

## Anti-Racist Educators and Relationship-Centered Restorative Schools

[Anti-Racist Education - YouTube](#) (Jan 2022 [7 mins] PBS Wisconsin)

“If you are not trying to disrupt a system that is inequitable for some students, then you are perpetuating [that] system,” Marguerite Penick-Parks (co-author of *The Guide for White Women who Teach Black Boys*). But how can educators lean in and imbed age-appropriate, anti-racism into the classrooms? Educators Gail Bertram (first grade) and Penick-Parks (professor and former HS teacher) provide concrete advice for teachers committed to growing as anti-racist educators. Multi-cultural books that center myriad identities and experiences is one way. Cultural diversity in literature, Penick-Parks explains, provides “windows” into others’ identities and experiences, as well as “mirrors” into your own; windows and mirrors are essential to children’s learning. The physical environment should reflect the positive identities and contributions of myriad communities. However, books, media and physical environment are inadequate without explicit conversations about race. White people are less equipped to do this than children of color who have race conversations all the time. To support all children, especially as white teachers, means first stepping back out of a comfort zone to learn and equip yourself, and it also means committing to anti-racist life-long learning. “Accept the disquiet of never being done with this work,” says Bertram.

[Being an Anti-Racist Educator | School Culture Solutions - YouTube](#) (July 2029 [17 mins])

Black children—and other children of color—are disproportionately punished, suspended, expelled, and even arrested in schools. “Mr. V”, educator, is resolute: “Restorative justice is the only approach to reverse these unforgivable trends in our schools and systemic racism is the chief obstacle that stands in the way of turning things around.” Mr. V. stresses that white teachers (80% of all teachers) can teach children of color effectively, but only if they embrace certain realities: that white supremacy exists and needs to be outed in schools; that white privilege is a component of white supremacy; and that white fragility makes it harder to understand white supremacy and privilege. Instead of self-reflection, educators too often turn the tables from racism to why Black or Brown kids can’t behave or learn. The central problem V. explains is that teachers lack relationships with their students. “They hadn’t created the classroom community that reflected the values, customs, desires and beliefs of the greater community that they served. They expected that the students would adopt their values and priorities. They complained about their students’ behaviors and ways of being while downplaying their strengths.” Teachers need to begin by asking, listening and observing what is important to students and families. “This is the focus of Restorative Practices.” Mr. V. uses Ibram X.Kendi’s framework to highlight how assimilation racism operates in schools: “I want children of all races to have the same opportunities but my Black students need to learn how to behave, how to adopt my values, how to fit in and shed their bad habits...” So, the thinking goes, we need to create harsh penalties so that these kids get in line. Mr. V. draws on MLK and, decades later, Kendi’s description of “order over justice”. If yours is a “no excuses” school, it cannot be anti-racist. Mr. V. describes how we escalate punishments that disproportionately harm a Black child, especially one with a disability. Restorative schools, however, would assure that the child had a meaningful relationship with at least faculty member. “As educators, if we’re not advocating for restorative justice in our schools with the same passion and dedication as the protestors fighting for police reform in the streets right now than we cannot be anti-racist educators. Restorative justice is the answer because it teaches us how to build communities that reflect the values and voices and students and provides the strategies needed to repair the harm with alternatives to the antiquated racist zero-tolerance punishments that currently dominate our schools.”

# children's institute



STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND  
EMOTIONAL HEALTH

## [School Culture Solutions](#)

### [Introducing Mister V, School Culture Consultant | School Culture Solutions](#)

#### **Additional Resource:**

#### [How to be an anti-racist teacher in a mostly white school | Taryn Coe](#) (Jun 25, 2021)

It is essential that white educators in majority white schools ensure that their students and colleagues are educated about racism. Educator Taryn Coe believes that unless parents and teachers actively choose to discuss race and racism with the young people, students will grow up with a woefully incomplete understanding of the subject - leaving them both uninformed and unable to tackle the obstacles racism has put in place. In this talk, Taryn shares some concrete steps she's taken to become a more actively anti-racist educator. The TED-Ed Educator Talks channel is dedicated to celebrating great ideas in education. Each educator featured on this channel participated in TED Masterclass—a professional learning program that helps people identify, develop and share their ideas with each other... and the world. Want to bring the TED Masterclass program to your school, district or organization? Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/tedmasterclass>