

## ATESL Best Practices Checklist for Anti-Racism

*Black, Indigenous, and Racialized learners and staff are safe, welcomed, included, protected, and supported. The program and instruction actively value and promote equity, diversity, and justice. Instruction welcomes multiple perspectives, challenges dominant assumptions, and aims to dismantle systemic racism.*

### Use the ATESL Best Practices Checklists:

#### *For Individuals*

- To learn about an unfamiliar area or new responsibility
- To reflect on your own practice
  - What am I doing well?
  - What am I doing that could be improved?
  - What am I not doing that I could or should be doing?

#### *For Professional development and teacher training*

- To identify goals to aspire to and specific steps to take to meet those goals
- To focus discussion after class observations
- To focus team meeting discussions
- To develop workshops/presentations

#### *For Programs*

- To identify strengths that distinguish your program (e.g., to justify the worth/value of the program to the broader institution, to funders, to learners, to community stakeholders)
- To identify gaps in a program or practice (e.g., to identify constraints to address, to identify initial and ongoing actions, to determine a focus for professional development, to justify requests for funding)

**106. Program policies and practices prioritize and protect the rights, freedoms, and safety of Black, Indigenous, and Racialized students and staff.**

- The program and its leadership recognize the following:
  - Racism exists, is rooted in privilege and power, and is systemic.
  - Racism is often unrecognized and unreported.
  - Staff and learners who experience racism feel alienated, unsupported, unsafe, and (in the case of learners) suffer academically.
  - Learners who do not see themselves represented in the teaching staff or the curriculum are at a disadvantage.
  - Action is needed to address race-based systemic discrimination that disadvantages Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people.
  - Anti-racism discussions can be triggering for Racialized people.
- The program collects race-based data (e.g., hiring rates, enrolment rates, retention rates, attrition rates, length of time to complete program, grades) to identify systems that may disadvantage Black, Indigenous, and Racialized learners and staff.
- The program counters systems that may disadvantage Black and Racialized learners. For example:
  - Policies and practices regarding cheating, attendance, etc., are examined to ensure that they do not disadvantage Black and Racialized people.
  - Policies and practices regarding hair styles, clothing, etc., are examined to ensure that they are not targeting Black and Racialized people.
  - Black and Racialized learners (and/or graduates) take part in designing program policies to ensure that their concerns and experiences are represented and addressed.
- The program ensures protection from discrimination based on race. For example:
  - Incidents of racism, discrimination, and poor treatment of Racialized staff and students are addressed and not overlooked or minimized.
  - Compliance measures (e.g., investigation, disciplinary or remedial actions, a plan to address the problem) are in place to ensure that anti-racism policies are followed.
- Program policies and practices ensure that Racialized students and staff are safe and feel safe in the facilities and on the premises of the program.
  - Policies and practices to ensure the security of the building and property of the program are closely examined to ensure that they do not inadvertently target Racialized people.
  - There are explicit anti-racism policies, and staff, including campus security, are trained in them.
  - Black, Indigenous, and Racialized learners and staff are consulted to ensure that the facilities are a safe place for them to be, learn, and teach; options are provided for giving anonymous feedback to ensure honesty and safety.
  - Recognizing that interactions with police can have serious repercussions for Racialized people, the program does not tolerate false accusations and weaponized authority; it provides de-escalation training for staff, and it identifies point people who can be called on when conflict arises.
- The program reframes how it goes about attracting, hiring, retaining, and promoting Racialized staff, going beyond token hires, with the goal that Racialized learners see themselves reflected in the staff.
- The program does not presume that their Racialized staff represent the voice of all Racialized cultures; neither does it put undue burdens on their Racialized staff to do the work of anti-racism.
- Resources are dedicated to enhancing the ability of Racialized learners to access and successfully complete educational programs (including seeking out grants, loans, and scholarships for Racialized learners).

**107. Ongoing professional development for staff promotes justice and equity by addressing and dismantling racism, discrimination, and misrepresentation.**

- Onboarding training includes an orientation to program expectations regarding inclusive culture and anti-racism practices.
- Ongoing professional development is provided by Racialized anti-racist facilitators and/or those with an established background in equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion (EDJI), who are allocated time and/or compensation. It meets the following criteria:
  - It includes an opportunity for self-reflection; experiential, transformative, and affective learning; and creative and critical conversations.
  - It promotes reflection on how one’s own identity is constructed and awareness of one’s own assumptions, biases, privilege, and racism.
  - It promotes empathy and perspective taking.
  - It raises awareness of microaggressions (intentional or unintentional slurs or insults that target Racialized people and the intersectionalities that they belong to, but are so normalized that they go unrecognized as hostile or rude).
  - It connects instructional practices to the sociopolitical context.
  - It increases the instructor’s capacity to respond to racism and bullying (e.g., through approaches such as zero indifference or bystander anti-racism).
  - It recognizes how individuals may be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders.
  - It increases instructors’ capacity to plan anti-racist learning opportunities that address the sociopolitical context, raise questions of power and control, and work against marginalization and oppression and towards equity and justice.
  - It increases instructors’ capacity to critically evaluate textbooks and classroom resources.
  - It identifies the dangers/flaws/complexities of the following practices:
    - Focusing exclusively on commonalities
    - Minimizing disenfranchisement
    - Putting Racialized people in the vulnerable position of having to share
    - Designing cultural awareness activities that essentialize or “other” Racialized experiences and cultures
    - Emphasizing only the “firsts” in history
  - It addresses some of the following:
    - The histories of Indigenous, Black, and Racialized communities in Alberta and Canada
    - The equal rights and freedoms of Racialized individuals in Canadian law
    - Appropriate language for talking about race, racism, equity, and social justice in a way that amplifies and centres Racialized people’s experiences and does not minimize the effects of racism
- Recognizing that anti-racism discussions can be triggering for Indigenous, Black, and Racialized people, staff who identify as such are forewarned of, and given the choice of how/whether to participate in, the above mentioned professional development opportunities.
- Instructors are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to explore anti-racism practices, and to seek input and mentoring from willing Racialized individuals (and/or those with a background in social justice and EDJI) who are allocated time and/or compensation.

**108. Black and Racialized learners are safe, welcomed, seen, respected and included in all aspects of the classroom.**

- Instructors recognize that they are privileged within the Canadian system.
  - If they are White, they recognize they are part of the history of dominance, colonization, and oppression.
  - They reflect on and work to disrupt this power dynamic in their own teaching practices.
- Instructors use and model appropriate language when referring to Racialized people.
  - Colour/race is not mentioned when it is irrelevant (i.e., “white” is not the default when colour is not mentioned).
  - Mention of colour/race is not deemed irrelevant when injustices are addressed.
- Discriminatory, xenophobic, biased, and disrespectful comments are called out and addressed, including the following:
  - Derogatory or demeaning words, labels, names, jokes
  - Cultural profiling and stereotypes (negative or positive) based on race
- Shared experiences of racism are respected and never minimized, ignored, silenced, or deflected.
  - Emotional responses and reactions are legitimate.
  - Learners are given a choice in whether and how much to share.
  - Learners have an opportunity to speak, represent, and take ownership of their own stories.
- Clear expectations are set out for respectful interaction with and inclusion of all learners in the class.
- When learners have an emotional response or reaction, instructors follow learner preferences to provide the flexibility, safe spaces, time, and privacy needed for learners to recover composure.
- Racialized learners see themselves, their cultures, and their worldviews mirrored in the content and curriculum of the class (e.g., in guest speakers, illustrations, stories, examples, visuals, etc.).
- Materials include the perspectives, histories, stories, and contributions of Racialized people (including the histories of Racialized people in Alberta and Canada).
- Materials go beyond tokenized representations (e.g., only highlighting the “firsts”: the first Black \_\_).
- Curriculum content and textbooks are free from biases and stereotypes based on race, or, where they exist, those biases and stereotypes are identified and challenged.
- An intersectional approach is taken, with a focus on the intersection of marginalized identities related to race and ethnicity (immigration status, language status, ethnicity, colour) with other marginalized identities (e.g., minority sexual orientations and gender identities).
- Learners encounter Racialized people, or stories of Racialized people, with whom they can relate on a variety of dimensions (e.g., Racialized LGBTQ2S+, parents, job seekers, members of a profession they wish to join, etc.).
- Instructors are allies and advocate for equity and justice for Racialized learners as they navigate the educational system.

**109. Classroom activities challenge dominant worldviews, assumptions, cultures, histories, and practices; they aim to dismantle systemic racism through collaboration, mindful reflection, critical conversations, and informed practice.**

- A class culture is fostered that welcomes multiple perspectives and voices, for instance, through the following:
  - Inquiry/problem-based learning
  - Opportunities to reflect (journaling, small-group discussions, forum discussions, etc.)
  - Opportunities to advocate (emails, debates, presentations, etc.)
- Instructors recognize that discussions about racism can be triggering for some Racialized learners. As such, instructors do the following:
  - Provide warnings and permission to leave when content has potential to trigger memories of past traumatic experiences
  - Give learners a choice in whether and how much to share of their past experiences
  - Provide a safe space and opportunity for learners to reflect on and share their own experiences, stories, and histories related to racism.
- Instructors promote and allow for deep exploration of complex issues related to injustice, racism, inequity, and discrimination.
- Instructors call out and challenge learning materials that assume a Eurocentric superiority; embed White supremacy; and/or omit, silence, or ignore Black, Indigenous, and Racialized voices in stories/histories/events that affect and involve them. Learners are empowered to do the same.
- Instruction recognizes the historical injustices and violence perpetrated against Racialized people (with a focus on Canada and Alberta).
- Class content and activities acknowledge the continued potential for and existence of violence and structural racism perpetrated against Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people.
- Class activities foster a critical, anti-colonial approach where learners call out, analyze, and deconstruct systems of power and oppression.
- Issues of racism in current events are actively explored as learners engage in inquiry and critical conversations to address the sociopolitical context and explore questions of power and control.
- Class activities and tasks provide opportunity for learners to work collaboratively against marginalization and oppression, and towards equity and justice.
- Class activities provide opportunity for learners to identify, explore, and practice actions they can take when they are bystanders or victims of racism.
- Class content includes vocabulary for talking about identity, diversity, equity, and injustice.
- Learners learn about and connect with community organizations that advocate for inclusion and representation of Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people.