



Learning Forward PA
Professional Learning Assessment

All participants attending the Fall Institute can choose to complete this option.

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**This Professional Learning Assessment is a summary of a fictitious session given by Beverly Daniel Tatum.*

1. Determine three central ideas you heard today. In three separate paragraphs, provide a summary of each of those ideas. Then, in one paragraph, state how you will apply those ideas in your educational setting. (100 pts)

Three central ideas spoke to me today. The speaker, Beverly Daniel Tatum, explained that leadership is everyone's responsibility within a community, that sometimes, our behavior patterns are so embedded that we bring assumptions into every situation, and that racism isn't always an issue of black and white.

The first idea regarding leadership was interesting to me. My principal is the "formal" leader in my school. Tatum, however, challenged our thinking and told us if every adult in the school assumed the responsibility of a leader and framed that role in the context of social justice, our schools would be better places. We need to prepare our students not just for their school day ahead, or even for the hour ahead, but for the world they are going to face beyond our community. Adults within our school systems need to begin to assume leadership responsibilities, informal and formal, and assist students in preparing them for the future.

The difficulty in assuming those leadership responsibilities is that often we carry assumptions into the workplace that limit our students without our even realizing it. We develop biases by what we haven't been told about a particular culture, not about what we have been told. For example, when students of color are not exposed to authors from different races, they begin to assume that only white people become authors. Cultural messages in our advertising and media have contributed to these assumptions. As leaders within the school system, we must be mindful of our own personal bias and make sure we are not imposing that bias upon our students.

Tatum borrows a definition of racism from David Wellman, author of Portraits of White Racism (1977). He defined racism as a "system of advantage based on race." Racism is not one race being hateful, ignorant, or prejudice toward another race; it is a

system that involves cultural messages, behavioral thought habits, and institutional beliefs and practices that convey advantage of one race over another. These messages surround us everyday. Our students hear them without realizing it, especially if they grow up in neighborhoods that are of one race. The example that Beverly Daniel Tatum used that I must share with my colleagues is the example of white people having the advantage of being able to walk around a store without being followed by security. Our Caucasian students have probably never had security follow them suspiciously through a store.

I plan on applying this information in my school setting in a few ways. My suburban school setting is 95% Caucasian and 5% African American. When it is time for my students to take a field trip into any city, the parents are fearful in allowing their Middle Schoolers to attend. In addition, the white students who go to our resource room have targeted the few students of color who happen to be in that resource room. So, I plan on sharing this information in the next few PLC meetings so all staff members can hear it. We will then generate a T-list of what an informal leader looks like and sounds like within our Middle School. Then, using the author list provided by the presenter, I will meet with the librarian so we can take inventory of the books that we presently have in our library. I want to make sure our students are exposed to authors from every race. Since I have some funds left in my literacy account, I will then purchase books that can be placed in classroom libraries. Prior to doing so, I will share those books with teachers at PLC meetings throughout the year so they can then share the books with their students. It may be difficult to change students' attitudes that have been engrained in their minds for years by their parents however I certainly can widen my students' view of the world and expose them to other cultures through literature.

2. Develop a measurable goal that demonstrates how you will use student performance measures to show the impact of what you learned today. (50 pts)

By the end of the 2014-15 school year all students at Utopia Middle School will have read 2 books by an author of a race different from their own; in addition, the students in the resource room will participate in an author study of their choice. This will result in a decrease in the number of "racial discipline events" in the resource room from our present number to zero.

3. Using the three components of the Leadership Standard below, explain in a three paragraph summary, how you will assume the role of a leader. Learning Forward's Standard #2 *Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who*
 - *develop capacity,*
 - *advocate, and*
 - *create support systems for professional learning. (50 pts)*

-I will develop capacity by sharing this information with my colleagues and developing a T-Chart with them as to what an informal leader looks like and sounds like at Utopia Middle School. This chart will hang in our PLC room and I will revisit it and provide positive feedback when I see the behaviors occurring.

-I will advocate for continued professional learning on this topic by making sure our PLC time is held sacred and not wasted on discussions that are irrelevant.

-I will create support systems for professional learning by sharing this plan with my principal and librarian so they are informed. My principal usually comes to the PLC meetings and my librarian is going to be involved in this plan. I am eager to get started.

*You may type your answers into this document.

*A rubric and an exemplar has been developed to assist you develop your answers. Go to our webpage www.learningforwardpa.org for further information.

*This assessment must be emailed to learningforwardpa@gmail.com by October 29, 2013 in order to receive your Act 48 Credit hours. When you email your document, save it as follows: your last name first name Act48. (eg. MillerFranAct48)