

Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English

Charge: *To investigate and make recommendations to counteract racism and racial bias in teaching materials, methods, and programs for language arts, English, and humanities and to recommend to the NCTE Executive Committee considerations related to professional learning and practice regarding teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students, with the assistance of appropriate scholars and experts, as well as careful documentation from the research base for the recommendations.*

Major activities: **What major actions, projects, initiatives, or studies in your charge have been completed by your group since July 1, 2018? In each activity describe the more important features of the work, and connect your work to the [NCTE Vision Statement](#), if applicable.**

1. List names, affiliations, and geographic region for all committee members.

CHAIR, Lorena German (2021) Headwaters School, Austin TX
Damian Baca (2020) University of Arizona, Tucson
Michelle Falter (2019) North Carolina State University, Raleigh
Richard Gorham (2019) Lawrence High School, MA
Felicia Hamilton (2021) Windsor Public Schools, Windsor, CT
Patrick L. Harris (2020) Bishop John T. Walker School of Boys, Washington, DC
Dorian Harrison (2021) The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
Jazmen Moore (2019) Washington State University, WA
Keisha Rembert (2020) National Louis University, Chicago, IL
Sahar Shafqat (2019) Lane Tech High School, Chicago, IL
Holly Spinelli (2019) Somers High School, Lincolndale, NY
Kathleen C. Colantonio Yurko (2021) The College at Brockport, NY

2. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are “in progress” at this time? There are various efforts in progress at this time. We are in the midst of developing several NCTE blog posts with corresponding video materials for teachers (Patrick, Keisha, Felicia). The videos are meant to be a catalyst for anti-racist teaching efforts and build on the work of the meter boards and posters and will offer strategies for anti-racist pedagogy and offer an easily accessible message so teachers can share with colleagues. Additionally, we are working on an NCTE blog post with resources and ideas for teachers in the area of anti-racist service learning work in schools (Holly). We are also developing ideas for a space at convention where we can share resources and do brief sessions for teachers (Lorena).

3. What have you accomplished so far, and what is your timeline for future work?

So far we have had two internal training sessions via webinars (coordinated by Lorena) to equip ourselves in this work as we prepare to support other teachers. Our first session featured an NCTE member who teaches courses focused on incarcerated literacies.

Additionally, our second session featured another NCTE member and he shared with us anti-racist perspectives in the area of writing and rhetoric. We plan on developing NCTE blog posts for both of those sessions to share our knowledge with the wider NCTE membership at some point in the winter. At Convention, we plan on brainstorming next steps and work to take on during 2019-2020. Some of the accomplishments of specific members:

- We co-hosted a Twitter chat with #TheBookChat (led by two NCTE members) on the book *Heavy* by Kiese Laymon and supported teachers in evaluating their practices through an anti-racist lens (Lorena, Keisha, Patrick)
- Dr. Damian Baca published a co-edited [a book in NCTE's Studies in Writing & Rhetoric Series](#).
- Keisha was awarded NCTE's Outstanding Middle Level Educator Award. It is connected to anti-racism and bias work because her instruction centered inquiry on what students understand and believed about others to break down barriers and fortify some students knowledge of self. They worked through literature and writing to affirm one another and moved away from othering.
- Additionally, Keisha was also recognized with another award celebrating her efforts in holistic anti-racist teaching approaches in literature through Illinois History Teacher of the Year through Gilder Lehrman. Her lessons sought to give voice and often center those folk often absent from the American story.

- Member Patrick Harris and NCTE member, co-host Antonia Adams Patrick documented their experiences as teachers through a weekly podcast called Common Sense Podcast. Using their actual experiences as anchors, they were able to document how racism and bias lives through the global education system. They garnered over 70,000 listens, Top 100 Education Apple Podcast, and Apple Podcast Black History Month spotlight.
- Patrick Harris also launched Edu2020, a podcast that centers education policy in the 2020 Election. In it, he breaks down what each candidate has contributed to the education field prior to their announcement to run for office. Also, the podcast is on the campaign trail to talk to a diverse group of teachers on what issues should be included in the nominee's education platforms, certainly with an emphasis on race and bias.
- Lorena German joined the graduate class of committee member Jazmen Moore as a guest speaker. Moore teaches at Washington State University and featured Lorena and the work of CARBTE.
- Committee member Felicia Hamilton worked on the School Governance Council at her school to develop an action plan to address disparities in that school related to academic performance and behavioral data (relative to suspensions/expulsions and referrals).
- Felicia also created a school-wide activity where students read, observed and discussed slam poetry for African-American Read-In. Then, arranged to bring in a local poet to speak to the school body and share his work.
- Developed and provided professional development at the building-level and beyond on topics such as implicit bias and race-related topics (Lorena, Felicia)
- Felicia worked on the District Equity Team to address disparities related to academic performance and behavioral data in her city/district.
- Committee member Holly S. made efforts toward disrupting the canon (through #DisruptTexts movement) at her institution by getting other educators in her department to move canonical texts from the center of their classroom's teaching to becoming the supplemental reading material for non-canonical texts.
- Committee member Holly S. led writing workshops on creative writing, self-expression, and cultural exploration/celebration at the Spring 2019 NYC Bread Loaf Writing Conference.

4. How has the work of your group contributed to NCTE's role in shaping the profession of teaching and/or the understanding of literacy in educational contexts?

I think that our committee's work has begun very important conversations both within NCTE and outside of the organization. Our members are active change agents in the field of teaching and English/literacy. Their work is impacting teachers nation-wide as we strive toward anti-racist practices. Additionally, we have:

- supported the Committee for Diversity & Inclusivity by joining their virtual meeting and offering insight and ideas (Lorena)
- participated in ALAN and supported their efforts (Keisha)
- reached out to members and encouraged newly-joined teachers to share their wisdom and expertise via the NCTE blog (Damian, Holly, Lorena, Keisha, Patrick, Jazmen)
- participating in NCTE chats and raising questions/issues in order to elevate discourse that promotes equity and anti-racism (Lorena, Keisha, Patrick, and others)
- used social media as a space to challenge and encourage teachers to evaluate their practices through an anti-racist lens (Lorena, Patrick, Keisha)
- Worked at school, district, and nation-wide levels to impact anti-racist educational policies (Lorena, Felicia, Damian, Rich)

Lorena German, Chair