Should All Americans Receive Anti-Bias Education?

*New York Times* - [Natalie Proulx](https://www.nytimes.com/by/natalie-proulx) - May 31, 2018

Have you learned about prejudice, unconscious bias or racism in school? If so, when did you first start learning about these issues? What have you learned and how have you been taught about them?

How do you feel about how your school teaches about race and racism? Is your school’s approach accurate, appropriate and sufficient? Has it been helpful to you? Why or why not?

In “[Starbucks’s Tall Order: Tackle Systemic Racism in 4 Hours](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/29/business/starbucks-closing-racial-bias-training.html),” Rachel Abrams, Tiffany Hsu and John Eligon write:

For Starbucks, the scope of companywide anti-bias training on Tuesday was easy to measure. Roughly 175,000 employees at 8,000 locations pored over nearly 23,000 iPads, learning about the processing power of unconscious brains and the roots of unconscious bias.

The training — part social justice crash course and part self-reflection exercise — is at the core of a well-choreographed effort by Starbucks to improve its corporate image after a backlash over the arrests [of two African-American men in a Starbucks](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/15/us/starbucks-philadelphia-black-men-arrest.html) in Philadelphia last month. Since then, the company has apologized, most recently in full-page newspaper ads. It has changed its guest policy, allowing people to sit without buying anything. And it enlisted a full complement of social justice activists and policy advocates for guidance.

Starbucks is trying to send a statement with the training. It closed most company-owned stores in the United States, leaving caffeine addicts without Frappuccinos and freelancers without office space.

But the company acknowledges that it is trying to tackle systemic racism going back centuries. And there is only so much that can be crammed into a four-hour session. …

At the training sessions, employees broke into small groups to guide themselves through 68 pages of materials printed on newspaper print, sure to create ink-stained hands. They watched videos on iPads, some with stands made from a cut-up Starbucks cup.

Many of the exercises had the sort of open-ended approaches that have long been the province of sociology classes and business retreats. In personal notebooks, employees were asked to jot down private responses to vague questions like “What makes me, me? And you, you?” After one of the Common videos, they were asked to pair with a co-worker and list all the ways they were different from each other.

After a brief lesson on brain science, they took the Stroop effect test, quickly reciting the colors that words were written in to show how they form implicit associations. The notebook then took them through what it means to be “color brave” — rather than “colorblind.”

One of the more powerful exercises came toward the end of the training, when the employees listened to recorded audio clips of other colleagues discussing biased decisions they had made. In one instance, an employee said he had hid the tip jar when he saw a group of black men walk in. He became embarrassed, he said, after he gave them their change and they asked if there was a tip jar for them to leave it in.