

Teaching in a Time of Racial and Cultural Tension

How do Race and Culture Impact Your Teaching?

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Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology

Land Acknowledgement

UBC Vancouver is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nation. Many or all of us are guests here.

Unceded means that it was never sold or traded – this land was stolen.

I would like to acknowledge the Elders, knowledge holders, land and water defenders, and ancestors who protect the lands on which we gather virtually today.

My intention for the work we do today is to work together to change the colonial systems in which we work and learn, one classroom at a time, and to acknowledge that racial and cultural tension is not new.

Agenda

- Introduction & Learning Objectives
- Ice Breaker
- Positionality
- Barriers and Challenges
- *Break*
- Skills and Strategies
- JEDI Statement

Introduction

There are multiple factors that can support or challenge our learning.

Race and culture are two of them, particularly because of **racism and discrimination**.

As teachers and facilitators of learning, our job is to help support our learners to succeed. We can employ skills and strategies to help mitigate racism and discrimination, and help tear down barriers to learners' success. We change the system one classroom at a time.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to identify and acknowledge your positionality in the context of race and culture.

Additionally, you will be able to identify barriers and challenges that racialized learners could face in the classroom.

You will develop skills and strategies to support racialized learners.

Ice Breaker

Mentimeter: What Challenges Learning?



Positionality Exercise

Follow the Google Drive link I will post in the chat.

10 minutes to work on your own for this exercise.

Barriers and Challenges

Barriers and Challenges – some examples

- Being made to feel unsafe on campus or in the classroom
 - Or at home, in the city/town you live in
- Being made to feel like you do not belong in an environment or situation
- Racism:
 - prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership (or perceived membership) in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized
- Discrimination:
 - the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, race, language, disability, and more

Barriers and Challenges - Exercise

- In breakout rooms, in groups of 2-3
- You have 10 minutes, and then we will come back together
- Discuss potential barriers and challenges that threaten the success of learners
- You do not have to use examples of your own experience if that does not feel safe
- Discuss the source of these barriers and challenges – is it the tradition of a colonial institution? Priorities of governance? Misogyny?
- Please choose one of your group to share what you discussed

Debrief

| Barriers & Challenges | Sources |
|--|--|
| Lack of prior knowledge/experience in the field - Underfunded schools, departments | Not having family or connections in the field |
| Food insecurity, not having basic needs met | sources could be agribusiness, rural -> urban migration and loss of food sovereignty |
| Social or cultural expectations | Institutions having particular bodies or people in mind |
| Assumptions about the learners: what they can and cannot do, 'types' of people | Unconscious bias, societal perceptions, language use |
| Lack of representation in leadership, lack of understanding | Hiring practices |
| Language barriers | Language policies (invisible or visible) of the institutions |
| Safety in learning spaces | Differing levels in understanding, knowledge; ignorance; lack of leadership in fostering safe spaces, knowledge building |
| Language that teachers use: misidentifying, triggering language, lack of inclusive language | Lack of understanding re the context, meaning of the language they are using, lack of awareness, not taking the time to learning, considering language |
| Financial or economic barriers: access to resources, technology, programs, privacy; time needed to devote to learning (job, caring responsibilities) | Financial, social inequality Instructors assuming students all have the same resources, needs, backgrounds |

Break - back at 1:47pm PST



Skills and Strategies

- So many of our teaching techniques and strategies will already be useful in aiding our efforts to remove these barriers and challenges
- Intention and transparency make all the difference
 - Can you share with your learners *why* you are implementing a flexible deadline policy, or *why* you are offering choice in assessment?
- What ways can you make your classrooms safe, inclusive, and respectful?
- We will go through an exercise with case studies to practice coming up with solutions and strategies that you can employ

Skills and Strategies – Case Studies Exercise

- You will have 15 minutes in your groups
- Your Group and Case Study number is the same as your Breakout Room number
- These groups are larger, so try to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute
- Consider and discuss your case study
- Choose one of the group to transcribe your notes on the note taking slide, and another to share to the large group
- Consider possible strategies and solutions, but also barriers that you may face in these situations as well

Debrief - Group Share

Debrief & Suggested Strategies

- If you have planning and organizational power
 - Build in ways to support students, like choice, flexibility, active engagement, and opportunities to check in and connect
 - Connect with support systems and offices on campus and learn how they can support you and your learners
- If you do not have planning and organization power (i.e. TAs)
 - Discuss your concerns and ideas with the one who does
 - Ask if you can be involved in the planning and facilitation of lessons for your professional development – can they give you a couple of classes?
 - Consider your own energy and effort – ensure your own safety and health first, or you won't be able to support anyone

JEDI Statements

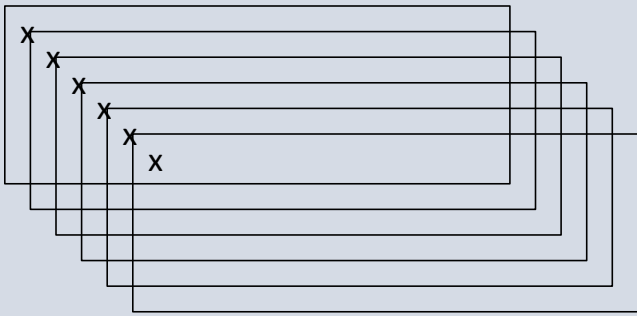
- JEDI = Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- JEDI Statements are useful for job applications
 - You may also hear them called EDI Statements
- They can be a source of inspiration and accountability for your own professional and personal development

These statements should acknowledge your positionality as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion (also justice, health, or any other important consideration) and demonstrate how you advance and incorporate these concerns in your work.

JEDI Statements - Exercise

- Time to start a first draft
 - All a first draft needs to do is exist
- You have 10 minutes to work on this solo
 - You can use pen and paper, a word document, anything you like to write with
 - You do not need to submit these
- Then we will debrief and share (optional participation)

Debrief



Summary and Closing

- Racism and discrimination are inherently wrong, but are built into the systems of governance, policing, education, and social support that we engage with daily
- We can't change the world alone, or with a single action, but **change is possible, and it is happening**
- **We can** work together by collaborating, discussing, and listening
- You and your learners deserve support, encouragement, and to feel like you belong here, **because you do**

Thank you for your energy and work here today.

Workshop Survey

Link in the chat or use this QR code



Go to www.menti.com and use the code **6415 2367**

Open Mentimeter

Mentimeter

What makes you feel like you belong?

A word cloud visualization of responses to the question 'What makes you feel like you belong?'. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with the most frequent or prominent words in the center and larger font sizes. The background is a scenic view of a mountain range with a person standing on a rocky peak.

Key words include:

- respect
- representation
- kindness
- acceptance
- validation
- being heard
- honesty
- being listened to
- community
- accessible features
- participation is valued
- presence acknowledged
- anti-oppression framework
- facilitate discussion
- meaningful relationships
- diverse voices
- inclusion
- being seen
- smile
- language
- connectedness
- understanding
- my language
- communication
- learning
- humour and laughter
- compassion
- valued
- friendliness
- inclusivity
- engagement
- inclusion
- active listening
- similarities
- community accountability
- encouragement
- transparency
- a welcoming environment
- diverse spaces
- interesting topic
- positivity
- equality

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Mentimeter

Why did you choose this workshop?

Because I wanted to be better as TA

To help create a safe space within the classroom

Wanted to learn about what UBC is doing to support racialized students in the classroom

Because I believe this is important, and I have so much more to learn

because I think it's important for every TA to provide a safe space for their students

Foster cultural competency in the classroom!

Gain more knowledge about the concepts, as part of the inclusivity committee we are trying to develop a plan moving forward for faculty and students

To support and foster inclusion for everyone

I feel that it is an important issue when I go to my classes as the TA

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Open Mentimeter

Mentimeter

Why did you choose this workshop?

To be able to create an inclusive environment as a TA

topics that are often skirted around due to being sensitive issues, despite the huge impact that they can have on learning, so I wanted to learn more about what we can do as TAs to help in this area.

To be a more efficient teacher

To build skills and refresh my teaching practice

To reflect on my own positionality, to learn more about everyone's experiences in relation to racialization, and how to address them more effectively.

Would like to learn more about multicultural training.

Wanting to be more empowered in supporting students and anticipating their needs

As a white educator invested in anti-racism, I need to grow and

I TA in a course directly affected by

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Mentimeter

Why did you choose this workshop?

faculty and students

relevance to my work

It fit under the themes I wanted to complete. I also don't know much about this topic.

It was one of the online workshops (I work remotely!)

I wanted to better understand how to provide "culturally competent" teaching. Particularly when discussing topics that might differ across cultures.

As a student, I've been on the other end where I have felt uncomfortable and discriminated against in classroom settings. Now that I have a leadership role, I would like to actively make sure the spaces I am leading are better.

To become a better TA

Making sure I check my biases regularly

Racism and discrimination are topics that are often skirted around due to being sensitive

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Mentimeter

Why did you choose this workshop?

teaching practice

Wanting to be more empowered in supporting students and anticipating their needs

to learn more about everyone's experiences in relation to racialization, and how to address them more effectively.

Would like to learn more about multicultural training.

I TA in a course directly affected by this subject and am looking for more to think about.

As a white educator invested in anti-racism, I need to grow and continue learning

To learn how to foster a better classroom community

Would like to learn more about multicultural environments.

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