you interpret your results? ii. How did you feel during the IAT? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you felt defensive or dismissiveness, interrogate why you felt this way. iii. Referring back to our assigned reading, why do you think it is important to continue reflecting on implicit bias beyond your IAT results? b. How implicit bias may or may not shape their experiences as a student: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Where do you think implicit bias may show up in your day-to-day life as a student? ii. How may implicit bias impact relationships you form on campus? c. How implicit bias may have influenced projects, research, or assignments in their field of study: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Can you think of an example where implicit bias showed up in a project, research, assignment, or in your field of study? d. Continuing to explore implicit bias and related concepts beyond this activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. How will you use this activity to further your learning on implicit bias? ii. What support do you need to continue this critical self-reflection?
<p>Small Group Debrief</p>	<p>10 mins</p>	<p>Students will break into pairs or triads to share their reflection responses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Check in with groups during the debrief.
<p>Closing</p>	<p>3-5 mins</p>	<p>Possible closing remarks:</p> <p>Whether you took the IAT or read the article, our focus today was to examine implicit bias on a more personal, reflective level. It is important to remember that although we all have implicit bias in some form, it is what we do with that recognition that matters. Implicit bias does not make us good or bad, it is amoral and what matters most is that we make the effort to confront our own biases regularly. If we pretend that we don't hold bias, we will perpetuate distorted cultural views about different groups and people. I encourage you to continue learning about implicit bias and how you can actively work to recognize, acknowledge, and challenge those moments where we are exhibiting it.</p>