

Part 6: Responding to Racism

Lesson 6.1 (Individual)

Essential Question

How does/should a person respond to individual forms of racism?

Enduring Understanding

Combating individual forms of racism can take different forms based on the situation. Techniques can range from asking questions to shifting the narrative.

Learning Outcomes

Students will know:

- Anti-Muslim racism can be countered using different approaches.
- Controlling narratives that fuel anti-Muslim racism can be challenged through specific strategies, like asking questions and listening for keywords.

Students will be able to:

- Recognize individual forms of racism.
- Apply their understanding of anti-Muslim racism to respond to a variety of situations/scenarios.
- Reframe conversations about anti-Muslim racism by shifting the narrative.
- Evaluate the most effective ways of responding to anti-Muslim racism.

Standards:

- **ISBE SEL 3A:** Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.
 - 5a. Apply ethical reasoning to evaluate societal practices.
- **ISBE SEL 2D:** Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
 - 4a. Analyze how listening and talking accurately help in resolving conflicts.
- **SS.CV.5.6-8:** Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school and community settings.

Vocabulary:

- Shifting the Narrative
- Controlling Narrative
- Framing
- Affirmative Stories

Time:

50-60 Minutes

Materials

- Shifting Narrative Scenario handouts
- Shifting Narrative PowerPoint (if needed)
- Shifting the Narrative Guide handouts (if needed)

Procedure

1. **Opener:** Students journal/respond: Have you seen an example of individual racism in your personal life? What was it? How did you respond? How do you wish you responded?
2. **Connection:**
 - a. Remind students that the stories that we tell about groups of people and their cultures are constructed - socially-created. Usually these stories function as *controlling narratives*. We reach for these narratives to make sense of Muslims and Muslim communities. Unfortunately, many of these controlling narratives reduce Muslims to one-dimensional caricatures, which creates anti-Muslim understandings that often go unchecked. These narratives become the air we breathe to make sense of the world around us. In responding to racism of any kind, we want to try to shift out of those controlling narratives and that is what we are going to practice today.
3. **Mini-Lesson:**
 - a. Teacher should go over the basics of argumentation (ethos, pathos, logos) with students.
4. **Classroom Scenarios**
 - a. Student Pairs for Responses: Distribute the Shifting the Narrative Scenarios handout to students. First, students should work in pairs to develop a response to the first Shifting the Narrative Scenario. Students should think about these prompts: *How would you respond to this situation? What response would be effective with your audience? What strategies might you use to persuade them? Think about the different modes of persuasion (ethos, pathos, logos) as you develop your responses.*
 - b. Switch Partners: Have students switch partners and ask each other to: *Identify the different modes of persuasion they used to respond and determine whether the responses are effective.*
 - c. Teacher Modeling on Dos and Don'ts: Teacher should ask students to share their responses to a scenario with the class. Using that response, the teacher should ask the class what strategies they used to come up with their responses. Then, the teacher should model deconstructing their responses to identify a list of Dos/Don'ts (strategies that worked well and those that did not).
 - d. Continue Partner Work on Dos and Don'ts: Students should continue to work with their partner to come up with additional Dos/Don'ts

- e. Whole Class Discussion about the Dos and Don'ts: With student responses, create a visual (t-chart) about the different Dos and Don'ts to shift the narrative/respond to racist statements. If needed, teachers can use the Shifting the Narrative PowerPoint and/or handout as a guide (optional).
- f. Teacher Modeling on Applying Dos and Don'ts: Teacher should model how to use their class list of Dos/Don'ts to reflect on their previous response.
 - i. Teachers may choose to use the Shifting the Narrative PowerPoint for more explicit teaching.
- g. Have students reflect on and then edit their previous responses.
 - i. Encourage them to use the Dos and Don'ts t-chart and new insights to craft responses that not only use effective argument strategies but shifts the narrative as well.

5. Reflection:

- a. At the end of class, bring students back together for a quick reflection. You can ask students to share with the whole class or have them reflect with a Quick Write/Journal Prompt.
 - i. What are examples of individual racism against Muslims? How would you respond to that situation?
 - ii. Have you seen an example of individual racism in your personal life? What was it? How did you respond/wish you responded?
 - iii. Which modes of persuasion were most effective in responding to individual racism?

Talking Points

- It is important to challenge anti-Muslim messages/controlling narratives. Inaction only affirms racism.
- It is important not to replicate anti-Muslim narratives when responding to an anti-Muslim comment. For instance, if someone says, "All Muslims are terrorists," responding, "Not all Muslims are terrorists," does not shift the conversation and reinforces the stereotype that some Muslims are terrorists. Try asking a question instead, like "What makes you think that?" or "Have you ever met a Muslim person?" "
- Like our classroom norms, you should critique the idea, not the person.
- Even if you don't think you can persuade the person making the anti-Muslim remark, others may overhear your discussion, and your thoughtful response will have an impact.
- Another shifting technique is to pivot the conversation using a keyword. For instance, if someone says, "The Muslim ban protects us from terror," responding "Refugees fleeing terror in their home countries should be welcomed here."
- [Research](#) conducted by the American Friends Service Committee shows that responding to anti-Muslim comments with positive shared values is effective. Statements such as "Everyone deserves to live in safety and peace" or "All people deserve human rights," can change the conversation without reinforcing controlling narratives.
- Lastly, drawing upon your own experiences can be persuasive, for instance, sharing how your own understanding of anti-Muslim racism has developed, or your knowledge of the impact of anti-Muslim racism on students at your school.

Additional Resources for Teachers:

- Shifting the Narrative Guide handout

PART 6: RESPONDING TO RACISM

- Modes of Persuasion (pathos, logos, ethos) handout
- How to use social media to counter Islamophobia handout
- [Chicago Area's Muslim Students Fight Stereotypes, Suspicion, Chicago Tribune](#)
- [Telling an Affirmative Story, The Opportunity Agenda](#)