



# SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021

GETTING STARTED WITH

# EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

(ED&I)

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## OVERVIEW:

The 2020–2021 school year finds us experiencing many challenges simultaneously, from the effects and limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, budgetary constraints, and woes to ongoing, increasing racial tension and unrest. As an educator, you are likely seeking resources, experts, supportive peers, and guidance in navigating these multiple realities. In addition to the instructional resources that NAEA has released recently, this resource—organized around the following areas: **Context and History, From Individual/Self to Community/Others, In the Classroom, Organizational Change, Impact, and Action Steps You Can Take Today**—is a guide for *getting started* with equity, diversity, and inclusion work in your setting.

In March 2019, the NAEA Board of Directors acted swiftly in response to the recommendations presented by its **National Task Force on Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion**. In December 2019, NAEA officially launched the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (ED&I) Commission, which has been working on reviewing and prioritizing these recommendations. Currently, five ED&I Working Groups are addressing the most crucial and relevant recommendations for practitioners, with ED&I-related professional development and resources that NAEA members identified as their top two immediate areas of need.

This document is intended for use in tandem with the existing “Tips for Returning to the Visual Arts and Design Classroom” and “Tips for Teaching Visual Arts and Design in a Distance-Learning Environment” in **NAEA’s Remote Learning Toolkit**.

## CONTEXT AND HISTORY:

Each individual is on a unique learning journey toward an increased understanding of the role of equity, diversity, and inclusion in their community and educational setting. Our positionality—shaped by past and present experiences, social identities, and many other dynamics—contributes to understanding ourselves and how we understand others. Regardless of where you fall on the continuum or cycle of learning, each of us must take steps toward increased growth and understanding to serve our diverse learners best and create inclusive learning environments.

NAEA ED&I Recommendation #6 charges the association with providing ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion professional development for NAEA membership and leadership, as these individuals “play a critical role in creating equitable outcomes for all by undertaking initiatives aimed at informing equity, diversity, and inclusion-focused policy and practice. As a consequence, key players within an organization should commit to developing their understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion to determine how existing policies and practices create, [maintain], or perpetuate inequity.” This recommendation stems from data collected from Task Force research in July 2018, in order to better understand how the NAEA Board of Directors, state-level affiliates, and other leaders within the NAEA community comprehend and approach equity, diversity, and inclusion work, and what they perceive as their professional development needs toward furthering the work.

In his open letter to members, NAEA President-Elect James Haywood Rolling, Jr. reflected on the urgency of the steps ahead: “And this brings us up to this very moment as we contemplate a way forward. The nation is clearly at a tipping point. We are beyond just making statements. **What are the actions our field must take next?**” Defining the specific actions we will take moves us beyond performative roles in equity, diversity, and inclusion into positions that have the power to effect positive change. To identify these action steps, we must have a robust knowledge base of potential equity, diversity, and inclusion strategies to incorporate into our daily professional practices.

Engaging in equitable practices is not necessarily a linear path and perhaps better understood as a cycle of learning and growth on our daily journey as we revisit essential lessons multiple times, building upon knowledge and experiences along the way. As we each consider the actions that we will take, let’s get started by looking at some resources to increase basic understandings.

**1. Understanding race and ability as a social construct:** When did you become aware of race, stereotypes, and other complicating components of individual or social identity, such as ethnicity, culture, **LGBTQIA2S+**, gender and sexual orientation, and the spectrum of physical/learning abilities and disabilities?

- [Explore this video on debunking race.](#)
- [Explore this video concerning the origins of race.](#)
- [Explore this video about ethnicity.](#)
- [Find out more about neurodiversity here.](#)

**2. Resources for understanding my community’s history:**

By researching our community’s history, we become more aware of legacies of inequity that still impact people today, and we can contextualize their influence on the present. As you research your local community, ask yourself:

- How have practices, such as redlining and Jim Crow laws, left legacies of racism, oppression, and inequity in your community? Which of these practices are still in effect today?
- How has your community supported diverse individuals both in the past and present?
- How are diversity and People of Color represented in your community?
- To be more supportive, how can you listen and learn about the perspectives and histories of diverse individuals and People of Color leaders in your community?
- What action can you take to make your community more equitable and inclusive for diverse and People of Color?

- Resources:
  - More information on segregation [here](#).
  - More information on redlining [here](#).
  - Exploring community history and cultural difference [here](#).
  - Fostering equity through community design [here](#).

### 3. Resources for understanding national and international history and context:

- Explore **books** focusing on history and anti-racism by author Ibram X. Kendi and his collaboration with author Jason Reynolds for young audiences, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*.
- Shorthand guide by [the Smithsonian](#).

### 4. Resources for building lessons and units:

- See NAEA's Remote Learning Toolkit section on **ED&I** for vetted resources/websites.
- Teaching Tolerance has a range of helpful **tools and classroom resources**.

Our shared history and context bring us to this current moment, and from that our language and terminology have also evolved. Part of getting on the same page with our colleagues, students, parents, and communities includes having shared language and understanding. In the following section, we're providing an initial overview of key terms and ideas, but please visit these **resources** and **websites** for more comprehensive glossaries.

#### GETTING STARTED, DEFINING TERMINOLOGY:

NAEA's work has been centered on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Here's how we've begun thinking about these terms (adopted December 2017):

- **Equity:** Refers to conditions that support fairness and justness based on individual needs and circumstances, whereas all members have opportunities to thrive and realize their best within the NAEA community.
- **Diversity:** Describes both observable and non-observable individual differences (life experiences, work context, learning and working styles, and personality types, among others) and group/social differences (race, gender identity and expression, age, social class, country of origin, ability, beliefs, and intellectual and cultural perspectives, among others) that can contribute to organizational vibrancy and a dynamic professional community.
- **Inclusion:** Describes proactive, intentional, and thoughtful engagement with diversity to the extent that all have the ability to contribute fully and effectively throughout the NAEA community and feel a sense of welcoming and belonging.

Given that language continues to evolve to better reflect and represent individual identities, including race, culture, and gender, here are some suggestions. Avoid making assumptions about someone's identity. Try setting the tone by speaking from the "I" perspective and sharing your identity first. For example, on Zoom calls, you might add your pronouns after your name.

Look at these resources that further explore the most recent terminology and language:

- **Gender identity and pronouns.**
- **Language for race and cultural backgrounds.**
- The term BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Although BIPOC intends to be a more inclusive term, it is not necessarily embraced by all. Read more [here](#).
- Explore Latinx, Hispanic, and Latino identities and language [here](#).

**Ask yourself:** How is art education moving from the colorblind and multicultural approaches of the past toward **culturally sustaining pedagogies** that support **anti-racist educators** right now? Our art education colleagues, Anti-Racist Art Teachers, have created powerful and relevant resources and tools [here](#).

## FROM INDIVIDUAL/SELF TO COMMUNITY/OTHERS:

Most ED&I training programs begin with a self-assessment tool. These diagnostics can help an individual see where their strengths and weaknesses may exist with regard to our own cultural competency and how to develop and address these. When a community chooses to inventory, share, and learn together, positive and equitable change can occur.

### 1. Individual/Self:

- Explore self-assessment tools like the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**. These tools are most effective when paired with dialogue from professional experts. They often can offer a common language for groups to find connections and support each other in this journey.
- Understanding your **positionality**, privilege, and power is a critical first step. Through assessments, readings, and conversations, give yourself safe space for growth as you will likely experience discomfort as you progress on your learning journey.
- There are some models for understanding oneself, like the **Helms and Cross model**. These frameworks describe different stages of racial and ethnic identity development. **Find out more about racial equity tools here.**

### 2. From Individual to Community: The process of moving from individual internal work to engaging with a community on the topics of race, equity, diversity, and inclusion can benefit from the following tools and strategies:

- Consider establishing **group norms** or agreements with input from your community to create safe spaces for dialogue and difficult discussions. Items like “speak your truth” and “experience discomfort” can help to establish productive norms around respect and inclusivity.
- Spend time listening to others’ stories and descriptions of their unique experiences. Before responding, take in the information and consider it from a fresh perspective.
- Join others for greater support and understanding. Consider becoming a part of an affinity group (find out more **here** and **here**), a learning community, or a **community of practice**.



## IN THE CLASSROOM:

Bringing race, equity, diversity, and inclusion work into your classroom is both brave and essential. Each of our students need to know that their background and identity is honored and welcomed in our art rooms and studios. Check out this resource promoting youth voice and identity **here**. NAEA has developed the following Position Statement on Equity for All Learners [Adopted March 2012; Reviewed 2015; Reviewed and Revised March 2020] that our Delegates Assembly and Board have vetted and approved:

Visual arts education is committed to goals that advocate excellence, equity and inclusivity for all learners through differentiated educational opportunities, resources, communities and systems of support. A successful art education program respects a range of diversity in the uniqueness of all learners, their similarities, differences, and learning characteristics. Included in the range of diversity are learners who are underserved, typically these include marginalized identities around race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status/class, and disability/ability. Art educators should incorporate learners' prior knowledge and experience into practice by respecting and valuing their learners' unique strengths through creating equitable learning environments. Instructional materials should present diverse populations as role models in various aspects of the visual arts. To this end, instruction and assessment should be designed so that all learners, based on their abilities and backgrounds, are afforded opportunities to communicate what they know, understand, and are able to do through the visual arts.

In James H. Rolling, Jr.'s open letter, he challenges us to think about our roles: "As an anti-racist local art council, art teacher, or museum educator, you can disrupt racism by *speeding up* the process of including the contemporary work of artists who are Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color in your curricula, collections, or public parks without waiting years for them to be sanctioned as important or famous by the gatekeepers of the powers that be." Ask yourself how you are designing the most inclusive classroom. Is it through your social-emotional approach with students, analyzing and updating your instructional moves, and/or carefully reviewing and updating your content and artist examples? Here are a few methods and examples to help you along your journey, whether you are a novice or an experienced practitioner.

1. Consider how **visual arts and design standards** can work hand in hand with **social justice standards** and **social-emotional learning standards**.
2. Expand your library of artists and examples by considering how to integrate the work of BIPOC artists as well as a broad range of gender identities and cultural/geographic backgrounds and perspectives. Include more living artists. For excellent thoughts and resources on this topic, **Art21**, **Crystal Bridges Museum**, and the **Brooklyn Museum of Art** are great places to find inspiration.
3. Examining your instructional moves, habits, and processes is a valuable practice for better understanding how intentionally inclusive you are, and identifying areas to address and improve. Check out these various resources to support this work **here**, **here**, and more on **culturally sustaining practices here**.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:

Whether a practitioner in the classroom or an administrator in a central office, we all have a role to play in organizational progress and transformation. In NAEA's ED&I Task Force Recommendations, there are numerous ideas for addressing necessary changes in policy and infrastructure. In many cases, a thorough review of policy and practice is necessary to illuminate areas of successful inclusion as well as barriers to inclusion, from governance to implementation. Below are some areas that NAEA is exploring:

- **Recommendation #5:** Infuse ED&I priorities into each Goal of the 2020–2025 NAEA Strategic Plan; develop a new sixth ED&I Goal for the Strategic Plan with its own priorities that center equity work within the NAEA community; and employ metrics to measure progress toward ED&I goals and objectives.
- **Recommendation #7:** Develop policy that includes, supports, and welcomes diversity, including invisible diversity. Policy based on universal design principles ensures that the responsibility for adaptation resides with NAEA, rather than the marginalized individuals and groups the association seeks to include.
- **Recommendation #9:** Collect equity, diversity, and inclusion statistical data that incorporates demographics concerning NAEA award recipients, the selection committees, and the nomination committees, as well as of Divisions, the Delegates Assembly, and Interest Groups, to ensure inclusionary NAEA policies, practices, and procedures.

We encourage respectfully seeking outside assistance or input from members of underrepresented groups both within and outside of your organization to identify ways in which the organization is not welcoming or inclusive of different perspectives.

Please be considerate when asking underrepresented individuals to offer feedback on systemic issues and work from a place of listening and respect. Ask yourself how you might re-invest or return the time and energy that they've shared with you. Consider reviewing the following areas to increase your understanding of your organization's **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/challenges (SWOT)** in terms of ED&I:

1. Understand the governing documents and policies for your organization.
2. Review both formal policies and routine daily practices.
3. Consider the governance structure and processes for nominations, elections, and appointments to leadership roles. Are the criteria and rubrics utilized for decision making inclusive and fair for all? How could language best be updated?

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### IMPACT:

How do we best measure the impact of equitable policies and initiatives? How do we measure success in this arena? What does success look like? Who decides if the initiative is successful? Measuring change is critical, but it is not always an easy task. Work to set benchmarks for yourself, your local community, and your classroom and strive to track meaningful progress. Consider your reach, implementation, and effectiveness, as well as qualitative accounts and quantitative data. The **RE-AIM** Model can aid in looking at aspects of a body of work or initiative.

1. **Reach:** The number of individuals who participate in a given initiative, intervention, or program.
2. **Implementation:** This refers to the fidelity of the various components, steps, and delivery that are part of the overall intervention strategy.
3. **Effectiveness:** This refers to the impact and the outcomes that are a result of an intervention.
4. **Qualitative Data:** This refers to the study of things in their natural settings with a focus on making sense of them, interpretation, and meaning-making.
5. **Quantitative Data:** This refers to information about quantities and numbers.

**This section is included as it is critical to understand and track progress over time.**

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### ACTION STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY:

Not sure where to get started? Here are three immediate actions you can take:

1. Establishing group norms/agreements with the help of your community is a great first step.
2. You may also consider working with local tribes and Indigenous populations to acknowledge the history of the original people and land on which your organization operates, and begin convenings and gatherings by acknowledging **native lands** and people.
3. Commit to integrating contemporary diverse artists in your lesson plans as standard practice.

Additionally, ask yourself the following critical questions concerning self, students, curriculum and teaching, and learning environment:

## 1. Self:

- Have I identified and confronted my biases and prejudice?
- Am I actively anti-racist?
- Are my views ethno- and/or Eurocentric?
- Do I celebrate and affirm diversity?
- Do I demonstrate respect for cultures and backgrounds that are different from my own?
- Am I committed to behaviors, dispositions, and values that are pluralistic in nature?

## 2. Students:

- For whom am I designing the art curriculum?
- Have I made genuine attempts to make art education relevant to all of my students?
- Do I provide a learning environment where all students' cultures and art forms are recognized, shared, and respected?
- Am I knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, students' differing cultural backgrounds, values, traditions, and learning styles?

## 3. Curriculum and Teaching:

- Is my pedagogy and teaching practice culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining?
- Do I afford students and community the opportunities to teach me what I don't know or understand about their cultural and artistic forms?
- If I teach children or adolescents from only one cultural group, do I ignore diversity-related issues?
- Concerning art curricula, do I view art as socially constructed and consider which cultures have exerted dominance and which have been erased or marginalized in such constructions?
- Do I raise questions about art or frame questions in ways that encourage others to see that the arts may serve similar and unique functions and roles in diverse cultures and communities?
- Am I addressing gaps (i.e., racial, ethnic, and Indigenous perspectives) in teaching and learning about art?
- What more can I do to ensure that issues of diversity permeate the entire art curriculum?

## 4. Learning Environment:

- What is the social-emotional climate in my art classroom or learning environment?
- Whose work is displayed? To what student needs do I attend primarily?
- Whose work is dominant? Why?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>These questions were adapted, extended, or rewritten from an article titled "Using Contemporary Art to Challenge Cultural Values, Beliefs, and Assumptions" (Knight, 2006).



Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) is the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts/design educators, advancing visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding. Find out more at [www.arteducators.org](http://www.arteducators.org).



The *NAEA Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Commission* is working to ensure an inclusive art education professional community open to all. Find out more [here](#).



**SUPPORTING YOU AND YOUR LEARNERS DURING THIS UNPRECEDENTED TIME.**

The *Remote Learning Toolkit* is a repository of resources curated to help visual arts/design educators navigate challenges and opportunities within and beyond the classroom in the 2020-2021 school year.