



Exploring AANHPI Identity and Intersectionality

Competency

Educators create learning experiences that recognize the intersectional identities within Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities and use that understanding to foster belonging, representation, and inclusive classroom communities.

Key Method

The educator promotes inclusive and affirming learning environments by examining identity and intersectionality, exploring the diversity of AANHPI communities, and facilitating learning experiences that foster representation, belonging, and understanding of diverse perspectives. This helps students understand how systems and structures interact with identity - connecting identity work to justice, not just inclusion.

Method Components

Understanding Identity and Intersectionality

Each person carries multiple identities that shape how they experience the world. These identities may include race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, religion, citizenship status, family roles, profession, geographic background, and life experiences. Some identities may be more visible than others, but all contribute to how individuals see themselves and interact with their communities.

Intersectionality means these identities don't exist separately. They overlap and influence one another in ways that shape experiences, opportunities, and

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perspectives. Two individuals may share one aspect of their identity while having very different experiences because of other identities they hold.

As educators, reflecting on our own identities can help us better understand the strengths, experiences, and needs of the learners we serve. It can also help us recognize how our own experiences influence our perspectives, assumptions, and interactions with others.

Some of these assumptions may be implicit and influence how we interpret situations and respond to people. Reflecting on identity and intersectionality can help educators recognize potential biases and make more intentional decisions that support inclusive learning environments.

Exploring AANHPI Identities

AANHPI is a broad term that includes many different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national communities. While the acronym is often used as a collective identifier, there's no single AANHPI experience. Experiences may differ based on ethnicity, immigration history, language, religion, geography, socioeconomic status, gender, and other aspects of identity. Understanding this diversity helps educators move beyond stereotypes and recognize the unique experiences, strengths, and perspectives represented within AANHPI communities.

Migration patterns, family histories, community connections, cultural traditions, and contemporary experiences all contribute to how people understand themselves and their place within larger communities. Learning about this diversity helps educators develop a more accurate and inclusive understanding of the people and histories represented in classrooms and schools.

AANHPI identities also intersect with gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, and multiracial identities. Understanding these intersections helps educators recognize that there's no single AANHPI perspective or experience.

AANHPI communities are often viewed through broad stereotypes that fail to reflect the diversity of experiences within these communities. One example is the model minority myth, which portrays Asian Americans as uniformly successful and suggests that hard work alone determines outcomes. This narrative overlooks diversity within AANHPI communities, ignores historical and systemic barriers, and can obscure the challenges faced by many individuals and groups.

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Throughout history, individuals and communities within the AANHPI umbrella have also worked in solidarity with other communities to advocate for equity, representation, and belonging. These efforts show how shared experiences and intersectional identities can strengthen communities and contribute to positive social change.

Understanding and challenging stereotypes helps educators recognize the varied experiences, strengths, and needs represented within AANHPI communities. Examining whose stories are told, whose perspectives are centered, and whose experiences may be missing can help educators create more accurate and inclusive learning experiences.

Identity Formation and Community Experiences

Identities are shaped over time. Historical events, migration experiences, cultural traditions, community organizations, activism, and relationships all contribute to how individuals and communities understand themselves. These events and responses to them can influence how identities are formed, preserved, and transformed across generations.

Throughout history, AANHPI communities have built solidarity, responded to challenges, preserved cultural traditions, and advocated for change. Communities have developed shared identities while also maintaining unique cultural, linguistic, and historical experiences. Studying multiple AANHPI communities provides opportunities to explore both similarities and differences in lived experiences.

While communities may share themes such as resilience, cultural preservation, or community advocacy, each community also has its own history and perspective. Understanding these differences helps educators avoid generalizations and recognize the richness and diversity within AANHPI communities.

Representation, Voice, and Belonging

Students benefit from seeing themselves reflected in what they learn. They also benefit from opportunities to learn about experiences that may differ from their own. Representation helps students develop a stronger sense of identity, belonging, and connection to learning.

Rudine Sims Bishop describes learning experiences as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Mirrors reflect our own experiences and identities. Windows help us

learn about the experiences of others. Sliding glass doors invite us to step into new perspectives and deepen our understanding of the world around us.

Representation extends beyond literature and includes history, media, community stories, family narratives, and contemporary voices. When educators intentionally include diverse histories, stories, perspectives, and contributions, they help create learning environments where students feel seen, valued, and connected.

Facilitating Identity Exploration in Learning Communities

Identity exploration can help learners better understand themselves, their communities, and the people around them. Activities such as identity wheels, identity maps, oral histories, visual representations, and reflective discussions provide opportunities for learners to explore the experiences, values, and communities that shape who they are.

Effective identity exploration isn't about labeling students. It's about creating opportunities for reflection, conversation, and connection. When learners examine their own identities and listen to others' experiences, they can develop greater self-awareness and a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Educators can support identity exploration by creating learning experiences that are age-appropriate, respectful, and inclusive. Providing opportunities for learners to share their stories, explore community experiences, and reflect on multiple perspectives helps build stronger learning communities. When learners feel their identities and experiences are acknowledged and valued, they're more likely to feel a sense of belonging and connection in the classroom.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Bishop, Rudine Sims. "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors." Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, vol. 6, no. 3, 1990. Available via NCTE: <https://ncte.org/blog/2016/02/windows-mirrors-sliding-doors/>

Lebrón AMW, Torres IR, Kline N, Lopez WD, DE Trinidad Young ME, Novak N. Immigration and Immigrant Policies, Health, and Health Equity in the United States. Milbank Q. 2023 Apr;101(S1):119-152. doi: [10.1111/1468-0009.12636](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12636). PMID: [37096601](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37096601/); PMCID: PMC10126972.

Rodríguez, Noreen Naseem and Sohyun An. "Perspectives on Practice: Celebrating AAPI Heritage Month Is Not Enough: A Guide to Centering Asian American

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Histories and Narratives." Language Arts, vol. 101, no. 5, 1 May 2024, pp. 350–357, <https://publicationsncte.org/content/journals/10.58680/la20241015350?crawler=true.10.58680/la20241015350>.

Yang, Cathy J., and Monica K. Hsiao. "The Necessity of Teaching Asian American History." *Organization of American Historians*, Teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander History, <https://www.oah.org/tah/asian-american-and-pacific-islander-history/the-necessity-of-teaching-asian-american-history/>

Resources

Understanding AANHPI Identity
[AANHPI in the South](#)

[Desi Identity and Experience](#)

[PEW research on AANHPI demographics](#)

Exploring Identity and Intersectionality
[AANHPI Women: Representation and Voices](#)

[Asian American Queer History](#)

[Building Identity from the Library of Congress](#)

[Filipinas in the Farmworker Movement](#)

[NPCA Women You Should Know](#)

Teaching Identity and Building Belonging

[Exploring Perceptions About Identity Through Self-Portraits | Edutopia](#)

[Letting Young People Lead Their Identity](#)

[Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors | Reading Rockets](#)

[Social Identity Wheel – Equitable Teaching](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

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To earn this microcredential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

Suggested word count: 250-350 words

Please don't include any information that could identify you to reviewers.

1. What grade level and content area do you teach or support?
2. Why did you choose this microcredential on AANHPI identity?
3. What professional growth goals or student outcomes do you hope to achieve by completing this microcredential? Provide at least one concrete example of how you hope this will impact your teaching or students. Examples may include disrupting stereotypes, increasing AANHPI students' sense of belonging, or helping students analyze how systems affect communities.

Passing: Completely answers each of these questions using personal examples. Writing is organized and easy to understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this microcredential, please submit the following three artifacts as evidence of your learning. See rubric for passing score requirements.

Please don't include any information that could identify you or your students to your reviewers.

Artifact 1: Identity Reflection and Visual Representation

Part A: Visual Representation

Create a visual representation using an identity wheel, pie chart, self-portrait, infographic, hand-lettered design, or another visual format. Include aspects of your identity, such as race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, family role, profession, religion, geographic background, hobbies, or life experiences.

Part B: Written Reflection (200–300 words)

Below your visual representation, write a reflection that addresses:

1. Which aspects of your identity are most significant to you and why?
2. How do multiple aspects of your identity shape your experiences and perspectives?
3. How can understanding your own identities help you create a more inclusive learning environment for students?

Submission Requirements: Upload one document that contains one visual representation of your identity and a 200–300-word written reflection that responds to all three reflection questions.

Artifact 2: AANHPI Community Research (300–600 words)

Select two AANHPI communities to research. You may choose communities represented in your school, district, local community, personal experiences, or professional interests.

Choose **one** of the following formats to demonstrate your learning:

- A written comparison (300–600 words)
- A graphic organizer with written explanations
- A presentation, infographic, chart, or other visual format with written explanations

Your submission must address:

1. What historical events contributed to the formation of each community's identity?
2. How have the identities of these communities changed or evolved over time?
3. What similarities and differences exist between the experiences of the two communities?
4. Based on your research, identify one specific way you could incorporate the histories, perspectives, or experiences of these communities into a learning experience, classroom resource, discussion, or community-building activity.

Upload one document that addresses all questions.

Artifact 3: Identity Exploration Lesson or Activity

Design and facilitate an identity exploration activity with students, colleagues, or another learning community. The activity should provide participants with opportunities to reflect on identity, explore intersectionality, and consider how identities shape experiences and perspectives.

You may use an identity wheel, identity map, identity web, oral history activity, visual representation activity, or another age-appropriate identity exploration strategy.

Submit a single document that includes:

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- A copy of the activity, organizer, prompts, or directions used
- Three completed participant samples representing a range of responses, with personal identifying information removed
- A 200–300-word analysis that addresses:
 - What evidence from participant responses suggests participants developed a deeper understanding of identity and intersectionality?
 - How effective was the activity in fostering understanding, belonging, and community? Include specific evidence from participant responses.
 - What modifications, extensions, or next steps would you consider if you facilitated this activity again?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Identity Reflection and Visual Representation	Submission includes a visual representation that identifies several aspects of the educator's identity. Includes a 200–300-word reflection that addresses all three required reflection questions. Visual and reflection are submitted together in a single document and demonstrate an understanding of intersectional identity.	Submission includes both a visual representation and a written reflection, but one or more requirements are only partially completed. Examples may include identifying fewer than five identities, failing to fully address all three reflection questions. Evidence of understanding identity is present but incomplete.	Submission is missing a required component. Examples include a missing visual representation, a missing written reflection, failure to address most of the reflection questions, or insufficient evidence of understanding how multiple identities influence experiences and perspectives.
Artifact 2: Community Research	Submission examines two AANHPI communities and explains how historical events shaped each community's identity. Submission describes how the identities of both communities have evolved	Submission examines two AANHPI communities but provides a limited explanation of identity formation, identity development, or similarities and differences between the communities.	Submission does not adequately examine two AANHPI communities or provide incomplete information about identity formation, identity development, or community experiences.

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	over time and analyzes meaningful similarities and differences between their experiences. Submission identifies a specific and appropriate way to incorporate the histories, perspectives, or experiences of these communities into a learning experience, classroom resource, discussion, or community-building activity and explains how the application supports representation, belonging, or inclusion.	An application to educator practice is identified but lacks specificity, connection to the research, or explanation of how it supports representation, belonging, or inclusion.	An application to educator practice is missing, unclear, or not connected to the research.
Artifact 3: Identity Exploration Activity	Submission includes required components: a copy of the activity, organizer, prompts, or directions used; participant work samples that provide evidence of implementation and participant engagement.	Submission includes most required components but is missing part of the required evidence. Examples may include missing or incomplete activity materials, fewer than three participant samples,	Submission is missing multiple required components or provides insufficient evidence that the educator implemented and analyzed an identity exploration activity.

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	with identifying information removed; and a 200–300-word analysis. The analysis addresses all three required questions by examining participants' learning related to identity and intersectionality using evidence from participants' responses, evaluating the activity's effectiveness in fostering understanding, belonging, and community, and identifying appropriate modifications, extensions, or next steps for future implementation.	an analysis that doesn't fully address all three required questions, or an analysis that provides a limited explanation of participant learning and activity outcomes.	The analysis may be missing, incomplete, or fail to address the required questions.
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Part 3 Reflection

Suggested word count: 300-500 words

For tips on writing a strong reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this microcredential.

Please don't include any information that could identify you to reviewers.

1. What's one new insight or perspective you gained about AANHPI identity and intersectionality, and how did it expand or challenge your previous understanding?
2. Which artifact was most meaningful to you and why?
3. What steps will you take to continue learning about AANHPI identity and intersectionality?

Passing: The educator responds to all reflection questions and includes specific examples from their experience completing the microcredential.