Anti-racism Series
PART 1: Definition and Significance

As racial inequities and disparities permeate society, these inequities also appear on campuses, in curricula, and in classrooms. In his most recent book, *How to be an Antiracist*, Kendi defines an anti-racist as: “One who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity” (2019, p. 25). Implicit in Kendi’s definition of an anti-racist is the expectation of actually doing something. Neither inaction nor silence offer pathways to equity. He suggests, “…the only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it – and then dismantle it” (Kendi, 2019, p. 9).

As educators, we can infuse our professional practice with actions in support of anti-racist ideals. We can all contribute to this race and equity work, so that the entire burden does not fall solely on Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). Beginning with a vigilant self-awareness, we can interrogate our own experiences and unconscious biases (see Implicit Bias series), disrupting the privileges from which we may benefit. Reflecting on privilege and acknowledging racism and white supremacy (see Figure 1) can help keep focus on our anti-racist work.

![Figure 1: Image Source: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (2005), Adapted: Ellen Tuzzolo (2016); Mary Julia Cooksey Cordero (@jewelspewels) (2019); The Conscious Kid (2020).](image)

In taking responsibility for what we know and don’t know, we must educate ourselves and strive for higher levels of cultural competence and humility (see Part 3 for resources). Becoming culturally competent is committing to the practice of cultural humility which involves continuous exploration of ones’ own cultural beliefs and intersecting identities through self-reflection, and self-critique as a precursor to learning about, interacting appreciating and respecting different cultures; it is a process that requires humility (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Indeed, cultural competence is a life-long journey not a destination. We must then

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1 Throughout this resource, we have followed the spelling convention normative at UC Davis, which includes a hyphen. At times, we spell the term without a hyphen, to honor preferences of referenced authors.
act to apply these new learnings to our course design and interactions in our classrooms.

Anti-racist classrooms should attend to our students’ collective trauma in ways that address their experiences and cultivate a climate built to empower, uplift, and celebrate the differences. Decolonizing our curriculum and teaching representative history works towards these goals. Listening without judgment, addressing perceived slights, and actively engaging in and facilitating respectful and productive discussions that may feel uncomfortable, are ways we can take anti-racist steps in our classrooms (Simmons, 2019).

Why It Matters?
As evidence-based course design informs us, we should first seek to understand the characteristics of our learners in order to strategically plan our courses. Of particular relevance, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) is an inclusive term which highlights the identities and distinction between Black and Indigenous people, in contrast to other people of color. For more on where the term comes from, see this recent New York Times article. On an increasingly diverse campus, such as UC Davis, BIPOCs enrich instructional programs and courses. Approximately 77% of all degree-seeking undergraduate students (with known race/ethnicity) at UCD identified as other than White/Caucasian in Fall 2019 (UC Davis Student Profile, 2020). Of all US Citizen and Immigrant undergraduate students, 71.8% identified as BIPOC. Classrooms are not culturally-neutral spaces as “students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door” (Ambrose et al, 2010, p. 169-170). It is therefore crucial that instructors engage in pedagogical practices that acknowledge, celebrate and are inclusive of students who come from various backgrounds, experiences, and identities. Creating inclusive spaces within the classroom is a vital anti-racist enterprise that can help ensure equitable opportunities exist for all students to thrive.

Beyond general inclusiveness (see Part 2), as anti-racists, we must specifically be aware of and attend to more. While we cannot necessarily dismantle the structural racism embedded in our institutions individually, we can collectively work towards the dismantling, one class and course at a time. We do have control over our courses and are singularly in charge of each of our classes. Therefore, we have the power within our classrooms to establish policies that either reproduce or reduce inequities. We can create environments with a focus on interpersonal interactions that challenges bias, confronts microaggressions, and facilitates uncomfortable and charged discussions that foster growth.

Microaggressions and Charged Discussions
A landmark study published in 2007 defined microaggressions as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative...slights and insults” (Sue et al., 2007: p. 271). Microaggressions are often unintentional or automatic, come from well-meaning people, and may leave everyone involved uncertain about what happened.

While the research on microaggressions is ongoing (e.g., Bartlett, 2017, Lilienfeld, 2017), students, faculty, and staff on college campuses do report experiencing these daily “indignities” (Sue et al., 2007). Over time, microaggressions can inhibit the academic performance of students as they experience increased feelings of discomfort, self-doubt, isolation, and emotional exhaustion (Solorzano et al., 2000); undue stress and feelings of exclusion (Yosso et al., 2009); hopelessness and even post-traumatic stress disorder (Nadal et al., 2011). Additionally, microaggressions can often be explained in ways that absolve the perpetrator of responsibility, implicitly delegitimizing the experience of the targeted person (Sue et al., 2007). This type of gaslighting, in which the person experiencing the microaggression is made to feel that they are imagining things or being “overly sensitive,” can be just as detrimental as the microaggression itself (Sue, 2010). However, to be anti-racist in the classroom means that it is more important to center the experience of the person experiencing the microaggression rather than the intent behind the microagression.

Microaggressions can and do occur in the classroom. However, their occurrence can be an opportunity to stimulate potentially generative dialogues, though success in facilitating such conversations depends strongly on instructors’ abilities to recognize and respond to microaggressions in the first place (Sue et al., 2009). Being anti-racist includes maintaining a vigilant self-awareness, educating yourself, acknowledging racism and white privilege, and teaching representative history and scholarly contributions. It is imperative that when you see racism, you say something (Simmons, 2019). Recalling that anti-racism is rooted in action, below are some practical strategies to address (preventatively and responsively) microaggressions perpetrated in the classrooms:
Preventative Measures in the Anti-Racist Classroom

- Consider sharing the ways in which you have been conditioned by the circumstances of your life and society. Revealing yourself as “flawed” will encourage students to take risks by sharing their experiences and thoughts, and communicates courage in approaching conversations about difference and relationality.

- Be willing to accept a different reality and truth than your own. It’s likely that if you have a different background and circumstances than your students, and the experiences, feelings, and views they share may not resonate with your own.

- Consider using micro-affirmations. “Micro-affirmations,” (Rowe, 2008) are small acts of support that foster inclusion, listening, comfort, and support for people who may feel isolated or invisible in an environment. Using micro-affirmations can “communicate to students that they are welcome, visible, and capable of performing well” (Powell, Demetriou, & Fisher, 2013). Micro-affirmations can include making concerted efforts to use students’ correct names, pronunciations, and pronouns, and rewarding positive behaviors.

- Anticipate “hot button” topics or comments. Identifying and considering your response to these “hot button” topics ahead of time will help you respond effectively in the moment (Goodman, 1995). Questions you might ask yourself include: what issues, comments, or points of view might provoke a strong personal response in you? In your students? What topics are currently charged on campus, in the news, on social media, or in our larger society?

- Be intentional and prepare questions/guides that facilitate thoughtful discussion. Discussion guides can also provide you with a way to engage students in critical discussions in constructive and appropriately challenging ways. Brookfield & Preskill (1999) identify types of questions that can keep discussions moving and focused on learning goals. Questions that ask for more evidence: e.g. “How do you know that?” Questions that ask for clarification: e.g. “Can you think of an example?” Open questions that require more than a yes or no response: e.g., “What did the author mean when she said...” Linking or extension questions: e.g. “How does your observation relate to what we discussed last week?” Hypothetical questions: e.g. “If this event had happened today, what role do you think the internet might play?” Cause-and-effect questions: e.g. “What is likely to be the effect of raising the average class size from 15 to 30 on the ability of learners to conduct interesting and engaging discussions?” Summary and synthesis questions: e.g. “What remains unresolved or under debate about this topic?” Consider that conversations need not always arrive at solutions.

Responsive Measures in the Anti-Racist Classroom

- Sometimes when charged topics come up unexpectedly in class, it is because a student makes a remark that is hurtful or offensive to others. Other times, it is simply an unexpected turn in a conversation. Either way, how an instructor responds can have profound implications for students’ experience (Sue et al., 2009; Goodman, 1995). In either case, it is good to address the comment promptly.

- Think ahead to what portions of your class might spark charged conversations. Consider your course content, and work to develop specific strategies for handling those moments. If you’re stuck, this resource and others can help.

- Ask follow up questions. Ask follow up questions, particularly if a student has made a comment that’s potentially offensive or hurtful. This can help to clarify what they meant, which might not be what you heard (for suggestions with language, see part 2).

- Have students free write about the topic. Ask students to freewrite for a few minutes about the issue. This can allow things to calm down, and give you some time to re-group. It’s also a great way to emphasize the “teaching moment” such comments often present. Ask students to reflect on what they could learn from the conversation. Clarify what is inappropriate, however.

- Consider how best to address the comment or charged moment. Ignoring these comments can be tempting, especially if you feel uncomfortable, but that will send the message that such comments...
are okay. Instead, take pause and decide whether to address the topic as a class, address it with a small number of students outside of class, or address it in the next class meeting. Taking a deep breath and counting to 10 can be a useful way to decide slowly. If you decide not to pursue the discussion, you should still address the comment and say that you will return to it during the next class or outside of class. Then prepare in the meantime, and revisit the topic at the next opportunity.

- If you decide to pursue it, immediately legitimize the discussion. Avoid changing the subject or dismissing topics of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, citizenship status, disability, etc. as they arise (unless you are clear that you will return to the topic in the near future). This dismissal is itself a type of microaggression against some students.

- Use a direct approach to facilitating the discussion. Don’t be a passive observer, or let the class take over the discussion. It is also important to avoid engaging in tokenism, students are not “representatives” speaking for an entire identity group, nor should their identity and/or experiences be leveraged to make up for your lack of comfort or knowledge. The A.C.T.I.O.N. Framework (Souza, Ganote, & Cheung, 2016) is one method for effectively responding to microaggressions in your classroom. This framework includes: Ask clarifying questions to assist with understanding intentions; Come from curiosity not judgment; Tell what you observed as problematic in a factual manner; Impact exploration; Own your own thoughts and feelings around the impact; Next steps (Souza, 2018). For example questions and comments associated with this framework, see this article.

- Acknowledge and respect the experiences and feelings of your students. Avoid questioning, dismissing, or playing down experiences and feelings that your students share about issues of difference and power. They are trusting you when they share their experiences and feelings.

Acknowledgements
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Citation

References


Anti-racism Series
PART 2: Strategies for the Classroom

This part of the series focuses on developing student-centered learning experiences and content. It highlights anti-racist strategies to implement both in what you want students to learn (the content) and how you want them to learn it (the process). Antiracist pedagogy includes actively applying techniques to multiple dimensions of instructional practice – classroom climate, course curriculum, and teaching practices. A Community of Inquiry framework (where meaningful learning occurs through interdependent interactions between instructors, students, and content) can be helpful when designing antiracist learning activities and instruction, as the process of learning, whether face-to-face or online, can be sustained through such an integrated system of presences.

Anti-racist Teaching Presence
An anti-racist teaching presence optimizes student – instructor interactions. Establish the instructor as engaged facilitator by: providing instructor or TA feedback on assignments, learning journals, or other reflective activities; administering surveys or questionnaires and using the results to inform future instruction; participating in discussion forums or chats; sending announcements to summarize the previous week or describe the next week; providing online office hours for teams and individuals; mentoring individual learners; or developing classroom community through “working agreements” that determine how that community will work together.

Instructors can model anti-racist practices and a commitment to dismantling existing patterns of privilege and white supremacy in their interactions with students in many ways (see part 1 for more):

- Ensure that you ask students to speak only for themselves, not on behalf of an entire group.
- Design learning activities that are more often cooperative, as opposed to competitive.
- Intentionally develop and structure group projects in which all students have an opportunity to participate and contribute. Assign project roles for students to assume, for example.
- Structure class interactions by providing goals, procedures, and processes to ensure they don’t reinforce existing patterns of privilege.

When facilitating discussions with students, instructors can increase inclusivity of voices in many ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Example Language to Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering a discussion</td>
<td>“I invite you to share your ideas.” or “What are you thinking about?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>“Let me see if I heard you correctly. You said…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>“Tell me more about…” or “Can you give me an example of that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on</td>
<td>“Does anybody want to build on what was said?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>“I’d like to hear from someone who disagrees with that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging others</td>
<td>“That’s a great point. I hadn’t initially thought about that. Thanks for raising that.” Or “That’s a good question, which I hadn’t considered. I’m not sure of the answer right now. I’ll have to think more about it.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Anti-racist Cognitive Presence
Next, build an anti-racist cognitive presence through student – content and resource connections. From relevant and strategic content to examples and visuals to web quests, design a course devoted to an exploration of diverse ideas. Strive to develop curriculum that models and reflects the diversity of our world.

Working to ensure that all students might see themselves reflected in course content signals that everyone’s identity and group membership are valued and emphasizes the importance of considering
multiple points of view on a topic. Diverse points of view can be incorporated through the examples used to explain course concepts, through diverse cultural references, and through diverse scholarly perspectives, among other examples.

Your anti-racist curriculum...
- Acknowledges, respects, and makes multiple identities visible and represented in course materials.
- Emphasizes the racial-ethnic diversity and backgrounds of experts who have contributed to your discipline.
- Includes diverse readings, videos, and visuals that acknowledge the contributions and experiences of BIPOC students through content—powerpoint slides are a great place to include diverse examples.
- Is transparent-- clearly communicates expectations, learning objectives, assignments (see Tools for Revising/Creating your Own Transparent Assignments), and evaluation criteria (e.g., use of rubrics).
- Presents course material using a myriad of modalities (e.g., video, text, audio) to ensure greater student access.
- Seeks to understand the experiences and cultures of BIPOC students in order to plan learning activities that connect to prior knowledge.
- Acknowledges that decisions and interpretations are affected by who we are.

Anti-racist Social Presence
Finally, establish an anti-racist social presence by focusing on student – student interactions. You can foster these in-person or online through: student-generated community expectations; discussions, collaborative tools and tasks (e.g., Think-Pair-Share, Group Projects, Jigsaw Activities); peer instruction and editing of work; or synchronous / asynchronous Q & A or discussion fora (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Garrison et al, 2000). These types of interactions and learning platforms integrate discourse with climate.

Anti-racist climates...
- Provide opportunities to examine personal assumptions of a students' background, prior knowledge, and experience.
- Demonstrate high expectations for all students with an authentic belief that all can succeed.
- Learn and be able to pronounce all students' names and encourage them to address each other by name.
- Actively monitor for potential stereotype threat and broad generalizations.
- Create an environment prioritizing sense of belonging (e.g., where multiple groups feel “connected”).
- Cultivate connections between students, the discipline, and scholarly and professional communities.
- Ensure that students have an awareness of and access to campus resources that support their unique identities.
- Maintain a classroom free from microaggressions and address microaggressions when they occur.
- Facilitate a space where all classroom exchanges are respectful (e.g, norm setting, working agreement).
- Are transparent about instructor and student roles in the classroom, discussions, and activities and communicate them explicitly and consistently throughout the quarter (e.g., during the first day of class, in the syllabus, etc.).
- Acknowledge the unique identities, experiences, strengths, and needs of students, embracing student diversity as an asset and celebrating differences (e.g., a safe space where differences are not only respected, but also honored and valued).
- Invite students to approach instructors with concerns or ideas for inclusivity.
- Support the Principles of Community.

Increase inclusivity of student voices in their discussions with each other by first teaching them to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Example Language Students Can Use With Each Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter a discussion</td>
<td>“I’m wondering about...” or “Let me throw out an risky idea...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase</td>
<td>“Let me see if I heard you correctly. You said...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

cee.ucdavis.edu
Clarify | “Tell me more about...” or “Can you give me an example of that?”
---|---
Build on | “I agree with that because...”
Challenge | “Looking at it from a different perspective...” or “I’m not sure I agree with that because...” or “I can see you point, but...”
Acknowledge others | “That’s a great point. I hadn’t initially thought about that. Thanks for raising that.’ Or “That’s a good question, which I hadn’t considered. I’m not sure of the answer right now. I’ll have to think more about it.”

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**Citation**

**Additional Resources**
- For an Inclusive Pedagogy Framework from the Center for Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), visit [this site](http://cee.ucdavis.edu/JITT).
- For a developmental approach for reflecting and intentionally creating a new assessment future which proactively includes all students, read this paper from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

**References**

Anti-racism Series
PART 3: Seven Actionable Anti-Racist Steps in the Academy

As described in Part 1, anti-racism implies action. Simply put, to be anti-racist means to do something. This part of the series compiles and annotates resources that can be used as a basis for pedagogical and scholarly action.

1. Think Critically About Academic Literature

- A social-emotional learning expert argues that instructors have a responsibility to address the consequences of racism, even if uncomfortable. She describes how educators can do this – teach for an antiracist future – in five actionable steps.

- The paper situates antiracist pedagogy in within the sociological framework of Critical Theory. She argues for integrating antiracist pedagogy in the curriculum and for engaging in the professional development needed for effective implementation.

- The author synthesizes the literature on antiracist pedagogy to define and analyze its application to courses and professional lives. The paper describes the importance of self-reflection and the three components for effectively integrating the pedagogy.

- The author argues that, while perhaps not intended, whiteness theory and identity politics often lead to the focus on white students and white educators. She describes antiracist education for students of color, using her own lived experiences as a black female graduate student.

- The author analyzes the pedagogical practices of an antiracist framework and specifically focuses on the process of learning antiracism. She then examines the efficacy of such practices to move away from the existing Eurocentric approach in higher education.

- This experimental study describes the variation in responses of Black and White students to critical feedback. Authors analyze how stigma mediates these responses and provides suggestions for mentoring and other instructor-student interactions.

- The study uses focus groups to investigate how Black faculty at an R1 university navigated their service and community experiences of invisible labor, called cultural taxation. Authors provide recommendations for educational programming that can support faculty from marginalized identities.

• The author draws on research from organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and demographers to find that diverse groups are more innovative than homogenous groups. Diverse backgrounds bring new information, but interacting with diverse others also informs preparation and expectations.


• The study examines the token status of faculty of color (FOC) within the academy. Through analysis of data collected from 118 interviews, authors describe experiences of both invisibility and hypervisibility. It concludes with some suggestions as to how FOC can take back control of their own visibility or lack thereof.


• In this study, the author reflects on her own lived experiences as a mid-career tenured professor at a research-intensive institution. She explores tokenism and epistemic exclusion and provides suggestions for students navigating similar spaces.

2. Read Timely Peer-Reviewed Journals


• This study analyzes three decades worth of US PhD recipients and their dissertations. The authors find a higher rate of innovation amongst underrepresented students, in contrast to majority students, but also that the work is more likely to be discounted and less likely rewarded with academic positions.


• The author describes the pressures and costs that ethnic minority researchers endure to participate in campus diversity issues.


• The author writes about the aftermath of two Black scholars who shared on social media their experiences of racism in their fields.


• The author describes the lived pressures and experiences as a Black man in a STEM department.


• The author discusses how systemic racism in the science community frustrates and exhausts Black scholars and outlines steps for action.


• In this editorial, a range of authors in academia come together to highlight the biases in the sciences and to offer actionable steps to eliminate its structural prejudices.

3. Keep Abreast of Current Articles and Interviews


‘Interrupt the Systems’: Robin DiAngelo on ‘White Fragility’ and Anti-Racism (by Ari Shapiro on NPR)

What Anti-Racist Teachers Do Differently (by Pirette McKamey in The Atlantic)

Give Black Scientists a Place in This Fight (by Adrianne Gladden-Young in The Atlantic)

10 Ways for Non-Black Academics to Value Black Lives (by Stacey Chimimba Ault in Medium)
Black Academia, it’s time to move (by Buoy Analytics in Medium)

White Academia: Do Better (by Jasmine Roberts in Medium)

Opinion: ‘To create lasting change, we must sustain this anti-racist work beyond the heat of the moment’ (by Jennifer Rich in the Hechinger Report)

‘A severe toll’: UC Davis professor Orly Clerge on racism in academia (by Caleb Hampton in Davis Enterprise)

Ten Simple Rules for Building an Anti-racist Research Lab (by Danielle Venton on KQED)

4. Watch Videos and Webinars

Book talk with Ibram X. Kendi, Scholar and author of “Stamped from the Beginning” and, more recently “How to Be an Antiracist” discusses his work on anti-racism at the hour-long Aspen Institute event.

Curated youtube playlist of stories from the film Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity.

Anti-blackness On Campus: Implications for Educators and Institutions. In this nearly two-hour long webinar, scholars from Peralta Community College District, UC Berkley, and San Diego State University describe concrete actionable steps that schools and universities can take to address anti-blackness.

5. Listen to Podcasts

Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Podcasts (from Ideas on Fire an organization for interdisciplinary scholars)

Codeswitch (NPR podcast featuring fearless conversations about race, led and hosted by journalists of color)

6. Investigate and Contribute to Crowdsourced Repositories

Anti-Racism Resources for White People (google doc)

Shareable Anti-Racism Resource Guide (google doc)

Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources (google doc)

Reclaiming STEM Statement on Black Lives Matter (google doc)

7. Explore Websites

Remote DEI Toolkit is an online guide for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in remote settings. Established by the Remote DEI Collective, the site considers challenges, key considerations and insights, and concrete strategies to implement.

Open Collab Live is a site from the Open Learning & Teaching Collaborative out of Plymouth State University. This page includes anti-racist teaching resources such as books, articles, and syllabi.

Racial Equity Tools is a website that supports individuals working toward systemic and organizational justice with tools, tips, and curricula. The site is facilitated by the partnership of Center for Assessment and Policy Development, MP Associates, and World Trust Educational Services.

Acknowledgements
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Citation