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Creating Learning Experiences for Anti- Oppression

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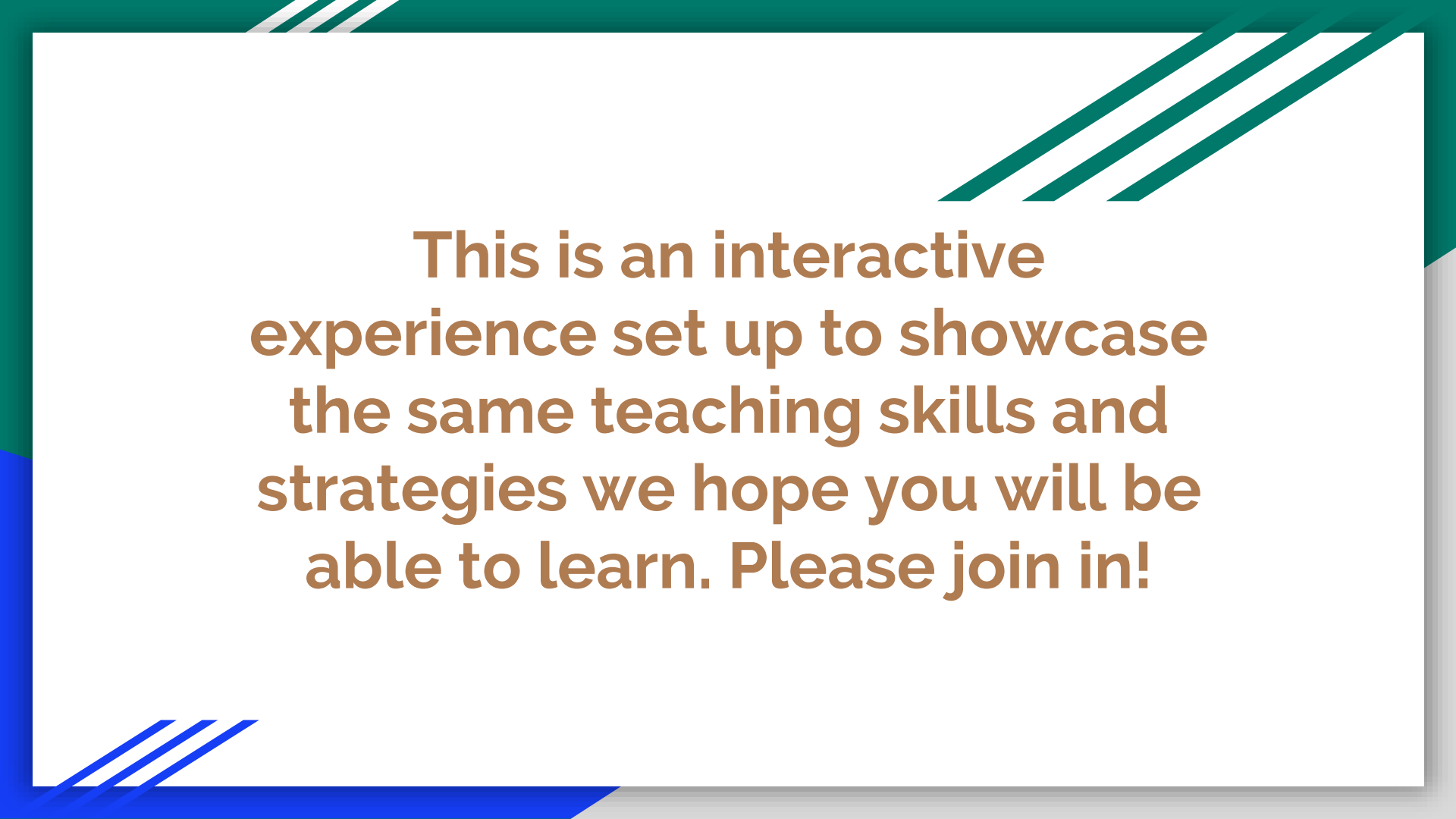


Creating Learning Experiences for Anti-Oppression

Pippa Hemsley, Shayna Woods, and Tian Qing Yen

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**This is an interactive
experience set up to showcase
the same teaching skills and
strategies we hope you will be
able to learn. Please join in!**

Goals

- Experience an example of an anti-oppression lesson
- Identify core components that help structure anti-oppression learning experiences
- Practice developing your own anti-oppression learning experience
- Decide on future steps for implementing these experiences in your own professional or academic context

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Part 1:
What to include?

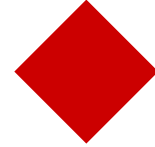


There are several important components to consider including in a learning experience for anti-oppression.

The colored shapes serve as a key linking each component to the example learning experience we give later in this presentation.



1. SETTING THE SPACE



Engaging in anti-oppression requires discomfort and the ability to manage discomfort.

It is important to create a “safe-enough” space where participants feel they can stretch and learn.

How will you encourage participants to step outside of their comfort zones?

Example activities:

- Establishing ground rules beforehand or as a group
- Sharing or co-creating learning goals

2. INTRO & BACKGROUND

Orient your participants to the issue or topic of your workshop. This is crucial to ensuring everyone has a basic level of understanding before participating.

What are important terms that might need to be defined? Is this lesson in response to a situation or event?



Example activities:

- Defining terms,
- Presenting new ideas, concepts, or resources
- Introducing the topic of conversation

3. SELF-ASSESSMENT



Help participants connect personally to what they've learned so far by linking to real experiences and impacts in their lives.

How can you relate what you've discussed so far to the participants in your lesson?

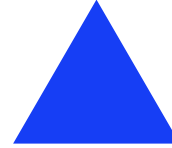
Example activities:

- Self-reflection on what participants already know or have experienced
- Survey or questionnaire about privilege

4. EXPERIMENTATION

Anti-oppression takes practice. This is a chance to try new solutions, practice speaking up, and see how others might respond in a challenging situation.

What type of situations might participants come across related to your topic? What type of experimentation will participants benefit from the most?



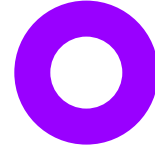
Example activities:

- Critically analyzing scenarios
- Role-play
- Brainstorming strategies or changed actions

5. GOING META



Encourage participants to reflect upon the learning experience and their reactions to it.

How did this experience go? Did we really address what we intended to?



Example activities:

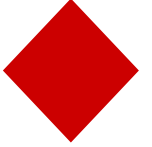
- Pair-share with a partner
- Group conversation about workshop
- Quick-write on applying skills in the future



**Part 2:
Example Learning
Experience**

The next few slides are an example of how we ran an anti-oppression professional development session for our Research & Writing Studio.

Please follow along and try it out as if you'd been right there with us!



GROUND RULES

Ask questions

Respect... Ouch/Oops

- If you hear something that hurts, say so; if you make a mistake, apologize

“Safe-enough space”

- Create a supportive community space that allows for risk taking



KEY TERMS

Microaggression:

the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights snubs or insults (intentional or unintentional), which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership

Implicit bias:

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our decisions and behavior in an unconscious manner; they encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments of individuals, and are activated involuntarily

Systemic/institutional oppression:

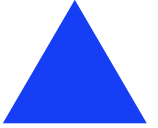
When established laws, customs, and practices perpetuate and produce inequities based on an individual's marginalized group membership



QUICK WRITE

Write down examples of oppression you can think of that you have noticed in your own personal life or workplace.

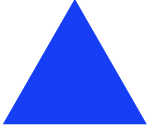
If you haven't noticed any oppression, instead write down your best guess about why that might be.



What would you do in this situation?

A Studio visitor came in asking about citations and the research process, then launched into an aggressive criticism of Colin Kaepernick, a quarterback who refused to stand for the national anthem as a way to protest the oppression of black people and people of color.

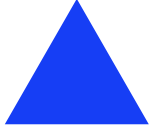
This visitor's argument was that the protest was just a way for Colin Kaepernick to get attention.



Possibility #1: “Oops”

In this case, we found that the visitor hadn't done enough research to realize that this protest was in response to the recent deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of the police. Their opinion changed after learning more.

What might have been some reasons why this visitor had such a strong opinion before doing the research?



Possibility #2: “I’m right”

What if the visitor had done the research and still maintained the same opinion?

- Is it possible that this is a legitimate argument, or is it structural racism in action?
- What are the consequences of the protest? What are the consequences of forbidding this form of protest or of condemning Kaepernick for it?
- If protesting by staying seated during the anthem is unacceptable, what method of protest would society consider acceptable? How effective would other forms of protest be?
- Where do our beliefs about what is acceptable come from?



NEXT STEPS

- Check in with yourself. What was your reaction to this discussion. What was difficult for you and why?
- Develop a strategy for yourself to make it easier to overcome that difficulty and respond the next time you encounter oppression in the Studio.
 - Test your strategy and record your results in the experimental strategy log.

What did you think of how was this experience structured?

What would you want to change to make it better?



Part 3:
Create your own!



YOUR TURN!

- With a partner, talk about your own writing center or department and identify one new skill or goal for yourself and the people you work with to become better at addressing oppression.
 - Examples:
 - Starting conversations
 - Noticing structural oppression (e.g. Oppression of ELL writers)
- Start designing your plan on the template provided!

Tips for successfully proposing anti-oppression learning experiences

- **Identify areas of improvement**

- Do you know of any conflicts that tend to bubble up, or that tend to get avoided?
- How “traditional” is your space? Many long-standing practices, norms, and aspects of the physical environment contribute to keeping oppressive systems in place.

- **Have well-established sources and learning outcomes**

- Good research and preparation will lend more authority to your proposal

- **Establish a support system among your peers**

- If many of your staff, student, or faculty colleagues show interest in this type of learning, your proposal is more likely to be accepted



Planning Template & Additional Resources



Template

Designing a Plan to Engage In or Teach Anti-Oppression

Before you start

Step 1: Identify your Audience

Who are you engaging with? What is your relationship to them? What knowledge can you assume they already have about anti-oppression?

Step 2: Identify Key Learning Outcomes

What are you hoping your audience will gain from this anti-oppression lesson or conversation?

Step 3: Establish Background Information and Find Supporting Resources

What background information do you need to feel prepared? Are there sources, people, or experiences you can draw on?

Creating a Lesson Plan

Below is a general framework for what to include in a lesson plan or conversation. There are many ways to approach engaging in anti-oppression. Feel free to include, exclude, or mix and match any of these elements, as well as come up with your own!

Setting the Space:

Anti-oppression requires discomfort. It is important to make sure that your participants feel as though this is a space where they can stretch and learn.

How will you encourage participants to step outside of their comfort zone?

Example activities: establishing ground rules beforehand or as a group; reviewing learning outcomes

Introduction/Background:

What are important terms that might need to be defined? Is this lesson in response to a situation or event?

Example activities: Defining terms, presenting new ideas/concepts/resources, introducing the topic of conversation

Self-Assessment: This is an opportunity for participants to connect what they've learned so far to real experiences in their lives and how it might impact them.

How can you relate what you've discussed so far to the participants in your lesson?

Example activities: self-reflection on what audience already knows/has experienced; surveys or questionnaires about privilege

Experimentation: Anti-oppression takes practice. This is a chance to try new solutions, practice speaking up, and see how others might respond in a challenging situation.

Example activities: critically analyzing scenarios, role-play, brainstorming strategies or changed actions

Going Meta:

How did this experience go? Did we really address what we intended to?

Post-Lesson

Get feedback from participants: *Was this helpful? What else do you want to know? Is there something you would have wanted to do during this experience that we didn't do? Do you have scenarios that could be used in a future lesson?*

Plan to adapt lessons based on feedback if needed.

Keep Going: What are your next steps?

Examples: Run another workshop, create a follow-up activity, continue to educate yourself and others

Creating Learning Experiences for Anti-Oppression - Resources & Further Reading

Teaching Resources:

Methods for Responding to Microaggressions (Goodman)

http://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/resources_for_primary_care/cap_resources_for_medical_student_educators/responding-to-microaggressions-and-bias.pdf

Critical Racial & Social Justice Education Resources (DiAngelo)

<https://robindiangelo.com/resources-2/>

Working Towards a Racially Inclusive Studio (Dombrowski, Payton & Yen)

http://cedar.wvu.edu/library_rwslegacy/1/

Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry (Southern Poverty Law Center)

<https://www.splcenter.org/20150126/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry>

Further Reading: Articles

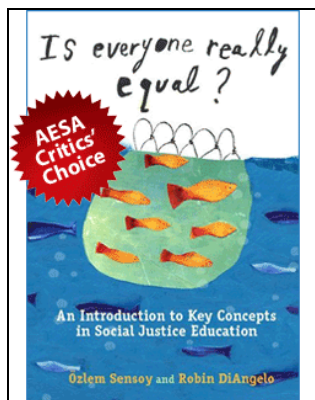
"Going there": Peer Writing Consultants' Perspectives on the New Racism and Peer Writing Pedagogies (Ozias et al.)

<https://wac.colostate.edu/atd/race/oziasetal/conflict.cfm>

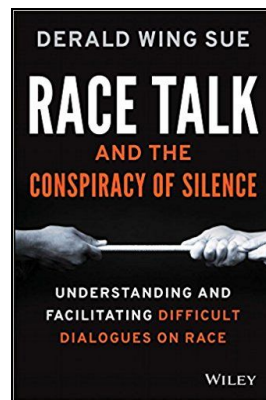
Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable (Diab, Thomas & Simkins)

<https://wac.colostate.edu/atd/race/diabetal.cfm>

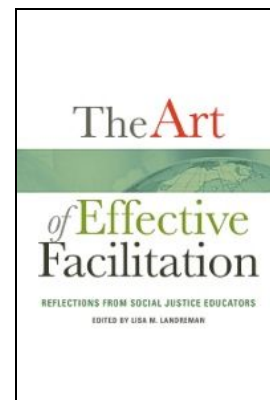
Further Reading: Books & Chapters



Is Everyone Really Equal? An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education
By Ozlem Sensoy & Robin DiAngelo



Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence
By Derald Wing Sue



"From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces",
By Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens.
(Chapter 8 of *The Art of Effective Facilitation: reflections from social justice educators*, pp.135-150)