

The Consciously Unbiased Educator

Foreword by
Yvette Jackson

HUDA ESSA

ADVANCE COPY—NOT FINAL. NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION.



2800 Shirlington Road, Suite 1001 • Arlington, VA 22206 USA

Phone: 800-933-2723 or 703-578-9600 • Fax: 703-575-5400

Website: www.ascd.org • Email: member@ascd.org

Author guidelines: www.ascd.org/write

Richard Culatta, *Chief Executive Officer*; Anthony Rebor, *Chief Content Officer*; Genny Ostertag, *Managing Director, Book Acquisitions & Editing*; Susan Hills, *Senior Acquisitions Editor*; Mary Beth Nielsen, *Director, Book Editing*; Miriam Calderone, *Editor*; Thomas Lytle, *Creative Director*; Donald Ely, *Art Director*; Melissa Johnston/The Hatcher Group, *Graphic Designer*; Valerie Younkin, *Senior Production Designer*; Kelly Marshall, *Production Manager*; Shajuan Martin, *E-Publishing Specialist*; Kathryn Oliver, *Creative Project Manager*

Copyright © 2024 ASCD. All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce copies of this work in print or electronic format (including reproductions displayed on a secure intranet or stored in a retrieval system or other electronic storage device from which copies can be made or displayed) without the prior written permission of the publisher. By purchasing only authorized electronic or print editions and not participating in or encouraging piracy of copyrighted materials, you support the rights of authors and publishers. Readers who wish to reproduce or republish excerpts of this work in print or electronic format may do so for a small fee by contacting the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923, USA (phone: 978-750-8400; fax: 978-646-8600; web: www.copyright.com). To inquire about site licensing options or any other reuse, contact ASCD Permissions at www.ascd.org/permissions or permissions@ascd.org. For a list of vendors authorized to license ASCD ebooks to institutions, see www.ascd.org/epubs. Send translation inquiries to translations@ascd.org.

ASCD® is a registered trademark of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All other trademarks contained in this book are the property of, and reserved by, their respective owners, and are used for editorial and informational purposes only. No such use should be construed to imply sponsorship or endorsement of the book by the respective owners.

All web links in this book are correct as of the publication date below but may have become inactive or otherwise modified since that time. If you notice a deactivated or changed link, please email books@ascd.org with the words “Link Update” in the subject line. In your message, please specify the web link, the book title, and the page number on which the link appears.

PAPERBACK ISBN: 978-1-4166-3278-8 ASCD product #121014 n3/24

PDF EBOOK ISBN: 978-1-4166-3279-5; see Books in Print for other formats.

Quantity discounts are available: email programteam@ascd.org or call 800-933-2723, ext. 5773, or 703-575-5773. For desk copies, go to www.ascd.org/deskcopy.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Essa, Huda, author.

Title: The consciously unbiased educator / Huda Essa ; foreword by Yvette Jackson.

Description: Arlington, VA : ASCD, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023050996 (print) | LCCN 2023050997 (ebook) | ISBN 9781416632788 (paperback) | ISBN 9781416632795 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Culturally relevant pedagogy. | Educational equalization. | Teaching—Psychological aspects.

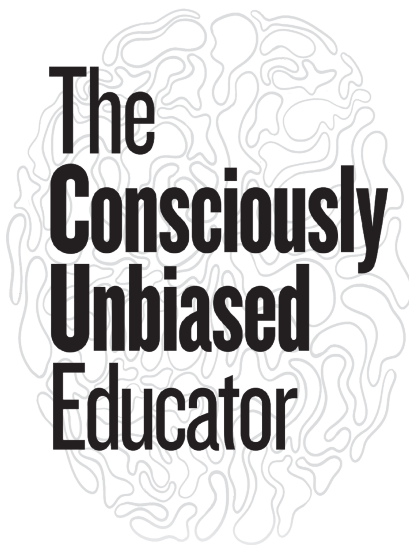
Classification: LCC LC1099 .E83 2024 (print) | LCC LC1099 (ebook) | DDC 370.117—dc23/eng/20231213

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023050996>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023050997>

33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



Foreword by Yvette Jackson	xi
Letter to the Reader	xiv
Introduction	1
1. Seeing the Big Picture: Embarking on Your Cultural Proficiency Journey	7
2. Examining the Problem: What Research Tells Us About Unconscious Bias	26
3. Looking Inward: Your Beliefs and Practices on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum	46
4. Moving Forward: Finding the Courage to Be Vulnerable and to Confront Privilege	66
5. Clearing the Lens: Using Your Critical Consciousness to Address Exclusionary Behaviors	90
6. Stepping Up: Actions to Confront Bias Across Your School	132
7. Looking Ahead: The Journey Continues	178
References	185
Index	191
About the Author	195

Foreword

The potential of the United States to maintain its role as a leader on the world stage is rooted in and contingent upon our most prolific resource: the diversity of the American people. Studies in the sciences and the arts have shown that diversity catalyzes the variety of perspectives, experiences, and strengths that spawn and optimize U.S. creativity and innovation. This reality is substantiated by the fact that “the United States, a country that accounts for about 5 percent of the world’s population, has won about 60 percent of all the Nobel Prizes ever awarded. From the motor car and the airplane to Facebook and Google, from the telephone and the internet to Hollywood and Wall Street, scientists, entrepreneurs, and entertainers from the United States have powerfully shaped the world in which we live” (Vedantam, 2019).

But America has a history of ignoring and negating the incredible, undeniable influence and power of its diversity by viewing its own people’s innovation through a discriminatory lens, attributing success to the intellectual ability and talent of a chosen few. The resulting prejudices and biases convey that peoples not recognized by this myopic lens lack the potential or the talent to contribute to the successes of America, perpetuating the myths about these peoples originally promulgated by racism.

However, the 20th century provided us with the cognitive science and neuroscience demonstrating that we are *all* born with the desire to be engaged; the propensity to develop high intellectual abilities, strengths, and talents; and the self-determination to succeed and make contributions. What is needed to cultivate the desire and the potential of *all* our students to learn is what all people need to succeed: exposure, enrichment, opportunity to apply critical and creative thinking, and support for high levels of learning. America abounds in the resources to provide each of these critical components, so why don't we lead the world in nurturing and eliciting the potential of our students so that they thrive and contribute to our productivity and advancements?

Tragically, the reasons are political and social rather than scientific. Enabling the potential of *all* our students requires giving them access to the aforementioned critical components, and providing this access is predicated on belief in their potential. When we believe students have talent and potential for high-level performance, we provide them with access to opportunities, resources, and pedagogy that nurture their potential and eradicate hindrances to the fulfillment of that potential. But we do not provide that access. Despite the science substantiating the power of diversity to increase U.S. innovation and the propensity of *all* students to develop the skills and talents to contribute to such innovation, the conscious and unconscious bias propagated by racism continues to influence how students are or aren't educated and, consequently, who does and doesn't achieve.

Much of the consequence of unconscious bias in education comes down to a collective lack of recognition of the reality of bias in schooling, including the behaviors that reflect it, what facilitates those behaviors, how those behaviors are manifested in teaching, and the effects those behaviors have on learning. Huda Essa eloquently elucidates this reality through the tour de force she has penned in *The Consciously Unbiased Educator*. She masterfully uses her acutely sensitive dialogical perspective acquired from empirical research and her lived experiences to curate teaching scenarios, administrative actions, and personal reflections to poignantly illustrate how bias lives

in schools. Her ability to crystallize seemingly esoteric concepts from scholarship—such as *unconscious bias*, *cultural proficiency*, *privilege*, and *exclusionary behaviors*—deepen our understanding, making us keenly aware of the ideology that creates bias and the power it has to blind us to the vast and valuable potential of students who have been traditionally otherized.

The heightened consciousness that Huda deftly stimulates generates our appreciation for the pedagogical strategies, practices, and leadership moves she provides that can address and mitigate the negative impact of bias on learning. These are augmented by individual and group exercises for deep reflection that can foster our competence to make more mindful and effective pedagogical choices for enhancing the learning and achievement of *all* our students.

Huda Essa has gifted us with the pedagogical equivalent of the Hubble Space Telescope. Her book provides us with a powerful lens through which we can transcend the limitations of unconscious bias to recognize and appreciate in our students what Essa eloquently refers to as “magnificent, expanded views” of the brilliance of *all* our students, strengthening our resolve and confidence as *consciously unbiased educators*.

—Yvette Jackson, EdD

Letter to the Reader

Dear reader:

I write this at a time in history that feels unprecedented and yet, in some ways, all too familiar. It is a time of contrasts. Justice seekers are demanding change while others who are served by the status quo fiercely petition against it. On the one hand, technology is exposing long-hidden offenses like never before, and, in a few cases, has yielded long-overdue justice. On the other hand, that same unfettered access to technology has led to the widespread dissemination of misinformation, often rooted in bigoted belief systems. Legislators are enacting laws to suppress the truthful teaching of history, and heavily sanitized curricula are designed to cover up the mistakes of some and highlight those of others. Muddying the facts in this way perpetuates fragility and fear while silencing educators and diminishing the value of education. It is not an overstatement to say our rights as educators and the minds and futures of all humanity are at risk.

I have designed this text to help you more powerfully advocate for students, educators, and education itself. My hope is that with its guidance, ignorance and fear will evolve into confidence, knowledge, and empathy. Your entire community will learn to stand strong and steady upon a foundation built on character and truthful education. It is my honor to have written this book for you, my fellow influential educator, with confidence in your limitless ability not only to create waves of transformation but to teach others to do the same.

—Huda Essa

Introduction

Cultural proficiency learning is distinct among professional development subjects for an array of reasons—perhaps first among them, because it requires *unlearning* as much as learning. Specifically, it requires uncovering and overcoming unconscious biases that nearly all of us have been programmed to unknowingly abide by our entire lives. This lack of awareness severely limits our potential for positive growth and impact. Conversely, raising your consciousness by gaining cultural proficiency—your goal in reading this book—will set you up to become *consciously unbiased* and therefore able to take control of what you allow to influence your beliefs and actions. The control you gain will also enhance your ability to purposefully engage in thoughts and behaviors that maximize your potential for success and that of your entire community.

What Does Cultural Proficiency Learning Involve? Who Is It For?

To deliver this content as effectively and productively as I know how, I structured this book a bit differently than most. Becoming a consciously unbiased educator requires you to undergo a deeply

personal evolution, in the process gaining vast awareness, conducting soul-searching reflection, showing great vulnerability and courage, and building your stores of empathy. The thorough contemplation and resolve necessary to succeed in this undertaking will not occur through a swift read and premade checklists. Although I can empathize with busy educators looking for shortcuts, attempts to take them here will end in failure. Shortcuts support a perilous assumption that there is one exact answer for each question or problem that arises. The reality is that the world, including all the cultures and humans within it, is constantly changing. Therefore, it is imperative that you are equipped to respond as effectively as possible to *all* kinds of populations and circumstances—even communities almost entirely made up of White students. A common misconception I encounter in my work is that cultural proficiency is relevant only to teachers of ethnically diverse student populations. For reasons you'll find illustrated throughout this text, communities with the least diverse representation of identities may need this learning most of all. You will also see why an invaluable element of true cultural proficiency is learning about identities that aren't significantly represented in your classroom or even in research and data. Without this learning, your lack of knowledge about various social identities is guaranteed to show up in your practices and communications.

How to Use This Book

Because cultural proficiency benefits everyone and applies to all people, cultures, and circumstances, there will never be one set method for how to best serve your students in this ever-changing world. Therefore, I have designed this book to help you build the knowledge and skills required to become *your own manual*. Using this text, you will be able to continuously advance your skills to successfully navigate all sorts of situations, whether they are planned or arise abruptly in the moment. Countless educators were not taught to be culturally proficient, leaving them ill equipped and reluctant to respond to the issues that matter most to their students. This sends a tragic message that I

have heard repeatedly from students: “My teacher’s comfort is more valuable to them than my well-being.”

To address this gap, the “Connect and Converse” reflection sections offer numerous opportunities throughout this book to build greater confidence and ease around speaking to sensitive, difficult matters. My sincere hope is that you exercise mindfulness and thoughtfully engage with the prompts and, in some cases, “converse” with me by reading my own reflections (indicated with an “HR” icon standing for Huda’s Response). Doing so will enable you to hone your skills for independent application and transference to real-life situations rather than depending on cookie-cutter answers that have been handed to you. Most important, this practice sets you up to regularly activate your critical consciousness skills, which will help you more confidently engage in similarly important conversations off the page. To offer more space for reflection, these prompts, along with the Privilege Check-In from Chapter 4 (p. 72), are also available for download at <https://www.ascd.org/consciously-unbiased-resources>.

Now for a brief overview of this book. Chapter 1 is where you’ll learn about unconscious bias as it relates to you personally and the ways it affects your work and the communities you serve. This chapter also introduces important strategies and tools that will help you get the most out of the book. In Chapter 2, you will learn what research and data reveal about the harmful effects of unconscious bias and delve into ways to stop shame from limiting your progress. Chapter 3 provides the background knowledge and vocabulary necessary to establish a strong foundation for future learning and growth. In Chapter 4, you’ll sharpen essential skills and uncover personal learning that expands your empathy, understanding, and capabilities. Chapter 5 teaches you to activate your critical consciousness to more effectively assess and productively respond to behaviors created by prevalent unconscious bias in schools. In Chapter 6, we’ll put all your learning into practice and assess how far you’ve come while exploring knowledge and strategies to take you further. The book concludes with Chapter 7, where I leave you with a note for what lies ahead.

A Note on Voice and Language

I'd like to touch on voice, language, and terms used in this book, since the topic is a sensitive one. As I explain more fully in Chapter 1, my own perspective is one of compassion and humility; I have tried to keep my tone warm and even light and humorous when warranted, but this book necessarily delves into serious matters that are sometimes difficult to talk about. If you are ever in doubt, please remember that I am *with* you on this journey.

I wrote this book with the intention of modeling thoughtful language. I have done my best to replace commonly used deficit-based language and labels with more precise, asset-based language. For example, I swap out *low-socioeconomic-status* or *low-income* with *underresourced*, and I replace the term *achievement gap*—which focuses on an inadequate end product—with the more accurate and productive descriptor *academic potential gap*, which addresses the heart of the matter: the way in which some students' academic potential is restricted more than others'. Both *underresourced* and *academic potential gap* focus on what can be done to lift people out of those positions rather than just imposing a label and a fixed status, which implies passivity and helplessness on the part of those being described.

Terms commonly used to describe language learners are prime examples of deficit-based language, where value is placed solely on the English language rather than the outstanding benefits of speaking more than one language. The term you'll read here is *Emergent Multilingual Learner*, which is appropriately and deservedly asset-based and inclusive of students' native and cultural languages.

While writing and revising this book, I have also rethought the common term *microaggression*, concerned that *micro* might minimize the seriousness of such an action. As a result, I have largely replaced this term with the more accurate *exclusionary behavior* (Tulshyan, 2022). My hope is that you will easily recognize both terms when you hear them used in the world beyond this book. There is no term that

is “perfect,” but I believe *exclusionary behavior* comes closest at this time.

I also want to discuss the terms and usage around race in this book. Race is an unfortunate social construct that provides an excuse for many to justify division, supremacy, and injustice. Although I strongly believe in honoring specific ethnicities and cultures that reside within each of these extremely broad identifiers, I can only illustrate the consequences of these made-up classifications by using the given terms. As with the term *exclusionary bias*, I have tried to choose what I believe are the best terms while acknowledging that they are not perfect (see, for example, the debate around the term *AAPI* [Kaur, 2023], which I use to refer to people of Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage). I hope that you are able to read these labels with the understanding of how incredibly diverse they are. For example, although your students who are Indigenous or Arabs may not be the first you think of when seeing the so-called “Brown” racial group, many of the obstacles they face align with those encountered by others more commonly identified in that category, such as people whose origins are from Latin America. In keeping with my use of language that is specific and inclusive of diversity, I do my best to steer away from broad terms like *people of color*. Another reason to avoid this term is that it implicitly reinforces the notion that “White” is the norm, with everyone else lumped together as a group of “other” people of “color.” For this reason, among others, I have chosen to capitalize all racial identities, including *White*. Using a proper noun helps to combat the misinformed belief that White is neutral, which makes it easier to dismiss its prominent role in education, communities, and systems and to propagate misguided ideologies like color-blindness. As you read on, you’ll see why this belief is pervasive and incredibly important to overcome.

I hope that considering voice, using asset-based language, and capitalizing all racial identities model inclusiveness and the meaningful effects it creates while helping you more thoughtfully and confidently engage in learning for cultural proficiency.

Now that you have an idea of what to expect and why this book is organized and written the way it is, let's get started on this journey of a lifetime!



1

Seeing the Big Picture

Embarking on Your Cultural Proficiency Journey

Instruction in youth is like engraving in stone.

—Moroccan proverb

“I am a better person today because of [*educator name*].” If you haven’t made a statement like this at some point, you’ve probably heard someone else say it. These memorable figures are the ones who touched our hearts, opened our minds, and awakened our souls. Many among us have the privilege of remembering such a special educator.

Of course, there are also educators we remember for the opposite reason. You may have personally experienced, witnessed, or heard stories of educators whose actions led to suffering. I am certain that most were oblivious to the ongoing effects of their actions. Their intention was most likely to help, not harm, their students. Nonetheless, impact does not always match intent.

The significant longitudinal effects teachers have on student outcomes are undeniable (Johnston et al., 2019). It is therefore crucial that your positive intent is reinforced with instrumental know-how. My own intent is for the guidance throughout this book to fortify your goal of a profound legacy of excellence.

For now, though, I just want you to have hope. If you feel jaded by failures resulting from the unjust policies and practices in today’s

educational systems, I get it. I will not insist that you proceed filled with unwavering optimism that you will change the world (yet). Still, I trust that you know the power of knowledge. If you devote to this text the relatively short amount of time it requires, you will be rewarded with a plethora of potential positive outcomes. As you advance your professional skills, you will increase student motivation, engagement, and overall achievement. In addition, this learning will enrich your aptitude for positive collaboration and communication with not only students but also caregivers, staff, and community members. The positive effects will even extend to your personal and social life.

And to all you eye-rollers out there: I see you. All I ask is that you begin with a smidgen of hope that the knowledge you gain will enhance the overall impact of your work.

Identifying Unconscious Bias and Shame

Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.

—Liberian proverb

If we want our students to remember us as educators who touch hearts, open minds, and awaken souls, we must boldly address the topic of bias. Discussion of its presence in school communities is often restricted to accounts of explicit bias alone. *Explicit bias* is easily recognized, and it occurs in relatively rare circumstances. It shows up in conscious, deliberate behaviors like sexist jokes, racial slurs, or refusal of service to someone of a given sexual orientation. When explicit bias occurs, the perpetrator is aware of it and can easily describe the reasoning behind it.

Although certainly harmful, explicit bias is not our biggest problem. More insidious is *unconscious bias*, also called *implicit bias*—a type of social cognition that occurs below the surface, making it harder to detect. Its origins are not so much firsthand experiences as they are societal norms and stereotypes that we unconsciously internalize. Regardless of ethical or moral attitudes and intentions, the formation of unconscious biases is a universal guarantee for all human

beings. Social scientists find that unconscious biases develop as early as age 3 (Flannery, 2015). They are often undetected and may even be in direct contradiction to a person's pronounced beliefs. As a report from the Kirwan Institute (Staats et al., 2016) notes, "research from the neuro-, social and cognitive sciences show that hidden biases are distressingly pervasive, that they operate largely under the scope of human consciousness, and that they influence the ways in which we see and treat others, even when we are determined to be fair and objective" (p. 6).

Each unconscious bias we hold splashes the lens through which we see the world. Over time, these nearly imperceptible smudges are what we use to interpret what we see, draw our conclusions, and make our subsequent choices. To remain oblivious to our unconscious biases is to give them free rein over our everyday thoughts, behaviors, and communications. This obliviousness perpetuates the admission of dangerous ignorance that gives rise to enduring negative influences.

Inequities in our education systems are overwhelmingly due more to unconscious bias than to explicit bias. The disappointing reality is that most educators have been trained to provide services in a way that permits systemic oppression to continue. The sources, materials, and experiences supplied to educators are not conducive to promoting cultural proficiency. In fact, they do the opposite. Unfortunately, this truth remains widely unknown and is continually denied and dismissed by large sectors of society. Unless educators learn to recognize and mitigate their unconscious biases, their damaging effects will persist. For the sake of all former, current, and future students, we must learn to see through the false illusions our suppressive education taught us to interpret as reality.

To prevail over unconscious biases, educators need to achieve cultural proficiency. Although the journey toward achieving this goal is eye-opening and even life-changing, it rarely offers a straight and smooth path. Charting my own course toward cultural proficiency forced me to face a barrage of mortifying realizations, each one a drop of fuel to ignite embers of shame, setting them ablaze and threatening my ability to confidently advance. Fortunately, I quickly saw that giving

any power to shame would threaten or even halt my progress. In hindsight, I see that my refusal to allow shame to slow me down turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life. I want the same for you.

Recognizing the presence of shame is key. This can be tricky because shame is a shapeshifter of sorts. It may appear when we least expect it or when we are least ready to face it. Shame often resides at the deepest levels of our consciousness, yet it drives many of our surface reactions. Do not mistake my words of caution as doubt in your capacity for growth; I simply want to equip you with the tools and awareness to journey toward cultural proficiency effectively and efficiently.

The first tool comes in the form of an idea that you will need to keep in mind throughout this learning: *We were all born into systems of injustice that were already in place*. Neither our formal nor our informal education taught us how to liberate ourselves from these oppressive cycles. Any missteps you have taken up to this point are not indicative of an immoral nature but, rather, of the education and conditioning you've received. Acknowledging this whenever shame threatens your progress frees up your mind and heart to appreciate the lessons that exist in that moment and amplifies your ability to practice empathy, which researchers now identify as the most important leadership skill (Brower, 2021). Among other abundant lifelong advantages, empathy fosters deep intellect, problem solving, creativity, social-emotional balance, brain functioning, and productive collaboration. It is an inarguably powerful skill for students and educators alike.

Preparing for the Journey: Creating Your Index

A fault confessed is half redressed.

—Zulu proverb

One of the most important tools I want to share is an index that you will create to help you organize your learning. Achieving the goal of cultural proficiency is a deeply personal experience that deserves a

specialized approach, and as you read, you will experience an array of emotions, thoughts, and reactions that deserve moments of pause and reflection. (If you just sighed at the prospect of this taking a lot more time than anticipated, rest assured that the additional time invested upfront will accelerate your progress.) To begin, grab a notebook; this will be your constant companion and a key component to your interactive engagement on this journey. In your notebook, you will create a system inspired by Brené Brown's (2022) "integration index," itself adapted from Maria Popova's "alternative indexing" approach. Its purpose is to help you organize and reinforce your learning based on what is most useful to you.

To create the index, make a list of categories that hold the most meaning for you. You hold the pen here, so make it distinctly your own. You can add or revise categories at any time. Once you have your list, write each one as a heading on a page or two in your notebook. Make sure you leave enough blank space below each heading for your notes. Here are some examples of possible categories:

- **"Aha" moments:** New learning or information that excites or inspires you
- **Vocabulary:** Unfamiliar vocabulary words and definitions worth exploring or using
- **Quotes:** Quotations that resonate with you
- **Dig into later:** Questions, things you don't understand, ideas you want to research further and learn more about
- **Put on hold:** Concepts that you need to put on hold for now. These might be ideas that challenge you beyond your current bandwidth for whatever reason—anything from a tired mind after a long day to emotionally charged reactions like shame and fear. It is OK to press pause, but this category is your promise to yourself to revisit the concepts so that you won't have gaps in your foundational learning.
- **Talk it over with _____:** Ideas that you want to share and discuss—for example, with colleagues at a meal, with loved ones on a call, with students in class, or with followers in a social media post

- **Take to work:** Takeaways for timely application
- **Schedule it:** Actions that you don't want to forget to take
- **Personal connection:** Ideas that ignite empathy on any level. This could be in ways that relate directly to your life experiences or to those of significant others, including but not limited to ancestors, admired figures, family, and friends.

Far from being just another task, the index enables you to obtain learning in the way that is most meaningful to you. It asks you to slow down and distinguish ideas that resonate with you, including ones that upset, excite, or perplex you. You can highlight and tag notable ideas, recording the page number and any relevant notes under the corresponding index category.

An Invitation to Connect and Converse

Constant dripping hollows out the stone.

—Vietnamese proverb

Another key tool I offer in this book involves conversation. Free, honest conversation is crucial to our cultural proficiency journey. And once again, shame rears its head as a major roadblock to this kind of open discourse. One of the subtlest manifestations of shame is what I call the “programmed hush.” This is not the silence associated with captivated engagement; it is the silence derived from disconnectedness between people, which leads to feelings of insecurity, inferiority (or superiority), uncertainty, inadequacy, stress, intimidation—even spite, anger, or apathy. Maybe the disconnect is between you and your colleague, your doctor, or the keynote speaker on stage—whoever it is, the missing ingredient is empathy. Empathy is needed to generate the comfort necessary for authentic and productive discourse.

The next tool is going to help you overcome the programmed hush. Here is how it works. Throughout the book, I pose questions that prompt you to reflect on an aspect of the information shared or how it applies to your life. I urge you to record your unadulterated, genuine

responses in your notebook. Some of these may be sobering, but don't hold back. Withholding truths may deal a less severe blow to your ego, but it shoves you backward on your journey. Who has time for that? Not you! If you feel stuck on a particularly challenging question, you can add it to a "Put on hold" section in your index, but you will need to revisit it at some point, so it's best to complete as much as you can before moving on in the text. Once you have written your response, go to the page listed next to HR (standing for Huda's Response). There, you will read my response, which may include any combination of personal narrative, researched facts, and alternative perspectives that you may or may not relate to personally.

Now here is the real challenge: I want you to do your best not to peek at my responses before you hash out your own thoughts. Otherwise, you will remove your voice from the conversation and rob yourself of the opportunity to learn in a deeply personal way. Including your unfiltered voice expands your knowledge base and gives you practice breaking the programmed hush instigated by shame. Engaging in our conversation here will infinitely enhance your experiences off the page. You can then use your acquired skills in a way that compels others to do the same. To help you in this endeavor, I have purposely placed my responses apart from the prompts, at the end of each chapter.

A note on the "voice" of my responses: I want you to "hear" them in a compassionate voice. (If you've ever sent a text message that was wildly misconstrued, you will understand this request!) Because this book is likely to kindle an array of emotions, I want to be clear about my intended voice. It is not one of judgment or arrogance, but one of humility, empathy, and genuine care. In my consultations with professionals, I intentionally maintain a relaxed and informal atmosphere and dialogue. Here, I offer you a similar opportunity. I'd like you to indulge in the notion that although I am not physically in your presence, my written responses are what I would say to you in person. And while it is true that I won't receive your responses in the moment, my genuine hope is that you and I will meet face-to-face in the near future. Until then, rest assured that my hearing your response

is nowhere near as important as you expressing and really listening to your own voice. You will soon see why understanding what *you* think is the most effective action you can take.

Finally, I have provided multiple opportunities for you to reflect on and expand your worldview. You will see that many of these *don't* include a response from me. This varied approach is designed to allow you to learn in a more natural, authentic way, meaning sometimes you'll be able to talk it out to learn more, and other times you'll need to expand your knowledge in other ways. These might include conducting intentional research through various modes of media, engaging in conversations with others, or acquiring accurate information from observations made through your enhanced, clearer lens.

Let's start this practice by returning to the beginning: childhood. Psychology professionals agree that a great deal of our anguish stems from this time in our lives. Many of my own childhood memories are from Michigan in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Smartphones and online social media did not exist. Neighbors sat on their front porches and visited one another frequently. Kids played in the streets until sunset. We drank from hoses without a second thought and used them to spray unsuspecting siblings and friends during the humid summers. My memories include elaborate hairstyles, heavily trafficked side-walks, and highlighter-bright colors. However, this particular memory I'm thinking of includes simple hair and shades of dull brown: my neighbor Penny's brown brick house, with its oak front door, coffee-colored mailbox, and wheat-brown stucco lining the front porch steps and columns. The sneaker-scuffed, drab brown tile on the floor stands out the most. The day my heart broke and my chin dropped, that floor is what I stared at through a curtain of brown hair that I let fall to hide the tears stinging my chocolate-brown eyes.

Just moments before, we had been excitedly planning an epic sleepover at Penny's. It would involve braiding each other's hair, giggling over magazines, and eating buttered popcorn. With ear-to-ear smiles, Jill and I wiggled and hopped with excitement, waiting for Penny to return with her mother's permission. We were sure the answer would be yes but were still eager to hear the joyful

confirmation. The door swung open, and out came Penny skipping toward us. She enthusiastically announced to Jill that her mom had said yes! They swung their linked hands as they squealed and jumped up and down. As if on cue, Jill's mother called to her from across the street to let her know that supper was ready.

I was stirring with excitement for my turn to celebrate with Penny as she watched Jill run home. After what seemed like a long time, she turned to face me, and I saw that her smile had disappeared. "Umm, Huda, we need to talk." My bubbly friend's voice had instantly transformed into an adult-like tone. She gently took my arm and walked me to the edge of the porch. Her eyes seemed to glance everywhere but my face as she mumbled, "My mom said you can't sleep over." Confused, I replied, "But you just told Jill that your mom said yes." She took a deep breath, and this time, she looked straight at me to say, "My mom said that Jill can sleep over but you can't because you're Black." Confused again, I said, "I'm not Black, I'm Arab." With a look of pity and a slight shake of her head, she said, "It's the same thing." I felt like I had been punched in the gut. My throat tightened and I turned my face toward the dusty brown floor. Now I was the one who couldn't look at her. Heartbroken and filled with shame, I walked the short distance home. This was not the first time I had faced racial discrimination in my short years, but when it came from loved ones, it pierced through the thick skin I was rapidly growing to protect myself.

As teenagers, my siblings and I would laugh at this story. By the time I became a culturally proficient adult, the memory would come back to tug at my heartstrings all over again. I grieved Penny's spoiled sense of unreserved love and that of all the souls taught to hate. I held an acute sadness for my younger self who, like so many of us, trusted in the oppressive, atrocious lie that Black was somehow bad. But above all, this memory fills me with determination to turn both types of victims into champions.

**CONNECT AND CONVERSE**

› Think back to your childhood years. When did you first contemplate race, and what prompted this? (See **HR1** on p. 22.)



› What notions did you absorb about each racial identity? Some responses may be obviously stereotypical or biased, but I urge you to honestly think about them anyway. (See **HR2** on p. 22.)



Look Back to Advance Forward

Do not fear a stain that disappears with water.

—Puerto Rican proverb

Revolutionizing unjust education systems requires comprehending how and why unconscious bias directs our beliefs and actions. My story echoes those of countless others who have similarly embarked on the journey toward cultural proficiency.

Once again, allow me to press the rewind button and return to my childhood years. Unbeknownst to me then, my adolescence bore witness to White flight and the ways it reformed the neighborhood I called home. Before then, my family was one of a small number of Muslim and Arab families in the area. We did not look like most families there or the staff at my school. We were bilingual, bicultural, and Brown. From a young age, my mind absorbed endless messages that taught me what was good versus bad, what was acceptable versus unacceptable, and what was deemed “normal.”

In my very first years of schooling, it became quickly and painfully clear to me that my family and I were *not* normal. Compared with most of my classmates’ names, mine was unusual and difficult for my teachers to pronounce. My parents were immigrants, and their English didn’t sound like that of most other parents. Even the lunch I brought from home was not like my friends’. Plain and simple, I was different and I knew it.

The evidence of what was normal and the glaring notion that I was *abnormal* were continually confirmed through nearly every channel and experience of my youth. Literature was a big one. I was an avid reader as a child. As is true for many readers, I swiftly became submerged in the books I read. My imagination delighted with every new character and storyline I encountered to the extent that I *became* the character. This was not fun for my family, especially when the character was a young detective or an up-and-coming musician. My now enhanced lens allows me to see that reading was not just an outlet; it was a coping mechanism by way of dissociation. Reading was my chance to escape my excluded reality and live vicariously through characters that were “normal.”

The diversity of the U.S. population was increasing, but you wouldn't have known it looking at children's literature at that time. It hardly ever included anyone other than White, able-bodied, monolingual, Christian characters, so the message of what constituted normalcy was loud and clear. To take just one data point, in 1990, only 51 of an estimated 5,000 children's books published were by Black authors and illustrators (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2023). This was consistent with other forms of media I consumed. In TV, film, popular magazines, news media, advertising, school curriculum, and even the toys I played with, narrow and biased representation endured. Although the characters represented in these media had a variety of problems, rarely were they related to the systemic injustices that I, like nearly all children with excluded identities, was forced to grapple with. Like these characters, most of my classmates and school staff were not frequently obliged to feel inferior or contemplate identities such as race, ethnicity, language, or religion. Those with widely represented identities benefited in countless ways. When your people's diverse stories are widely shared by *your* people, it is a prevailing privilege most others can only wish they had. Those with excluded and misrepresented identities face a barrage of destructive consequences likely to persist through lifetimes and generations.

Cultural proficiency affords me the insight to understand how harmful it was for me to be exposed to such limited perspectives. One

of the most profound psychological effects was an aching, continuously unfulfilled longing to fit into a mold that was not created for the likes of me. My integral human need to feel a sense of belonging was unrelentingly threatened. My adolescence was shaped by a constant struggle to fit into a concrete mold, to show others that I was not all that different—that I, too, was a normal American (Essa, n.d.). My learned unconscious biases dominated my motivations, from the ways I spoke and thought to how I acted, dressed, and styled my hair. Although I couldn't yet understand why and how this was the case, I was acutely aware of how utterly exhausting it all was.

However hard this marginalization was for me and others like me, an individual injustice leads to a collective loss for us all. My experience had a compounding effect on my entire community, including those with widely represented identities. Imagine the breadth of useful knowledge that could have been gained from embracing the diverse identities, cultures, and places of origin represented in the community. In not doing so, the community unknowingly blunted the attainment of lifelong skills like empathy and critical consciousness.

The disadvantages of this marginalization go even further. In the United States, I find that many need to be reminded that unless their ancestors were Indigenous to this land, they are all descendants of people whose origins began elsewhere. As society does to Brown and Black people and people of AAPI heritage today, centuries of oppression robbed my White neighbors, classmates, and teachers of the invaluable gift of knowing their own origins. The beneficial attributes of their heritage, such as language, traditions, family, and world history were buried. (I discuss this more extensively in subsequent chapters.) These losses are all our losses. We are all deprived of the informational wealth that could have been gained from an abundant array of cultural knowledge and skills.

Billions of people throughout the world have unfortunately received a formal education devoid of such high-quality learning. No one is immune, yet everyone can improve. In the United States, the greater majority was deprived of what Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) beautifully describes as follows:

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (p. ix)

Bishop is referring to literature, but this passage could just as easily apply to curricula, instruction, and school cultures. Every student, past, present, and future, deserves this sort of education. The learning you do throughout this text will help you obtain and offer this education.

Review, Reflect, Resolve

If we wonder often, the gift of knowledge will come.


—Arapaho proverb

The most substantial progress often occurs outside the keynote, PD workshop, or, in this case, the pages of the book. It transpires when you apply the knowledge attained to your everyday life, both in and out of the classroom. To help you get started, the conclusion of each chapter takes our “conversation” to the next level with one more tool: a set of three prompts designed to expand your understanding of the chapter. First, I ask you to simply *review* your perspective of the topic presented. To expand your comprehension, you are then prompted to *reflect* more deeply on your experiences, beliefs, and relevant impacts. Last, you will *resolve* to immediately apply your learning toward improved practices and continual growth.

These 3Rs, as I refer to them, supply you with opportunities for contemplation and guidance for actions that move beyond your thoughts and into the real world. I illustrate this method more thoroughly in

Chapter 5, but for now, just know that the 3Rs help you build independent practice that will prove useful over time. Don't forget to use your personal index to help you power through more productively!

Review

- Think back to your childhood. Were you exposed to people, curricula, and media that offered you “mirrors, windows, and sliding doors” to a diverse array of identities and perspectives? (See **HR3** on p. 23.) 
- When did you take notice of whether you shared the racial identity of leaders and figures you learned about in your curricula and most media sources?
- Are you aware of whether your family history is like that of most others in the United States? Might it include instances of encountering prejudice or using tactics to avoid it that resulted in the loss of identities and valued cultural traits?

Reflect

- What are some advantages to young people seeing people who look like them in influential and positive roles?
- How have your experiences with and among diverse populations shaped your worldview?
- What obstacles have you faced due to limited knowledge of diverse identities (e.g., discomfort around discussing various topics, lack of confidence communicating with and learning from various identities, unhelpful and misplaced shame or fear)?

Resolve

- Consider the disadvantages you now have owing to discrimination your ancestors may have encountered. These may include loss of invaluable assets like languages, cultural traditions, family history, lessons, recipes, and communications, along with less direct disadvantages like poorly developed empathy.

- If this history is unknown, look into why information relating to your ancestors' identities is unavailable to you—for example, is your family or ethnic history unobtainable or unknown, were your ancestors forced into enslavement, did your family change their name due to discrimination, did your family lose native language(s) that your ancestors may have spoken, or is your family unable to understand or practice cultural traditions that were once invaluable to your ancestors?
- Discuss your findings and the emotions that arise from them with at least a few others to compare and learn from one another's stories. It is best if you have access both to people who apparently share your racial identities and to those who do not. No matter their identities, engaging your colleagues in these prompts is an opportunity to plant seeds of knowledge, empathy, and motivation. Inviting others on the journey with you will only increase your capacity.

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.

—Ethiopian proverb

Huda's Responses

HR

HR1:

Think back to your childhood years. When did you first contemplate race, and what prompted this?

My anecdotal experiences consistently imply that Black and Brown people and those of AAPI heritage tend to think about race from a very young age. Research confirms this finding and expands on its associated detriments (Dulin-Keita et al., 2011). Reasons for this awareness abound, from facing or witnessing differential treatment and misrepresentation to being taught ways at home to prepare for and protect themselves from racism. Race becomes a dominant identity considered frequently for the rest of their lives.

HR

HR2:

What notions did you absorb about each racial identity?

Regardless of our own racial identities, we are all susceptible to social conditioning that teaches us a notion of separatism and supremacy (Perszyk et al., 2019). Until my early 20s, I lived in complete ignorance of the innumerable biases I personally held. As a result of the relentless advocacy of some educators at my university, I was finally offered the incomparable learning opportunity I never knew I was missing. Dr. Leslie Thornton's course, focused on cultural competence, paved the way for me to eventually learn firsthand how unconscious bias had shaped my thoughts, feelings, and actions in countless ways. Rather quickly, my learning illustrated the many ways in which I have served as both the oppressed and the oppressor. Because I identify with several marginalized identities, my self-identification as oppressor comes as a surprise to many. But a vital acknowledgment is that *everyone* holds unconscious biases. In fact, a great many of us hold *shared* widespread biases, regardless of our

identities and backgrounds. This is primarily because mainstream media, curricula, and systems exposed us to many of the same overarching notions. For disenfranchised communities, the damaging effects are twofold because they include upholding negative beliefs about our own identities as well as others.

HR

HR3:

Think back to your childhood. Were you exposed to people, curricula, and media that offered you “mirrors, windows, and sliding doors” to a diverse array of identities and perspectives?

I can without a doubt say that the missing mirrors, windows, and sliding doors produced tidal waves in my world. I have already shared some impacts of absent mirrors in my early learning. Here, I want to elaborate further on the significance of the severely lacking windows and sliding doors. They were a major factor in why I did not have a great deal of empathy for others who faced similar disenfranchisement. Simply put, my formal education perpetuated unconscious biases that inhibited my ability to build essential empathy skills.

Every single one of us deserved an education that provided us with the mirrors, windows, and sliding doors necessary to draw the most excellent educator out of each of us. I will not blame my previous teachers, though. They taught me what they were taught, and what most educators in the United States were taught: the sweepingly biased version of history. This version includes “discovered land” and “peaceful Thanksgivings” where the Indigenous people were “savages” who were “civilized” by the supreme colonizers. If only my teachers and, consequently, my classmates and I, had been taught the *truthful* perspective, we might have developed invaluable critical thinking skills and empathy. As a descendant of refugees, I would have found special meaning in the truthful history about the origins of the land I now live on. Like the Indigenous peoples of North America, my ancestors were native to the land where they, too, were

subjected to brutal colonization and ruthless ethnic cleansing. Backed by supremacist ideologies, both groups were murdered or forced out of the homes, communities, and land that they and a long line of their ancestors had cultivated. Both groups were then and are still portrayed as savage and uncivilized to justify collective punishment and elimination among even the youngest among them. Both persecuted groups' past and present tragedies and struggles are suppressed and distorted alongside attempts to erase or undermine their existence.

The commonalities of these two heart-wrenching stories could fill the pages of this book, but my point is this: had I been taught the truthful perspective about the Indigenous peoples of the land I live on today, I would have developed the empathy to understand *their* story as *my* story. Instead, the false, one-sided education I received taught me what it likely taught you and every other student: to recognize people as "others." Instead of inclusive learning opportunities that taught us to see and benefit from our common humanity, the learning my teachers and I received produced exclusionary beliefs and behaviors that we acted on without a second thought. It contributed to my classmates and me regularly playing "Cowboys and Indians"—and you can guess who the bad guys were. Considering the particularly personal empathy I could have easily accessed makes that memory both ironic and poignant.

I feel privileged to have gained knowledge that enables me to identify and improve upon these and other misguided beliefs. My realizations fostered what is now a genuine, acute empathy for South Africans, Uyghurs, Venezuelans, Bosnians, Rwandans, Iraqis, Black Americans, Rohingya, Brazilians, and virtually all previously or currently oppressed peoples. My knowledge has made me a vastly more qualified educator and a stronger advocate for the trustworthy, empowering education that we *all* deserve.

My dawning consciousness of my limited beliefs led me on a quest to continue deepening my understanding of how it was

I could be so insensitive. I learned how I could be devoid of empathy for those who faced discrimination that was so similar to mine, and why it took so long for my awakening to occur. My path toward cultural proficiency uncovered tangled roots of injustice that ran deeper than I could have ever imagined. It also revealed what should have been taught to me far earlier in my education: that I carry an untapped potential to make waves in what may appear to be injustices set in stone. I *could* create reverberating change. I am here to tell you that you have that power as well.

References

- Acholonu, R., & Oyeku, S. (2020, November 23). Addressing microaggressions in the health care workforce—A path toward achieving equity and inclusion. *JAMA Network Open*, 3(11).
- Ahmed, R. (2021, June 10). *Muslim misrepresentation in film* [Video]. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ssuhvv0l3bk
- Akst, J. (2013, February 5). Some girls better at science. *The Scientist*. www.the-scientist.com/the-nutshell/some-girls-better-at-science-39813
- Alvidrez, J., & Weinstein, R. S. (1999). Early teacher perceptions and later student academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91(4), 731–746.
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Confirmation bias. In *APA dictionary of psychology*. Retrieved December 1, 2023, from <https://dictionary.apa.org/confirmation-bias>
- Artiles, A. J., & Ortiz, A. A. (Eds.). (2002). *English language learners with special education needs: Identification, assessment, and instruction*. Center for Applied Linguistics. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED482995.pdf>
- Bernhardt, S. (2014). *Women in IT in the new social era: A critical evidence-based review of gender inequality and the potential for change*. IGI Global.
- Bishop, R. S. (1990, Summer). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).
- Boiko-Weyrach, A. (2017, March 21). Asian American students push to reveal what the “model minority” myth hides. *The World*. <https://theworld.org/stories/2017-03-21/asian-american-students-push-reveal-what-model-minority-myth-hides>
- The Bridge Initiative. (2015). *The super survey: Two decades of Americans’ views on Islam and Muslims*. Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University. <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/the-super-survey-two-decades-of-americans-views-on-islam-muslims>
- Brower, T. (2021, September 19). Empathy is the most important leadership skill according to research. *Forbes*. www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2021/09/19/

- empathy-is-the-most-important-leadership-skill-according-to-research/?sh=1cd7ad513dc5
- Brown, B. (2015). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Avery.
- Brown, B. (2017). *Braving the wilderness: The quest for true belonging and the courage to stand alone*. Random House.
- Brown, B. (2022). *The gifts of imperfection: 10th anniversary edition*. Hazelden.
- Castillo, J., Corbin, C., & Downer, J. (2019, March). *Implicit bias, exclusionary discipline, and expectations for students: Does the teacher-student racial/ethnic match matter?* Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, MD.
- Chemaly, S. (2015, February 12). All teachers should be trained to overcome their hidden biases. *Time*. <https://time.com/3705454/teachers-biases-girls-education/>
- Chen, A. Y.-P. (2015, May). Educational inequality: An impediment to true democracy in the United States. *Sociology Study*, 5(5), 382–390.
- Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2004, Winter). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2(1). www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding_Effectiveness_Dual_Language_Ed.pdf?864d7e
- Cooperative Children's Book Center. (2023). *Books by and/or about Black, Indigenous and People of Color (all years)*. <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/books-by-about-poc-fnn>
- Council on American-Islamic Relations. (2023). *2023 civil rights report: Progress in the shadow of prejudice*. Author. www.cair.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/progressintheshadowofprejudice-1.pdf
- Cross, B. (2003). Learning or unlearning racism: Transferring teacher education curriculum to classroom practices. *Theory Into Practice*, 42(3), 203–209.
- Cross, B. E. (2005). New racism, reformed teacher education, and the same ole' oppression. *Educational Studies: A Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, 38(3), 263–274.
- Dee, T., & Gershenson, S. (2017). *Unconscious bias in the classroom: Evidence and opportunities*. Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis. <http://hdl.handle.net/1961/auislandora:83263>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903/1989). *The souls of Black folk*. Penguin.
- Dulin-Keita, A., Hannon, L., Fernandez, J. R., & Cockerham, W. C. (2011, April). The defining moment: Children's conceptualization of race and experiences with racial discrimination. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(4), 662–682.
- DuVernay, A. (Director). (2016). *13th* [Film]. Kandoo Films.
- Elmasry, M. (2015, February 11). Chapel Hill shooting and western media bigotry. *Al Jazeera*. www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/2/11/chapel-hill-shooting-and-western-media-bigotry
- Elsheikh, E., & Sisemore, B. (2021, September). *Islamophobia through the eyes of Muslims: Assessing perceptions, experiences, and impacts*. Othering & Belonging Institute. <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/2021-09/Islamophobia%20Through%20the%20Eyes%20of%20Muslims.pdf>
- Endres, D., & Gould, M. (2009). I am also in the position to use my whiteness to help them out: The communication of whiteness in service learning. *Western Journal of Communication*, 73(4), 418–436.
- Essa, H. (n.d.). *Huda Essa: Ever American* (Curriculum materials). Teacher Created Materials.

- Essa, H. (2016). *Teach us your name*. Author.
- Essa, H. (2018). *Your name is the key!* TEDx Talk. www.ted.com/talks/huda_essa_your_name_is_the_key
- Essa, H. (2019). *Common threads: Adam's day at the market*. Sleeping Bear Press.
- Fairlie, R., Hoffmann, F., & Oreopoulos, P. (2014). A community college instructor like me: Race and ethnicity interactions in the classroom. *The American Economic Review*, 104(8), 2567–2591.
- Fasching-Varner, K. (2012). *Working through whiteness: Examining white racial identity and profession with pre-service teachers*. Lexington Books.
- Ferguson, R. F. (2003). Teachers' perceptions and expectations and the Black-White test score gap. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 460–507.
- Flannery, M. E. (2015, September 9). When implicit bias shapes teacher expectations. *NEA Today*. www.nea.org/2015/09/09/when-implicit-bias-shapesteacher-expectations
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Geronimus, A. T., Hicken, M., Keene, D., & Bound, J. (2006, May). "Weathering" and age patterns of allostatic load scores among blacks and whites in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(5), 826–833.
- Gershenson, S., Holt, S. B., & Papageorge, N. W. (2016, June). Who believes in me? The effect of student–teacher demographic match on teacher expectations. *Economics of Education Review*, 52, 209–224.
- Grissom, J. A., & Redding, C. (2016, January–March). Discretion and disproportionality: Explaining the underrepresentation of high-achieving students of color in gifted programs. *AERA Open*, 2(1).
- Grissom, J. A., Rodriguez, L. A., & Kern, E. C. (2017). Teacher and principal diversity and the representation of students of color in gifted programs: Evidence from national data. *The Elementary School Journal*, 117(3), 396–422.
- Gushue, G. V., & Constantine, M. G. (2007). Color-blind racial attitudes and white racial identity attitudes in psychology trainees. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38(3), 321–328.
- Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.
- Hancock, A. B., & Rubin, B. A. (2014). Influence of communication partner's gender on language. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 34(1).
- Harrington, T. (2018, April 6). Educator asks teachers to examine unconscious racial bias. *EdSource*. <https://edsource.org/2018/closing-the-achievement-gap-requires-teachers-to-examine-their-unconscious-racial-bias-teacher-trainer-says/595408>
- Haviland, V. S. (2008). Things get glossed over: Rearticulating the silencing power of whiteness in education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(1), 40–54.
- Hirschfield, P. (2009). Another way out: The impact of juvenile arrests on high school dropout. *Sociology of Education*, 82, 368–393.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Hollie, S. (2017). *Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning: Classroom practices for student success* (2nd ed.). Shell Educational Publishing.

- Holt, S. B., & Gershenson, S. (2015, December). *The impact of teacher demographic representation on student attendance and suspensions* [Discussion paper no. 9554]. Institute for the Study of Labor. <https://docs.iza.org/dp9554.pdf>
- Howard, T. C. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms*. Teachers College Press.
- Jackson, Y. (2011). *The pedagogy of confidence: Inspiring high intellectual performance in urban schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Jhally, S., & Earp, J. (Directors). (2006). *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people* [Film]. Media Education Foundation.
- Johnston, O., Wildy, H., & Shand, J. (2019). A decade of teacher expectations research 2008–2018: Historical foundations, new developments, and future pathways. *Australian Journal of Education*, 63(1), 44–73.
- Jones, T. M., Fleming, C., Williford, A., & Research and Evaluation Team. (2020, December). Racial equity in academic success: The role of school climate and social emotional learning. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119.
- Kaur, H. (2023, May 1). Why some have mixed feelings about the terms Asian American and AAPI. *CNN*. www.cnn.com/2023/05/01/us/asian-american-aapi-terms-history-cec/index.html
- Keengwe, J. (2010). Fostering cross cultural competence in preservice teachers through multicultural education experiences. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38(3), 197–204.
- Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272–1311.
- Kunstler, E., & Kunstler, S. (Directors). (2021). *Who we are: A chronicle of racism in America* [Film]. Sony Pictures Classics.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Lindsay, C. A., & Blom, E. (2017). *Diversifying the classroom: Examining the teacher pipeline*. Urban Institute. www.urban.org/features/diversifying-classroom-examining-teacher-pipeline
- Lindsey, R. B., Nuri-Robins, K., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders* (2nd ed.). Corwin.
- Martin, J. L. (2018). Factors contributing to microaggressions, racial battle fatigue, stereotype threat, and imposter phenomenon for nonhegemonic students: Implications for urban education. In G. C. Torino, D. P. Rivera, C. M. Capodilupo, K. L. Nadal, & D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Microaggression theory: Influence and implications* (pp. 102–120). Wiley.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Privilege. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved December 1, 2023, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/privilege>
- MetLife. (2010, April). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Collaborating for student success*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509650.pdf>
- Mogahed, D., & Ikramullah, E. (2022, August). *American Muslim poll 2022: A politics and pandemic status report*. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.
- Moore, M. (Director). (2002). *Bowling for Columbine* [Film]. United Artists.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). *Sexual harassment of women: Climate, culture, and consequences in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine*. The National Academies Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2002). *Education longitudinal study of 2002* (ELS: 2002). U.S. Department of Education.

- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2021). *Digest of education statistics: Table 209.23: Number and percentage distribution of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and selected teacher and school characteristics: 2017–18*. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_209.23.asp
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2022). *Digest of education statistics: Table 315.20: Full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and academic rank: Fall 2019, fall 2020, and fall 2021*. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_315.20.asp
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. *Condition of education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge/racial-ethnic-enrollment>
- Ouazad, A. (2014, Summer). Assessed by a teacher like me: Race and teacher assessments. *Education Finance and Policy*, 9(3), 334–372.
- Pager, D., Western, B., & Sugie, N. (2009, May). Sequencing disadvantage: Barriers to employment facing young black and white men with criminal records. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 623(1), 195–213.
- Pennington, J. L., Brock, C. H., & Ndura, E. (2012). Unraveling the threads of white teachers' conceptions of caring: Repositioning white privilege. *Urban Education*, 47(4), 743–775.
- Perszyk, D. R., Lei, R. F., Bodenhausen, G. V., Richeson, J. A., & Waxman, S. R. (2019, May). Bias at the intersection of race and gender: Evidence from preschool-aged children. *Developmental Science*, 22(3). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/desc.12788>
- Peters, T., Margolin, M., Fragnoli, K., & Bloom, D. (2016, May). What's race got to do with it? Preservice teachers and white racial identity. *Current Issues in Education*, 19(1).
- Phillips, S. F., & Pytkänen, L. (2021, November 3). Composition within and between languages in the bilingual mind: MEG evidence from Korean/English bilinguals. *eNeuro*, 8(6).
- Ruggles-Gere, A., Buehler, J., Dallavis, C., & Shaw-Haviland, V. (2009). A visibility project: Learning to see how preservice teachers take up culturally responsive pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(3), 816–852.
- Samari, G. (2016, November). Islamophobia and public health in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(11), 1920–1925. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5055770/
- Saunders, S., & Kardia, D. (1997). *Creating inclusive college classrooms*. Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan. https://crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1
- Schlosser, E. (2017, December). *Race, socioeconomic status, and implicit bias: Implications for closing the achievement gap* [Dissertation]. The Graduate School, the College of Science and Technology, and the Center for Science and Mathematics Education, University of Southern Mississippi.
- Sensoy, Ö., & DiAngelo, R. (2014). Respect differences? Challenging the common guidelines in social justice education. *Democracy and Education*, 22(2). <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1138&context=home>

- Shaheen, J. (2001). *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*. Olive Branch Press.
- Siebel Newsom, J. (Director). (2011). *Miss Representation* [Film]. Girls' Club Entertainment.
- Staats, C., Capatosto, K., Wright, R. A., & Jackson, V. W. (2016). *State of the science: Implicit bias review: 2016 edition*. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. <https://culturalq.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Kirwan-Institute-Implicit-Bias-2016-Report.pdf>
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271–286.
- Tulshyan, R. (2022, March 8). We need to retire the term “microaggressions.” *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/we-need-to-retire-the-term-microaggressions>
- UNESCO. (2023). *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2023: Partnerships and cooperation for water*. Author. www.unesco.org/reports/wwdr/2023/en/download
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Talk, read and sing together every day! The benefits of being bilingual—A review for teachers and other early education program providers*. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/early-learning/talk-read-sing/bilingual-en.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2014, March 21). *Civil rights data collection: Data snapshot (school discipline)*. Author. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/assets/downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>
- Van Den Bergh, L. (2010, June). The implicit prejudiced attitudes of teachers: Relations to teacher expectations and the ethnic achievement gap. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(2), 497–527.
- Vedantam, S. (Host). (2019, January 24). Creative differences [Audio podcast episode]. In *Hidden Brain*. Hidden Brain Productions. <https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/creative-differences>
- Walters, P. B. (2001). Educational access and the state: Historical continuities and discontinuities in racial inequality in American education. *Sociology of Education*, 74, 35–49.
- Wright, A. C. (2015, November). *Teachers' perceptions of students' disruptive behavior: The effect of racial congruence and consequences for school suspension* [Unpublished manuscript]. University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Zamudio, M. M. (2011). *Critical race theory matters*. Routledge.
- Zelasko, N., & Antunez, B. (2000). *If your child learns in two languages: A parent's guide for improving educational opportunities for children acquiring English as a second language*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED44713.pdf>

About the Author



Huda Essa is the founder of Culture Links, LLC, a multiservice organization focused on providing a variety of high-quality, authentic cultural proficiency learning opportunities. She is a TEDx speaker and the author of the culturally authentic and responsive children's books *Teach Us Your Name* and *Common Threads: Adam's Day at the Market*.

Huda's thought-provoking learning opportunities and writing have positively influenced communities around the globe. She uses her extensive experience as a cultural proficiency consultant, former teacher, and multilingual education specialist to support organizations in successfully meeting their goals. Huda provides consulting, keynotes, and interactive learning opportunities for education professionals from preK–12 through higher education. Their collaborations help them develop practices that promote engagement, productivity, and overall achievement. Huda's award-winning work extends to supporting students directly as well as professionals in businesses, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. Her dedicated leadership is driven by the fact that cultural proficiency is a worthy, lifelong education benefiting people of all ages, social identities, and careers.

She can be reached via her website, www.culturelinkslc.com, and through her social media channels: on Facebook at www.facebook.com/culturelinkslc, LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/huda-essa-27670932, and Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) at @culturelinkslc.

Related ASCD Resources

At the time of publication, the following resources were available (ASCD stock numbers appear in parentheses).

Aim High, Achieve More: How to Transform Urban Schools Through Fearless Leadership by Yvette Jackson and Veronica McDermott (#112015)

The Antiracist Roadmap to Educational Equity: A Systemwide Approach for All Stakeholders by Avis Williams and Brenda Elliott (#123023)

Cultivating Joyful Learning Spaces for Black Girls: Insights into Interrupting School Pushout by Monique W. Morris (Monique Couvson) (#121004)

Cultural Competence Now: 56 Exercises to Help Educators Understand and Challenge Bias, Racism, and Privilege by Vernita Mayfield (#118043)

Finding Your Leadership Soul: What Our Students Can Teach Us About Love, Care, and Vulnerability by Carlos R. Moreno (#123025)

Fix Injustice, Not Kids and Other Principles for Transformative Equity Leadership by Paul Gorski and Katy Swalwell (#120012)

The Innocent Classroom: Dismantling Racial Bias to Support Students of Color by Alexis Pate (#120025)

Keeping It Real and Relevant: Building Authentic Relationships in Your Diverse Classroom by Ignacio Lopez (#117049)

Leading Within Systems of Inequity in Education: A Liberation Guide for Leaders of Color by Mary Rice-Boothe (#123014)

Leading Your School Toward Equity: A Practical Framework for Walking the Talk by Dwayne Chism (#123003)

Literacy Is Liberation: Working Toward Justice Through Culturally Relevant Teaching by Kimberly N. Parker (#122024)

Restoring Students' Innate Power: Trauma-Responsive Strategies for Teaching Multilingual Newcomers by Louise El Yaafouri (#122004)

Stay and Prevail: Students of Color Don't Need to Leave Their Communities to Succeed by Nancy Gutiérrez and Roberto Padilla (#123006)

Support and Retain Educators of Color: 6 Principles for Culturally Affirming Leadership by Andrea Terrero Gabbadon (#123018)

Understanding Your Instructional Power: Curriculum and Language Decisions to Support Each Student by Tanji Reed Marshall (#122027)

For up-to-date information about ASCD resources, go to **www.ascd.org**. You can search the complete archives of *Educational Leadership* at **www.ascd.org/el**.

ASCD myTeachSource®

Download resources from a professional learning platform with hundreds of research-based best practices and tools for your classroom at <http://myteach-source.ascd.org/>.

For more information, send an email to member@ascd.org; call 1-800-933-2723 or 703-578-9600; send a fax to 703-575-5400; or write to Information Services, ASCD, 2800 Shirlington Road, Suite 1001, Arlington, VA 22206 USA.