# Lesson Plan Topic

*Understanding Bias*

## Learning Objectives

Rising educators will be able to:
- Examine the role and significance of bias, stereotypes and privilege in educational settings.
- Describe how implicit bias can limit students’ educational attainment.

## Essential Questions

- How can perceptions of students, groups of people and communities hinder student success?

## Lesson Title & Overview

**Day 1: Negative Impact of Bias**

Rising educators will examine how bias manifests in the classroom. They will discuss the impact that teacher bias could have on students and commit to an anti-bias practice.

Preview the resources for these lessons [here](#).

## Procedure

**Tips:** Create a safe environment to discuss and examine bias. If you have classroom norms, this is a good time to review. If you do not have norms, spend a minute or two recognizing that there are diverse perspectives in all classrooms, and it is essential that all educators proactively encourage all voices be heard. Additionally, remind rising educators that they will examine their own bias and it might not feel natural or comfortable. Two key expectations you may want to share with rising educators are: 1. Be respectful of other people’s opinions and experiences. 2. Don’t shy away from asking questions that you are grappling with.

**Day 1:**

**Tip:** Write the three questions for the Explore Teacher Bias activity on chart paper prior to the start of class.

- *(Eight minutes)* Ask rising educators to reflect on their educational experiences. Have there been times when they felt like a bias impacted their education? Observed teachers who used strategies to combat bias in the classroom? After five minutes of writing, ask students to share with a partner or with the class. **It is important that students do not use teacher names or student names in discussion.**

  Transition: Explain that today rising educators will explore how bias manifests in educational settings and identify ways to combat implicit bias.

- *(20 minutes)* Have rising educators [watch](#) or listen to “Bias Isn’t Just a Police Problem, It is a Preschool Problem” *(00:02:00).*
Next, split the class into three groups. Put the following three questions on chart paper around the room. Allow each group of rising educators six minutes at each paper rotating to the next prompt when time is up. Rising educators are to silently write their thoughts about each question on the paper and then respond to other comments using lines to connect their thoughts. If you have a large class, you may want to make two papers for each question.

Put one of the following questions on each paper:
- What was problematic about the findings of the study?
- How might parents of these children respond to the findings?
- Does bias impact students?

Debrief: Ask some students to share key ideas for each question.

- (15 minutes) Rising educators will read “Four Ways Teachers Can Reduce Implicit Bias.” Rising educators can be divided into four groups to read and discuss the ways teachers can reduce implicit bias.

Discuss which option(s) would be best for the teachers in Exploring Teacher Bias study from the first activity and why. If in groups, rising educators can select a group expert to discuss the topic they read and explain how it would impact teacher practice.

- (Two minutes) Formative assessment: Sticky note commitment: Have rising educators commit to one strategy from “Four Ways Teachers Can Reduce Implicit Bias” that would be most beneficial for them to focus on personally. How will they commit to this strategy? Hang sticky notes on chart paper upon leaving the room.

Extension/challenge
- CNN Video - Image simulation – Watch this video. Rising educators should reflect on what they notice in one-paragraph and brainstorm ways they might approach the situation as a teacher.
- In a 1- to 2-page, double-spaced document or timeline drawing, rising educators should create their education biographical sketch. Ask rising educators to think about each year of their schooling and capture important people and events. When they are finished, have them separate their experiences into “negative” and “positive.” Rising educators should then reflect on the following question: How might your personal educational experience creates bias and how you perceive schools and education?

Educators Rising Cross-cutting Theme(s) Alignment
- Cultural Competence
- Fairness, Equity and Diversity
- Reflective Practice
- Ethics
- Collaboration
- Social Justice and Advocacy
- Self-efficacy

Educators Rising Standard(s) Alignment
Click on and place an “x” in the checkbox next to the relevant alignment(s).

☒ I: Understanding the Profession
☒ II: Learning About Students
☐ III: Building Content Knowledge
☐ IV: Engaging in Responsive Planning
☐ V: Implementing Instruction
☐ VI: Using Assessments and Data
☒ VII: Engaging in Reflective Practice

Resources

Day 1:
- NPR. (2016, September 30). Bias isn’t just a police problem, it’s a preschool problem. [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucEAcIMkS0c

Teacher Leader Notes

Common misconceptions
- Implicit bias does not affect people’s beliefs about other people.
- Implicit bias is the same as stereotyping.
- Having biases make me a bad person.
- People who are typically marginalized (non-white, non-male, non-middle class, non-Christian, cisgender, non-disabled, U.S.-born citizen, etc.) cannot be biased.
- People who have a diverse group of friends can’t be biased.
- Trying to fix biases is a waste of time.

Academic language
- Bias (implicit, unconscious, subconscious)
- Stereotypes
- Stereotype threat
- Cultural competence
- Empathy
- Ally

Tips
- Encourage students to take risks and ask questions in the safe space.
- Be mindful of how your own bias manifests itself in discussion.
- Give students time to process the information and reflect.
- Bring in people from the community or other educators when talking about issues that could benefit from a variety of points of view.
- Consider breaking this lesson down into even smaller chunks so students have enough time to discuss and understand new terms.

Did you enjoy this lesson? Educators Rising Beginning to Teach Academy Curriculum offers over 50 lessons aligned to the Educator Rising standards. Visit https://educatorsrising.org/edrisingacademy/ for more information.

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