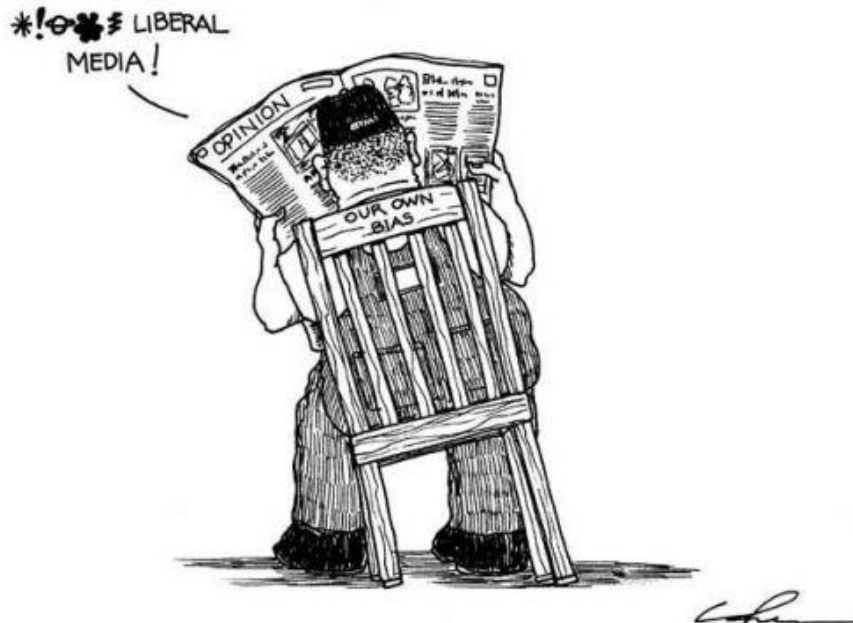


CPW4U Guide 1 -- Bias



CPW4U – Bias

Learning Guide #1

Unit Value: 1 Unit

Time: 4 Days + Homework

Evaluation:

Assessed Activities

Evaluation – None

Expectations:

PI1.01 – formulate meaningful questions that lead to a deeper understanding of a political issue and of the different ways to approach an issue;

PI1.04 – prepare summary notes in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes (e.g., for recording research findings, making oral presentations, and studying for tests and examinations).

Tracking Sheet

Activity	Date Started	Date Finished	Complete? Mark?
Complete Readings			
Film: The Truth Behind the Moon Landings			
Activities			
In-Class Lessons			

FACTS AND VALUES

Life is not simply a choice between good and bad alternatives. If each dilemma or problem could be solved by referring only to the facts, then it would be a relatively simple task to resolve conflicts of opinion. In that case, only a lack of knowledge on one or both sides could cause a difference of opinion. Yet we know that this is not always the case. A group of people can be given identical information and still arrive at different conclusions. Some of your classmates, for example, are very concerned about the environment, whereas others are not. Varying opinions often result from the differing values held by each individual. Values are fundamental ideas about what is important in life. They are standards of conduct that cause people or groups to think and act in certain ways. Although we might disagree about what the "facts" are in a situation, a fact is simply "what is," whereas a value is a deeply held conviction or belief. As people encounter new and different places, ideas, and people, their values are constantly being tested and shaped. Over time, major value changes are much less likely to occur. A disagreement over facts can be resolved on the basis of concrete evidence, but a dispute over values is much more difficult to settle. Three examples illustrate the problem:

- Edmonton is a beautiful city.
- Brian Mulroney was a great prime minister.
- Emily Carr was Canada's best artist.

These three statements combine fact and value judgments. It is possible to verify the factual statements: Edmonton is a city; Brian Mulroney was a prime minister of Canada; Emily Carr was an artist. The words "beautiful," "great," and "best," however, are value-laden terms - what exactly do they mean? Is the whole city of Edmonton beautiful, or just parts of it? Are skyscrapers and large apartment buildings beautiful, or do they signify crowded living conditions? Was everything that Mulroney did great? Did his policies benefit everyone? Is it possible to compare abstract artists to realist artists? Value-laden statements are almost impossible to "prove." To many businesspeople who export goods to the United States, Mulroney was a great prime minister because he helped to pass the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Some consumers, however, might take a different view because Mulroney established the GST. A Calgarian might not think Edmonton is beautiful simply because of the rivalry between the two cities.

Since it is impossible not to make value judgements, it is important to know and understand your own values and to ensure that your conclusions are grounded on a solid base of information. If you think that natural areas are beautiful, you could support your belief that Edmonton is a beautiful city by referring to the North Saskatchewan River valley or to other scenic areas in the city. It is also essential that you examine other people's values and opinions with an open mind. When faced with different choices, people react with selections that vary largely because they possess different values. It seems inconceivable that only one religion, one country, and one lifestyle could be completely correct. Are all the people in other countries who hold different values from ours wrong?

Differing values help to explain the variety of political and economic systems in the world. Each political and economic system is based upon a set of values on such significant decisions as the importance of the individual versus the rights of the state, the degree of government involvement in the economy, and the

method of selecting political leaders. Should everyone's income be similar, or should some people be allowed to amass huge fortunes? Should the country's leaders be chosen in free elections, or should an elite group of people make all political and economic decisions? Such questions as these have been debated for centuries. The basic questions have remained constant, but society's values have not. The answer that each society selects generally reflects its underlying values and assumptions.

Informed analysis occurs when a person is asked to evaluate different points of view, arrive at a conclusion, and support it with facts and value judgements.

If you value critical thinking and do not want to accept everything people tell you without first examining its "truth" and you want to be tolerant of other people and receptive to new ideas, then you must attempt to have an open mind toward controversial issues. Tolerance means to recognize and respect the rights and opinions of others whether you agree with them or not. Permitting people to follow another religion than your own without condemning them is an example of tolerance. Sometimes, however, a society or an individual can be too tolerant. Should society permit sexism, racism, murder, and violence? There is often a fine line between the need for tolerance and the necessity of imposing restrictions. When, for example, does freedom of speech become the spreading of lies or hatred, and when does government control of free speech become censorship?



People who hold their beliefs so strongly that they will not change them, no matter what, are called closed-minded. This means that their minds are closed to many new and different ideas. Rather than carefully examining information that conflicts with their views, closed-minded people will reject the information without considering its merits. Such people tend to judge issues in black and white terms, and they often evaluate people according to their appearance, occupation, and manner of speaking. Rarely will they question the statements made by figures of authority. As a consequence, they are generally ignorant of the views of those who oppose them.

If democratic governments are to operate effectively, their citizens need to be open-minded. Democratic people must be adaptable to change and receptive to different points of view. Tolerance of divergent ideas is basic to democracy, because one of the most important aspects of democracy is the recognition that people are different. Even more important is the acceptance of these differences. In contrast to the open-mindedness of the democratic personality, the closed-minded personality is often intolerant, distrustful, conforming, and rigid.

No individual is completely closed—or—open-minded. Do not accept anything you read without first questioning it, and do not reject new opinions without first considering their merits. The more open-minded you attempt to be, the more you will learn.



(Ideologies, 2-4)

Activity: Work with a partner for these two activities.

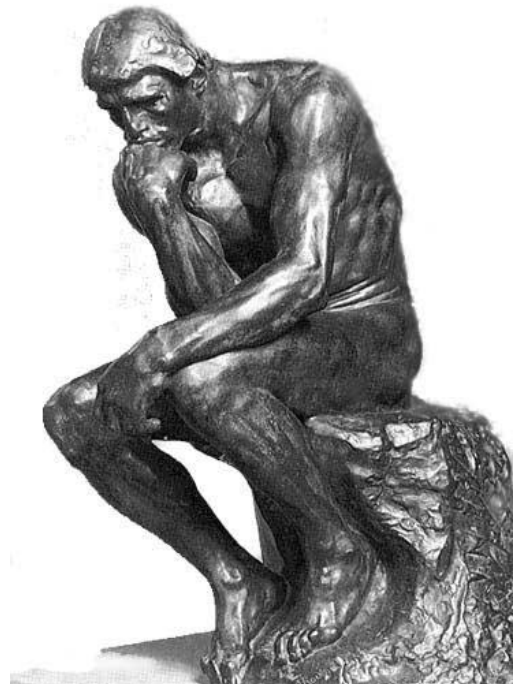
1. Read the following list of statements. Determine which are fact-based (F) and which are value-based (V). If you aren't sure, look it up.

1. It is impossible to lick your elbow.
2. Women are more intelligent than men.
3. In every episode of Seinfeld there is a Superman somewhere.
4. Killer whales are black and white.
5. Humanity is basically good and ethical.
6. Citizen Kane is the best movie ever made.
7. More than 50% of the people in the world have never made or received a telephone call.
8. Canada is the best country in the world in which to live.
9. Nuclear power is safe and cost effective.
10. Soccer is the beautiful game.
11. Stephen Harper is the Canadian prime minister.
12. Barrack Obama is a great leader.
13. Global warming is a fact.
14. Seal hunting is wrong.
15. A basketball is larger than a tennis ball.
16. Fish that live more than 800 meters below the ocean surface don't have eyes.
17. Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave.
18. Margarine is healthier than butter.
19. All politicians lie.
20. Mankind is fundamentally selfish and deceitful.
21. Carrot is a good source of Vitamin A.
22. Man evolved from monkeys.
23. Alligator tastes like chicken.

2. Discuss this question with your partner:

Is there any danger associated with making political decisions based on values and not on fact?

- a. If so, what is it? If not, why not?
- b. What might happen?
- c. How can this be prevented?



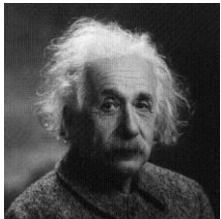
Bias

Bias is a term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology or result, especially when the tendency interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced, or objective. The term biased is used to describe an action, judgment, or other outcome influenced by a prejudged perspective. It is also used to refer to a person or body of people whose actions or judgments exhibit bias. The term "biased" is often used as a pejorative, because bias is inherently unjust, lacking merit.

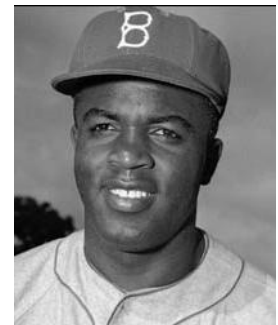
Bias is neither good nor bad; it just is. Everyone is guilty of bias in one way or another on every subject and topic being discussed. The problem with bias develops when it causes the individual to exclude other people or ideas. In these cases, bias narrows the possible solutions or options for the individual (or country, business or other organization). Bias can result in serious demonstrations of prejudice, including racism, sexism and other exclusionary behaviour. For example, if a country holds a bias against people of a certain racial background, and that bias inspires laws that exclude those people from fully participating in the society, that country loses out on the many valuable contributions people of that racial group could provide. Need evidence?



The significant bias against those of Jewish background that existed in Nazi Germany during the 1930's excluded Jews from holding positions in the German civil service. German citizens were encouraged to not use Jewish doctors or lawyers. As a result, many Jews fled Germany to escape persecution, among them many scientists who relocated to England and helped develop technology that was ultimately used against Nazi Germany during World War II. Among them? Albert Einstein, whose ideas Hitler dismissed as 'Jew science'.



Another example? On April 15, 1947 the Brooklyn Dodgers called up Jackie Robinson, a black man, to play first base. Robinson's appearance was the first by a Negro ball player in a Major League game since the 1880s. Prior to Jackie Robinson, Major League Baseball was segregated based on bias against African Americans. Black baseball players were relegated to the Negro Leagues, and not allowed to play in the traditional minor league system with white players. Aside from the grotesque human rights issue, this meant for more than 60 years, major league baseball teams had excluded an enormous resource of baseball talent. Robinson went on to a Hall of Fame career, and paved the way for other black players to enter the big leagues including Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Roy Campanella, each of whom also ended up in the Hall of Fame.



In these two cases – and others – bias in the extreme is harmful for both sides.

Who Is Biased?

Everyone. Every single human being has some bias or another on almost every single issue. It is part of being human. The trick is to recognize your individual biases and be sure you are not excluding information or opportunities because of your bias. The source of your bias could be as significant as a previous conflict with

members of an ethnic, religious or cultural minority, as subtle as the influence of a parent or other respected family member, or as mundane as a favourite or disliked food item.

Many -- indeed most -- people are unaware of their own biases. This means they are equally unaware of how their biases influence their decisions or actions – from where to go for lunch, to whom to hire for the new sales job, to who he or she should marry.

What Causes Bias?

In psychology, cognitive bias is bias based on cognitive factors. One type of cognitive bias is **confirmation bias**, the tendency to interpret new information in such a way that confirms one's prior beliefs, even to the extreme of denial, ignoring information that conflicts with one's prior beliefs. The fundamental attribution error, also known as "correspondence bias", is one example of such bias. Simply put, people presume the actions of others reveal of the "kind" of person they are, rather than the kind of situations that brings on their behavior. However, we tend to prefer interpreting our own actions in terms of the situational variables accessible to our awareness. A person who cuts you off in traffic is an inconsiderate, narcissistic, self important jerk. By contrast, you are a considerate, gentle giving person who only cuts people off when you're late for your shift at the animal shelter.

In some ways, bias is a result of not looking deeper into a person, idea or situation. Judgments are made based on superficial analysis often based on previous experience which may or may not be relevant in the case in question. Conclusions are formed on a person because of his or her external appearance. A tall person must be a basketball player. An African American must like rap music. A kid from the inner city must be a gang member. As human beings we make these kinds of assumptions and judgments every day, and others make assumptions and judgments about us, too. Most of the time, we don't even think about it. Many biases



actually have a basis in fact – some tall people are basketball players, and many African American's enjoy rap music. Some inner city kids do join gangs. The problem is many of these qualities become inextricably linked to the group and people make judgments and determinations based on these broad general ideas.

While personal bias can be a problem in our every day activities, it is more concerning when bias is institutionalized. An institution is any organized social structure, including corporations, government and social groups. If a group of like minded individuals form one of these institutions, the possibility of that group's bias being incorporated into the structure of the organization is quite high. School cafeterias serve pizza, French fries and other fast food items at least in part because they believe students do not want and will not eat healthier choices. For years, private golf clubs excluded women and visible minorities from membership. In the southern United States, African Americans were legally forbidden from using the same washrooms, drinking fountains and lunch counters as white residents. Each of these "policies" is based on some element of bias.

Types Of Bias

There are many ways an individual or organization can display bias, but it is important to realize that bias can be shown either in favour of or in opposition to a particular person or point of view.

Cultural: interpreting and judging phenomena in terms particular to one's own culture.

Ethnic or racial: racism, regionalism and tribalism.

Geographical: describing a dispute as it is conducted in one country, when the dispute is framed differently elsewhere.

Inductive

Media: real or perceived bias of journalists and news producers within the mass media, in the selection of which events will be reported and how they are covered

Gender: including sexism and hetero-normativity.

Linguistic: bias, favoring certain languages

Political: bias in favor of or against a particular political party, philosophy, policy or candidate.

Corporate: bias in favor of a business.

Advertising: bias with observations motivated for selling an opinion rather than using objectivity.

Sociological: bias in favor of a society's ideals. bias for groups needs/wants.

Entertainment: bias in favor of entertaining an audience

Personal: bias for personal gain.

Religious: bias for or against religion, faith or beliefs;

Sensationalist: favoring the exceptional over the ordinary. This includes emphasizing, distorting, or fabricating exceptional news to boost commercial ratings.

Scientific (including **anti-scientific** and **scientific skepticism**): favoring (or disfavoring) a scientist, inventor, or theory for non-scientific reasons. This can also include excessive favoring (or disfavoring) prevalent scientific opinion, if in doing so, other viewpoints are no longer being treated neutrally.



Bias vs Prejudice

Bias is a tendency to assume a certain viewpoint or answer is correct. A biased individual is likely unaware of their bias. It generally results from limited experience or exposure to non-representative samples.



Prejudice, in contrast, is a very conscious phenomenon. An individual chooses to degrade another group, using specific and identifiable reasons. Typically these are irrational reasons. Often they develop when biased ideas are reinforced repeatedly.

A practical way to differentiate between bias and prejudice is to confront the belief/behavior with a concrete fact contrary to it. For instance, when an individual suggests that most rapists are black, you could counter with the fact that 93% of rapes are same-race, and only about 49% of rape victims are black. A person who made the initial statement out of bias will likely take these new facts into account. A person acting out of prejudice will likely ignore the new information, misrepresent it, or simply change to a new topic of prejudice.

Definition of terms

Source: http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/tutorials/index.html

A **stereotype** is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group — a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputations passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

A **prejudice** is an opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but in our usage refers to a negative attitude.



Prejudices are often accompanied by ignorance, fear or hatred. Prejudices are formed by a complex psychological process that begins with attachment to a close circle of acquaintances or an "in-group" such as a family. Prejudice is often aimed at "out-groups."

Discrimination is behavior that treats people unequally because of their group memberships. Discriminatory behavior, ranging from slights to hate crimes, often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

How do we learn prejudice?

Social scientists believe children begin to acquire prejudices and stereotypes as toddlers. Many studies have shown that as early as age 3, children pick up terms of racial prejudice without really understanding their significance.

Soon, they begin to form attachments to their own group and develop negative attitudes about other racial or ethnic groups, or the "out-group". Early in life, most children acquire a full set of biases that can be observed in verbal slurs, ethnic jokes and acts of discrimination.

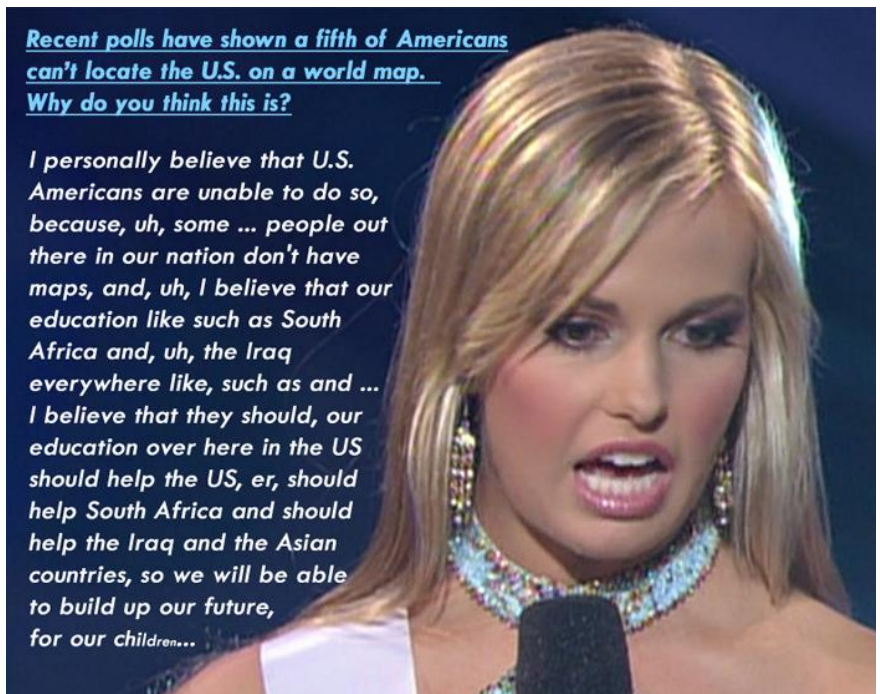
How are our biases reinforced?

Once learned, stereotypes and prejudices resist change, even when evidence fails to support them or points to the contrary.

People will embrace anecdotes that reinforce their biases, but disregard experience that contradicts them. The statement "Some of my best friends are _____" captures this tendency to allow some exceptions without changing our bias.

How do we perpetuate bias?

Bias is perpetuated by conformity with in-group attitudes and socialization by the culture at large. The fact that white culture is dominant in America may explain why people of color often do not show a strong bias favoring their own ethnic group.



Mass media routinely take advantage of stereotypes as shorthand to paint a mood, scene or character. The elderly, for example, are routinely portrayed as being frail and forgetful, while younger people are often shown as vibrant and able.

Stereotypes can also be conveyed by omission in popular culture, as when TV shows present an all-white world. Psychologists theorize bias conveyed by the media helps to explain why children can adopt hidden prejudices even when their family environments explicitly oppose them.

Scientific research has demonstrated that biases thought to be absent or extinguished remain as "mental residue" in most of us. Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes.

Biases and behavior

A growing number of studies show a link between hidden biases and actual behavior. In other words, hidden biases can reveal themselves in action, especially when a person's efforts to control behavior consciously flags under stress, distraction, relaxation or competition.

Unconscious beliefs and attitudes have been found to be associated with language and certain behaviors such as eye contact, blinking rates and smiles.

Studies have found, for example, that school teachers clearly telegraph prejudices, so much so that some researchers believe children of color and white children in the same classroom effectively receive different educations.

A now classic experiment showed that white interviewers sat farther away from black applicants than from white applicants, made more speech errors and ended the interviews 25% sooner. Such discrimination has been shown to diminish the performance of anyone treated that way, whether black or white.

Experiments are being conducted to determine whether a strong hidden bias in someone results in more discriminatory behavior. But we can learn something from even the first studies:



- Those who showed greater levels of implicit prejudice toward, or stereotypes of, black or gay people were more unfriendly toward them.
- Subjects who had a stronger hidden race bias had more activity in a part of the brain known to be responsible for emotional learning when shown black faces than when shown white faces.

Leading to discrimination?

Whether laboratory studies adequately reflect real-life situations is not firmly established. But there is growing evidence, according to social scientists, that hidden biases are related to discriminatory behavior in a wide range of human interactions, from hiring and promotions to choices of housing and schools.



In the case of police, bias may affect split-second, life-or-death decisions. Shootings of black men incorrectly thought to be holding guns — an immigrant in New York, a cop in Rhode Island — brought this issue into the public debate.

It is possible unconscious prejudices and stereotypes may also affect court jury deliberations and other daily tasks requiring judgments of human character.

People who argue that prejudice is not a big problem today are, ironically, demonstrating the problem of unconscious prejudice. Because these prejudices are outside our awareness, they can indeed be denied.

Hidden bias has emerged as an important clue to the disparity between public opinion, as expressed by America's creed and social goals, and the amount of discrimination that still exists.

Despite 30 years of equal-rights legislation, levels of poverty, education and success vary widely across races. Discrimination continues in housing and real estate sales, and racial profiling is a common practice, even among ordinary citizens.

Members of minorities continue to report humiliating treatment by store clerks, co-workers and police. While an African American man may dine in a fine restaurant anywhere in America, it can be embarrassing for him to attempt to flag down a taxi after that dinner.



A person who carries the stigma of group membership must be prepared for its debilitating effects.

Studies indicate that African American teenagers are aware they are stigmatized as being



intellectually inferior and that they go to school bearing what psychologist Claude Steele has called a "burden of suspicion." Such a burden can affect their attitudes and achievement.

Similarly, studies found that when college women are reminded their group is considered bad at math, their performance may fulfill this prophecy.

These shadows hang over stigmatized people no matter their status or accomplishments. They must remain on guard and bear an additional burden that

may affect their self-confidence, performance and aspirations. These stigmas have the potential to rob them of their individuality and debilitate their attempts to break out of stereotypical roles.

Conscious attitudes and beliefs can change. The negative stereotypes associated with many immigrant groups, for example, have largely disappeared over time. For African-Americans, civil rights laws forced integration and nondiscrimination, which, in turn, helped to change public opinion.

But psychologists have no ready roadmap for undoing such overt and especially hidden stereotypes and prejudices.

Learned at an early age

The first step may be to admit biases are learned early and are counter to our commitment to just treatment. Parents, teachers, faith leaders and other community leaders can help children question their values and beliefs and point out subtle stereotypes used by peers and in the media. Children should also be surrounded by cues that equality matters.

In his classic book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, the psychologist Gordon Allport observed children are more likely to grow up tolerant if they live in a home that is supportive and loving. "They feel welcome, accepted, loved, no matter what they do."

In such an environment, different views are welcomed, punishment is not harsh or capricious, and these children generally think of people positively and carry a sense of goodwill and even affection.



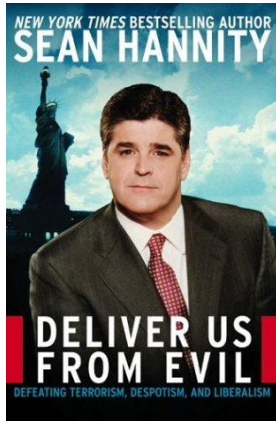
Community matters

Integration, by itself, has not been shown to produce dramatic changes in attitudes and behavior. But many studies show when people work together in a structured environment to solve shared problems through community service, their attitudes about diversity can change dramatically.

By including members of other groups in a task, children begin to think of themselves as part of a larger community in which everyone has skills and can contribute. Such experiences have been shown to improve attitudes across racial lines and between people old and young.

There also is preliminary evidence that unconscious attitudes, contrary to initial expectations, may be malleable. For example, imagining strong women leaders or seeing positive role models of African Americans has been shown to, at least temporarily, change unconscious biases.

How To Detect Bias In The News



At one time or other we all complain about "bias in the news." The fact is, despite the journalistic ideal of "objectivity," every news story is influenced by the attitudes and background of its interviewers, writers, photographers and editors. Not all bias is deliberate. But you can become a more aware news reader or viewer by watching for the following journalistic techniques that allow bias to "creep in" to the news:

Bias through selection and omission

An editor can express a bias by choosing to use or not to use a specific news item. Within a given story, some details can be ignored, and others included, to give readers or viewers a different opinion about the events reported. If, during a speech, a few people boo, the reaction can be described as "remarks greeted by jeers" or they can be ignored as "a handful of dissidents." Bias through omission is difficult to detect. Only by comparing news reports from a wide variety of outlets can the form of bias be observed.

Bias through placement

Readers of papers judge first page stories to be more significant than those buried in the back. Television and radio newscasts run the most important stories first and leave the less significant for later. Where a story is placed, therefore, influences what a reader or viewer thinks about its importance.

Bias by headline

Many people read only the headlines of a news item. Most people scan nearly all the headlines in a newspaper. Headlines are the most-read part of a paper. They can summarize as well as present carefully hidden bias and prejudices. They can convey excitement where little exists. They can express approval or condemnation.



Bias through use of names and titles

News media often use labels and titles to describe people, places, and events. A person can be called an "ex-con" or be referred to as someone who "served time twenty years ago for a minor offense." Whether a person is described as a "terrorist" or a "freedom fighter" is a clear indication of editorial bias.

Bias by photos, captions and camera angles

Some pictures flatter a person; others make the person look unpleasant. A paper can choose photos to influence opinion about, for example, a candidate for election. On television, the choice of which visual images to display is extremely important. The captions newspapers run below photos are also potential sources of bias.

Bias through statistics and crowd counts

To make a disaster seem more spectacular (and therefore worthy of reading about), numbers can be inflated. "A hundred injured in aircrash" can be the same as "only minor injuries in air crash," reflecting the opinion of the person doing the counting.

Bias by source control

To detect bias, always consider where the news item "comes from." Is the information supplied by a reporter, an eyewitness, police or fire officials, executives, or elected or appointed government officials? Each may have a particular bias that is introduced into the story. Companies and public relations directors supply news outlets with puff pieces through news releases, photos or videos. Often news outlets depend on pseudo-events (demonstrations, sit-ins, ribbon cuttings, speeches and ceremonies) that take place mainly to gain news coverage.

Word choice and tone

Showing the same kind of bias that appears in headlines, the use of positive or negative words or words with a particular connotation can strongly influence the reader or viewer.

Activity

1. Since bias begins with the person, take a moment and consider your own biases.
 - A. Make a list of your likes and dislikes – they can be significant or mundane.
 - B. Make a note on why you either like or dislike each of these.
 - C. Create another list of organizations with which you are directly or indirectly involved.
 - D. Consider how these involvements might affect your point of view on related issues.
 - E. Finally, choose one like or dislike, and one organization and write a detailed explanation of how each may influence your point of view on **two issues** of your choice.

2. Have you ever been the victim of unfair bias based on your age, gender, cultural or religious background or other generalities?

3. Have you ever judged someone unfairly due to your personal bias? **Briefly describe an example of each situation.**

4. Take a look at the photos below. Consider your immediate reaction. What does this reaction reveal about your own biases? What biases might others hold about this person or people?

LyzyrdGzyrd.com



5. WEBQUEST : Visit the following websites. After considering some of the content, predict how each group respond to questions on each of the topics provided. Explain why you believe this to be the case.

<i>SITE</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>
WWW.FRASERINSTITUTE.ORG/	IMMIGRATION
WWW.CWFA.ORG/MAIN.ASP	ABORTION
WWW.NAACP.ORG/	RACIAL HIRING QUOTAS
HOME.NRA.ORG	CRIME
WWW.TAXPAYER.COM/TAXPAYER/HOME1	BANK BAILOUT
http://canadianlabour.ca/	WORKPLACE SAFETY
WWW.PFLAGCANADA.CA/EN/INDEX-E.ASP	GAY MARRIAGE
http://www.aidwyc.org/	DEATH PENALTY