

## 60-Second SoTL

Episode 11 – Teaching Race and Racial Justice

(Piano Music)

00:03

**Jessie L. Moore:**

How can teachers effectively address both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning about race and racial justice? That's the focus of this week's **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. I'm Jessie Moore.

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(Piano Music)

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This episode features the Nancy Chick Article of the Year for the 2021 volume of *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*; the award was named in honor of the journal's founding co-editor, and the inaugural winning article was announced at last week's International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conference.

In "Teaching Race and Racial Justice: Developing Students' Cognitive and Affective Understanding," Joe Bandy, M. Brielle Harbin, and Amie Thurber test course-planning and pedagogical principles for teaching race and racial justice. The article is a follow-up to their 2019 review of scholarship on anti-racist education in higher education.

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In their earlier work, the authors synthesized prior scholarship to highlight four course planning principles for teaching affective and cognitive dimensions of race. Those course-planning principles include:

- Anticipating misconceptions and intentionally curating content and active learning strategies to resolve them;
- Incorporating multiple modes of content;
- Adopting a concept-centered approach, rather than a group-centered approach; and
- Varying assessments of learning.

The authors also previously identified five pedagogical principles for teaching race:

- Model and motivate racial reflexivity;
- Prepare for and welcome discomfort and challenging discussions;
- Meet students where they are;
- Develop students' capacity to critically evaluate racial issues; and
- Engage both cognitive *and* affective learning, since engaging students affective learning may enhance their cognitive understanding of race.

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In their award-winning article in *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, Bandy, Harbin, and Thurber present an in-depth case study of employing these two sets of principles in an undergraduate environmental justice course taught at Vanderbilt University in the United States. To assess how these principles informed students' affective and cognitive development, the authors conducted pre-course and end-of-course surveys examining cognitive understandings of race and students' affective development related to issues of race, empathy, interracial reconciliation, and coalition-building. The authors also drew from participant observer notes maintained by the course instructor, as well as a thematic content analysis of students' written assignments.

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Most students demonstrated growth in both their cognitive and affective understandings of race, although Bandy, Harbin, and Thurber note that students exhibited more limited engagement in in-class dialogues than in written assignments. Nevertheless, the case study demonstrates the potential of these four course-planning principles and five pedagogy principles for teaching about race. Although the authors aren't able to draw causal relationships between individual principles and students' affective and cognitive outcomes, their data suggests that inclusion of diverse voices informed students' comprehension and empathy and that critical reflection on readings via blog posts, case-based analyses, role plays, and simulations enhanced students' intellectual development and analytical skill.

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As noted in the award citation, the authors are generous in describing their teaching strategies, research methods, and ideas for continued inquiry, making this open-access article a great entry point for instructors committed to teaching about race and racial justice and for those who wish to study students' cognitive and affective understandings of race.

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To learn more about this study, follow the link in our show notes to read the article and to review our supplemental resources for this episode.

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(Piano Music)

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Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at [www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org](http://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org).

03:59

(Piano Music)