ANTI-BIAS WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR: SHARING OUR WISDOM

Editor's Note: This issue of The Web focuses on People of Color doing culturally relevant anti-bias education with other People of Color. Several individuals have contributed their perspectives and thoughts, as they considered the following questions:

1) **What are your goals as CRAB/LID trainer/advocate working with people of color?**

2) **What are three essential understandings you want POC to take from your training sessions?**

3) **What training methods have worked best?**

4) **What do you use as indicators of the impact of your work on participants?**

5) **What hard issues/challenges have you faced in your training/advocacy work with POC?**

6) **What are your issues/struggles in working with people from your own cultural group? Other groups of color?**

7) **What do you do when you encounter cultural conflict or prejudice between people of color?**

8) **What do you do when you experience cultural conflict or prejudice from POC directed at you?**

9) **What sustains you in this work?**

JULIE BENAVIDES

A member of the CAEYC Leadership-in-Diversity network, Julie was a long-time director of Friendship Children's Center and is currently a faculty member in the Early Childhood Education Department at East Los Angeles College.

1) My goals in working with people of color are to:
  • Spark thinking -- I know this has happened to me, so it can happen for others -- and then see where it can go. Some people have more internalized oppression than others; some have been more introspective about themselves and can move more quickly to greater understanding.

- Help people understand the importance of trusting and respecting yourself so you can work together with others to get things done.
- Encourage ourselves to notice what is going on around us and being active with the issues within our communities and our lives.
- Move people to recognition of our own culture and the culture of other groups of color -- to voice what our children need, what we do know as POC, and as a member of a particular ethic/cultural group -- to set the stage to exploring the world around us. I was so ingrained in the notion that we are all alike, and I have come to understand the harm in this to ourselves and our children.
- In doing this work, I am also learning more about myself. People also ask questions to which I don't have answers, so I have to find out more. The process rejuvenates me by feeling the connections we make among ourselves and to the work we do with children.

2) I don't want to have too many expectations when I begin because I think this can close down people's evolving thinking process. Opportunities for their questions must be there. Key insights I hope they gain are:
- bias does exist.
- looking at their own self-identity and developing a positive sense of themselves supports children's positive development.
- they have power and responsibility in their role working with children.

What I look for most is people's developing sense of spiritual empowerment. That's what keeps me going.

3) Training methods that have worked well for me include:
- stimulating divergent thinking by having small groups do problem-solving.
- ask for the participants' input into the content and process.
- provide information about children's development of race/ ethnic identity and about the anti-bias approach.
- a lot of resources - having visual materials plus books for working with children.
- not inundating people.

4) I look for both immediate and more long-term indicators of the impact of my work. During the training session, I look for:
- a need being expressed.
- people sharing their stories -- making connections to their work.
- the realization that there is a lot more to anti-bias work than the "recipe" answers people look for at first.

Later on I look for:
- people telling me the workshop really made them think in a new direction.
- seeing people working on implementation in their classrooms.
- hearing their excitement about working with children in new ways.

5 & 6) Two types of responses from people of color to my anti-bias work have been particularly challenging to me. One is the "I've made it" individuals who over-generalize from their experiences and deny the existence of racism. I have to watch my reactions to this kind of perspective because it shuts me down. The second type of response I find difficult is people of color who I see as acting out dominant culture models of power: hurting their own people and misusing their power. This makes me mad - another reaction I have to watch in myself so I can then decide how to deal with the person. Another challenge for me is positively interacting with people of color whose style of dealing with and solving problems is very different from mine, and which I experience as aggressive.

7) When I encounter cultural conflict or prejudice between people of color in a workshop I know I need to stay detached and acknowledge that two dynamics are going on: individual feelings -- and what's actually happening. Feelings have to be accepted/ and discussed first. It's important not to allow personalization. I may also have to deal with different styles of responding to conflicts. Then I try to guide people to go back to the issues as they connect to the workshop and what we can do to move on and not stay stuck.

8) When it is directed at me, I first feel anger and defensiveness. Then I try to look at all of the perspectives. Knowing I can do get to this next step is validating and strengthening.

9) Finally, several things sustain me in this work:
- justice is very important to me.
- my own growth - energy, excitement I get from my own thinking and understanding expanding - e.g., my growth in understanding cultural role in DAP.
- a spiritual feeling -of how collaboration works and feels.
- seeing the development of ownership, seeing people get a sense of their knowledge, skills, and leadership, seeing them take their excitement to work with children; seeing people's energy connected to their growth.
- always more work and new steps to take: this keeps me challenged.
- my two children: I want them to live in a world that is better.
- I get tired but not burnt out. It is hard and tiring at first when trying to get people to become more aware. As they get on board, their learning process pulls me in and energizes me. The flame of our candles together becomes brighter.

SONIA GAIANE

A member of the CAEYC L-I-D network, Sonia is an Associate Professor of Childhood Development at Bakersfield College.

1) **My goals as an adult education trainer working with people of color are:**
   - to cultivate self-exploration and critical thinking in order to set each individual on a path of self-discovery leading to the appreciation of self and others.
   - to engage in mutual learning.
   - to start where the individual's interests are.
   - to strive for social consciousness.
   - to explore ways in which we actually participate in the process of social change.

2) **Three essential understandings I hope people in general will take from the training:**
   - The understanding that, independent of ethnicity, culture, ability, economic class or political persuasion, we owe each human being the respect accorded to that individual as a member of the human race; a being created by the force transcending all the bickering and hurdles we often place on the developmental path of our brothers and sisters.
   - I would also hope we would achieve the understanding the social awareness that we are deeply embedded in each others' dreams and problems, making it imperative that we stand up for each other, for as in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "We all must live together as brothers or perish together as fools."
   - Finally, I would hope that we would all achieve the under- standing, the enlightenment, to accept each other despite our faults and limitations not worshipping ourselves so much that we would expect everyone to be our clones.

3) **Because I believe self-awareness is the first step towards critical thinking and social consciousness, I place great emphasis in my teaching methods on self-questioning, self- examination and individual responsibility.** We cannot expect to lead others on the path of social consciousness if we haven't start the process ourselves. I encourage lots of interaction and active participation and a climate safe enough to include the individual's option to disagree and transgress beyond the limits of my mental and emotional scope.

4) **I do not look for indicators of my impact, for I believe that true transformation must come from within one's mind and soul.** I listen for

words and actions that indicate that the process has begun and as noted by bell hooks, the results may not be evident for a good time to come.

5) **The biggest challenge for me is to resist the temptation to dish out an ideal** I consider particularly relevant and make myself wait for the process of discovery and growth to take place in a developmental manner, allowing each individual to grow by the beat of her own drum. As Paulo Freire explains in pedagogy of the Oppressed (1986), independence cannot be taught or given, but it is achieved through one's own conscientization.

If, for the sake of quick results, I manipulate, divide, create "needs" of success or invade another's culture, I will become the oppressor, the very forces that I originally set out to challenge.

6) **I do struggle with my need to "see" results and speed the process of "enlightenment," two things rising from my conceited and unfounded belief that I have come further in the journey of self-enlightenment.** I struggle with the frustration of seeing how "blind" some people are of their own social and political conditions; I struggle with -the anger that rises when I see a person of color adopting the thinking and behavior of those considered "superior." I struggle with the urge to scream "wake-up" to the passive acceptance of the status quo or the total alienation pervading among us.

7) **When I encounter cultural conflict/prejudice between people of color I take it as the starting point for self-discovery.** I try to remember what Paulo Freire taught in his writing, that the oppressed often identifies with the oppressor. I see the existing conflict and prejudice between people of color as the place to begin the process of self-examination through critical thinking, the place to engage in mutual learning and the first step towards social conscious-ness and freedom from oppression.

Resources I find useful:

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire, 1986

Education for Critical Consciousness, Paulo Freire, 1993

Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, bell hooks, 1994, Routledge, N.Y.

Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Black & Whites, Harlon & Dalton, Double Day Publishers, 1995.

Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation, Jonathan Kozol, Harper Perennial, 1995.

DEBORAH HAMPTON

Deborah is Associate Director, Salvation Army Child Care Program, President-elect Chicago Metropolitan Association; Professional Development Chairperson, Ecumenical Child Care Network.

1) **My number one goal in working with people of color is to make sure we begin to be honest with each other about internalized racism and oppression.** It is difficult for people to talk and to express their feelings about this. My second goal is to get a support group of POC together -- to start with one person and then move to two or three. We need time to digest and talk about our work around diversity/equity -- and to support each other's frustrations with the constant obstacles, slowness of the pace, "two steps forward, one step back" dynamic.

   We are out there working in the dominant culture -asked to be on boards, to speak, etc. -and often it is just one or two at the most of us in a given organization or situation. However, it is hard to get together, even though we know we need a support group. Because we are all very busy doing the work, we need the support group to sustain us.

2) **In addition to understanding the concept and dynamics of internalized oppression and its impact on ourselves and other POC, the focus of my training is to help teachers of color know how to use the anti-bias curriculum in a cultural perspective.** I want them to understand that we can't just use the suggestions in the ABC book just as they are; they have to make choices and changes from their own cultural perspective - using their own and their community's experiences. The ABC book does say to put it in a community context, but doesn't provide specifics of how to do this -and people either don't pick up on that idea or don't know how to do it. We need the stories from people struggling to do anti-bias work within their cultural perspective. Some people are saying we need our own term -- rather than the term "anti-bias". [Ed. note: a good point for dialogue in The WEB -- how about sending in your thoughts?]

3) **Training methods that work best for me are hands-on activities, such as going through children's books together; persona dolls, envisioning new environments.** For example, sometimes I have people work in small groups to design a lay -- out of a classroom: they come up with many different ways to do this, and see their own knowledge and abilities as well as gaining new ideas. Hands-on activities let peoples' voices be heard.

4) **What indicators of the impact of my work do I look for?**
   - During a session, I look for signs that people have caught the concept: are able to articulate for themselves (e.g., critiquing a children's book),

are able to voice a different opinion than mine or challenge a point of mine. Then I know that honesty is happening and that people got the critical thinking concept of anti-bias education.

- Beyond a training session, I look for teachers working with the issues in their classrooms and evidence of their struggles to make the ideas their own. I hear them using the words and the concepts in informal conversation and trying to be creative and innovative in how they implement the ideas. In the long term I also look for them doing anti-bias activities with families and feeling more natural about this approach -- it becomes a part of them rather than something they have to do very self-consciously.

5) The challenges I face are:
- getting people to look at internalized oppression.
- getting people to buy into the struggle of working with and within dominant culture organizations. This requires overcoming the lack of trust, based on past history. Moreover, something always happens to break whatever little trust has been established; then people say "I told you so!" and don't want to continue. It is never-ending struggle.

6) My own struggles are:
- feeling alone or lonely in my leadership positions. I often find other people of color are waiting for leadership guidance - to straighten issues out, rather than seeing the need for them to join me in creating change.
- trying to help people of color understand their importance in this work of creating more inclusive and just early childhood programs for children and families. So many people feel it is hopeless to struggle: they say things like "I am too tired," "Won't hear me anyway -- let me go home and be with my family." We don't value our own voice enough. I believe we have more power than we believe we have so we can short-circuit ourselves and not value the importance of the struggle. People are also very conscious of how to position themselves to be in a place of safety. To take any step out of that place is scary. I take the risks; so need my own support system.
- seeing the children in the city being oppressed in such an institutional way and not being able to do a whole lot about it I find myself wishing I was working in an organization where I can really do something more directly about the oppressive situation. In the work I do I am always thinking constantly of the children -- how will what I am doing have an impact on the quality of their lives -- even if just making their lives a little bit better.
- sometimes, I have this little inkling/worry that I am selling out. I ask myself "Am I doing the real work?" I am not now doing direct community work. I plan to go back to more direct community work after I finish my Metro AEYC term.

7) When I encounter cultural conflict or prejudice between people of color, I usually try to do mediation with them. Often the people involved don't understand where each is coming from. But I don't always deal with the underlying issue of skin color, class, status in the mediation; rather I try to help people solve the immediate problem and keep moving on. I know other issues underlie the conflict, but don't feel I have the skills to get further from specific issue to underlying bases of the conflict at the moment.

8) What I experience cultural conflict or prejudice from POC directed at myself, I take on a diplomat role -- I intellectualize the issue and don't deal with my own anger and fear -- then I eat.

9) What sustains me in my work?
- my Church - my minister.
- girlfriends who are not doing ABC work but listen to my struggles with it.
- a group of six European American women in anti-bias work who support me, listen to my frustrations. The group, two other people and I meet once a quarter -- to find out what I need. We also have lots of informal contact. They are encouraging to me in my process of learning how to trust individual European-Americans.

MARY LAURIE

Currently principal of a Primary School in New Orleans, primarily serving poor, African American children, Mary was previously the coordinator of the Safe, Drug-Free Schools program and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters for the New Orleans school district. She is also a member of the New Orleans CRAB group.

1) The people of color I primarily work with are African American teachers who work with African American children. This is my own ethnic/cultural group. My underlying goal is to spark a change process that will result in people:
- becoming self-reflective -- about who they are, their own biases, how they work with children and families.
- becoming more aware and conscious about the class divisions and biases among African Americans and the history that created these.
- making changes in how they teach children. I want teachers to stop writing off children from poor communities, to see the children's families -- whatever the form -- and communities as equal to their own.
- breaking down teachers' top-down power mentality, i.e. , the principal dictates to the teachers, the teachers dictate to the children and their parents.
- eventually getting to level of overcoming internalized oppression. This is a whole new level that I hope to get to but realize it is not always

possible in the limited time I may have. It means people realizing that changing themselves is at the core, to recognize where they are a part of the problem and to then move to finding solutions.
- understanding and accepting the powers and responsibilities they have as teachers -- this is the ultimate goal.
- Understanding that change won't happen until all of these barriers are broken down.

2) Specific understandings I want people to take from my training sessions are:
- understanding that anti-bias work is relevant to African American children because in addition to having to deal with racism, even if they do not have to deal with racial issues day to day (because their schools are all African American), they also have to deal with issues of gender and class.
- anti-bias education work is not separate from everything else they do as teachers. Rather, it is part of a whole approach and needs to be integrated into all subjects. We may focus on it in a workshop, just as we may focus on another aspect of the curriculum, such as science or reading. But in the classroom it should be so well integrated into everything that we don't even notice we are doing it -- it becomes second nature.
- Especially when working with an interracial group, getting people to a comfort level to begin a real dialogue beyond the surface level -– beyond being "PC" -– even for that brief moment in time.

3) Training methods that work for me are:
- interactive activities that allow people to come to their own discoveries and understandings.
- not lecturing.
- not trying to do too much at a time.
- making what I do relevant to where people are at -- I ask myself, "How do I get them to the level of having new consciousness of self and their work?" Often, I have to go back to the most basic of levels and start with what will be of interest to them.
- building in time for talk, for discussion.
- flexibility with my agenda -I may not be able to cover all planned.
- Many people come to workshops looking for experts to give them a magic answer, or to validate what they are already doing - waiting to hear the presenter say something that makes them feel they are a good teacher. But ultimately validation comes from self. Therefore, I start my workshops with the message that "We (the presenters) haven't come as experts to tell you what to do. We came here to engage in a dialogue, in a learning process -- you will learn from us and we will learn from you."

4) Signs I look for to tell me I have reached people are:
- people being honest, sharing experiences, feelings and thoughts beyond the surface level of the "correct or polite thing to say."
- breaking down of hostile attitudes -- instead people beginning to be honest about their pain.
- body language moves from "I'm sitting on the side, don't want to be here, this doesn't concern me" to more engagement (e.g., moving their chair a fewer inches closer, moving body forward to listen etc.).
- people who stay behind after the workshop to talk with me one-on-one. This says to me that something has been sparked -- even if the person my not yet be conscious of just what it is. But they want to share something, to get acknowledgment for what they are feeling.

5 & 6) The hard issues I face in my work with African American teachers are:
- the historic baggage we bring with us that colludes with racism to keep us divided and mistreated. This is so entrenched in New Orleans, that we often don't even know it is there.
- a mind-set that says "I can't be biased because I'm the victim." So, we don't talk about discrimination against each other because of skin color degree, class, gender. We deal so much with the oppressions of race that it's hard for us to give validity to other isms -even though we know they exist.
- the rule about "keeping our dirty laundry in the family." This is particularly true in a mixed group, when people will only say the polite thing, and not want to hurt anyone's feelings, or get themselves in trouble for something they said. However, it also is often a barrier in an all African American group in a public setting such as a workshop. People often prefer to talk one-on-one.
- the "underclass" position and treatment (e.g., the horrible pay) of ECE people who are responsible for our most precious possession -- our young children. How much are you willing to invest, to go out on a limb, to rock the boat when you are in such a tenuous position?
- lack of understanding of educational practices that support the whole child.

9) What sustains me in this work is my overriding belief that our country is going to get better, that we will one day no longer have to always worry about all the horrors of racism. That one day we can have coffee together, work, play, without having to always worry if my kids will be treated okay -- get the education they need, go out into the world without getting harassed or killed, get the jobs they deserve.

My personal struggle is to hold on to my belief in the possibility of change, even though I sometimes ask myself WHEN??? Can we ever get to that point where racism won't exist? Can we get to the point where ant-bias education

is no longer needed so intensely? I know it will not be in my lifetime. Will it be in my children's or their children's lifetime?

My strength, and determination to keep on struggling to bring this day closer also comes from my own experiences. I don't want anyone else to have to go through the ugly, ugly thing of losing their own children. I thought once it would not happen to me, but it did. How do we end the long stream of hurts our children face that create the split second when the trigger is pulled?

THERESSA LENEAR

A member of the Seattle CRAB leadership group and the African American Child Care Task Force, Theressa is a co-instructor at Seattle Central Community College for a series of four Child Development Associate classes, "Perspectives in Working with African American Children and Families." She is employed at Child Care Resources, King County, as the Director of Diversity/Inclusion.

1) **In the broadest sense, everything I do in my professional and private work revolves around supporting children and families, especially children and families of color.** I strongly believe that improving the quantity and quality of life for children and families of color has a direct correlation and impact on the quality of life for all children and families now and in the future to come. More specifically, I think of my goals, short and long term, in relation to the different roles people have in the care of children. The responsibilities are of equal importance for all, whether we come from the mainstream culture or communities of color. But for the sake of this article, my comments will generally address working with other people of color.

Teachers/ Center, Family And School Age Care Providers

When working with people of color, I want to provide many opportunities for learning and understanding the importance of the following:
- the responsibility to all children globally, and specifically to children of color.
- the responsibility to role model ways of being effective, successful, contributing leaders within our diverse communities and beyond.
- a historic perspective, our position in this country's society within a social and political context, and the impact of the before-mentioned on the healthy development of our children.
- child development and developmentally appropriate practices based on perspectives of the children's language/culture.
- the power we have upon the lives of the children left in our care, and our awareness as keepers of the gates, we decide who gets what, when, where and how much.

Parent/Guardian

In improving the quantity and quality of life of children, families are an important piece of the equation. The word **"family"** is used in the most broad and inclusive sense possible. The family, being the main educator for their children, needs assistance and support from their many different communities (extended family, spiritual/religious community, schools, neighborhood). Having control of and navigating through life carries responsibilities and challenges. When working with families of color, I want to provide many opportunities for learning and understanding the importance of the following:

- the responsibility for their children's lives.
- provide many opportunities for experiences which will develop their potential.
- how racism has impacted us as a people and as parents, the responsibility to purposefully educate ourselves to get the whole story. Part of my responsibility is to jump-start their thinking and questioning and to provide information or places where people can investigate on their own.
- the essential connections between parents and community. We share a collective community responsibility for all the children. We cannot do for our children in isolation; we must form partnerships with each other, with our children's teachers, our places of worship, our neighborhoods, to build communication, common vision, and trust.

Communities of Color

We as a people have been educated within the dominant society, looking through their lens -- and we do not know our own history. We are not aware of what we have given up to be part of the dominant society in order to gain the promised, alleged goodies. All of this "miseducation" has to be dismantled before we can begin to talk about community building. This takes time when this nation lives off of instant gratification.

2) **Additional learning I would like people of color to take from my training sessions are:**
   - being introspective and getting clarity about their own goals in working with children and families: what do you want to happen? Is this is the direction you want to go? What ways will you be able to measure the well being of the children and families that you serve? Whatever happens in a program needs to have a positive effect.
   - to have as much information as possible to stimulate their critical thinking and ask hard questions of themselves and others.
   - social connections: building relationships and networks towards building community and reclaiming our traditions through story telling, cooperation and group effort -— interdependency.

3) **I see my underlying task as the passing on and exchange of knowledge -making the dialogue happen.** The ideas of Paulo Freire and

Myles Horton, in *We Make The Road By Walking* have been very influential in my beliefs about the role of the teacher, and cause me to look at myself continuously.

Specific methods that I find work well for me are:
- facial gestures -combining actions and words.
- teaming.
- getting closer to participants, students.
- structure the training to meet the needs.
- provide opportunities to return to issues if there is no immediate response.
- I like to give people something they can take with them to continue the reflection process -like questions for further thinking, making one commitment to action, handouts to reinforce key points of the session, an activity to do with co-workers.
- I would really like to have a place or places in our communities where one can find information and resources readily available.

4) **I look for both immediate and after-the-fact indicator of the impact of my work.** Immediate indicators can be a nod of the head, emotions, verbal responses. I get a sense that the audience is engaged. Right after the workshop/training, people come up to talk more -that tells me I have touched that person in some way.

But for me, the ultimate biggest impact is that people have heard the words, the message and then it is in their court on how they carry the ball. It is their choice for what to do with the information.

5) **What hard issues/challenges have I faced in my work? Let me count the ways. Particular ones that come to mind are:**
- the realization that I won't beat racism before I leave this place called earth.
- wondering if it is beatable at all?
- however, I deeply and truly believe that if we do not fight against racism we lose our will/need to live -- we let evil take over. So, while sometimes I get overwhelmed, and retreat know I can't wallow in self-pity too long and the strong need take control wins.

6) **The main issues of struggle in this work are:**
With Whites:
- Not blaming all by an individual's action or attitude. I try not to keep track of the hard moments, but do know that they build up. So that when I experience white arrogance, or taking privilege for granted, or one more time of feeling invisible, strong emotions are triggered.

With my own, Blacks:
- Lack of knowledge and lack of historical perspective makes me want to shout, "Don't you know what has happened and is happening now?" I become sad/depressed and when that happens, I try to do things to promote the healing of my spirit -- my family, my lover, my friends, sleep, read lots of fictional books, no newspaper/TV, taking time out to regroup and start again. I feel that I am constantly learning, unlearning and relearning.

With Other People of Color:
- The major frustration is with the separation between groups based upon the stereotypical messages of the dominant society. We must realize the important commonalties among us.

7) **When I encounter cultural conflict or prejudice between people of color, I want to:**
- douse the fire first.
- validate that we have been set-up and primed for such conflicts to happen.
- educate on what prejudice is, de mystify the stereotypes we have been taught and how those same stereotypes create divisions among us even before we have a chance to get to know one another.
- time permitting -- facilitate understanding of what we share, the commonalities.
- help the group to establish an environment that is thoughtful of each other's opinions. (I do not say respectful for we definitely have different definitions of respect. And I believe respect is earned!!)

8) **Experiencing cultural conflict or bias from people of color directed at me is painful, more painful then when it comes at the hands of the mainstream culture –- from whom there is that expectation.** The emotional commitment and stakes becomes higher, like talking to your child about peanut better and talking to your child about drugs or unprotected sex. The emotional response becomes the learning tool.

9) **What sustains me in my work:**
- my inner spirit -my spiritual guidance -knowing who I am and my purpose in life.
- my family and their love, and the love and support I get from my Black man.
- the support system of my friends and colleagues. Different needs are met in each place. With my Black sisters, I play, get crazy, talk Ebonics; with my friends in the CRAB group, I talk over issues and get validation.
- seeing another person's realization of their self-worth and the steps taken toward their own liberation

- knowing there is a bigger network and that I am not doing my work in isolation. There are connections locally, nationally and globally -- **and we are still growing!!**

MARY NORMAN

A faculty member in early childhood education at East Los Angeles College, Mary is a member of the CAEYC Leadership-In-Diversity network.

1) **My goals as a CR/AB adult education trainer are to exchange ideas and feelings among ethnic groups.** The main ingredient is communication, which involves speaking, listening, and interpretation of what is said and heard. My goal is to recognize and try to meet the needs of teachers, parents, students, and the community in which they live and work. I'm committed to work for understanding -- to begin dealing with what we are and what we can be to be better suited for living and loving in a diverse society.

2) **I would like people of color to see that:**
   - they have a lot to offer and are part of a whole and not separate from it.
   - this should be a society that values contributions from everyone.
   - diversity enriches all of us.

3) **The best training methods for me have been:**
   - the team approach.
   - using triads and dyads.
   - reflecting on personal history and experiences.
   - writing daily journals.

4) **I encourage questions asking about and sharing information**. Other indicators of impact are participants wanting information regarding other training and workshops and one-on-one interaction after the session.

5) **Hard issues for me:**
   - identifying who can be a racist, according to our definition (LID).
   - dealing with the convictions of people who say: "But under our skin we are all the same;" "We are taking this diversity issue too far; it was better when we just accepted each other;" "Children will not notice differences unless we point them out; it really doesn't matter to them."

6) **My own issues in doing this work are:**
   - accepting my own culture.
   - challenging myself to read, become more knowledgeable.
   - speaking up and speaking out when confronted with culture or diversity issues.

7) **When I encounter prejudice between people of color, I sometimes make light of it and keep my comments positive** -- such as saying, "Are you serious?" At other times I try to find out, in a non-confrontational way, what caused their bias. I haven't experienced this situation recently.

8) **When I encounter prejudice-oppression directed to- wards me, I confront and try to engage in dialogue with the person reacting to me.** Some other people of color feel that am too easy on white people -- that I don't get angry enough or hold them responsible. I don't like to get into the blame and focused-on-the-past dynamics. Rather, I explain to people of color who criticize me that I agree we have to look at history, but let's concentrate on what we can do from this point on.

9) **What sustains me in this work:**
   • the children -- working toward a better world for them.
   • wonderful people I have met who are also committed to "the work."
   • knowing that this is the only way to bring about change.
   • the feeling you get when you begin to get it.
   • knowing that people of color have a tremendous legacy -- one of inner strength, courage, strong survival instincts -- and a spirit of wholeness that will help us in joining forces with and/ or leading the way to unity.
   • A resource I find useful is: Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104. Fax: (334) 264-3121.

MICHELLE SOLTERO

Currently President of the San Diego AEYC, Michelle is an Education and Professional Development Specialist with Educational Enrichment Systems Inc., and member of the CAEYC Leadership-in-Diversity network.

1) **My goals in working with people of color are to:**
   • open up awareness of cultural differences within the group - inter-generations / same generation with different experiences, and to provide space/air time to talk about these issues.
   • create understanding of the history behind relationships between different groups of color, of how cultural groups got along within a particular community and how that affects what is happening now -such as distrust between various groups. Then people can move beyond anger and hurt to building better relationships.
   • foster understanding that racism effects all of us, that we all have experiences of biases. We need to look at how we are all affected, be aware of the hurt it causes, recognize why we feel anger, or sadness, or afraid, and understand how we a responding to each situation, (e.g., we may brush off situations that we should be dealing with. Then we need to figure out what steps we can take to resist when treated

inappropriately or when people say negative things about ourselves or our culture.

2) Training methods that have worked best for me include:
- validating people's experiences by sharing stories.
- supporting people becoming more centered by knowing their roots and who they are through writing, pictures, stories.
- providing a safe space to share about themselves by: role modeling sharing about myself; using a voice, tempo, tone, and language that embraces everyone and allows everyone to be part of the conversation; conveying a sense of acceptance and the connections of my experience to theirs.
- helping people move from their personal "ah-hahs": from their experiences to relating them to their work with children and families by asking a lot of questions to help them make the link: How did you come to that conclusion? How do you see the story you just shared related to what you do on the job?
- I don't give answers because I believe people are already learning much of what they need to know through their daily experiences, but haven't yet put all they do know into words. My task is to help them find these words -- and then they can figure out what to do next, or what not to do next.

3) Indicators of the impact of my work during a workshop include:
- individuals speaking up during the workshop after being silent at first (sometimes this happens in the second or even third of a series of workshops).
- seeing a sense of assurance from people that it is not me -- the realization that racial prejudice is not their fault, but part of a larger picture. It's as if a burden lifts off their shoulders. Can see this in their body language -- something powerful that happens when we connect to people in the group.
- people wanting to talk about issues that are coming up for them at the end of a presentation. Then I know we've connected, that I've opened up something for them -- even if an individual is just saying "I'm so glad you're talking about this -- I don't feel ready yet."
- in the long term, my measure of having had an impact is seeing people make changes in their work with children and families.

4) I face three main challenges in my anti-bias work with people of color:
- one is dealing with anger that comes up during experiential activities. I want to validate peoples' emotion and what has happened to them to cause it. Yet, I also want to facilitate people moving beyond anger to do something, so they won't feel so powerless. I want people to become pro-active and continue to grow.

- I also struggle with how to respond to others' very hard experiences with racism when mine haven't been as hard (although I have had them.) Sometimes I freeze and don't know what to do. I don't want to smother a person with too much sympathy but I also don't want to sound unsympathetic. I also can get stuck about how to go to the step of taking action after validating and sympathizing because people may not be ready yet to go to the next place, especially in a one-time, short workshop. I also sometimes have difficulty figuring out how to get the group to refocus afterwards. Another challenge is dealing with people's distrust of me as a trainer because of the negative experiences individuals have had in other settings.

5 & 6) My main personal struggle is when get negative feedback saying I am not truly Latina because I don't speak Spanish. It was a challenge from White, Latinos and other groups of color. When I get this accusation my own cultural identity comes back to haunt me and re-opens my feelings about where I fit. I have to figure out ways to deal with my own anger -- but not in front of the group. I am also getting to the point where I can challenge the person who says this in a group with whom I am working beyond a one-time session. I can get past the anger and "eyes bulging out of my head" reaction and say "Wait a minute, I have a right to also be validated in who I am. Let's look at the issues around language that come from the larger culture. We get put down by the dominant culture for our speaking Spanish and then put down by our own people and other people of color for not speaking Spanish. It's a lose-lose situation."

7 & 8) To deal with these challenges, I try to understand where each person is coming from developmentally and to figure out what approach I will take.

9) Finally, several kinds of connections with others sustain me in this work. These include:
- my local support group - we began with 3 - now we have 14 people.
- my statewide Leadership-in Diversity group.
- connecting at state and national conferences with people doing similar work. Hearing another person's presentation, even if don't know them personally, gives me both new ideas and a sense of being part of a larger network of people.
- reading success stories.
- knowing I can call anyone who has done LID training for problem-solving, resources, ideas. It was also great to hear what people are doing at the weekend retreat of people from the three rounds of LID training.
- the possibilities of more new allies in my local area.
- my family (very important to me),

GLORIA TRINIDAD

Currently President of Washington AEYC and a member of the Seattle CRAB group, Gloria works with the City of Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program and ECAP.

1) **My overall goals are to help people of color:**
   - recognize and feel within themselves that they are of worth, can advocate for themselves, and work with others to support each other, and see the leadership within themselves. I found the leadership within myself; now I want others to find it. I see such potential, in people who are where I was in the past.
   - I also want to provide information relevant to their experiences that they can use in their work with children and families.
   - While I do have some general goals, whenever I work with a new group I first try to take a couple of steps back -- to really hear where people are at and go from there -and not to assume people are where I am now. I don't want to work from a framework of "I set the agenda." Rather I start by doing "research" though dialogue to find out where people are and pay careful attention to how they react to questions, and to what I do. This means I am continually re-evaluating how I work.

2) **Because I often get resistance to the idea that we need to have an anti-bias approach (e.g., people will say "Why are you telling me this? I am a person of color, how dare you tell me I have biases"), I want people to understand that the biases we experience against ourselves and that we have against others are both our barriers and can also be our strengths.** It is understandable that we have biases -- because some kind of experience -- often in the larger society -- taught us that bias. Understanding where it comes from and how to work it through to challenge and change it in ourselves is what creates strength. A second is how to educate others to change. We all carry our anger about our experiences with racism. How do we make our responses to others' bias an educational experience?

3) **Training methods that have worked well for me include:**
   - dialogue.
   - presenting scenarios and working small groups to address them. This activity also gives me information about where people are coming from. Their own scenarios also come out in the process of discussion.
   - visuals - pictures and photos to open up the dialogue -- "Tell me about this picture."
   - one-on-one or small group informal discussions after a presentation to process something that happened, or that came up for them (e.g., in the

hall outside the workshop room; or bumping into someone at another time during a conference.).

4) I look for both immediate and longer term indicators of my work's impact. During the training session, I look for signs of:
- being engaged in the dialogue (rather than sitting in denial).
- using their voice -- speaking to what they may not have had a chance to say before to a trainer of color, and haven't been able to tell whites because they expected they wouldn't understand.
- feeling validated in their experiences/feelings from someone who talks the same language.

Long-term signs I look for are:
- hearing what I've said excitedly repeated or reformulated by workshop participants and about how they plan to use these ideas in their work.
- getting follow-up calls: "I want help to begin doing what you talked about," or they are putting the ideas into practice and want support, reinforcement, check-in, advice.

- **Three challenges in doing this work with people of color particularly come to mind. They are:**
- resistance in the form of "Why are you telling me?" -- that I already mentioned in talking about my goals. I find it is harder to deal with when it is a body language attitude rather than spoken directly.
- the person who knows issues are there but won't to do anything about them. These people say things like "It's too much work," or "There is no point because nothing will change." I think they also don't want to act because if they rock the boat they also have to deal with their own issues and biases.
- the denial I see in some people with lighter skin color who are getting by with some privileges. I think it is also a fear of rocking the boat issue because if they stop denying racism they may no longer "fit in" with the white world as they are currently doing.

5) Within in my own group, I mostly work on gender/sexism issues. I have different shield systems going on depending on the ages of people and the settings in which we are in. I have to figure out where my place is within the cultural rules of respect and sometimes have to sacrifice the work I want to do. I also may have to stifle myself for a long time to gain trust. I know I am equal to men -- but they might not know it yet! I might struggle with them privately but not in front of other people, even if everyone in the group knows each other.

With people from other groups of color, my main struggle comes from others challenging my right to address racism. I know my experiences with racism have not been the same as the experiences of African Americans.

With my lighter skin color I feel that I been thrown in the middle of racial power lines by the dominant culture. So, while I know I can't say " I know what you are going through" -- yet I want to *because I also have experienced racism.*

7 & 8) What I do when I encounter cultural conflict or prejudice between people of color or directed at me depends if I can confront the person or not; and if I feel they will listen and it will make a change. This is true for both my own or other cultural groups.

- In a training session, when people express stereotype: about each other, I say "Something is going on, let's look at it; let's deal with it, like we do when we deal with conflict between children," and then I facilitate a discussion about what is happening. I also ask the group to set some ground rules about how to handle this kind of conflict.
- When bias is directed at me from someone from another group - e.g., main one is when a person challenges me with "You can't possibly know what racism is really like" -- I try to say something like: "In my experience I feel like I have -- even if from your perspective it doesn't seem like it. Let me finish, let's talk about it." I also try to validate that I don't have your experience and also validate my own -- I do have mine. Validating both perspectives is something I've learned with experience -- when I first started doing this work, I might have just wimped out and then felt hurt that I didn't stand up for myself. Doesn't get to me emotionally now as it did at first.
- When I experience bias directed at me from within my own group it really bothers me and gets me really sad. I don't feel I have a good method for dealing with this yet. I try to ask myself -- about myself and the other person -- " Why are you acting this way?"

9) What sustains me in this work:

- I see so much so do -- that's a challenge to me.
- watching my kids grow and what they have to experience. I want to be their role model.
- the support I get: knowing I can turn in many different ways to get support.
- knowing I am not alone - that many others have similar experiences in doing the work; the chance to talk about and reflect on my experiences with others.
- I don't want someone who is amazed or proud of me that survived the oppression.
- recognizes that I may (and probably do) have a different style of communicating and that he/she and respects this enough to pay attention to the process upon which we are engaged.
- realizes that my experiences are mine and I do not speak for all interracial individuals.

- views mistakes as learning opportunities, and engages in dialogue to help resolve feelings of guilt, anger, sadness, etc. and who won't allow him/herself to get stuck being worried about making mistakes.
- understands that there are places where I get stuck and where my internalized oppression comes back to haunt me, yet will encourage me to take the risk of challenging myself.
- accepts this work as a journey. We never know exactly where it will take us, but will stay in it for the duration.

Working with a white ally who has internalized these qualities can be a wonderful gift. In addition, I feel it's important for a white ally and myself to make a commitment to each other and the movement. We both need to recognize this work as a journey and to continue to stay in open and honest dialogue (even when we feel we may hurt the other.) The commitment we've made will always provide the security to take those risks of being uncomfortable with emotions, if we can understand it as a process of growth.