

# DEI in Action:

Implementing Project Ready at Your Library

# Land Acknowledgement

# What is Project Ready?

— — —

- Program: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program
- Fiscal Year: 2016
- Federal Funds: \$569,583
- UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science Staff (white):
  - Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Ph.D.
  - Casey H. Rawson, Ph.D.
  - Kimberly Hirsh
- Advisory Board: 5 individuals
- Partners: 6 individuals
- Content Contributors: 22 individuals
- External Reviews: 3 individuals

<https://ready.web.unc.edu/about-us/>

<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/re-40-16-0012-16>

# Project Ready Samples

## From Module 9: Racial and Ethnic Identity Development



### REFLECT

In your [journal](#), write a short autobiography exploring your own racial, ethnic, or tribal identity. Consider these questions:

- When and how did you become aware of your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity?
- Describe a moment when your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity was important to, or took on particular meaning for, you.
- Describe a moment when your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity was important to, or took on particular meaning for, others.
- How do you benefit from your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity?
- How do you suffer or “miss out” because of your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity?
- How did your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity impact your experiences at school? In the library?
- How does your racial, ethnic, or tribal identity continue to impact your life today?



### REFLECT

When faced with discipline disparities like these, many people argue that students of color – in particular, Black students – are simply more poorly behaved than white students. At this point in the curriculum, we have explored several topics that might help you effectively counter this argument, including:

- the historical association between blackness and criminality that arose after the Civil War as a result of the prison labor system ([Module 2](#));
- the systemic connections between the criminal justice system and the education system ([Module 5](#));
- implicit biases and their relation to stereotypes and media messaging ([Module 4](#));
- racial identity development frameworks ([Module 9](#)).

In your [journal](#), compose a response to the argument that students of color are simply “bad.”

## From Module 14: (In)Equity in the Educational System

### Racism is:

- a **system of advantage** based on **race**;
- a **system of oppression** based on **race**;
- **social and institutional power PLUS racial prejudice**.

### Racism is NOT:

- racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination.

Let’s unpack this definition, because this conception of racism may be different from the ways you have heard the term used in other contexts. Racial equity advocates define racism as a **system** – a set of things that work together for a common purpose or with a common outcome. Remember from our definition of “system” above that once established, a system does not require planning or initiative of individual people. Because inequity and differential treatment are embedded in the social, economic, and political systems of our country and therefore seen as “normal,” *systemic racism would exist even if racial prejudice and racial hatred were completely eliminated*.

Racism is both a system of **advantage** (for whites) and a system of **oppression** (for BIPOC). The system was created to concentrate **social and institutional power** among those designated as “white,” and to exclude all others from receiving these benefits. Again, because these systems are self-perpetuating, differential outcomes according to race will continue to be produced by them regardless of the action or inaction of individual people within the system, unless and until the system itself is changed.

Finally, racism is more than mere prejudice, hatred, or discrimination based on race. As we noted above, no one is completely free of prejudice, and it is certainly possible for a person of color to have negative prejudices toward white people. What elevates racial prejudice to racism, however, is the social and institutional power that allows one group to carry out systematic discrimination using the major institutions of society. Because, in the United States, these institutions were created and are still largely controlled by white people, racism refers specifically to a system that advantages whiteness and oppresses people of color and Indigenous people.

**Why is it problematic to define racism as interpersonal prejudice or bias based on race?** When we define racism as personal rather than institutional, our conversations about what is racist often devolve into a discussion of “what’s in a person’s heart” rather than the impact of their beliefs and behaviors. This limits racism only to intentional and conscious acts and therefore erases the real impact of both unintentionally harmful behaviors and large-scale systemic oppression and discrimination. Defining racism in a systemic way doesn’t ignore individual instances of overtly hateful behavior, but instead expands our understanding of what is “racist” to include less conscious, unconscious, and institutional manifestations.

## From Module 3: Getting on the Same Page: Defining Race & Racism

# How and Why it Came to EPL

- Addressing racial/ethnic inequities in libraries
- Pandemic opportunities
- Admin concerns

# Elmhurst Demographics

- **Population: 45,326**
- **86.8% White, 1.5% African American, 6.2% Asian, 7.7% Hispanic or Latino, 9.6% Foreign born persons**
- **Median House Value: \$442,400**
- **61.3% of residents 25+ have bachelor degrees or higher**
- **Median Household Income: \$123,869**

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/elmhurstcityillinois>

<https://abc7chicago.com/dulles-cleaners-elmhurst-dry-anti-asian-sign-protest/10448274/>

<https://abc7chicago.com/student-elmhurst-nooses-found-york-high-school/10590732/>

# Beginning Preparation and Implementation

- Gauging interest
- Facilitator
- Scheduling
- Discussion groups
- Project Ready participant agreements

# Samples

Hello, Tuesday group,

Please find information on October's discussion below. :)

## Module 2 [History of Race and Racism](#)

**Date:** October 4, 2022 at 12pm -- **If this no longer works for you, please respond to the group so that a collective decision can be made to reschedule or move ahead as planned.**

- [Describe](#) how and why the concept of race was developed.
- [Explain](#) how the concept of race was applied throughout history in ways that advantaged white people and disadvantaged people of color and Native people.
- [Outline](#) how historical advantages and disadvantages based on race have accumulated to create and maintain the racial inequities we observe today.
- [Connect](#) historical events and trends to your own personal and family history.

### Activities

- Complete journal entries 1-9 for Module 2. (This stays private, unless you choose to share any reactions.)
- Read and view as much of the module materials as possible.
- Bring one question and one observation you'd feel comfortable sharing with the group.

## FOUNDATIONS

### Module 1: A & B

**Month:** September 2022

**Contact Hours:** 1

#### Agreements and Introduction

- [Describe](#) why learning about race and racism is critical for library professionals and educators.
- [Commit](#) to a set of norms that will guide your progress through the Project READY curriculum.

#### Activities

- Complete journal entries.
- Read and view as much of the module materials as possible.

### Module 2

**Month:** October 2022

**Contact Hours:** 1

#### History of Race and Racism

- [Describe](#) how and why the concept of race was developed.
- [Explain](#) how the concept of race was applied throughout history in ways that advantaged white people and disadvantaged people of color and Native people.
- [Outline](#) how historical advantages and disadvantages based on race have accumulated to create and maintain the racial inequities we observe today.
- [Connect](#) historical events and trends to your own personal and family history.

#### Activities

- Complete journal entries.
- Read and view as much of the module materials as possible.

### Module 3

**Month:** November 2022

**Contact Hours:** 1

#### Defining Race and Racism

- [Define](#) race, racism, and related terms in ways that are consistent with racial equity advocates' use of these terms.
- [Compare](#) these definitions to the ways that these terms are colloquially used.

#### Activities

- Complete journal entries.
- Read and view as much of the module materials as possible.



# Beginning Preparation and Implementation

- Gauging interest
- Facilitator
- Scheduling
- Discussion groups
- Project Ready participant agreements

# Afterwards - Our Own Questions and Other Possible Models

---

- How did the manager being in the space impact things, for better or for worse?
- How did group size affect discussions?
- How did staff's familiarity with one another affect discussions?
- Would it be more impactful with strangers/non-coworkers?
- How did the racial composition of the group impact discussions?

# Pre-Assessment Samples

How often do you think about racial equity? \*

- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Almost always

How knowledgeable are you about: core constructs such as structural racism, equity, justice, white privilege, internalized oppression, anti-racism, etc. \*

- ☐ Not at all knowledgeable
- ☐ A little knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ☐ Pretty knowledgeable
- ☐ Very knowledgeable

How knowledgeable are you about: how race-based privilege and power has contributed to "the range of barriers to equal opportunity and the depth of embedded racial inequities" - how they were created, are currently reinforced and maintained, and can be removed. \*

- ☐ Not at all knowledgeable
- ☐ A little knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ☐ Pretty knowledgeable
- ☐ Very knowledgeable

How knowledgeable are you about: The history of racism in public libraries. \*

- ☐ Not at all knowledgeable
- ☐ A little knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ☐ Pretty knowledgeable
- ☐ Very knowledgeable

Please rate your level self awareness: Awareness of your social identities and their cultural influences, and how they intersect \*

- ☐ Not at all aware
- ☐ A little aware
- ☐ Somewhat aware
- ☐ Mostly aware
- ☐ Extremely aware

Please rate your level self awareness: Awareness of your prejudices, stereotypes, and biases \*

- ☐ Not at all aware
- ☐ A little aware
- ☐ Somewhat aware
- ☐ Mostly aware
- ☐ Extremely aware

# Afterwards - Our Own Questions and Other Possible Models

— — —

- How did the manager being in the space impact things, for better or for worse?
- How did group size affect discussions?
- How did staff's familiarity with one another affect discussions?
- Would it be more impactful with strangers/non-coworkers?
- How did the racial composition of the group impact discussions?

# Questions?

**Alea Perez**

Young Adult Services  
Manager

Forest Park Public Library  
[pereza@fppl.org](mailto:pereza@fppl.org)

**Ruth Ronnau**

Youth Services Librarian  
and Outreach Coordinator  
Oswego Public Library  
[rronnau@oswego.lib.il.us](mailto:rronnau@oswego.lib.il.us)