



# Content Creator and Facilitator DEIB Toolkit

Start Early Learning Hub in collaboration with Nova  
Collective

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# Purpose

The creation and facilitation of our content - how it connects and resonates with different audiences - is critical to our impact as an organization. We want Start Early content to present the best in thought leadership, best practice, and pedagogy - and we strive to present this content through a lens of social justice and equity.

This toolkit is designed for content/curriculum creators and facilitators who deliver Start Early content. It is intended to be used to support development and facilitation for these groups. This guide should not be shared without context and can be shared in sections rather than in its entirety.

This toolkit is not intended to be a rule book or a one-and-done solution to the content creation challenges we will encounter. It should guide our journey, not prescribe our solution. As language, societies and norms continue to shift and change, so will this guide.

If you'd like to suggest changes or updates, or if you'd like to start a conversation about the way we're approaching a topic, please reach out to leadership within the Start Early Learning Hub.

# SECTION 1: Check Your Bias

Whether you are beginning to plan a new course, or putting the finishing touches on an updated course, reviewing the materials through a lens of bias is a good idea. The question is never **if** we have brought our biases to the materials, but **how** we have brought them. Use this section to review (or peer-review) your materials to scan for biases that may have impacted your content.

## When you begin creating:

**Use the MICE Method as an active Bias mitigation strategy.** The MICE Method is a way to reframe your thinking before jumping into action.

1. **Measure your approach.** Slow down. Take time with decisions. Consider how your biases may be influencing you.
2. **Identify the narrative.** Scan for social identity groups and your membership within them.
3. **Challenge your lens.** What assumptions are you making based on that membership?
4. **Expand your reference points.** Work regularly to introduce counter narratives. (*Definitions of Dominant and Counter Narratives can be found on page 17 of this toolkit*) Consume media, seek out information, and hold space, especially in groups where you are dominant narrative status.



## When you're developing content

- **Check your implicit biases.** What sources and resources are you using for development? Do you have a balance of perspectives?
- **Who's story may NOT be getting told?** As you review your sources and resources, who might be left out of the information?
- **Use a multipartial approach.** Ensure you have the sources and information you need to balance social power, give space to both dominant and counternarratives, and ensure all groups are represented fairly.
- **Consider what "balance" means.** Balanced content creation traditionally means seeking out and presenting opposing viewpoints. However, the pursuit of balance can sometimes be harmful to individuals or communities, and balance does not always help further understanding of the full story.
- **Understand the systems at work.** Investigate issues from a systemic perspective to understand the history and processes that may have privileged some groups over others. For example, if our content makes mention of which educational programs are well resourced or under resourced - include perspective and information around why and how that resourcing has been determined. Don't be satisfied with "this is just how things are".
- **Know the history.** Particularly when working with communities adversely impacted by settler colonialism, it's important to understand the intergroup dynamics, marginalization, and oppression. Settler colonialism is a foundational belief that norms and values held largely by white/European settlers are "correct" and that deviance from these norms and values are deficient. It is often tempting to frame "other" cultures, norms and values as "exotic" or "odd", which is highlighting an assumption of White superiority without zooming out and naming the baseline of those assumptions. When making space for a variety of norms and values, we can never be comparing "apples to apples" - we are always navigating around the default setting of Whiteness as "norm" and anything else as "other" in the U.S. Knowing the historical context can help you avoid/stop perpetuating colonial narratives and check your biases and the biases of your sources.
- **Use visuals to expand understanding.** Visuals and photographs allow us to frame stories symbolically with a type of visual shorthand. Use them to expand your audience's understanding of a group or groups rather than reproducing disempowering or stereotypical narratives.
- **Consider the story your imagery is telling.** As visual creators, we may have information about our subjects that our audience doesn't have. Consider how your audience might view the imagery at face-value, and decide if it is telling the visual story that you intend.

What other images could support your message? Examine your own biases and demonstrate an awareness of stereotypes and tropes to avoid doubling down on harmful narratives.

- **Stay mindful of diverse representation.** It is important to include representation from various demographic groups in your images and videos to also account for the broad diversity of your audience. Consider people with varying ability status, faith traditions, national origin, gender expression, etc.
- **Use gender-neutral language.** When you see a term that is unnecessarily gendered, use a gender-neutral version. For example, rather than referencing the research chairman or chairwoman, use “chair” or “chairperson.”
- **Use people-first language.** Emphasize personhood rather than a disease, disability, situation, or action. Examples include people with autism, people who are experiencing homelessness, people with a criminal record.
- **Check for coded language.** Coded language that evokes and reinforces stereotypes has no place in Start Early content. *(see coded language examples on page 7 of this toolkit)*
- **Attribute all work to its original source.** People of color and people in other marginalized groups experience their work being appropriated at higher rates than creators and researchers in dominant groups. Content creation with a lens of equity means taking every reasonable step to ensure you’re giving credit to the original source.
- **Imagine the space you are trying to create with the session.** Developing community agreements and guidelines that highlight safeguarding a brave space for participants can enrich the in-session experience.
- **Design activities with ability as a lens.** Session activities should be mindful of mobility (stand up, stretch, walk around) and offer alternative activities for anyone with mobility impairment.

## Sample Community Agreements

In-sessions, we hope to create a brave space where participants can engage in dialogue with one another, and learn from the wisdom in the room. We want to acknowledge any apprehension or anxiety in the space, and agree on guidelines that support our dialogue and process as a group.

### *Monitor your airtime*

- This can look like participants who process externally challenging themselves to step back, or participants who don't often participate challenging themselves to step forward

## *Speak from personal experience*

- Use “I” statements - don’t speak on behalf of anyone else or an entire community or group

## *Lead with curiosity, not judgment*

- Get curious about ideas that other people surface, try to separate the idea from the person

## *Be fully present*

- There is so much calling for our time these days. What can you do to ensure you are able to be fully with us?

## *What’s learned can leave, what is said stays*

- Any personal details and stories should be confidential.

## *Comfort, safety, learning edges*

- To learn at our best will require pushing outside our comfort zones. Monitor yourself - are you uncomfortable? If you are being pushed too far, take steps to care for yourself, we don’t want people to shut down and disengage.

## *Intent vs. Impact*

- We want to assume the best intentions of every participant, but we also ask that participants take responsibility for their impact. We may not “mean” something to land a certain way, but if it does we should acknowledge that impact.

# SECTION 2: Inclusive Language

## Inclusive Language

- Puts people first and aims to avoid intentionally excluding people from a group
- Is free from words or phrases that explicitly or implicitly stereotype, discriminate or express prejudice
- Centers the wants and needs of people who have historically been and/or currently are excluded, marginalized and decentered by those in the majority
- Is defined by those who are marginalized

## Words/Phrases to Stop Using, and What to Use Instead:

Following are a few examples, and there are many, many more. As your team encounters or reads/hears/sees additional examples, it's a good idea to add to this list.

Empower	→	Remove barriers
Give a seat at the table	→	Follow the lead of
Grandfathered in	→	Exempt from the rule/policy/etc.
Call a spade a spade	→	Tell it like it is
Circle the wagons	→	Protect ourselves
Low man on the totem pole	→	Lowest-ranking person
Turn a blind eye	→	Deliberately ignore
Crazy, insane, nuts, psycho, etc.	→	Outrageous, wild, ludicrous



## Coded Language Watchouts:

- **Thug:** Technically referring to a violent person or criminal, over time this word has been used to refer to Black people and has hence been given the connotation that reinforces the racist idea that Black people are violent criminals.
- **Urban/inner city:** This phrase has long been used as a euphemism to refer to Black and brown communities following the “white flight” of the 1950’s and 1960’s.
- **“Bossy”/“Sassy”:** Used to refer to women who assert themselves. They are used to undermine a person’s (oftentimes a woman and even more often a woman of color) confidence and assertiveness in different scenarios.
- **“Diverse”:** Typically used when someone is attempting to refer to historically marginalized groups such as women or people of color. However, one person cannot hold diversity within themselves as diversity is simply a measurement, observant of differences amongst a group of people.
- **Illegal/Alien vs Undocumented:** While used to refer to individuals who have entered the country “illegally” this term is used to incite fear of immigrants and refugees. These words send the message that people of color are not welcome here. It is dehumanizing and criminalizing. Instead, the use of the term “undocumented” is more accurate and less dehumanizing.
- **Achievement Gap:** This is often used to refer to the statistically significant disparity in educational outcomes between White and Black, Indigindous, or People of Color (BIPOC) students. This disparity is more accurately framed as opportunity and access-based, not based on the outcome (and vaguery) of “achievement”.
- **Athletes: Natural Talent vs. Skill and Intelligence:** There is a pattern often found when reporting or commenting on athletes and it is also laced in race. White athletes are described as intelligent, skilled and strategic, while athletes of color, specifically Black athletes, are described more on their physical ability, and as having “natural talent”. This undermines the work athletes of color put in to succeed and perpetuates stereotypes of unintelligence in these communities. See:  
<https://globalsportmatters.com/culture/2019/03/21/listening-to-sports-broadcasters-can-be-a-lesson-in-coded-language/>
- **Articulate:** While often used as a compliment when told to a person of color, this term can also be very othering. It can imply that someone was not expected to speak so well, be intelligent, or not have an accent. Rather than commenting on how articulate an individual

is, be specific about what you found interesting in what they shared. Be specific and direct rather than using a general statement that could land as offensive.

- **Ethnic:** This word others and exoticizes people of color; A way of upholding systems of oppression; Anyone or anything that is different from White, mainstream culture. Implies that White is the standard. In reality, all people have an ethnicity (which is not the same as race or nationality). Instead, one should state explicitly what/who you're talking about (e.g., People of color; Instead of saying, "ethnic food," be specific: "Thai food, French food").
- **"Best for", "High Potential":** We often use superlatives that have an assumed shared definition, which is rooted in colonial norms and Dominant narratives. When we encounter these phrases we need to zoom out and consider what we are really trying to communicate. If we have specific measures for terms like "high potential", we need to explicitly define them.

## Inclusive Language FAQs

**Acknowledgment:** It is essential that Start Early is always adapting to the ever-changing nuances of language, and specifically when it comes to DEIB terminology. The following questions are directly from Nova's clients and represent common FAQs when it comes to word choice in content and communications.

Words matter, and understanding the role of language when it comes to word selection and its context is crucial as well. It's not enough to simply avoid certain words but to understand *why* some choices are better than others. Again, the following list is not definitive but a resource catalyst—along with this entire toolkit—for continuous learning and growth.

Topic	Question	Answer
1	<b>America vs. United States</b>  Should we use "United States" or "America"?	"America" has become synonymous with "U.S." because of its world power. The term America has a dominant narrative undertone and dismisses North/Central/South America. Using "United States" or "U.S." is more objective and neutral.  <b>Use U.S. Avoid calling the U.S. "America".</b>
2	<b>Black vs. African American</b> Should I say, "African American" or "Black"?	<b>Black*. Not every person who is Black is also African American.</b>

		<p>"Black" is often a better default and is more inclusive because it encompasses both Black people and African Americans. Black is also the more universal term.</p> <p><b>*Note:</b> The terms and labels used around one's identity should be self-ascribed, and it's okay to respectfully check-in with individuals to ask how they identify.</p>
3	<p><b>Black/White</b> Should we capitalize the "B" in Black?</p> <p>Should we capitalize the "W" in white?</p>	<p><b>Yes!</b> The Associated Press changed its style guide to ensure the "B" is capitalized – "lowercase black is a color, not a person."</p> <p><b>Consensus varies:</b> As of 2020, the Associated Press does not capitalize the "W" in white, while APA and Chicago Styles <i>do</i> when referring to racial and ethnic identity.</p>
4	<p><b>Crazy/Insane</b> Should we cease to use words like these? Or can we use them under certain circumstances, like "crazy/insane amount of snow"?</p>	<p><b>Do not use "crazy" or "insane" to describe anything.</b> These words are harmful because of the stigma on people with mental illness.</p> <p>Using ableist language like crazy/insane or psycho/demented/lame reveals our unconscious biases and perpetuates harmful biases about people with disabilities.</p>
5	<p><b>Developing countries/world</b></p> <p>Are these phrases still "politically correct"?</p>	<p>According to AP: "Developing nations is more appropriate [than Third World] when referring to economically developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.</p> <p>However, this is a developing debate since "developing countries/world" still implies a superiority complex.</p> <p>e.g., The <a href="#">World Health Organization</a> dropped the term and now categorizes countries using income data. It uses the term "low- and lower-middle-income countries".</p> <p><b><i>What should Start Early do?</i></b> Avoid the term. Instead use geographic location and gather all the facts to form a more accurate story.</p>
6	<p><b>Gender Identity/Expression</b></p>	<p><b>Gender Identity</b> is someone's concept of self as male, female, both or neither. It encompasses how people perceive themselves and the pronouns they use (e.g., she/her, he/him, they/them). One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. Additional information regarding pronouns can be found <a href="#">here</a> through the GLSEN website.</p>

		<p><b>Gender Expression</b> is the external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.</p>
7	LGBTQ Terminology	<p>Use the <a href="#">terminology</a> by NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists</p>
8	“Empowering” others	<p><b>“Empowerment”</b> means to give authority or power, which implies that the recipient is “powerless” and therefore encountering the savior complex.</p> <p>Refrain from using “empowerment” when working with local people in the places where Start Early operates. Instead, focus on removing barriers by actively listening to peoples'/communities' needs, and allowing those directly impacted to take the lead toward conservation work and protecting nature (and learning from those already doing the work; what has been done, what are the challenges, etc).</p> <p>Acknowledging that people already have agency and knowledge is critical for any strategic partnership that can both center conservational work and improve people's lives. Sustained engagement built on a foundation of trust and respect is key to avoiding any form of tokenism or notion of “saving” local people.</p>
9	<p><b>Diverse person</b> Is it OK to use “diverse” to describe a single person?</p>	<p><b>No, since “diverse” means variety within a group.</b> Therefore, one individual person, place or thing cannot be diverse. E.g., “diverse person” is often used as coded language for “Black” or “person of color,” but that is incorrect. You can have a <i>diverse group</i> of people, but a single person is not “diverse.”</p>
10	<p><b>Latino/a/x vs Hispanic</b> Are Latino and Hispanic the same thing?</p> <p>And what about “Latinx”?</p>	<p><b>Not quite...it's complicated!</b> These are all identity labels for people living in the U.S. with Latin American roots.</p> <p>“Hispanic” is a government-created term and was first used in the 1970 Census, and then “Latino” emerged as a popular self-assigned identity alternative which was then adopted into the 1980 Census.</p> <p>A person can identify as Latino/a/x <i>and/or</i> Hispanic, but they are <i>not</i> interchangeable terms (e.g., Brazilian Americans may identify more with Latino/a/x given that Hispanic is more associated with Spanish-speaking countries).</p>

		<p>Spanish is a gendered language, and so “Latinx” is strategically used as a non-binary, gender neutral term. According to the Pew Research Center, only 25% of Latino adults heard it, yet only 3% use it; while young Latinx women are among the most likely to use the term.</p> <p>Moreover, Latino/a/x and Hispanic are <i>ethnic</i> identities, and <i>not</i> racial categories. A person could be White <i>and</i> Hispanic, or Black <i>and</i> Latino/a/x.</p>
11	<p><b>Community vs Communities</b> Is using or referring to the “Black community” appropriate/correct?</p> <p>What about the “Latinx community”?</p>	<p>Using “Black communities” is more inclusive and acknowledges the diaspora beyond African American.</p> <p>Similarly, “Latinx community” can more inclusively be expressed as Latinx Communities” since as a pan-ethnic group, there are many racialized communities within the umbrella term of “Latinx”. Always consider using plural “communities” when referring to a group of people, which acknowledges the many experiences and diversity within.</p> <p>The same applies to Asian or Asian American communities since experiences are multifaceted and no community is a monolith.</p>
12	<p><b>Native American/ American Indian</b> How should I refer to Native Americans?</p>	<p>Whenever possible, Native people prefer to be called by their specific tribal or pueblo name. When speaking broadly, people tend to be OK with Native American, American Indian and Indigenous.</p> <p>Some indigenous people resist any term that contains the word “American”, as their ancestors did not refer to this land as “America” and it was only after colonization that that label was used.</p> <p>This preference for terminology will vary by individual.</p>
13	<p><b>Italics for foreign words</b> Should we italicize foreign words?</p>	<p>Chicago style recommends only using the italics the first time the word appears; however, you can continue to use italics if the word appears infrequently.</p> <p>AP style: Uses quotation marks around foreign words that aren’t “understood universally.”</p>

		<p><a href="#">LA Times Food</a> does not italicize 'foreign' foods given the city's demographics it just doesn't make sense.</p> <p><b>In Start Early's case, we'd recommend going against italicizing per Chicago style.</b></p>
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# SECTION 3: Common Dominant Narratives

Dominant narratives around the topics listed below are all around us. They signal to us who is dangerous, who is a hard worker, who is lazy, who is attractive, who deserves power, who can be a leader, who is intelligent, who is worthy of love, etc. Even if we become aware of them and resist them, the world around us is still constantly reminding us of the dominant narratives. And ultimately, all of these narratives define who has worth, and who is valuable in our society.

It is important to note that the dominant and counter narratives don't ascribe only to those with dominant and marginalized identities. People with marginalized identities can ascribe to and perpetuate dominant narratives--many of the dominant narratives may actually be true for them. And people with dominant identities may have experiences outside the dominant narrative. These narratives are often shaped at a high level by those dominant identity experiences but, like everything, it is important not to assume that they apply to everyone in those groups. The section below lists examples of dominant narratives and how you can challenge them by elevating the counter narratives.

## Common Dominant Narratives in U.S Culture:

*These narratives are specific to the United States of America. However, as the U.S markets and culture have global influence, these narratives are not unique to **only** the U.S*

Dominant Narratives	Assumption	Counter Narratives
<b>American Dream: If you work hard, you can achieve</b>	If you don't succeed, you are thus not working hard enough. (aka lazy)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. "We are all just a layoff away from experiencing homelessness."</li><li>2. As people of color, we must work twice as hard to reach half as far.</li></ol>
<b>Gender roles</b>	Gender is a binary; you can either be a boy or a girl/man or woman. It aligns with one's anatomy/assigned sex at birth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Gender is a social construct, and the way individuals identify around gender is not a binary but a spectrum.</li><li>2. Gender is an expression of who one feels they are rather than what society deems normal.</li><li>3. Sexual anatomy and gender do not have to align.</li></ol>

<b>Gender Pronouns</b>	Binary: She/Her or He/Him	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One can use gender pronouns interchangeably</li> <li>2. They/them/theirs isn't just a plural pronoun but one used by individuals who do not identify within the gender binary.</li> </ol>
<b>Body Types</b>	Healthy and beautiful equals slim and fit. This is the goal everyone should be trying to achieve.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy and beautiful doesn't always look the same way. Someone who is not thin can also be healthy.</li> <li>2. Bias toward individuals of larger body size is harmful. Weight loss and diet culture create shame, harm and bias.</li> </ol>
<b>Sexuality and Relationships</b>	Binary: men seek out women and women seek out men.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sexuality is fluid, not a binary.</li> <li>2. Attractionality can happen across the gender spectrum.</li> </ol>
<b>Immigration</b>	Someone who enters this country without documents is illegal.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No person is illegal, ever.</li> <li>2. Undocumentation is a circumstance.</li> <li>3. It is our responsibility to welcome individuals to this country.</li> <li>4. The only people that did not come onto this land illegally are Native Americans.</li> </ol>
<b>Ability</b>	You can only be a leader if you are physically, mentally, and emotionally able bodied.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership and intelligence spans across able-bodiedness.</li> <li>2. Structures in place harm individuals that are differently abled and hold them back from their full potential.</li> </ol>
<b>History</b>	History is made of facts from the past.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. History is written by the victors.</li> <li>2. It only tells one side of our past.</li> </ol>
<b>Affirmative Action</b>	Someone got an opportunity because of their marginalized identity and not because of their hard work, intelligence, and/or qualifications.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regardless of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation, one's qualifications are still taken into account.</li> <li>2. The experience of having a marginalized identity is a quality worth adding to a team.</li> </ol>



<b>"Best Potential", "Best for", "Better Outcomes"</b>	We all share the same understanding of what "success" and "best" mean for our children	Many people and groups define "best" and "success" in individual or unique ways.

# SECTION 4: Style Guides & Imagery

These Style Guides offer clear definitions regarding terms used and provide important guidance on words and phrases not to use. The links and explanations below offer examples of how to shift common terms and phrases into more inclusive and respectful language. Inclusive language is constantly expanding and evolving, be sure to check in regularly for updates from these guides.

## How to use the style guides:

1. Familiarize yourself with the contents of each guide.
2. Note any “ah-ha!” moments you have when reviewing these guides, anything you hadn’t considered before or that surprised you.
3. Keep these guides and your notes somewhere you can easily access them.
4. Reference the guides as they’re relevant to your work to ensure you’re representing different communities fairly.

## Alt Style Guides:

- [Race Reporting Guide](#)
- [National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide](#)
- [Native American Journalists Association Reporting Guides](#)
- [Association of LGBTQ Journalists Stylebook](#)
- [Asian American Journalists Association Handbook](#)
- [National Association for Hispanic Journalists](#)
- [Conscious Style Guide](#)
- [The Diversity Style Guide](#)
- [Alaska Native Studies Council Writing Style Guide](#)

## Resources for Photographers and Graphic Designers:

- [Conscious Style Guide Design + Images](#)
- [Black Illustrations](#)

## Consider for Both Writing & Imagery:

- [A Progressive's Style Guide](#)

## We commit to ensuring our imagery:

- Accurately represents our organization's employees, partners, and the communities we serve, particularly when taken in aggregate. No single photo or image can be expected to represent the full breadth of our community's diversity.
- Acknowledges that most dimensions of diversity are not apparent in photography, while also affirming the importance of showing diversity of physical and cultural elements in authentic and situationally appropriate ways.
- Rejects the idea that the sole responsibility for showing our rich diversity lies with our visual communication. We work to represent our diversity in multiple ways, as is reflective of the true diversity of our community.
- Intentionally resists harmful stereotypes about people with marginalized identities

## Considerations for Imagery

When choosing images, consider common stereotypes and assumptions:

- Men or non-women as caregivers
- Women or non-men as "single" or "solo" parents
- Man and woman as co-parents
- Shared race or physical features between parents and children
- Racial stereotypes as "single" or "solo" parents
- Able-bodied as "standard" and "normal"
- Alternative caregivers or parent figures
- Representation of a variety of racial, ethnic, religions, class, occupational and other social and personal identities

# SECTION 5: DEIB Key Terms & Concepts

## DEIB Terms & Concepts | Definitions & Explanations:

While the following list of DEIB terms and concepts is not exhaustive, this glossary resource identifies key terminology critical for Start Early's DEIB journey; with the objective of viewing this list as a living document that will grow and evolve over time.

Term/Concept	Definitions/Explanations
Allyship	<p>Allyship is a verb, not a noun. Allyship is not a place you arrive at. Rather it is a constant journey for support of a group that is marginalized.</p> <p>Allyship is specific to leveraging privilege. This might be leveraging positional privilege as a leader in the company, or social privilege as a man or a White person.</p> <p>Bias intervention vs. Allyship - Bias intervention is part of allyship but not every action in support of a marginalized group means you are an ally since allyship is a journey.</p> <p>Allyship not self-defined—work and efforts must be recognized by those you are seeking to ally with.</p>
Dominant vs Counter Narratives	<p><b>Dominant narratives</b> are stories told by the dominant culture that define reality and guide our lives. Often this is what most of society believes to be “true.” These can show up as stereotypes and assumptions about other groups.</p> <p><b>Counter Narratives</b> are narratives, truths and experiences that arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized. These can be collective or individual experiences that run against the Dominant Narrative or dominant stereotypes about their group.</p>
Equity vs. Equality	<p><b>Equity</b> refers to providing the resources needed for everyone to have the same opportunities to succeed within a given environment.</p>

	<p><b>Equality</b> means providing the same resources to each individual, regardless of individual needs.</p> <p>While the intention of equality is to create access, it ultimately ignores the lack of access for some individuals and groups historically. It also ends up ignoring the unique needs of individual contributors.</p> <p>Equity takes into account the unique needs of individuals and strives to create an environment where they can fully participate with the resources they need to thrive.</p>
<b>Identity</b>	<p>Identity is the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you. Social Identities fall into predictable patterns and are socialized through media, schools, parents, etc. countless forums that build our common understanding of what is “normal” and what is “other” within key categories.</p>
<b>Marginalized vs. Minority</b>	<p>Marginalized means that a group is on the fringes of society and has less power and access to resources and opportunities. Minority means you are a small fraction of the population. Therefore, using “marginalized” over “minority” is preferred since the term “minority” is not factually correct.</p> <p>Minority refers to actual numbers while marginalized refers to being othered, which can mean not just different, but less than.</p> <p>The two (minority/marginalized) may often be true of the same group but don't have to be. E.g., Statistically, Philadelphia has a greater Black population than White population. The White minority is NOT marginalized, and even as a majority in Philadelphia, the Black population IS marginalized.</p>
<b>Microaggressions</b>	<p><b>Microaggressions</b> are the ways in which unconscious bias shows up in everyday behavior. A microaggression can be an intentional or unintentional way of communicating through verbal or behavioral actions in a hostile, derogatory or prejudiced insult toward a marginalized group.</p> <p>Often assumed to be a bias that anyone can experience on any identity, microaggressions are similar to oppression in that only individuals in their marginalized identities can experience them. In other words, a microaggression is when bias lands on a marginalized identity.</p> <p><b>Microaggressions</b> are not “micro” at all. They are oppressions that occur on an individual level that are connected to institutional and systemic oppression. They can actually have a lasting negative impact and become a burden for individuals to reach their fullest potential in a team and workplace.</p>

<b>Prejudice, Discrimination &amp; Oppression</b>	<p>The terms prejudice, discrimination, and oppression are often used interchangeably, yet mean different things.</p> <p><b>Prejudice</b> is a <b>judgment, belief, or attitude</b> that is formed before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices can be learned and unlearned. They're internal – not necessarily acted upon. Prejudices are universal in that we all have prejudices but may not always act on them.</p> <p><b>Discrimination</b> is the <b>action</b> in response to the prejudices we hold. It is the unequal treatment of a person or group of people based upon a certain (perceived) identity. Discrimination shows up in unequal allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society based on individual membership in a particular social group; reinforced by law, policy, and cultural norms that allow for differential treatment on the basis of identity.</p> <p><b>Oppression</b> is the <b>abuse of power by a dominant group, whether knowingly or unknowingly, over a marginalized group</b>. This pervasive system is rooted in <b>history</b> and maintained through individual and institutional/systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice, resulting in a condition of privilege for the dominant group at the expense of the marginalized group.</p> <p><b>Oppression = Prejudice + Discrimination + Power + History</b></p>
<b>Privilege</b>	<p>Privilege is the set of benefits, access to resources, or opportunities, you have because you belong to a certain social group.</p> <p>People can experience privilege based on one or more of their identities, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, education, religion, ability, and more.</p>
<b>Intersectionality</b>	<p>Term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, describes how race, class, gender and other social identities “intersect” with one another; it is a lens through which you can see where privilege and power—or lack thereof—interlocks and intersects. Stated another way, it is the complex and cumulative way in which the impact of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap and/or intersect in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.</p>
<b>Unconscious Bias vs Confirmation Bias</b>	<p><b>Unconscious biases</b> are beliefs that individuals form, outside their own conscious awareness, about people. They're cognitive shortcuts that help us categorize information and quickly make decisions in our complex world.</p>

	<p>They are automatic, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal, and able to influence our behavior toward others. They are influenced by our background, environment, and personal experiences. Unconscious biases aren't inherently negative, but when our unconscious biases go unchecked at work, there's potential for us to make decisions that ultimately harm individuals or our company.</p> <p><b>Confirmation bias</b> is the human tendency to search for, favor, and use information that confirms one's preexisting views on a certain topic. It is the brain's shortcut.</p>
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# SECTION 6: Using Data Responsibly

Our content resonates when it is presented with clear and compelling data, and we know that our audiences appreciate the detailed research and studies that underpin our curriculum. We also know that data can only point to a single slice of a larger, complex story and we must take care to use data responsibly.

## Things to consider regarding data usage:

- **What am I collecting this data for?** Only collect data on what you plan to actually analyze and create action around. Resist the temptation to collect data for the sake of having data.
- **Should this data be disaggregated?** We want to balance the “deficit” model of showing statistically significant disparities between identity groups if it doesn’t serve the overall perspective we are sharing. And we don’t want to paint with a broad brush when we know that the data point does not apply to all people the same way. Consider whether your data is being used to express generalities and if the true experiences are more complex than we are showing.
- **Does this data point say something new or is it reinforcing a point that has already been made?** We can over rely on a data point to support an idea we are communicating. Using data as a prop can dilute the effectiveness of these sources and cause unintentional harm to participants. Especially when we use data that shows disparity or is illuminating systemic inequity - if we do not have capacity to unpack and give due time to those systems at play it can be triggering to participants who may share an identity represented in the data. Use care and intention when leveraging data; avoid using random ‘stats’ to prop up a point.
- **Making assumptions about shared definitions.** If you are using a statistic that is “proving” a point around “better outcomes” or “reaching potential”, you need to define how those terms are measured for the purposes of the study. Similarly, watch out for using “success” without specific markers and definitions of what “success” looks like in a given context.
- **Get curious about what the data is measuring.** Is this study measuring objective skill growth and development? Is it measuring teacher and program adaptability (which has resulted in skill growth and development)? Is it measuring student assimilation (which is



appearing as skill growth and development)? Any data point should come with the context of the study it was part of, not just a footnote.

- **When encouraging educators to use data:** Are we fully equipping educators to use data responsibly, and with context? We know that quantitative data alone can not tell a full story and we should be sure the use of data in programs isn't seen as a "one size fits all" approach. As we think of data collection and data hygiene as part of our roles, consider the additional workload this adds to one's role.

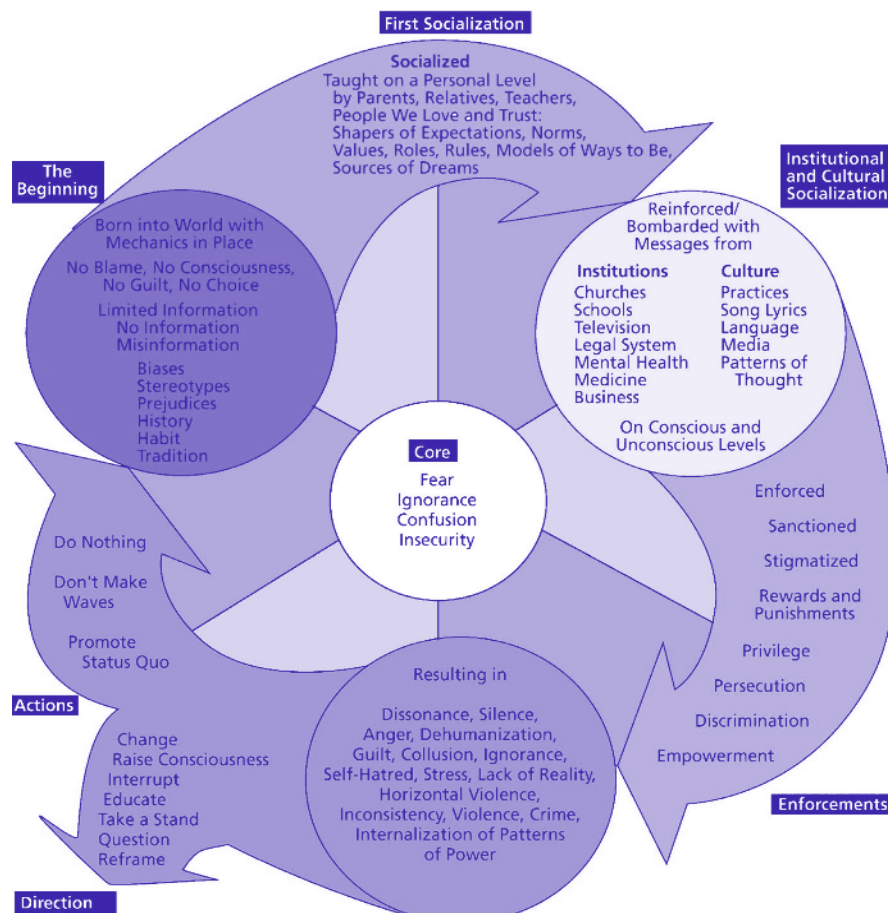
For further learning on responsible data collection and presentation, we recommend utilizing the [Responsible Data](#) website.

# SECTION 7: Addressing Systems

When creating content and building curriculum, we often have to tell a slice of a story without time to zoom out and create rich context. Ignoring systems in our narratives can be harmful, as it perpetuates the ideas of individualism and personal responsibility that keep damaging cycles in place. We must take a macro view and consider how to weave in the identification of systems-level inequities and how our institutions have been steeped in systems of oppression - whether that is embedded within parts of the curriculum or even as a course-wide disclaimer at the top of the session. Encouraging participants to think critically about the field of education and to examine systems will support transformative learning.

This lens is especially critical in the field of education, as educational institutions are large drivers of socialized ideas and narratives:

*Cycle of Socialization, Developed by Bobbie Harro*



Educators will likely remain prominent figures in this cycle of socialization. Consider what responsibility this puts on the educational institution, as well as on the individual educators.

## Systems to consider are:

*\*Note that rarely are any systems at play in a vacuum - these systems of oppression are often intermingled.*

**Capitalism:** Capitalism is at play in any educational system in the U.S. From how education is funded, how educators are valued, and how caregivers view education - all of our perspectives of education are tinted by capitalism. Capitalism tells us that children must develop certain skills and competencies to be a productive member of society and to secure a lucrative future. It tells us that schools and educators must “take care” of our children so that the adults and parents can work. And it informs which educational programs received what type of funding, insinuating who “deserves” more or less resources in education.

**White Supremacy:** White supremacy or White superiority is a foundational belief that norms and values held largely by white/European settlers are “correct” and that deviance from these norms and values are deficient. It is often tempting to frame “other” cultures, norms and values as “exotic” or “odd”, which is highlighting an assumption of White superiority without zooming out and naming the baseline of those assumptions. When making space for a variety of norms and values, we can never be comparing “apples to apples” - we are always navigating around the default setting of Whiteness as “norm” and anything else as “other” in the U.S.

**Patriarchy:** While women may be overrepresented as educators, much of the power and authority over the education system is held by men. This system historically perpetuates gender-based violence, restriction of access and opportunity and subjugation of anyone who does not embody what it means to be a “man” in U.S. society.

**Colonialism:** The United States is a colonial project - many of us who grow up here are educated around this idea through the lens of the colonizers. We have been socialized around the ideas of the U.S’ “founding” without the details of genocide, rape, destruction and displacement that occurred. This colonized mentality is upheld by ideas such as “individualism”, “survival of the fittest”, “winner takes all”, and other narratives that penetrate our institutions. Our education system was, specifically, weaponized to ethnically cleanse Indigenous people and continues to rest on the foundational pillars of these colonial values.

**Heteronormative:** Modern U.S education is rooted in heteronormative ideas regarding identity, love, relationship, sexuality and attractionality. The system is often constructed to reinforce gender

binaries of “girls” and “boys” and socialize around ideas of family, love, intimacy, and other core values.

**Ableism:** U.S society often functions under the explicit assumption of “one” way of moving, thinking and processing. Much of our systems, spaces and content are created for people who do not experience disabilities - excluding anyone who does not fit into the mold of “abled”. We often hear from disability advocates that their disabilities are not the problem - the system that refuses to create access and inclusion is the problem.

**Ageism:** U.S Society has historically embraced the idea that children are not yet full people, and therefore should not be considered as individuals with value outside of their family structure. These systems presume that young people offer less value to our society and therefore have less self-determination than older “adult” people.

It can be overwhelming to think of “systemic issues” and “systems of oppression” as separate things, but they do operate in layers with one another. Other systemic issues or systemic instances of oppression are: public policy, the criminal justice system, higher education, public education, U.S immigration, and many other “societal systems” that intentionally or unintentionally oppress or privilege specific groups.

# SECTION 8: Facilitation Tools

Content and curriculum design is only one piece of the puzzle. The skilled facilitators who hold space for the conversations, context and unpacking of the content are a key factor in creating meaningful sessions. As facilitators, we are balancing many factors. Getting through the agenda, ensuring clarity, bolstering engagement and managing group dynamics. Skilled facilitation is an art.

As facilitators who “hold the space” for participants, we must also be constantly aware of and calibrating for social power, different levels of content comprehension, and multiple truths. Below are some resources and concepts that can support a journey of skilled, inclusive and equitable facilitation.

## What it means to be a multipartial facilitator

Multipartiality rests on the awareness of how our own identities and those of others impact dialogue and can replay oppression and dominant narratives within a space.

Things to consider when being a multipartial facilitator:

- Participants are individuals and members of social groups, who have many social identities (dominant and/or marginalized).
- The decision-making is in the hands of all the participants (co-learning): we all have experiences to contribute to a collective learning process.
- Provide a space for all narratives while questioning/challenging the dominant ones.
- Be aware of our identities within the space, and identities that we assume or know to be not included.

Because of the inequality established in society and because our dialogues are microcosms of society, power within the dialogue is not balanced. Therefore, facilitators must be able to recognize these imbalances and create a structure that supports the target narrative in order to create a more balanced dynamic. This is contrary to how one usually conceptualizes facilitation (individually-focused and neutral). Multipartiality, therefore, has a social justice orientation.

Below is an “action continuum” describing the range of possible responses to oppressive behavior that facilitators can choose from, with multipartial responses falling under ‘Work Towards Social Justice’.

Works <b>Against</b> Social Justice		Works <b>Towards</b> Social Justice				
Actively join in behavior	No Response	Educate Oneself	Interrupt the behavior	Interrupt and educate	Support others' proactive response	Initiate Proactive Response
		Take action and teach oneself about the history behind oppression	Show disapproval by calling out or naming oppressive behavior	Explain why the behavior is oppressive	Encourage others to educate themselves	Act in ways that promote values of difference and resist oppressive behaviors

Source: McClintock, M. (2000). *How to Confront Oppressive Behavior in Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. (483-485).

These different responses each have a different level of risk associated with them, for oneself and for others. The following tools should be used in helping to decide which response and action to take.

## Tools for being a Multipartial Facilitator

1. Consider what power issues are at play, how the identities of the people involved intersect, and how your own social identities will impact your intervention.
2. Evaluate participant ideas and how they relate to, promote, or challenge the dominant ideology.
3. Listen to participants as they express their experiences, and be conscious of the target/agent identity being expressed. This may help in letting go of prescribed reactions that social norms have taught us. Pay attention to developing your communication skills so you can share knowledge with others.
4. Look for the patterns of oppression around you: in the dialogue, in yourself, in others, in policies, in daily actions made based on power and privilege.
5. Don't expect members of target groups to always be able or willing to educate everyone, be the experts, or challenge oppressive statements in the dialogue.
6. Challenge (mis)conceptions and confront oppressive behaviors: Take risks and take responsibility.
7. Acknowledge discrepancies between values and statements made in the dialogue and ask for clarification. Explore the linkages between these and the oppressive behavior or statements that are occurring.

8. Reach out to other facilitators for support – share your challenges and stories with them to increase your learning.

## Leading Dialogue instead of Teaching

- **Be a moderator, not a lecturer.** You are supporting the conversation with information, prompts and activities– but the participants are 'doing the work' to unpack and apply the concepts to their own context.
- **Watch the dynamics.** Your job is to include everybody in the conversation, manage time and monitor how participants are sharing the airtime.
- **You don't need to have all the answers.** It's OK to acknowledge your own knowledge gaps and mistakes. Encourage others to do the same. Lead with questions, and discover the answers together
- **Manage time.** Remind the group that consensus is not necessary, and that many topics will be further explored in future sessions. It's OK to say, "This is a rich topic, but we need to move on."
- **You are not neutral.** Remember to challenge dominant narratives when they creep into dialogue. Continue to complicate the conversation rather than settling for an "easy win".

## Drawing out participation

- Use the phrase "What do others think?"
- Feel free to use a person's name or ask for input from part of the group. "Let's hear from somebody on this side of the table."
- It's OK to sit in silence after a tough question. Give people time to reflect before they speak.
- Don't force agreement. Rather, request openness and empathy. Invite other perspectives.
- (Virtual) Ask for responses in the chat and then call on one respondee to share more.

## Monitoring the energy

- Don't be afraid to mix up the energy: if you perceive lagging energy and engagement, ask participants to move their bodies (staying aware of ableist language) in a way that works for them, or take a bio break to reset the tone
- Have the group break into pairs or trios for some of the discussions rather than discussing as a full group
- Manage your own energy - continue to modulate your energy and engage with authenticity

## Helpful questions for facilitation

"Can you say more about that?"

"What do others think?"

"Does anyone else have a different experience?"

"Where do you think that is coming from?"

"How has this shown up in your experiences? Do we think this is true for everyone?"

"What are we missing here?"

"What will you need more time to reflect on and process?"

*For further information on multiparitality please refer to the following:*

- [This Informative Deck](#) by Karen Rice, PhD, LSW, ACSW and J. Whitlow, M SEd
- [The Art of Dialogue: Multi-partiality](#) from the Ohio State University



# Wrap Up

Creating and delivering content with a lens of equity & inclusion can feel like an overwhelming shift from “the way we’ve always done it”. As educators and content creators, we hope you will find this shift invigorating and rewarding. Remember that “perfection” is not the goal of any given piece of content. Rather, we are working to challenge common dominant narratives, name oppressive systems, and balance social power. We will never do any of these things “perfectly”, but that shouldn’t stop us from continuing to strive and stretch.

We hope your teams are able to build on this toolkit and use it as the launch pad for rich dialogue and continued evolution within your organization.



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