Anti-oppression strategies for online educational environments

June 18-19, 2016
Amelia Ortega and Matthea Marquart
St. Cloud 7th Annual ARPAC Workshop - Anti-Racist Pedagogy Across the Curriculum
Thank you for being here, and thank you for the warm welcome!
Welcome and Introductions

Please share:

● Your name
● Your School & subject area
● One important learning from ARPAC so far
Who are your facilitators?

- Amelia Ortega, LMSW
  Trauma Psychotherapist, Social Worker & Online Faculty

- Matthea Marquart, MSSW
  Administrator of an online program, Lecturer, Trainer

A team since 2014
Community Agreements

- A strategy for checking in with yourself - your feelings, thoughts and reactions to being in a new group.

- An opportunity to develop a stated set of agreements that can support group accountability.

- Consider:
  - What do you need from this group this weekend?
  - What would you like to keep outside the room?
Pair and Share: Working on a Continuum

Discuss:

● What have you experienced in this conference so far?
● What activities have gone well for you, and how do you see these impacting your participation and engagement this weekend?
What’s in this for you?

- Identify logistics and strategies for setting up an online classroom to promote community and accountability
- Build a toolkit of anti-racist approaches to online instruction
- Prepare potential responses for addressing acts of micro and macro oppression that may occur within online classrooms

Classroom scenarios & cases
Reflection & mindfulness practice
Modeling intentional community

Note: we will focus on ideas for using technology, rather than specific platforms
Big Picture for Saturday & Sunday

- **Saturday morning**: Introduction to online education and how issues of oppression can be experienced online
- **Saturday afternoon**: The praxis of transformative learning in an online environment
- **Sunday morning**: Collaborative strategizing and practice with challenging situations
- **Sunday afternoon**: Toolkit-building and planning for individual circumstances
Morning Session 8:00-12:00

- Welcome! And introductions (start by 8:00)
- Community agreements
- Working with continuum, agenda, our approach, housekeeping
- Community-building activity
- Your goals & concerns for the weekend
- Personal inventory
- Mindfulness exercise
- Intro to online education (start by 10:15)
- Intro to how we might encounter racism in online courses
- Meta-learning discussion, reflection, debrief (start by 11:30)

**Lunch**
Orientation to the space

- Self-care
- Parking lot
- We will aim for a 5-minute break every hour
Philosophy on Training

The more we talk, the less you learn

Speaking for too long results in “cognitive backlog,” which, like piling on weights, makes the mental load on your audience heavier and heavier until they forget everything you said.

Source:
Our Approach to Training

We will support your learning by:

● Creating a positive learning environment
● Helping you make connections between your prior knowledge/experiences, and new information
● Giving you opportunities to practice, integrate, apply, and reflect on your learning
● Giving you timely, supportive feedback
Our Approach to Training: Reflection is Key

“Knowledge rooted in experience shapes what we value and as a consequence how we know what we know as well as how we use what we know.”

-- bell hooks, Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom
When we think about learning, we typically focus on getting information **into** students’ heads. What if, instead, we focus on getting information **out** of students’ heads?

“**Retrieval practice**” is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information **out**. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. Retrieval practice is a powerful tool for improving learning without more technology, money, or class time.

Eyes on the Prize: Training transfer to make this weekend worth your time

What the participants are able to do before training

What you want the participants to be able to do back on the job
Community-Building Activity

In groups:

● On flipchart paper, make a list of things you have in common with each other that are not visible
● Goal: be the group with the most things in common
Group Assessment

On separate post-it notes, write your thoughts and then place on the designated flipchart:

1. What is a learning priority you have for this weekend? / What’s your motivation for being here?
2. What is one concern you have about this training or topic?
3. What is one skill you are bringing to this group process? / How will you help make this weekend a positive experience for the group?
Your Concerns About Online Education

Whole-group discussion:

● What concerns do you have about online education in general?
● What concerns do you have about online education and your role as an educator?
Personal Inventory

1. Individually: complete a personal profile

2. In groups: discuss with your group
Take a mind breath!

Inhale through your nose (1-2-3-4) and picture your breath moving up, up, up to the very top of your head.

Now, exhale through your mouth (1-2-3-4) and imagine pushing your breath down your back to the very bottom of your spine.
Our stories: How we came to online education

- Amelia
- Matthea
Survey results - Where are you with online education?

9. What is the nature of the courses you teach (select all that apply)?

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<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blended / hybrid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22%</td>
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Pair discussion: Your experience in the student/participant role

- Have you taken an online class or MOOC as a student?
- Have you participated in webinars?
- Have you posted to discussion forums, or in the comments sections of blogs/news sites?

- What was your experience like?
Online education: One form of distance education

- Other types of distance education:
  - Correspondence courses
  - Group video conferencing with connected conference rooms
  - Online training modules and videos
Intro to online education: Types

Two main categories:

● Asynchronous
  ○ Students log in at different times
  ○ Can include a synchronous element

● Synchronous
  ○ Live virtual classes
  ○ Includes asynchronous homework

Which type is relevant for you?
Intro to online education: Tech

Key types of software:

- Learning Management System (LMS)
  - E.g. Sakai, Blackboard, Canvas, D2L
- Web Conferencing Platform
  - E.g. Adobe Connect, Zoom, WebEx, Citrix GoToTraining, Big Blue Button

Which have you experienced using?
What does your School use?
Consider the activities we have done this morning. How might you do them in an online classroom?
Reflection: Think-Pair-Share (handout)
Welcome Back!

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Afternoon Session 1:00-5:00

- Warm-up, review community agreements (start by 1:00)
- Intro to online education, continued
- Intro to how we might encounter racism in online courses
- Intro to transformative learning
- Personal experiences with oppression online
- Oppression as a disruptor of community
- White fragility & microaggressions
- Mindfulness exercise and writing reflection (start by 3:15)
- Case example
- Meta-learning discussion, reflection, Q&A, preview Sunday (start by 4:15)
Warm-up

The wave!
Renewal of Community Agreements

- Review

- Are these still ok with everyone? Any additions or edits?
Sample live class set-up: Adobe Connect

Student view

Instructor-only area
Video: Example of a synchronous class

Synchronous classroom strategies

Rule of thumb for student engagement: Have students do something every 3-5 minutes

Tools vary by platform but often include:

- Webcam & mic
- Typed chat, polling, & status icons
- Breakout groups
- Drawing tools & notepods
Example asynchronous platform: Canvas
Discussion forums: the heart of an asynchronous classroom

Source: http://guides.instructure.com/m/8470/l/190706-how-do-i-reply-to-a-discussion-as-a-student
Creating video content for asynchronous delivery

Video can create a sense of instructor presence, community

Video professionalism is less important than immediacy, personalization

Videos can be for the whole class (lectures, announcements), or for individual students (feedback)
The debate: 
Teaching with technology changes everything vs. Teaching with technology produces no significant difference

Where do you stand?

Video: A student’s perspective (Anum Iqbal)

“Though I have been the target of racial microaggressions in a classroom lecture format, I believe this form of oppression is more likely to occur via online course format for several reasons.

- It is obviously linked to the “hide behind the screen” tactic; the person doing the oppressing finds it easier to type inappropriate things since they are hidden from view.
- For the oppressor, there is a heightened sense of boldness in typing something they would not particularly say to the oppressed.
- They can counter an opinion without seeing the hurt or anger they are causing to another person (sans webcam).
- They can also disregard the comments, but pretend to care by typing what “sounds” good.”
Setting a Foundation: The Praxis of Anti-Oppressive Online Teaching

Operating Assumption for the work:

“It’s not IF you will encounter acts of oppression within online learning environments, but a matter of WHEN.”

PEDAGOGY is the discipline that deals with the theory and practice of education; it thus concerns the study and practice of how best to teach.

PRAXIS is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, embodied, or realised. "Praxis" may also refer to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas.
Encounters with Racism Online

● How are we seeing Race/Racism handled ONLINE in our daily lives?

● Where do we engage with oppression ….

● Personal Lives (our own personal identities and somatic experiences influence responses when instructing)

● Professionally (our institution’s climate, culture and support networks inform our CAPACITY to respond and structure our courses)

● Socially (our outside networks, access and engagement with social media inform our general awareness of what students may be viewing/contributing to outside class)
The “sticky places”

- Where do we get stuck?
- Faculty who have not “done the work” themselves to unpack their identities and ways of being that influence pedagogical decisions
- Within online learning environments we have an opportunity to use pedagogical decisions to develop intentional communities and to work with new complexities of influence on the classroom space and collaborative learning.

Anti-Racist pedagogy aims to create systemic change.
“It’s not about what it is, it’s about what it can become”.

- The Lorax
What is Transformative Learning?

Core Elements of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1978)

- Individual Experience
- Self-Reflection
- Dialogue
5 Common themes or characteristics of transformative learning spaces (Taylor & Cranton, 2012)

- Learning happens in relationships
- There is *shared ownership* and control of learning spaces
- Room for the *whole person* — feelings as well as thoughts, body and soul, as well as mind
- *Sufficient time* for collaboration, action, reflection and integration
- Pursue a process of inquiry driven by the questions, needs, and purposes of the *learners*
Pair and Share Exercise: What if?.....

- Turn to your partner and explore/ share what prior experiences you have had with issues of oppression online personally.

Examples: obsessing about the tone of an email you have received that felt disrespectful....

- Take a the next few minutes to share with your partner
Oppression disrupts community

Vodde (2001) as stated in DiAngelo (2011) “If privilege is defined as a legitimization of one’s entitlement to resources, it can also be defined as permission to escape or avoid any challenges to this entitlement.”
Micro-Aggressions and White Fragility

Common interruption to building and maintaining community

Avoidance
Guilt  Silence
Blame
“And now at this point in the meeting I'd like to shift the blame away from me and onto someone else.”
Small Group Teach-Backs

Let’s collectively examine:

Microaggressions

White Fragility
3-minute Reflection (handout)
Metalearning Discussion (handout)

Consider the activities we have done this afternoon. How might you do them in an online classroom?
3-2-1 reflection activity (handout)

Debrief and Q&A
Thank you for all your hard work!

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
- Nelson Mandela
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Day 2

Sunday, June 19th

Happy Father's Day!
Thank you for a wonderful first day!

We’re excited to be back together.

What appreciations do you have for the group?
Big Picture for Saturday & Sunday

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Morning Session 8:30-12:00

- Welcome Back!
- Review of Day #1 - including Community Agreements
- Revisiting racial caucusing - Check-in’s and White Fragility Group
- Your concerns
- Racial microaggression case example
- Mini scenarios: group strategizing
- Mindfulness exercise
- Create and discuss case studies that you are concerned about (start by 10:30)
- Meta-learning discussion, reflection, debrief (start by 11:30)

**Lunch**
Revisit Community Agreements
Review activity (pairs):

- Revisit your 3-2-1 review handout from the end of the day
- Share what you wrote
- Compare your questions - have other questions come up for you since yesterday?
How are we doing on our objectives?

- Identify logistics and strategies for setting up an online classroom to promote community and accountability
- Build a toolkit of anti-racist approaches to online instruction
- Prepare potential responses for addressing acts of micro and macro oppression that may occur within online classrooms

- Classroom scenarios & cases
- Reflection & mindfulness practice
- Modeling intentional community
Guided teach-back from the white fragility group:
- What is white fragility?
- What key takeaways from reading about white fragility resonate with your personal approach to engaging in dialogues about racism?
- How has white fragility interrupted community building in your classrooms or institutions?

Check-in: Is there anything else we need to discuss before moving on?
Your Concerns (pairs):

- Review the group’s concerns from yesterday (new handout)
- Have any of the concerns been resolved for you?
- What additional concerns/questions do you have?
- Can you help each other resolve any of them?
The Case of “The Microaggression”

During class, some students used language in the typed chat conversation that was experienced as racially micro-aggressive by other students in the class, which led to an argumentative discussion. The TA was monitoring the chat conversation and escalated the situation to the instructor’s attention. Both the TA and faculty acknowledged this chat room content, responded briefly by directly acknowledging what had just been stated in the chat discussion, and requested that students pause the use of the chat function in order to focus on the class content.
Timeline of Events

Live Session Event
- Student Comment
- Faculty verbal response
- Chat room discussion

Additional Assignment & Re-development of Lecture of following week
- Discussion board assignment
- Additional Reading
- Lecture for next week

Live Session the Next Week
- Affinity Groups
- Lecture on Dialogue vs. Discussion
- Paired on Camera Dialogues

Contacted Advising Office
Held full teaching team meeting

Met one-to-one with Student
Utilized student handbook to frame “attributes of a social work student”
The new assignment: Directly after class an announcement was sent to students requesting that they…

1. Complete two additional readings:

   Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice
   by Derald Sue Wing, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M. B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal & Marta Esquilin

   European American (White) Racial Identity Development: Mental Health, and Prejudice
   by Joseph G. Ponterotto, Shawn O. Utsey & Paul B. Pederse
2. Respond to a new Discussion Board: 
*Reflections on Discussing Culture and Identity in Online Classroom Spaces,* with the following questions....

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<th>1) How did it feel to read the chat room discussion? What was the experience like for you?</th>
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<tr>
<td>2) Reflecting on last week’s class, were you active in this chat discussion? Were you able to say what you wanted to? Did you leave class with additional thoughts that you would like to contribute here?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) What have other conversations around identity, race, culture, oppression and colonization been like for you at CUSSW? How was this discussion similar or different?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) And lastly..... what can you contribute that might change the experience of this conversation for yourself?</td>
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Lessons Learned: Practical Tips

- When a microaggression occurs in your classroom and you didn’t notice it/aren’t sure if you agree, try not to feel defensive, and rather focus on supporting your students in their emotional reactions.
- Collaborate whenever possible, and try to see it as something that will take you further rather than taking longer.
- If you teach alone, locate another voice to support your framework (TedTalk, consult a colleague, blog).
- Keep all students involved— including student(s) who are responsible for the microaggression.
- Use technology to build community (e.g. webcam, chat curator).
Applying this to your context

- Asynchronous / synchronous
- Small class / large class
- Solo instructor / instructional team

With a partner, consider how you might approach the following scenarios?
Scenarios

A student is learning English as a second or third language. Every time this student types into the discussion board, other students make fun of their spelling, or correct their spelling.

A guest speaker has been introduced in writing and out loud as a woman. Students keep referring to the guest speaker as “he.”
Group Consultation : Let’s Analyze

Consider:

- Who are your resources? (Who do you have for support?)
- What tools do you have access to? (technology tools)
- In this scenario — what are the needs?
- What is your priority?
- Possible ways to intervene/address?
Debrief

What are some practical suggestions for how you might address these scenarios, in your context?
Ideas from Online Instructors, part 1

Make the first discussion forum an introduction. In the second discussion forum, co-construct how to create a safe & productive inquiry environment. --Andrea Tamburro

The ouch & oops rule. Let the class know that everyone can say or type “ouch” when someone has said something that hurt their feelings, or “oops” when they themselves say something that needs to be corrected. --Debbie Rice

I really emphasize parallel process -- I have students ask themselves “what could I be doing that contributes to oppression in this interaction?” and “what strengths are in the person I'm engaging in this interaction?” --Lindsay Littrell

Include both affinity groups and cross-social identity groups in the classroom structure. Consider how they can collaborate, intersect, etc. --Mark Giesler
I love the idea about "pre-teaching" etiquette and sensitivity to language, etc., setting agreements, and then being able to refer back to that. --Mo Cuevas

At the beginning of a course, I share that all of us commit microaggressions, including the professor -- and we learn and grow when others hold us accountable in the class because usually these microaggressions are unconscious. --Peg Munke

When a student commits a microaggression, consider an immediate reach out by phone or email, get support, use the ground rules that were set up front, and consider creating an alternative assignment to what was originally planned for the week. --Pete Meagher

I've found having students do some self-assessments throughout the semester useful in seeing how a student may change through a semester. I also love to use "Gifs" to help convey humour! --Richard Cooper

Mindfulness Exercise - Meditation
Your Turn to Create a Case Study:

● Think about a situation you are worried will happen when/if you teach online
  ■ Refer back to the group’s concerns if you need ideas (handout)
● Write a mini case study - describe a concrete scenario
● Present your case study to your table, and strategize with each other
Addressing Concerns
Consider the activities we have done this afternoon. How might you do them in an online classroom?
3-minute Reflection (handout)
Lunchtime show & tell
Afternoon Session 1:00-5:00

- Warm-up activity
- Simulation
- The 4 I’s
- Toolkit building activity - antiracist approaches to online instruction
- Mindfulness exercise
- Discussion: How to be an anti-racist educator online when you’re new to the technology & distracted/stressed
- Metalearning discussion, second-to-last reflection activity, wrap up reflection activity (start by 4:00)
- Wrap up the group process and farewells
Warm-up
Simulation Exercise
Logistics of Maintaining a Transformative Learning Environment Online

- At all stages of the course, consider ways to build community between students and yourself

- Critical Inquiry and collaborative projects build on both the collective learning and degree of contact that students will have with each other

- Foster leadership at all levels. Students can moderate discussions, posit weekly questions, make observations, use self reflection written exercises and conduct “teach-backs”
Discussion: Anti-Racist Pedagogy for Online Teaching

- Consider your decision to teach online- who are you in the work?
- Review your Syllabi- what authors’ voices are prioritized in this course? What new possibilities exist in having students pull from current events for critical reflection?
- Have you prepared for your “when it happens” situations?
- Have you structured the course around community engagement and community building activities?
- What other methods for contacting students can you use?
- Do you have easily at hand, your institution’s policy on student comportment?
The 4 I’s

Josh Miller’s “the web of institutionalized racism.”

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<tr>
<th>The 4 I’s</th>
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<tr>
<td>The 4 I’s of oppression represents a nested systems model that can support your thinking and planning for a supported, intentionally designed course. As a key component to the course going well, thinking about your own needs as an instructor can be useful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below are a few recommendations for areas of critical inquiry and support to consider as you build or re-design your course.</td>
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<th>Ideology</th>
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<tr>
<td>• What ideologies regarding social justice inform the department or school within which you work?</td>
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<td>• How do you see these informing the content of your courses and the assumptions of students entering your program?</td>
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<th>Institutional</th>
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<tr>
<td>• What structures exist within your institution that support and develop anti-racist thinking/organizing/course content?</td>
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<td>• How are you connected to these people/structures?</td>
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<th>Interpersonal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Who are you interpersonally connected with through your institution?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting up a peer support network, or an accountability partner with whom you can discuss online teaching, problem solve and share resources is important.</td>
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<th>Internalized</th>
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<td>• How has oppression shown up in your own life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What target identities do you hold that carry internalization of messages about your worth/value/ strengths?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How might these inform the risks you take as an instructor and the ways in which you approach interrupting acts of oppression in your courses?</td>
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Toolkit Building - What’s in your toolkit of anti-racist approaches to online education?

- **Strategies**: How can you proactively set up your online classroom to promote community & accountability? How might you respond to acts of oppression that may occur in your classroom?
- **Community**: When a sticky situation comes up in your online classroom, who can you call?
- **Technology**: What technology tools do you have access to? How can you learn more about how to use them?
- **University resources**: What resources does your institution provide?
Discussion:

- How can you be an anti-racist educator online when you’re new to the technology, distracted, and/or stressed?
Consider the activities we have done this afternoon. How might you do them in an online classroom?
Second-to-last reflection activity

Reminders for Your Future Self (handout)

1. What learnings would you most like to remember from this workshop?
2. What action(s) would you like to remind yourself to do?
3. What message do you have for your future self?
Final reflection / wrap-up activity

Pick an image that represents this workshop to you - e.g. maybe it represents something you learned, or something you felt, or the workshop as a whole

Share:

- What does the image represent to you about this workshop?
Thank you for all your hard work!
Please keep in touch!

If you would like to receive emails from us (e.g. with the slides, articles, news, etc.), please sign up for our mailing list.
Group Selfie

We would love to take & Tweet a group selfie with whoever would like to join us
Tip: Use Google Advanced Image Search to find images that are ok to use.
References & Further Readings


