



The Anti-Racist Writing Classroom

Racial Literacy and the FYC Classroom

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What does anti-racist pedagogy look like?

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) released a “Statement on Anti-Racism to Support Teaching and Learning” in 2018. In this statement, the NCTE urges English educators to engage in the following four activities:

- o Name and resist racist or other discriminatory actions and policies currently at work in our classrooms, institutions, and the field at large.
- o Affirm, welcome, and celebrate diversity within our classrooms, institutions, and scholarship.
- o Encourage cultural and linguistic diversity, while promoting anti-racist pedagogy through continual engagement in and frequent reflection on our teaching and scholarship.
- o Promote equity in education for all populations at the institutional and national level.

Why discuss race in your UGA classroom?

The United States has always been home to racist behavior and thought at both individual and institutional levels. Recent events at UGA make fostering productive conversations about race just as urgent and important as ever. These events include:

- In late 2015, an expansion of UGA's Baldwin Hall led to the unearthing of skeletal remains most likely belonging to people once enslaved by UGA. The University's controversial handling of those remains sparked a still-ensuing conversation surrounding UGA's failure to adequately address its historic relationship to slavery (Pizzino, Bedell, Brosius, Kundert, & Usher, 2019).
- In the spring of 2019, the UGA chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon was suspended after video of fraternity members using racist slurs and mocking enslaved peoples' pain went viral (Sicurella, 2019).

Often, the FYC classroom provides a freshman student's introduction to civil discussion about difficult topics. Additionally, UGA's status as a predominantly White, southern university means that many of our students have never critically thought about or openly discussed race.

As educators focused on writing as a way of thinking, we can invite students to critically reflect on their own relationship and reactions to current events surrounding race here at UGA and beyond. During the weeks ahead, the Writing Center hopes this series of posts on anti-racist pedagogy will assist instructors in this pursuit.

Questions for Reflection

Interested in fostering more critical discussions of race in your classroom? You might start by thinking about the following questions:

- In what ways have you discussed or addressed race in the classroom before? What was rewarding about the experience? What was difficult?
 - How have you encouraged cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom? What new activities or discussions might you implement?
 - What might you do differently this semester or in future classes to develop students' racial literacy?
 - What concerns do you have about implementing more explicitly anti-racist pedagogy? Where do these concerns come from and whom do they benefit?
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References

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- Pizzino, C., Bedell, M., Borsius, J. P., Kundert, K., & Usher, M. (2019, April 17). Report from the ad hoc committee on Baldwin Hall to the Franklin College Faculty Senate [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.franklin.uga.edu/>
- Sicurella, S. (2019, March 23). UGA fraternity suspended after racist video goes viral. *The Red and Black*. Retrieved from <https://www.redandblack.com>

Further Suggested Reading

- McClain, D. (2019, April 15). What all parents can learn from black mothers. *Nation*, 308(10), 14–19. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=135594912&site=ehost-live>
- Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2013). Toward a pedagogy of racial literacy in First Year Composition. (2013). *Teaching English in a Two-Year College (TETYC)*, Vol. 40 (3), 384–398.