

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.

Statements of (Emerging) Best Practice

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.

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.

Vignettes

for Anti-racism 

This section includes descriptions of what the Best Practices might look like when applied in a variety of contexts.

Vignette 1: Engaging Learner Interest in Social Justice

I teach CLB 5–6 learners in an employment training program. As part of our discussion on workplace diversity and inclusion, students are generally extremely interested in learning more about the ongoing discrimination and lack of equal opportunity given to Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people. Some of my students share their individual experiences of racism and discrimination, both in Canada and in countries they have previously lived in. They express frustration at not getting jobs, not because they lack the skills, but because of their race or ethnicity. Many students express their concerns for the Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I find that this is an excellent opportunity to further engage their interest in social justice, equality, and empathy, towards Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people. I do the following:

- I set a class tone that allows for open discussion where students can share their frustrations and disappointments. I acknowledge that racism exists, in other parts of the world, and right here where they are.
- We pay attention to instances and discussions of racism that come up in the news and in community discussions. Class activities prompt learners to inquire about the systems of power and oppression that have led to those instances.
- We talk about different ways of responding to racial discrimination, both from the perspective of being the victim, as well as being a bystander. I found that the [Bystander Anti-racism Campaign videos from Western Sydney University](#) prompt useful discussion and language.
- I invite Black, Indigenous, and Racialized guest speakers to the class to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in the workplaces that my learners hope to enter. I

give them a heads-up that students might ask about whether they have experienced racism.

- _ Learners research and present on community organizations that advocate for inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and Racialized people (e.g., [AfricaCentre](#), [Ribbon Rouge Foundation](#), [The Colour Factor](#), [Black Women United](#))

Vignette 2: Reflecting on “Cheating”

I was teaching a CLB 6 class when an incident occurred that caused me to reflect on how colour blindness can lead to racist outcomes. My students were taking a summative quiz, and I had emphasized that testing conditions were in place (no talking or collaborating, etc.). Some students had already left and turned in their papers. A few were left, including a young man from Somalia. When I said that time was up and they should stop writing, the young man stopped writing. He gathered up what he needed for his break and started to walk towards me with his quiz. A classmate (a middle-aged White woman who had not stopped writing) grabbed his arm and started to ask him for help with her quiz. The student looked a bit uncomfortable but was answering her. I moved quickly to the back of the room to stop the “cheating,” and as I moved (or perhaps “stomped”) towards them, the young man backed up and threw his hands up in front of him as if I was threatening him. That reaction shook me and stayed with me for a long time. And it caused me to reflect.

- _ I reflected on how the young man’s life experiences with other White authorities had given him a different lens from mine in how he perceived people in authority. Whether I liked it or not, and whether I felt comfortable with it or not, he perceived me as an authority figure, and he had had experiences with threatening White authority figures, and/or threatening angry teachers. I needed to keep that in mind when I interacted with him. Being colour blind and presuming that his experience was like mine was not a useful attitude here.
- _ As I had observed the whole interaction, I knew that he wasn’t the person who had initiated the “cheating.” In fact, I was heading over to extricate him from the situation and stop the cheating. But still, he clearly felt threatened. I forced myself to think through what my assumptions might have been if I had *not* observed the original interaction. It was uncomfortable to realize that I might have assumed that he was to blame. And more importantly, *he* might very well have been expecting me to presume that he was trying to cheat.
- _ With regard to the “cheating,” I know that there are differences in culture when it comes to collaborating and obligation that muddy the waters. We often tell students that they are just as guilty of cheating when they help someone cheat as when they are the ones

cheating. But I know that this does not always translate across cultures. That is, I realized that I also have a responsibility to try to make sure that they are not placed in a position of having to refuse to “help” a classmate.

- I talked to the young man privately to reassure him that I knew he hadn't been cheating. I mentioned that I regretted startling him. I asked him to tell me what was happening and how I could best help him in that situation.

Vignette 3: Creating Space to Talk about Racism

I was teaching a higher-level LINC class, and the theme we were covering was related to health and wellness. I came across a TED talk playlist titled [The Link Between Health and Racism](#) and decided to use this to spark some critical inquiry into this topic. I did the following:

- I told students the title of the playlist, and together they brainstormed for questions that they hoped to find answers to on this topic.
- As a reading assignment, they read the descriptions on the playlist page and answered some comprehension questions. I put some of the more challenging anti-racist vocabulary from the page into a Quizlet. In a poll, they voted on the 4 most interesting videos.
- Based on the poll, we narrowed down the list to 5 videos. We did a listening for gist activity, where students listened just to the first 2 minutes of each video to a) identify the purpose of the presentation; b) make a prediction of what the speaker would talk about; and c) decide whether the speaker would be easy for them to understand or not.
- Based on another poll, we narrowed down the list to 3 videos. The class was divided into 3 groups and assigned a video. Learners each watched the video on their own time and then worked in their group to come up with the most important learnings (related to the questions they had generated earlier). They then presented their learnings to the whole class.
- At that time, there was a race-related health issue in the news in Canada: Covid-19 was having a more severe impact on Black and Racialized people. Students read articles, watched videos, and learned about the topic. They brainstormed for what they wanted the authorities to do related to this issue. They wrote letters to a government department (Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health) with calls to action. They analyzed a call to action co-written by a number of community organizations. They reflected, and I reflected.
- A number of learners mentioned that they were glad that they could *finally* talk about their experiences of racism in class; and I wondered how many times in the past I had shut down such discussions before they had even happened. I had gone into this with a very clear intention to prioritize my learners' voices and experiences—and I was surprised at how quickly I had the urge to defend Canada, deflect uncomfortable comments, and

minimize fears. This time, I made space for discomfort. My learners' lived experiences were validated. They heard and used language for talking about racism, and with that came power to advocate.

Vignette 4: Reflecting on an Uncomfortable Conversation

In my LINC CLB 3–4 class, students participated in a “Show and Tell” demonstration on how they keep themselves fit and healthy. After each presentation, they asked each other questions to learn more about the different health practices. During one of these Q&A sessions, one student mentioned that students from specific parts of the world have strong body odour and sweat a lot because of the food they eat. There was a minute of uncomfortable silence. I jumped in and told the class that the statement was offensive because it stereotyped particular groups. Then we went on to talk about the importance of hygiene and eliminating body odour in the workplace. However, I was left feeling uncomfortable about the whole exchange and wondering whether I actually ended up perpetuating a racist system. I also felt that I might have alienated the student who asked the question, rather than engaging her in a discussion. The incident also sparked my curiosity about whether our sensitivity to the scents/smells of other ethnic groups stems from racism, and I found an enlightening article titled [Grease and Sweat: Race and smell in Eighteenth-Century English Culture](#) that caused me to look at the whole issue in a different light. Issues and comments related to scents/smells do pop up regularly, and this is how I plan to manage it next time:

- _ Sometime near the beginning of every class, we will talk about expectations for respectful communication. I will mention that the following are not allowed: terms and jokes that demean others; stereotypes based on race and ethnicity (as well as language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age, etc.); bullying, etc. We will talk about examples of stereotypes and bullying, and practice calling them out. My goal is that when students feel stereotyped, they have language to call it out. We will practice this frequently as we identify stereotypes in materials they encounter. I am hoping that they will feel comfortable calling me and each other out when they hear stereotypes or microaggressions.
- _ Scents/smells are indeed an issue that can raise barriers for my learners in the workplace—I've known people who have lost their jobs or experienced difficulty in their workplace because of this issue. At the same time, attitudes towards scents/smells vary much across cultures and can be racist. I do not want to assume that “our way” (in Canada) is “the only way” when it comes to scents/smells. When we broach the topic of scents/smells, I plan to ask learners questions such as “What are your favorite scents/smells?”, “What scents/smells do you miss since you've come to Canada?”, “What have you noticed

in Canada about attitudes towards particular scents/smells?”, and “How similar or different is this from attitudes in other countries that you’ve lived in?” The goal would be to elicit the idea that many in Canada are very scent/smell/odour-averse (after all, we ban odorous foods and even perfumes and perfumed lotions from many workplaces, and we have a plethora of products designed to hide odours). At the same time, the goal would be to acknowledge that this is only one of many ways of being in the world.

- _ With regard to helping learners manage body odours when they enter the workplace, I might flip the power structure in the classroom and describe my own (or my teenager’s) battle with body odour. I may have learners role-play giving advice (e.g., to an athletic teen or to my younger self) about products and hygiene habits to manage body odour in situations such as during an in-person job interview or starting their first job.

References and PD Resources

for Anti-racism 

This section includes resources that informed this document and resources (academic articles, websites, videos, tutorials, courses, etc.) for professional development and further learning on this topic.

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Resources for the Classroom

for Anti-racism 

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