

Minimizing Bias in Instructional Design





“Let's invite one another in. Maybe then we can begin to fear less, to make fewer wrong assumptions, to let go of the biases and stereotypes that unnecessarily divide us.”

Michelle Obama, Becoming



What do we mean by 'bias'?

- Every one of us has attitudes and beliefs that affect our understanding of situations, interactions with others, and decisions.
- If embedded in the course materials, biases can cause participants to question, disregard, or outright reject the content of the instruction.
- We must be aware of our biases and make every effort to neutralize them to maximize the value of our instructional design projects.



Bias Types

- Age
- Race
- Skin tone
- Ethnicity
- National origin
- Immigration status
- Physical appearance
- Education
- Social status
- Marital status
- Gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Physical disabilities
- Mental health status
- Religion



Bias Examples

- **Favoritism** – We prefer people who look like us and live like us
- **Labeling** – We assign labels to groups of people who share similar traits
- **Stereotyping** – We make broad assumptions about certain groups of people
- **Groupthink** – We go along with the crowd instead of forming our own opinions
- **Naïveté** – We give the benefit of the doubt to people we adore



How does bias appear in instructional materials?



Favoritism

We prefer people who look like us



And share our beliefs



Labeling

What labels might you assign to these people?



Stereotypes

Might this marriage be arranged?



Are these protestors becoming violent?



Groupthink

How far does celebrity influence go?



Is everything on the news true?

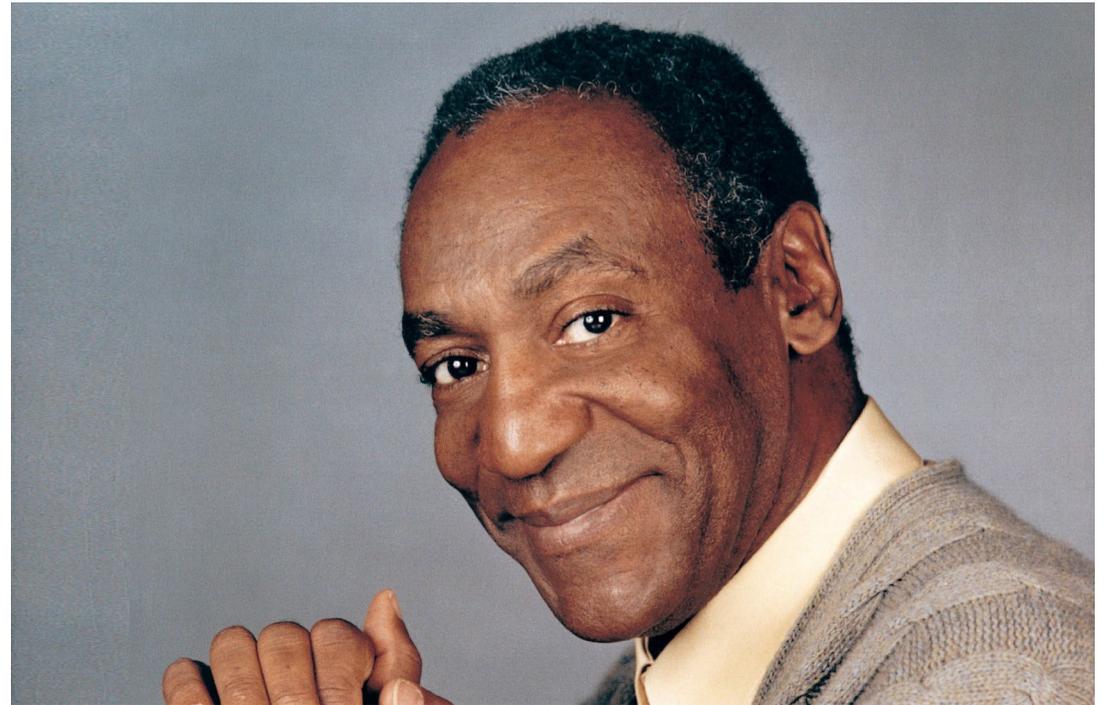


Naïveté

Not her...



Not him...



How to Minimize Bias in Instructional Designs

1. Admit that you have biases
2. Focus on your experience with individuals to challenge your biases
3. Open yourself to new ideas, images, and people
4. Consider diversity, inclusion, and equity when creating a course
5. Use peer review to ensure minimal bias in our work

