Teaching Race, Racism, and Racial Justice: Pedagogical Principles and Classroom Strategies for Course Instructors[1]

M. Brielle Harbin, Ph.D.
United States Naval Academy

Amie Thurber, Ph.D.
Portland State University

Joe Bandy, Ph.D.
Vanderbilt University

Abstract: Teaching on topics of race and racism presents unique challenges to leaders in the university classroom setting. Despite an increasing number of instructors bringing a critical analysis of racial in/justice to their curriculum, many report challenges in teaching this content effectively. In this article, we address these challenges. We define common challenges in teaching racial content and articulate four principles for course planning around topics of race, racism, and racial justice. Then, drawing on a systematic review of scholarship examining issues of difference within a diverse range of disciplinary settings, we introduce a set of five pedagogical strategies, and supporting classroom practices that will help instructors effectively manage everyday classroom interactions. This article contributes to the vast literature on teaching race and anti-racist education by synthesizing guiding pedagogical principles for course planning and classroom management that are applicable in a wide array of disciplinary contexts and providing concrete strategies that committed instructors, at varying levels of experience, can implement in their courses.

Keywords: teaching race, antiracist pedagogy, racial equity, racial justice, antiracist education

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Pedagogical Principles and Classroom Strategies for Course Instructors

There is significant momentum in higher education to integrate racial justice education into the curriculum across a broad array of disciplines. For many of us, teaching racial justice is among the most valued and rewarding parts of our academic life. That said, it can also be among the most demanding, intellectually and emotionally. These topics reference both instructors' and students' physical, embodied selves as well as deeply held identities and group experiences shaped by powerful social forces of community, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, religion, and language. Moreover, teaching race and racism raises complex conceptions and misconceptions of biology, history, culture, and political economy; and highlights profound social injustices pervading many of our institutions, including higher education itself.

In this article, we address these challenges. We begin by using resources collected during a year-long learning community on issues of race, power, and difference in the university classroom to define common challenges in teaching racial content and articulate four principles for course planning around topics of race, racism, and racial justice. Then, drawing on a systematic review of scholarship examining issues of difference within a diverse range of university classroom settings, we introduce a set of five pedagogical strategies, and supporting classroom practices that will help instructors effectively manage everyday classroom interactions. This article contributes to the vast literature on teaching race and anti-racist education by synthesizing guiding pedagogical principles that are applicable in a wide array of disciplinary contexts and providing

concrete strategies that committed instructors, at varying levels of experience, can implement in their courses.

Although instructors should find these pedagogical principles, course design strategies, and classroom practices helpful in teaching race more effectively, it is important that the reader understands that by "effective" we do not mean that it is possible to teach race and racism without conflict or confusion, or without emotional or intellectual discord. Given the complexity and emotion surrounding these issues, and the fact that much can be learned in moments of confusion and conflict, an instructor can and should never fully avoid the difficulties of teaching racial issues. That said, this article draws on the common experiences of faculty who teach these courses as well as scholarship related to teaching race and anti-racist education to provide guiding pedagogical principles and best practices to empower instructors and students in confronting the challenges of race in their classrooms.

Methods

Our quest to identify broad pedagogical principles for teaching race and racial justice is an outgrowth of two learning communities on teaching, race, and power that two of the authors, Brielle and Joe, recently hosted at Vanderbilt University. The learning communities created a space for members of the Vanderbilt community to critically reflect and act on the realities of racialized difference and power in the university classroom. The first learning community included faculty members from a range of disciplinary backgrounds including English, History, Sociology, Education, Engineering, Physics, and Astronomy. A second learning community included graduate students from similarly diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Meeting monthly over the

academic year, participants used book chapters and articles from the teaching and learning literature to provide context to the challenges they face when teaching race. As participant-observers, Brielle and Joe took notes on these conversations including major themes in the challenges expressed by participants. In this article, we draw on these conversations and readings when describing the common challenges instructors face when teaching race and racism.

This article draws on three sources of data. First, we used the existing literature on teaching race and racism to articulate four guiding principles for course planning around topics of race, racism, and racial justice. Second, we conducted a systematic search of anti-racist education literature to identify: (1) a set of unifying pedagogical principles that are transferable across a range of disciplinary and institutional contexts and (2) practices to help instructors effectively manage everyday classroom interactions. To cull these pedagogical principles and classroom practices, we completed a simultaneous database search of 67 ProQuest databases, restricting the search to peer-reviewed journals, and unrestricted with regard to geography and year of publication. We used the following search terms, as found in the article abstracts: Pedagogy AND ((race) OR (racism) OR (anti-racist)) AND ((college) OR (higher education)). When an abstract met these inclusion criteria, we reviewed the article in full. Articles that did not address pedagogy (defined as the methods or practices of teaching) or were not focused on higher education were excluded. We gathered 26 articles in this search (for a summary, see Appendix A).[2]

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[2] Although the majority of articles in this review were published by scholars working in the United States, we also read the work of educators in South Africa, the UK, Finland, Cyprus, and Canada. There are a range of institutional contexts reflected, including public and private institutions, historically white and historically black institutions, and institutions located in rural and urban settings. In addition, articles are drawn from a variety of disciplines. They include formal assessments and case studies of a particular course, autoethnographic accounts of teaching racial justice, and reflections on pedagogy from career anti-racist and social-justice oriented educators.

Third, to ensure racial and gender diversity in our citations, we solicited peer-reviewed work from women and non-binary scholars of color who have studied and written on teaching race, racism, and racial justice. In total, we drew insights from the learning communities, 69 peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters to summarize the common challenges in teaching racial content and describe ways that instructors can proactively address these challenges when planning courses and managing classroom dynamics.

Challenges Associated with Teaching Race

Five primary challenges to teaching race and racism in the university classroom emerged in the learning community discussions:

1) **Students may articulate simplistic models of racial identity.**

Many students enter classrooms having more simplistic and less literate conceptions of race, bringing with them misconceptions of biology, history, culture, and political economy (Bandy, Harbin, Thurber n.d). For instance, students may believe race is a fixed biological concept or subscribe to monolithic characterizations of racial groups. Students also may believe race demands merely a focus on Otherness, or developing cultural literacies about non-white groups, rather than on race relations and studies of racial privilege, including the scholarship on whiteness (Kandaswamy 2007). Finally, students may subscribe to individualist interpretations of racism that focus on individual manifestations of racial prejudice or discrimination rather than the complex institutional, cultural, and macro-social processes that can create racial inequality and injustice behind the backs of well-meaning individuals (Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

2) White students may resist confronting issues of race and racism

When prompted to critique white supremacist assumptions or reasoning, students, particularly those who have experienced disproportionate representation in political, economic, and cultural institutions, may experience an identity crisis in which "their entire sense of self and their social world is called into question" (Johnson, Rich, and Cargile 2008, 120). As a result, students may resist updating their thinking in four ways: casting themselves as innocent bystanders of racism, adopting myths of meritocracy to argue that success is a matter of mere effort, ascribing racist beliefs and behaviors to "overt racists," or describing racism as a regional problem (e.g. Southerners are racists) (Johnson, Rich, and Cargile 2008). In the context of such misunderstandings and resistance, students of color may be the targets of microaggressions or outright racism as their peers passively avoid or actively resist any counter-normative racial dialogue, especially if these dialogues challenge deeply held beliefs or trigger feelings of guilt or shame (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000).

3) Internalized oppression may complicate participation for students of color

Students who have been the target of racism have certain epistemic advantages over students who have not experienced racial injustice directly. As Fine contends, "a particular wisdom about injustice is cultivated in the bodies and communities of those most intimately wounded by unjust conditions" (2016, p. 358). That said, it is also true that many students of color carry misinformation and bias about their own, and other racial groups (Sue, 2010). Moreover, for students of color, addressing issues of race may be complicated by incongruence between how others perceive them based on their race, and their own self-concept based on ethnic, religious, or cultural identification (Maybee 2011). These students may also lack awareness of how internalized oppression has

affected their lives, or how dominant and subordinate identities interact in their own lives (Hackmann 2005). As a result of internalized oppression, some students of color may experience challenging, if not debilitating, consequences for participation in the learning process (Lorde, 1984). Complicating this is the fact that a growing number of young people identify as biracial, multi-racial, or multi-ethnic and have even more complex and intersecting forces of race and racism shaping their lives (Penn 2000).

4) Instructors may feel uncertain about whether to, or how best to intervene when students have emotional responses to course content.

The challenges of teaching race are not just a matter of cognitive gaps or flawed logic; the topic is also acutely charged with affect and often highly personal (Grosland 2013). Discussing race, and especially racism, may give rise to discussions about oppression and privilege that, in turn, generate feelings of trauma and resentment, guilt, and pride. The historical force of racism can be so profound that it can generate an apprehension around racial discussions born of various forms of fear, guilt, shame, or anger (Grosland 2018). Rather than confront these emotions, students may invoke dominant racial ideologies that exhibit a broad cultural denial of the continuing legacies of difference and conflict (Johnson, Rich, and Cargile 2008; Zembylas 2012). Instructors may feel uncertain about whether to, or how best to intervene when students express emotional reactions to course content (Estill 2018).

5) Instructors may face challenges to their authority.

Student resistance to challenging deeply held views on race can manifest as attacks on an instructor's authority to teach the subject (Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009; Lazos, 2012; Bandy, Harbin, and Thurber, n.d.). Given that faculty are disproportionately white at most higher education institutions, and given broader social

biases that often conflate ideals of leadership and expertise with whiteness (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008), it is not unusual for students to regard faculty of color in racially-biased ways. For instance, students may regard faculty of color as less competent and expertly informed (McGee & Kazembe, 2016). At the same time, white instructors may be viewed skeptically or with distrust among students of color (Housee, 2008). Given this reality, instructors must consider how their social identities shape how they are perceived by students, and how to preserve expert authority while challenging misconceptions and supporting a more open learning community (Perry 2009). Further complicating matters, faculty who teach race-based courses may find their student evaluations affected by students' feelings of discomfort, which may be an obstacle to successful merit reviews, promotion, and tenure (Bavishi, Madera, & Hebl, 2010; Smith & Hawkins, 2011).

Addressing Challenges to Teaching Race through Intentional Course Design

These challenges can be addressed, in part, through intentional and thoughtful course design, resolving intellectual and interpersonal issues before the class ever meets (Kishimoto 2018). Within the "backwards design" template — one that develops "enduring understandings" for students, methods of assessing their growth, and productive learning experiences that offer knowledge and skills (see Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) — we identify four principles for course planning around topics of race, racism, and racial justice.

1) **Anticipating misconceptions about race.**

Instructors must anticipate preconceptions and ideologies students may hold about race and proactively structure assignments (readings, discussions, writing, projects) that lead students to deconstruct them. Scaffolding, or assigning readings in an intentional sequence that confronts misconceptions and builds competencies, equips students with critical knowledge and skills necessary to interrogate and transform their preconceptions (Maybin 1992). If one wishes to promote deeper reflection on the history of inequality and power relations around race, one may need to begin with assignments that challenge, for example, student misconceptions of racial inequality as a thing of the past, or student neglect of whiteness or investments in it. Addressing misconceptions proactively and in an intentional order is more likely, both to motivate student learning, and to transform their racial preconceptions, thus making them more receptive to critical race studies.

2) Selecting diverse course materials.

Diversifying course material in their voice, their disciplines, and their forms can enable a critical approach to race dialogue and support an inclusive learning environment. Let us address these in turn. First, instructors can diversify the voices and perspectives included in the syllabus, intentionally including marginalized and diverse views necessary for students to develop multiple cultural literacies and critical insights into racial ideologies and systems. Second, instructors can assign reviews of disciplinary debates and ask students to critically engage with how "knowledge" is constructed, including which perspectives and whose voices are included (or not), and the effect these choices likely have on the discipline's accumulation of knowledge (Kishimoto 2018). Finally, instructors can diversify the material forms of content, for example by engaging students with alternative texts that explore course content that encourage new forms of intellectual, emotional, and social development, which might include theatre, video,

spoken-word, social media, music, web video clips, visual art, advertisements, or games.
Although many racial justice courses rely heavily on academic articles or books, these are not the only sources of knowledge. In some cases, it also may be necessary to supplement core readings with alternative materials such (auto)biographical narratives/memoirs that can surface, not merely students' intellectual reactions, but also those emotional and social, and intellectual feelings, experiences necessary to growth, as well as new understandings (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Winans, 2005).

3) Creating a concept-centered syllabus.

Existing scholarship suggests it is better to adopt a concept-centered rather than group-centered approach to organizing syllabi (e.g., Downey and Torrecilha 1994). Syllabi that adopt a group-centered model focus on individual groups in isolation, which can make it more difficult for students to integrate deeper, and more fundamental concepts such as privilege and structural disadvantage. At worst, it also can affirm students' misconceptions that racial literacy is achieved by touring the experiences of various racial Others, reducing complex racial histories and experiences to short discussions, and exoticizing racial difference as a subject of tourist fascination. Different from this approach, the concept-centered model uses key ideas such as colonialism, prejudice, and discrimination to examine broader social processes and understandings of the socio-historical significance of race and ethnicity (Downey and Torrecilha 1994). Thus, instructors are well-positioned to convey the complexities of race, create natural points of comparison, side step superficial representations of race, particularly aestheticized multiculturalism, and make it difficult for students to compartmentalize knowledge about race-related concepts (Downey & Torrecilha, 1994; Kurtis, Salter, & Adams, 2015, McCoskey, 1999). Nevertheless, the appropriateness of the group versus

concept-centered approach may vary based on the learning objectives and goals as well as the broader disciplinary context.

4) Incorporating diverse forms of assessment

Once an instructor has identified enduring understandings and strategically organized course content, they must determine what course assignments best enable students to demonstrate mastery of course learning goals. When assessing student learning in terms of cognitive development, typical assessment strategies (such as a quiz, exam, or research paper) may be appropriate. However, including other modes of assessment allows instructors to assess affective and social development as well. For example, if equipping students with tools for intergroup dialogue is a learning objective, assessment might include self-and peer reflections on student participation in large and small group dialogue in class.

While a number of pedagogical challenges can be mitigated through intentional course design, this alone is insufficient for addressing unexpected challenges that can arise in teaching race (Hackman 2005). Indeed, even with the best laid plans, current events or an off-hand remark can easily divert the course to uncharted territory. As such, teaching race requires educators to be nimble and adaptive, to rely on facilitation skill in the moment as much as pre-planned curriculum. Unfortunately, these facilitation skills are too often a missing component of instructors' academic training (Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). Drawing on the findings from a systematic review of the anti-racist education literature, in the next section we define five pedagogical strategies, and supporting classroom practices, that will help instructors effectively manage everyday classroom interactions.

Effectively Managing Everyday Classroom Dynamics When Teaching Race, Racism, and Racial Justice

Pedagogy is complex. How instructors teach is reflective of a constellation of factors, including:

- An instructor's theoretical/epistemological orientation to the course content as well as to the science of teaching and learning
- An instructor's social location/positionality
- An instructor's facilitation skills and experience
- The pedagogical strategies (i.e. activities, facilitation decisions) an instructor employs in a given course or lesson

Clearly, instructors with different levels of facilitation skill will be differently able to employ the same strategies. More experienced educators are likely more adept at 'reading the room,' navigating resistance, or trouble-shooting breakdowns in productive dialogue. But two equally-skilled facilitators leading the same activities will receive different responses from students based on student's perceptions of or biases toward the instructor's perceived identity (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015). Furthermore, a single instructor's teaching will be experienced differently by students of different backgrounds (Housee, 2008; Rothschild, 2003). As such, while there are more and less effective strategies, there is no one 'right way' to teach race, racism, and racial justice. We encourage readers to consider the five principles and engagement strategies below as possible pedagogical approaches, and discern their appropriateness given specific teaching contexts.

1) Effective racial justice education encourages reflexivity.

Encouraging student reflexivity is a core tenet of racial justice education (Bozalek, Carolissen, Leibowitz, Nicholls, Rohleder & Swartz, 2010; Smele, Siew-Sarju,

Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017; Zembylas, 2012). Reflexivity is broadly understood as the ability to consider one's own feelings, reactions, and motives and how they affect behaviors. In the context of racial justice education, reflexivity suggests the ability to critically evaluate one's own social location and racial socialization, to become increasingly aware of racial biases, and to be willing to investigate the ways internal perspectives about race inform our interactions and relationships. Strategies for encouraging reflexivity include instructor modeling, addressing instructor positionality, and using autobiographical prompts and assignments.

Instructor modelling. Instructors can interrogate their own experiences of marginalization, privilege, and internalized dominance, and share these reflections with students as examples of the kind of rigorous self-reflection expected in a course (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Rothschild, 2003; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017). In some settings, such modeling may require relatively little vulnerability. Yet in other settings, instructors may feel some discomfort making such disclosures. Acknowledging these feelings can be a way to normalize discomfort. With that said, faculty members from marginalized groups who are uniquely vulnerable in academic spaces may feel distinct levels of hesitation, which preclude their willingness to make these disclosures. However, with time and greater experience, even faculty members in the most vulnerable positions may become more emboldened in these declarations (Chesler and Young 2007).

Addressing instructor positionality. While it is true that instructors of all backgrounds can be equally effective (or ineffective) in leading racial justice content, it is also true that students will respond differently to instructors—at least initially—on the basis of their perceived race and other identities (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Housee,

2008). An instructor's positionality may generate in students various reactions—a sense of trust, affinity, authenticity, hope, as well as distrust, alienation, skepticism, or isolation. Importantly, the interpersonal challenges white faculty members and faculty of color face are often very different. For instance, Chesler and Young (2007) contend that faculty from different backgrounds face unique manifestations of challenges to their subject matter expertise. In a series of interviews with faculty with distinguished teaching records from the natural and social sciences and humanities, the authors find that white faculty were less likely to report being challenged in their expertise and felt greater comfort addressing conflicts with students over course material. Nevertheless, Smith, Kashubeck-West, Payton, and Adams (2017) find that white faculty members often find it challenging to navigate their own anti-racist development while also guiding their students' anti-racist journey, which contributes to anxiety, self-doubt, and feelings of imposter syndrome. Moreover, white faculty may also be navigating the same feelings of white guilt as their students and may feel stifled by perfectionism given the stakes of the subject matter. Faculty of color face different challenges. Chesler and Young find that faculty of color are more likely to feel they need to prove their subject matter expertise, are expected to be more accessible and nurturing, are limited in the range of topics for which they were considered expert voices, and more likely to experience visceral reactions to having their substantive expertise challenged.

To promote student reflexivity on these biases or prejudices and bring them to greater conscious awareness, Rothschild (2003) encourages students to reflect on their reactions to an instructor's perceived positionality, assigning a written reflection to the prompt: what concerns they may have about taking this course from a ___ professor? Of course, more vulnerable faculty members, either because of their social experience or

years of experience, may view this dialogue as inherently risky. For these faculty

members, beginning one's course with an explicit discussion of their background and

subject matter expertise may be a more attractive alternative (Chesler and Young 2007).

Other concrete strategies for encouraging student reflexivity include:

Assigning autobiographical journaling/essays. Providing assignments that

require students to make connections between course content and their lived experiences

is another way to encourage reflexivity. Instructors may offer a range of prompts related

to course content (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011, Rothschild, 2003; Estrada & Matthews, 2016;

Matias & Mackey, 2016; and Winans, 2005), such as:

- What/how did you first learn about race?
- When do you first learn that you were a member of a racial group? What/how did you learn about your racial group?
- When did you first learn that there were racial groups other than your own? What/how did you learn about this/these groups?
- How do you perceive your own race, and how do others perceive your race?
- Select a significant institution in your life (i.e. educational, religious, media/cultural, etc.). What have you learned from this institution about race? How might this have affected the relationships you have and how you identify racially (or not)?
- Scan your relationships with people who have been socialized into a different racial group than yourself. Thinking back to your childhood, what has been the nature of these relationships (i.e. friends, family, teachers, service providers, mentors/coaches, charity recipients, etc.)? Have the types of relationships changed over time? What do you notice about the relationships in your life today?

These prompts can be used as in class pair activities, written reflections completed in

class or as homework, and can be returned to later in the semester by having students

review and comment on their initial reflections.

2) Effective racial justice education welcomes difficulty.

It is arguable that all education—especially when challenging hegemonic

beliefs—is necessarily a discomforting process. This is particularly true with racial

justice education, which involves grappling with individual, cultural, and national identities (Housee, 2008). As Kumashiro explains, "the 'problem' that anti-oppressive education needs to address is not merely a lack of knowledge... but a resistance to any knowledge that disrupts what one already 'knows'" (2000a, p. 43). In this context, conflict—both internal and social—can be a sign of intellectual growth (O'Neill & Miller, 2015). Although educators should not aim to create discomfort as an end it itself, it is critical for instructors to expect, welcome, and prepare for conflict (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011; Ford, 2012; Housee, S., 2008; Kumashiro, 2000b; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Matias & Mackey, 2016; O'Neill & Miller, 2015; Simpson, 2006; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017). Strategies for preparing for discomfort include: normalizing difficulty and addressing harms immediately.

Normalizing difficulty. Instructors may choose to include a syllabus statement reminding students that, while repetition is comforting, learning new things—especially things that challenge previously held beliefs—is not (Kumashiro, 2000a). Instructors also may choose to initiate a meta-dialogue about discussion within the course, challenging the notions of safety, risk, and comfort (Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Matias & Mackey, 2016). Instructors also can ask students to write and reflect on issues they have with discussing race/racism in class (e.g., appearing racist or being a target of microaggressions), or their feelings about a specific course topic (Estrada & Matthews, 2016; Rothschild, 2003). These reflections can be shared in pairs or triads and then discussed among the class as a way to acknowledge and normalize students' concerns.

Another strategy is the "five minute rule" activity, wherein students are encouraged to discuss the merits of dissenting perspectives that are raised in class for five minutes. This activity helps normalize difficulty by asking students to vocalize diverse

viewpoints and grapple with the merits of, at times, unfamiliar arguments. As part of this discussion, students should discuss what a given perspective adds to the conversation and how it nuances collective understanding.

A final technique encourages instructors to regularly set aside ten minutes for students to reflect on what they have learned during the week. Questions might include:

- At what moment were you most engaged as a learner?
- When were you most distanced?
- What actions in the class were surprising or puzzling?

The benefit of this approach is that it allows instructors to continually check in with students and assess how they are relating to the instructor, their peers, and the course materials. Moreover, when students become familiar with this exercise, it is possible to seamlessly transition into this activity when a difficult moment arises.

Addressing harm immediately. Some emotional and uncivil debate is common to classes in which race has a significant role, especially among young adults learning to navigate challenging issues with their peers (Pittman 2018). However, for any learning to occur students need to feel that they are physically safe and that their humanity is respected. Therefore it is imperative for instructors to interrupt any challenge to that safety, such as physical threat, bullying, or dehumanization that occurs in the classroom. Ignoring or failing to address the conflict will teach students that they cannot trust you as an instructor to maintain norms of civility and cope with the social challenges that difficult topics present (Pittman 2018, p. 56). However, instructor engagement can be harmful if it is not calm, measured, and non-reactive. If instructors merely react to triggers in the classroom rather than addressing the complexity of the issues and the

interests of multiple perspectives, students may feel that the classroom is not fair-minded or an open space of dialogue and critical thought (Pittman 2018, pg. 61).

Along these lines, instructors should be prepared to respond to microaggressions in the classroom in ways that facilitate learning, accountability, and wherever possible, repair ruptures in relationships (Thurber and DiAngelo, 2018). According to Wright (2016), addressing breakdowns in classroom communication requires instructors to pay attention to students' verbal and nonverbal behavior. They must also be intentional about withholding judgments that attribute motivations to students' behavior. In particular, they must consider how factors and events outside of the classroom may be influencing students' mood, perspective, and communication style. Questions to gauge the focus of uncivil behavior include:

- Is the disruption a result of a student failing to understand the presence and civility that is expected?
- Is the disruption related to how the student was graded or evaluated?
- Is the disruption related to a student simply disagreeing with a specific viewpoint conveyed in the course materials, lecture, or discussion?

3) Effective racial justice education is tailored to student needs.

In deciding how to teach racial justice content, instructors must consider the overall campus context as well as their individual students. In some regions, it is not uncommon for white students never to have had a peer or instructor of color; never to have considered deeply the impact of racism on their own identity, relationships, or broader social conditions; and subsequently, never to have developed literacy with languages about race and racism (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Santas, 2000; Simpson, 2006; Rothschild, 2003). Even in contexts where students have encountered a diversity of perspectives on race, research indicates that the vast majority of white people, and not

insignificant numbers of people of color, internalize beliefs rooted in misinformation, bias, or prejudice grounded in concepts of white superiority (Sue, 2010).

Meeting students where they are poses a pedagogical challenge, as students in a given class may occupy a range of different perspectives. Not unlike a conversation among people with different levels of fluency in a given language, there is ample room for error and misunderstanding. Thus, instructors must consider students' differing knowledge bases, provide tools for constructive engagement with the course material, and help students develop new understandings. Strategies for meeting students where they are include assessing student's preexisting knowledge, providing skills for dialogue, and engaging students' arguments, even when they are flawed.

Assessing student knowledge and preconceptions. Surveys of students in the first days of a class not only can help you get to know students interests or preferred names/pronouns, it also can help assess what knowledge students bring to class related to the core concepts of the course. For example, Kandaswamy (2007) asks students to define race and gender and then create a collective list of what these definitions should include. The advantage of this exercise is that it simulates discussion while also bringing to the surface preconceptions students bring into the classroom. Further, issuing the same survey as a post-test at the end of a course can, through comparison, offer opportunities to assess student growth. Autobiographical journaling or essays, described in the encouraging student reflexivity section above, also function as an assessment of student preconceptions.

Providing skills for dialogue. There is debate around the usefulness of discussion guidelines, with a number of scholars arguing that such guidelines often function to privilege white students' sense of comfort and safety over critical self-

reflection (Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014), and limit student agency in shaping classroom dynamics around hot moments. That said, numerous scholars suggest allotting time and content in the course to discuss and develop skills for productive conversations about race (Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). For example, Matias & Mackey (2015) introduce students to Bonilla-Silva's (2009) study of white students' "semantic moves" — rhetorical efforts to avoid or resist discussion — and encourage them to notice when these tactics are employed in class. As another example, DiAngelo and Sensoy coach students to reframe their claims as questions, providing a list of eighteen possible prompts designed "to engender humility, develop critical thinking skills, interrogate what we think we know, and practice grappling with new information" (2014, p.194). For instance, when a student responds to a reading with the statement, "I don't agree that only whites can be racist — that's not true," an instructor might coach them to inquire about the issue with more openness and use "nonviolent communication" strategies, asking "The author is arguing that only whites can be racist (etc.) ... Can you help me understand that?"

Engaging students' arguments, even when they are flawed. Students who have not thought deeply about issues of race and racism, or who have not been exposed to alternative viewpoints, may voice arguments that are problematic. For example, a student may contend that racism is a phenomenon that exists only in the past or attribute a stereotype to all members of a particular ethnic group. Zembylas (2012) suggests the use of "strategic empathy," which requires resisting the urge to correct misinformation and adopting instead a stance of inquiry into the complex and contradictory motivations of students in order to promote self-reflection and critical thinking, a strategy other

researchers advocated as well (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Winans, 2005; Zembylas, 2012). This might involve simply asking questions. For example, in response to a student's statement that undocumented immigrants are "taking jobs away from Americans," an instructor might consider some of the following prompts:

- Tell me more about that…
- It sounds like you have strong views on this – have you had some personal experience that might help us understand where you are coming from?
- I'm glad you brought this up, because this sentiment is something we hear a lot in popular culture, and it's important to understand and unpack. What are the concerns underlying this statement?

Other scholars suggest being more direct in identifying flaws in argumentation or factual errors, while drawing students into inquiry about the function of the argument in perpetuating racism (Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017). In the previous example, an instructor might offer evidence of seasonal labor shortages in agricultural industries that have relied on migrant workers for decades, introduce the history of U.S. governmental policies that have brought non-resident workers into the country to meet that demand (i.e. the Bracero program), or cite statistics on the jobs that immigrants create through their consumption and taxes, in addition to other growth effects. They may then ask students to consider why the narrative of immigrants taking American jobs has persisted. Whether an instructor adopts a stance of "strategic empathy" or "calling out while drawing in", the recommendation is to meet students, but not leave them, where they are.

4) Effective racial justice education engages affective and embodied dimensions of learning.

It is critical that instructors use content to provide students with relevant empirical knowledge related to race issues. This often involves providing the historical context needed for students to understand patterns and engage in informed social analysis (Santas, 2000; Estrada & Matthews 2016). Yet, racial justice education requires much more than simply correcting misinformation or developing and applying a racial justice analysis. The reliance on knowledge and rationality may enable many transformations, but it is often insufficient to address the affective ways that racism is constructed and experienced. Powerful emotions — anger and fear, hope and love — flow from the collective memory we experience around our social structures of race and the identities they constitute (Ohito and Deckman 2018). Indeed, part of the problematic nature of racial categories is the ways they have been constructed to evoke emotions that injure and disable, provoke and polarize. Students who have lived experiences impacted by race and racism may experience moral trauma, while white students may be haunted by shame, guilt — and both may manifest in an array of forms (Grosland 2018). These feelings and conflict can even be embodied in the seating and postures of our classrooms. As such, racism is not simply "thought;" it is deeply felt and experienced.

Despite the fact that, as Leonardo & Porter caution, "whites turn racism into an intellectualist problem, rather than a lived one" (2010, p. 149), the affect of race enters the classroom with a power that defies repression and challenges the pretenses of peace we as instructors attempt to maintain. Therefore, it is imperative to engage the affective and embodied dimensions of learning strategically, so that we as instructors can help set the emotional terms of dialogue (Bozalek, Carolissen, Leibowitz, Nicholls, Rohleder & Swartz, 2010; Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011; Housee, S., 2008; Estrada & Matthews 2016; Ford, 2012; Kumashiro, 2000b; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Matias & Mackey,

2016; Rothschild, 2003; Simpson, 2006; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton, & Bernhardt, 2017; Zembylas, 2012). Strategies to empower emotional intelligence and to "put the body back into knowledge making" (Sutherland, 2013, p. 739) include fostering emotional literacy and developing empathy.

Fostering emotional literacy. As Matias & Mackey contend, students must "learn to take ownership of their own emotional responses to learning about race, racism, white supremacy, and whiteness" (2016, p. 37). This can be achieved through a variety of practices: pairing cognitive and experiential activities; slowing down to allow time for students to more deeply engage course content; and incorporating sensory ways of knowing, such as including rituals/mindfulness practices (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011; Estrada & Matthews 2016; Housee, 2008; Ford, 2012; Rothschild, 2003; Shahjahan, 2015;Sutherland, 2013; Waring & Bordoloi, 2012). Smele et al. (2017) suggest the use of a critical learning journal, a place for ungraded reflections that are not shared with other students or the professor but which encourage self-reflection when hot moments arise in the course. Critical learning journals can be useful tools for students as they process their learning, while also encouraging students to be responsible for understanding their own emotional responses to course content and interactions.

Developing empathy. Just as students learn to better attune to their own experience, they also must be willing to consider the emotional responses of others, which may be different from their own. Many scholars of social justice education recommend leveraging student's lived experiences as sources of knowledge and learning (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton, & Bernhardt, 2017). Ohito and Deckman use talking circles to cultivate students' ability to listen without judgment—what they refer to as "bearing witness." The authors

use this exercise to draw students' attention to the experiences of their peers and demonstrate, through personal storytelling and guided prompts, how race and racism provoke emotional reactions that may influence their responses. At the same time, this exercise teaches students how to "catch each other's feelings", which creates an opportunity to experience and empathize with each other's racialized pain and shame (Ohito and Deckman 2018, 137). Through these exchanges, the authors contend, racial justice becomes possible. Although peer-to-peer teaching and learning can be a powerful strategy to develop empathy, Matias & Zemblayas (2014) emphasize the importance of monitoring emotions such as pity and caring that arise in the classroom discussions, which may cloak feelings of disgust.

Empathy also can be fostered through encounters with course content. Although many racial justice courses rely heavily on academic articles or books, it can be effective to supplement core readings with alternative materials such as (auto)biographical narratives or memoirs that can surface feelings, experiences, as well as new understandings of the emotional dimensions of race (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Winans, 2005).

5) Effective racial justice education fosters a learning community.

Creating a sense of belonging within a classroom is a critical element to learning, since students learn best when they feel connected, cared for, and that their perspectives are valued (Samuel, 2017). This is particularly true when teaching racial in/justice, where building community in the classroom increases comfort and willingness to engage in "threshold" learning — that is, new understandings that transform previously held beliefs (Delano-Oriaran & Parks, 2015; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Santas, 2000; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017). Instructors play an important role in

building trust through being transparent about their commitment to racial justice, while also reflecting humility and a commitment to life-long learning. Instructors can let students know that they welcome hearing about students' experience in the course, and how they can be more effective. That said, what builds rapport for a white male instructor in a room full of students of color, may not for women of color instructors facing mostly white students. Still, there are some general techniques that provide a signal that the classroom is a welcoming and trusting environment.

Begin the course by introducing yourself. Williams (2016) describes the transformative power of "radical honesty," a practice of truth-telling that challenges racist and patriarchal cultures in the academy. Radical honesty harnesses the power of personal narratives by inviting both instructors and students to bring their whole selves to academic settings without shame. This pedagogical approach begins the first day of class with instructors introducing themselves and describing how their various identities may influence how they teach the course. Instructors can use their introductions to invite students to acknowledge their own identities and the stereotypes they may bring to the space.

Design opportunities for meaningful peer-to-peer learning. When designing small or large group activities, it is critical to be mindful of whom the activity is "for." In racial justice courses, too often the knowledge and experience of students of color is exploited to advance the learning of white students. At times, an instructor may elect to use intragroup caucusing, wherein students who share some aspects of social identity (e.g., black students, first generation students, white students, etc.) explore similarities and differences among their experiences, offer peer support, and learn from and challenge one another's perspectives (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). At other times, intergroup

dialogue may be most appropriate, and an instructor may intentionally create small groups that are diverse along any number of axes, including ethnicity, gender, or geography.

Creating meaningful intergroup dialogue on issues of race can be challenging for instructors working in racially homogenous settings. Some instructors have experimented with cross-institutional course design, bringing together students from two universities in both online and face-to-face sessions (Leibowitz, B., Bozalek, V., Rohleder, P., Carolissen, R., & Swartz, L., 2010). Groups that meet over time have the potential to form deeper bonds while also providing greater intellectual challenge. Suoranta & Moisio (2006) describe the use of a Study Circle wherein students work in groups of four to eight participants. Groups meet a given number of times over the term to discuss readings, taking turns presenting summaries and leading discussions, while documenting their collective work. The group presents the products of their collective inquiry in the form of a portfolio turned into the instructor.

Seek a learning community for yourself. Just as our students are more likely to engage in transformative learning when they feel a sense of connection and belonging, instructors bring our best to teaching racial in/justice when we are part of a learning community that offers ongoing support, challenge, and innovation. Some universities and colleges offer formalized learning communities for instructors. As mentioned earlier, this article is a product of a yearlong learning community that explored topics of teaching, difference, and power— particularly along the lines of race. Along the same lines, the Smith College School of Social Work offers a weekly workshop titled "Pedagogy and Diversity" where faculty gather to share strategies to integrate antiracist content and practices into their courses, and troubleshoot teaching dilemmas (O'Neill & Miller,

2015). Where such formalized networks do not exist, interested faculty can self-organize a reading group, skill-sharing workshops, or other convenings to discuss racial justice pedagogy and enhance their professional development.

Conclusion

While there is a burgeoning literature related to best practices in teaching about race, racism, and racial justice, there remains much for all of us to learn, particularly with regard to what kinds of pedagogical interventions are most effective in teaching race in different contexts, and with different students. The difficulties students and instructors confront as they understand the dynamics of race are in need of careful analysis and discussion, as are the many pedagogical approaches that have the potential to be transformative, if we are to be intentional and effective teachers of race. Inevitably there will continue to be situations that confound us, moments when we are not sure the most effective way to respond, where we cannot see the best path towards serving our students' diverse needs. At times, student learning may be modest, and uninformed perspectives may remain entrenched. In any given course, our students will walk away with less or more than we may have hoped, both as a result of and in spite of our contributions. As Simpson concludes, "Given the opportunity, our students learn in ways that make sense to them, and often in ways that we cannot predict. Likewise, it is our students who will decide what to take and leave from our classes…" (2006, p. 89).

In these moments, we too need to increase our comfort with not knowing the answers, embracing humility, and becoming comfortable with discomfort, just like we ask our students (Simpson, 2006; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Leonardo & Porter,2010). Indeed, teaching is an emergent process. Even with the best laid plans, we

cannot always anticipate the challenges and possibilities that will arise in a given course. Rather than closing the subject, we hope this article serves as an invitation to further dialogue about the many methods of teaching race that have demonstrated promise or success, so that we all may be empowered to, both be, and help create, more race-conscious citizens of the world.

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Appendix A. Summary of articles from systematic literature review by discipline

Short Citation	Country	Discipline(s)	Population
Bozalek, V., Carolissen, R., Leibowitz, B., Nicholls, L., Rohleder, P., & Swartz, L. (2010).	South Africa	Social Work, Psychology, Occupational therapy	Upper division undergraduate
Danowitz, M. A., & Tuitt, F. (2011).	USA	Education	Doctoral education
Delano-Oriaran, O. O., & Parks, M. W. (2015).	USA	Education	HWI
Estrada, F., & Matthews, G. (2016).	USA	Education	Undergraduate
Ford, K. A. (2012).	USA	General	Undergraduate, HWI
Ford, K. A., & Malaney, V. K. (2012).	USA	General	Undergraduate, HWI
Housee, S. (2008).	UK	Sociology	General
Kumashiro, K. K. (2000).	USA	Education	Student teachers
Kumashiro, K. K. (2000).	USA	Education	General
Leibowitz, B., Bozalek, V., Rohleder, P., Carolissen, R., & Swartz, L. (2010).	South Africa	Social Work, Psychology	Upper division undergraduate
Leonardo, Z., & Porter, R. K. (2010).	USA	Education	General
Lichty, L. F., & Palamaro-Munsell, E. (2017).	USA	Community Psychology	Undergraduate
Matias, C. E., & Mackey, J. (2016).	USA	education/teacher education	General
O'Neill, P., & Miller, J. (2015).	USA	Social Work	Graduate
Pierce, A. J. (2016).	USA	Political philosophy/justice studies	HWI
Rothschild, T. (2003).	USA	Sociology	Diverse urban college and HWI
Santas, A. (2000).	USA	Philosophy	Diverse state school
Shahjahan, R. A. (2015).	USA	Education	General
Simpson, J. S. (2006).	USA	Cultural Studies	General
Smele, S., Siew-Sarju, R., Chou, E., Breton, P., & Bernhardt, N. (2017).	Canada	Sociology, Gender Studies, Political Science	General
Suoranta, J., & Moisio, O. P. (2006).	Finland, USA	Education	Pre-service/in-service teachers
Sutherland, A. (2013).	South Africa	Drama Studies	Graduate
Walton, S. (2013).	UK	General	General
Waring, C. D., & Bordoloi, S. D. (2012).	USA	Sociology, Human Development	Undergraduate
Winans, A. E. (2005).	USA	English	SLAC, HWI
Zembylas, M. (2012).	Cyprus	Education	General