

How to be an Antiracist



- RACISM

A powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value

- RACIST

One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.

- ANTIRACIST

One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.

“What if we realized the best way to ensure an effective educational system is not by standardizing our curricula and tests but by standardizing the opportunities available to all students?”

Ibram X. Kendi

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Cultural Norms of white supremacy



Artwork by Tema Okun

- PERFECTIONISM

*Are students encouraged with a productive failure model?
Are there multiple ways to solve a problem?*

- SENSE OF URGENCY

*Are goals set with realistic time lines?
Is there a culture of stressful decision making?*

- QUANTITY OVER QUALITY

*What does success look like?
Are process goals valued?*

- INDIVIDUALISM

*Are students trained to work on teams?
Is there a culture that values asking for help?*

Building connections through “fast chats”

A fast chat is a short breakout room activity with 1-2 other people.

You only have 5 minutes, so make sure that everyone gets to share an answer to the following question:

What are the norms/habits/assumptions in your discipline?

What are the norms/habits/assumptions for student interaction during class time?



Photo by Robert Anasch on Unsplash

Podcast - “Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Practice”

<https://anchor.fm/cndls/episodes/Episode-2-Faculty-Perspectives-epf0f5>

Bob Beis, Business Professor, Georgetown (9:00 min)

Sabrina Wesley-Nero, Education Professor, Georgetown (16:34 min)

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Decolonial pedagogy

“Settler colonialism fundamentally relies on a logic of not-seeing. In particular, a not-seeing of indigenous people’s lands in order to allow their colonial takeover and a not-seeing of how anti-immigrant xenophobia, white supremacy, and settler colonialism are mutually reinforcing.”

Andrea Smith. “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism” from Queer Indigenous Studies. University of Arizona Press.

“Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and everyday.”

Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING, Cultural Studies, 21:2-3, 240-270

Decolonizing the classroom

Time: Resist colonial and neoliberal coercion around time and productivity

Consider flexible deadlines: giving multiple choices for due dates (for instance, over a week)

Consider suspending penalties for late work—prioritize full engagement rather than timeliness

Slow down the hurried pace of higher education by opening class with a freewrite, guided meditation, or song related to class themes

Openly discuss the impact of time scarcity on the learning process

Help students become conscious of the colonial morality around the use of time (worth=productivity)

Suggestions from Sam Bullington, INVST instructor *(Please contact me if you would like hire Sam to do a presentation for your unit)*

Decolonizing the classroom

Bodies: Bring bodies into the classroom

Critique the (white western masculine) disembodied rationality focus of the educational system

Highlight bodies as sources of knowing

Acknowledge bodily needs (for food, movement etc) in the classroom

Interrupt focus on bodies as objects of critique and self-improvement

Help students become conscious of the assumptions and standards around bodies that were part of their colonial training (appropriate bodies, attractive bodies, bodies as indicators of meaning/morality)

Do embodied exercises, such as role plays, that allow students to enact course materials rather than just think about them

Suggestions from Sam Bullington, INVST instructor *(Please contact me if you would like hire Sam to do a presentation for your unit)*

Decolonizing the classroom

Spirit: Help students mend their disconnection

Critique the (white western masculine) disembodied rationality focus of the educational system

Highlight intuitive ways of knowing; question the need for mastery, certainty and perfection

Do embodied exercises (either in the classroom or as homework) that are uplifting, that help students tap into their own inherent goodness and joy and the inherent goodness of others

Incorporate connecting with the earth into assignments and classroom activities

Move students out of their everyday mindset by opening class with a song, dance, or guided meditation

Help students recognize their complicity in promoting human exceptionalism/human superiority

Prioritize classroom community as a pedagogical goal—absences as disconnection rather than points

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Resources

Discussion board on office hour practices:

https://canvas.colorado.edu/courses/74405/discussion_topics/708920

JET micro-credential program:

<https://www.colorado.edu/center/teaching-learning/programs/micro-credentials/just-equitable-teaching>

Owusu-Ansah, A, Kyei-Blankson, L (2016) Going back to the basics: Demonstrating care, connectedness, and a pedagogy of relationship in education. World Journal of Education 6(3): 1–9.

Centering a pedagogy of care during the pandemic:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325020981079>

