

Some Dos and Don'ts of Teaching about Race, Culture, and Identity

This guidance can be used to evaluate resources, instructional practices, and assessment design.

Do	Don't
Affirm the dignity and humanity of all people, and foster empathy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generalize or treat groups of people as a monolith. ● Dehumanize by invoking stereotypes or reducing groups of people to a single characteristic. ● Represent people as if they belong to an earlier or more "primitive" era of human history. ● Portray one group of people as biologically or culturally inferior to another.
Emphasize the perspectives and experiences of people from oppressed or marginalized groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Erase marginalized groups' experiences ● Use the dominant group's perspective as the primary lens through which to view issues, events, and other groups. ● Present the dominant group as "us," and "other" less powerful groups as "them." <i>One variation of this is to make generalizations about people from a particular place (Virginia, the U.S.) that only reflect the characteristics of the dominant.</i>
Call out past and present injustice, engaging systematic oppression and violence in ways that are respectful and developmentally appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use language that minimizes or erases atrocities. ("Africans settled in Virginia" versus "Africans were brought against their will to Virginia") ● Portray injustice as inevitable or necessary for some other purpose, such as economic growth ● Use language, make comparisons, or design learning experiences that trivialize injustice, oppression, or violence