Resource Manual for Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive, and Anti-Racist Curriculum and Instruction

The School of Theatre and Dance
Kent State University

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Content Advisory: This document discusses various types of trauma

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I. Introduction

This document was crafted for all ~~of us:~~ faculty, staff, adjuncts, and graduate instructors.

It is ~~very~~ important to understand that this document is neither exhaustive nor a panacea. It is a perpetual work-in-progress and a step towards a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist instruction. It is intended to operate in tandem with individual work and accountability and support the School's DEI and anti-racist efforts.

The CARE committee will revise the document as needed in consultation with its users and the School Director.

II. Common Terms
- From Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
  - **Racist:** One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.
  - **Antiracist:** One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.

- With the exception of the definition of self-care, the follow come from the University of Washington
  - **Ally:** Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
  - **Bias**: A form of prejudice that results from our tendency and need to classify individuals into categories.
  - **BIPoC:** An acronym used to refer to Blacks, Indigenous people, and people of color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.
  - **Cisgender:** A term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
  - **Cultural Appropriation:** The non-consensual use/misappropriation of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes—including symbols, art, language, customs, etc.—often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture.
  - **Decolonize**: The active and intentional process of unlearning values, beliefs, and conceptions that have caused physical, emotional, or mental harm to people through colonization. It requires a recognition of systems of oppression.
  - **Disability:** Physical or mental (challenges) that affect a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
  - **Diversity:** Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation,

socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

- **Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favor one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories.
- **Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist in the provision of adequate opportunities to all groups.
- **Gender Identity:** Distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's internal sense of (their gender). Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
- **Gender Non-conforming:** An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.
- **Harassment:** The use of comments or actions that can be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, and unwelcome.
- **Implicit Bias:** Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.
- **Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.
- **Institutional Racism:** Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination.
- **Intersectionality:** A social construct that recognizes the fluid diversity of identities that a person can hold such as gender, race, class, religion, professional status, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc.
- **"Isms":** A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group. For example, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.
- **LGBTQIA+:** An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.
- **Microaggression:** The verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, insults, or belittlement, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon discriminatory belief systems.
- **Multicultural Competency:** A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the

world, and an openness to learn from them. (Multicultural competency is a perpetual process not a destination.)

- ○ **Oppression:** The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures.
- ○ **Patriarchy:** Actions and beliefs that prioritizes masculinity. Patriarchy is practiced systemically in the ways and methods through which power is distributed in society (jobs and positions of power given to men in government, policy, criminal justice, etc.) while also influencing how we interact with one another interpersonally (gender expectations, sexual dynamics, space-taking, etc.).
- ○ **People of Color:** A collective term for (individuals) of Asian, African, Latinx, and Native American backgrounds; as opposed to the collective "White".
- ○ **Prejudice:** An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.
- ○ **Privilege:** Exclusive access or availability to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.
- ○ **Queer:** An umbrella term that can refer to anyone who transgresses society's view of gender or sexuality. The definitional indeterminacy of the word Queer, its elasticity, is one of its constituent characteristics: "A zone of possibilities."
- ○ **Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time
- ○ **Safe Space:** Refers to an environment in which everyone feels (safe) expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.
- ○ **Self-care:** The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health (mental and physical). (from Oxford Languages)
- ○ **Sexual orientation:** An individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- ○ **Social Justice:** Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and society as a whole.
- ○ **Stereotype:** A form of generalization rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions, a product of processes of categorization that can result in a prejudiced attitude, uncritical judgment, and intentional or unintentional discrimination. Stereotypes are typically negative, based on little information that does not recognize individualism and personal agency.

- **Structural inequality:** Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws, and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.
- **System of Oppression:** Conscious and unconscious, non-random and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups. It is sometimes used to refer to systemic racism.
- **Tokenism:** Presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for her/himself
- **White Supremacy:** A power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as white, whether consciously or subconsciously determined; and who feel superior to those of other racial/ethnic identities.

The terms contained in this glossary (and gathered by University of Washington) have been reproduced from the following resources:

1. Anti-Violence Project. *Glossary*. University of Victoria
2. Colors of Resistance. *Definitions for the Revolution*
3. Cram, R. H. (2002). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*
4. Equity and Inclusion. *Glossary*. UC Davis
5. Potapchuk, M., Leiderman, S., et al. (2009). *Glossary*. Center for Assessment and Policy Development
6. Center for Diversity & Inclusion. *Glossary of Bias Terms*. Washington University in St. Louis
7. Ontario Human Rights Commission. *Glossary of human rights terms*
8. W.K. Kellogg Foundation. *Racial Resource Guide*

III. **Developing an Equitable, Inclusive, and Anti-racist Theatre and Dance Curriculum and Instruction Ethos (Practices and Values) (Practices based on your Values)**

- Your ethos is and should be a perpetual work in progress. Make sure to state this clearly at the top of your ethos.
- Investigate yourself to see what you value and are committed to in delivering diverse, equitable, inclusive and antiracist curriculum and instruction.
- Consider what is important on both the macro and micro levels. What comprises your ethos will be reflective of who you are, what you value, and what you teach. The ethos of someone who teaches stage management may differ from the ethos of someone who teaches dance.
- The following are some goals and commitments you might consider making in your **ethos**. (This list of possible goals commitments is drawn and adapted from work by

Associate Professor Fabio Polanco, the members of the charge item 2.1.2 working group, Associate Professor Courtney Brown, the work of Professor Nicole Brewer and her framework of Conscientious Theatre Training, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, Dr. Janice A. Byrd and the Earlham College Theatre Arts Department, and New York City Center. **Please credit the above if you use them.**)

- to center the voices of students from marginalized communities.
- to promote student agency.
- to dismantle white supremacist structures, policies, and ways of seeing.
- to "disrupt white cultural identifiers as default".
- to "seek out/engage guest speakers of diverse backgrounds." (EC)
- to "diversify my reading list and required viewing to include the works of marginalized persons." (EC)
- to "encourage (students) to create(e).new works that reflect the diversity of the world in which we live." (EC)
- to acknowledging the systematic mistreatment and disenfranchisement of BIPOC and other marginalized groups currently and historically subjected to systemic oppression.
- to seek to use/use anti-racist, anti-sexist, and gender-inclusive practices in my teaching.
- to include the practices of marginalized groups in theater training.
- to seek to provide an education that is free of racism, bias, and other forms of bigotry.
- to actively work to identify and challenge systemic and individual acts of racism and other forms of bigotry in the classroom.
- to challenge myself through reflective practice and acquire knowledge through on-going professional development to succeed in countering racism and other forms of bigotry.
- to promote cultural diversity and elevate the value of culture and personal uniqueness.
- to implement non-hierarchical approaches to teaching and learning that disrupt the power dynamic.
- to facilitate and uphold for all, a space in which acceptance, approval and appreciation of various socio-cultural paradigms are upheld.
- to avoid singling out BIPOC individuals to speak to an ethnic and/or racial experience.
- to avoid singling out LGBTQIA+, female-identifying, and non-binary identifying individuals to speak to experiences of sexual preference and/or gender
- to avoid singling out dis/abled individuals to speak to dis/abled experience
- to acknowledge when I make a mistake
- to foster a sense of belonging

IV. Harm Reduction and Trauma-Informed Teaching

The following is drawn and adapted from the work of Dr. Nisha Sajnani and her article *A Drama Therapist's Perspective on Teaching Theatre in Times of Crisis*, the UC-Irvine Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation, and resilienteducator.com). For further learning see Trauma-Informed Pedagogy – Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation |UCI

IV-1 What is Trauma?

"A traumatic event or situation exceeds an individual's ability to cope. Several types of psychological or physical trauma can lead to extreme distress. Sources of trauma can include (but are not limited to) bullying, natural disasters, shaming and sexual abuse. The National Survey of Children's Health states that 35 million children in the United States have experienced one or more types of childhood trauma.

One way to consider trauma is as a continuum in frequency and severity, from a single event to multiple events occurring over and over again. The three types of traumas are acute, chronic, and complex. Acute trauma occurs as an isolated event, such as a severe accident, medical procedure, or being a victim of a crime. Chronic trauma is when stressful or threatening events are experienced repeatedly, such as domestic violence. Complex trauma results from multiple and ongoing traumatic events such as abuse or neglect, living with alcoholism or substance abuse, and suffering from financial, food, and/or housing instability." (from reilienteducator.org)

IV-2 Trauma-informed Pedagogy

Trauma-informed pedagogical practice that keeps trauma, its prevalence, and how it affects an individual, in mind. (from UCI). (It) is a series of ongoing, deliberate interactions that put the (student) as an individual at the forefront. (from resilienteducator.org).

Harm reduction and trauma-informed practices that you may consider employing:

- Employing a content advisory in your syllabus.
- Providing content information in advance: Using content descriptions, especially for potentially triggering media, including but not limited to readings, play viewings, books, videos, projects, monologues, scenes, and plays. (UCI) Give students the agency to disengage from material that is potentially triggering. As an example, a student may choose to step out of the room when a monologue or scene with personally triggering material is being worked on or performed.
- Creating a safe and inclusive framework for discussions. (UCI)
- Checking in on students. (UCI)
- Encouraging community building and sense of belonging. (UCI)
- Allowing for multiple ways to engage with course content. (UCI)
- Building flexibility into assessment and absence policies. (UCI) Use restorative practices over zero-tolerance policies: Zero-tolerance policies...are rooted in punishment… (resilienteducator.org)
- Valuing student input and feedback. (UCI)
- Encouraging students, and you as the instructor, to name the impact of what happens in the classroom.
- Provide a moment, at the beginning and end of class, that enables students to enter and exit the space with awareness and appreciation (This might include exercises like De-rolling and Magic Box (Sajnani) or Crossing the Threshold (Chekhov).)
- Consider scheduling regular breaks, stretching, physical movement, etc. (Sajnani)
- "Develop and use practices that help you manage stress. Students pick up on signs of stress and safety on our faces and in our tone of voice and gestures. While we cannot and

should not pretend to be unaffected by the reality of this crisis, we are in a better position to support our students when we draw on practices that help us to relax." (Sajnani)

- ○ "Respond to instability with stability, not rigidity." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Slow things down. Fear has a way of speeding things up leading to a disembodied experience. Slow things down during regular check-ins with your class or when explaining tasks or assignments." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Offer regular, clear communication." (Sajnani)
- ○ "The importance of movement and play cannot be overstated in co-regulating and discharging our stress." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Foster a sense of connection by making time to get to know your students and for them to get to know you and each other." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Both educators and students can benefit from practices that allow us to be here now, focusing on the reality of what is happening around us and what we can control." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Know your limits and remember that you are a part of a community. Ensure you have a list of resources and referrals that you can use for the moments when your concern for a student moves beyond what you are equipped or are ethically able to address." (Sajnani)
- ○ "Recognize the signs of trauma. Signs of trauma in the classroom may include a (student) having difficulty focusing, struggling with creating and maintaining friendships, being overly tired, and/or having poor self-regulation. Students with excessive absences, changes in their school performance, and withdrawing from activities or others may also be signs that a (student) has been affected by trauma." (resilienteducator.org)
- ○ "Provide consistency and structure: Consistency is key to helping a (person) feel secure. Providing an overview each day of the schedule and lessons for the day can also reduce anxiety for those (students) who may become easily distracted, wondering, or fearing what might come next. This quick and straightforward task may help return a bit of control to the (student) as they can mentally prepare for the (class). Consistency and structure can also be provided by setting expectations and goals together as a class, defining responsibilities, and regularly checking in with...students to see how they are faring. (resilienteducator.org)
- ○ "Starting the day with an affirmation can set the tone for a positive learning environment as it encourages positive self-talk and promotes a growth mindset." (resilienteducator.org)
- ○ Teaching mindfulness activities such as breathing can be done in conjunction with "brain breaks" between lessons. (resilienteducator.org)

IV-3 Instructor's Self-care While Creating a Trauma-informed Classroom

- In order to create a supportive, trauma-informed classroom, it is imperative that instructors not only identify and deal with their own trauma but also regularly engage in self-care. (resilienteducator.org)
- Secondary traumatic stress: Failure to prioritize self-care can lead to burnout or secondary traumatic stress. This is significant stress that develops as a result of caring for others with a history of trauma. Hearing about various traumas each day can weigh on an educator, resulting in both physical and mental difficulties that can severely interfere with one's life. (resilienteducator.org)

Warning signs of secondary traumatic stress include:
- Difficulties sleeping/having nightmares
- Excessive fatigue
- Physical aches and pains
- Lack of motivation and/or decreased productivity
- Difficulties concentrating
- Isolation – avoiding people or activities that once brought joy
- Feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or anger

IV-3 Resources
(from resilienteducator.org)

> *Building a Trauma-Informed, Compassionate Classroom: Strategies & Activities to Reduce Challenging Behavior, Improve Learning Outcomes, and Increase Student Engagement* by Jennifer Bashant
>
> *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* – by Kristin Souers and Pete Hall
>
> Byer, L. (2016). Restorative practices in the school setting: A systematic review. Retrieved from Sophia, the St. Catherine University repository website: https://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/564
>
> SAMSHSA. (2014). SAMSHA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach. Retrieved from https://youth.gov/feature-article/samhsas-concept-trauma-and-guidance-trauma-informed-approach

V.   Curriculum Development and Syllabi

V-1 Decolonizing Curriculum and Syllabi

Decolonizing implies that one explores what and how one teaches by acknowledging the systems of oppression in different social places including organizations, workplaces, and classrooms in an effort to make our society more just and equitable.

Consider using the checklists for decolonizing your syllabus at Loyola University of Chicago (Link to Loyola of Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning)

Acknowledge, support, and promote learning about and engagement with Indigenous people, communities, and nations with a land acknowledgment in your syllabus (link to information on land acknowledgments at Nativegov.org.)

Consider using this checklist to help evaluate your curriculum/syllabi. It can be applied to theatre curriculum/syllabi, as well as dance. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tBIeSim1eqpZoKTav1EHDirYCVWBOLoP5Qd-uL_Tbp0/edit?fbclid=IwAR2IlYx0DAKNh96eR0DuNASvW2QLzShEdBMOgv3Z4boYOrddjjztmFK5TCA&pli=1#gid=524817967

Assignments and Projects
- Ideas for structuring assignments and projects
    - i.   Use the material from the Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning

ii. When developing projects, provide students options for exploring their identity, but do not wittingly or unwittingly force, expect, or assume they will or will want to do it. Such an exploration is for the benefit of the student from a marginalized population: The student should not be asked, directly or indirectly, to diversify the class or to teach the class or instructor about their identity.

iii. When developing projects, select and interface with material through a trauma-informed lens.

iv. Take a non-hierarchical approach. Understand that everyone, including you, can learn from everyone else in the room and that individual experience should be valued. Students are the experts of their own experiences.

v. Some projects could reflect the importance of learning to pronounce names correctly. See an NPR episode.

V-2 Performance Material Selection

- **Selecting Material**
  - "Start with the stories...Think about selecting playwrights who are from marginalized communities and are writing stories of these communities and lived experiences." (from https://www.theatreartlife.com/acting-singing/inclusive-casting-best-practices/)
  - What follows is about casting, but it also relates to how we think about and select performance material.
    - i. "While theatre has also been a place for transformation, we must also acknowledge the past oppressions and ongoing inequities facing people of color, including an uneven playing field where the vast majority of opportunities, onstage and off, are held by whites. In addition, appropriating the identities of communities of color has historically reinforced racial stereotypes and subjugation."—Theatre Communications Group
    - ii. "Have inclusive conversations early. Before calling in actors, decide if there actually needs to be restrictions on any roles. You can ask yourself and your team, 'Can this role be played by a woman, someone who is trans or gender non-conforming, someone with a disability, a person of color, an older person, etc.'...Only pin down what is integral for the storytelling by the playwright and if a play does not have an element of race, gender/gender identity, age, disability, etc. specific for the storytelling, bring everybody in. Be open to seeing underrepresented communities play a character that was not necessarily 'written for them' or a role that was not previously cast with an actor from their community." (from https://www.theatreartlife.com/acting-singing/inclusive-casting-best-practices/)
    - iii. "Do not continue 'brownface, yellowface, redface, or blackface' or the overall casting of white actors to play characters of color. Similarly, don't settle for the casting of nondisabled actors to play characters who are disabled. Disability is not a 'skill'". (from

https://www.theatreartlife.com/acting-singing/inclusive-casting-best-practices/)

- ○ **Checking List for Material Selected by Instructor**
    - i. Is the material you are selecting diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist?
    - ii. Are you providing opportunities to explore identity?
    - iii. Are you selecting material through a trauma-informed lens?
        1) Is there trauma in the content?
        2) Is the material free of stereotypes?
        3) Is it anti-racist?
        4) If there is trauma or potentially triggering material, have you communicated your reason to engage with it? Have you provided opportunities for professional support in engaging with the trauma? Have you provided students the agency to not engage with the material?
        5) Implement trauma-informed approaches previously discussed.
    - iv. Acknowledge historical and present-day inequities, exclusions, erasures, stereotyping, and racism. Actors have historically been excluded from opportunities to play characters who share their identity. There are many roles for members of dominant communities.
- ○ **Incorporating Material Selected by Students**
    - i. Have students consult with you on self-selected material.
    - ii. Is the material anti-racist and non-discriminatory?
    - iii. Consider the material through a trauma-informed lens
        1) Is there trauma in the content?
        2) Is the material free of stereotypes?
        3) Is it anti-racist?
        4) Is there trauma or potentially triggering material? If so, have you and/or the student informed the class of the traumatic or potentially triggering material? Have you and/or the student communicated your reason to engage with it? Have you and/or the student provided opportunities for professional support in engaging with the trauma? Have you provided the agency to not engage with the material?
        5) Discuss the traumatic elements of the material with the student before it is presented in class?
        6) Implement all trauma informed approaches previously discussed.
        7) Acknowledge(e) historical and present-day inequities, exclusions, erasures, stereotyping, and racism. Actors have historically been excluded from opportunities to play characters who share their identity. There are many roles for members of dominant communities.

V-3 Instruction

- A. **Establishing the instructional landscape**
    - i. **Pedagogy Of and For Difference** (from "Educate to Liberate: Build an Anti-Racist Classroom" by Joshua Bloc)

1) It is important that educators come to understand theoretically how difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, delegitimize, marginalize, and exclude the cultural capital and voices of various groups in American society; similarly, a pedagogy of difference needs to address the important question of how the representations and practices of difference are actively learned, internalized, challenged, or transformed. (142)
2) Understanding my own personal and family history, acknowledging my own power, rank, and privilege, and recognizing the dynamics of racism and identity in the U.S. all help me to create a climate where honest connections can be made across cultural divides. This kind of self-understanding is essential if I want to plan a curriculum that speaks to multiple experiences.

    ii. **Classroom Practices**
1) Create a Container
a. Create(e) spaces within groups where there is safety to explore ideas and take risks. Strong containers are products of clearly-developed norms and thoughtful, supportive facilitation. Students should feel free to honestly share thoughts and ideas, and must understand the expectation and necessity of listening deeply and openly to their peers. Strong containers allow students to feel safe and respected while encouraging them to take risks and bring their authentic selves to the learning process.
b. Remind (your) students to disagree with someone's thinking without engaging in personal arguments. At times this is a difficult distinction, yet students and classroom dynamics benefit from a framework that welcomes multiple perspectives and encourages disagreement while discouraging interpersonal conflicts.

B. **Specific Examples**
(The following material come from Columbia University)

Principle 1: **Establish and support a class climate that fosters belonging for all students.** Instructors should recognize and value students' varied identities, experiences and backgrounds and work to create a space where students are both challenged and heard. Research has shown that course climate can influence everything from student engagement in class to student motivation and persistence and is strongly connected to how much students learn.

Teaching Strategies
- Build instructor-student rapport. Make a point of learning students' names (and how to pronounce them) and get to know students through in-class surveys and activities, office hours, and online chats. Share your passions, interests, and personal learning process with students.
- Build student-student rapport. Encourage students to work in pairs or groups and share learning experiences.
- Treat each student as an individual. Do not expect them to speak for an entire demographic group or make suppositions about their membership in one. Ask for preferred pronouns.

- Avoid making assumptions about students' abilities based on stereotypes. Be aware of those stereotypes and work to not perpetuate them.
- Convey the same level of confidence in the abilities of all of your students. Be even-handed and cautious about being overprotective of or unduly strict toward any group or individual.
- Address challenging classroom behaviors and attitudes, such as microaggressions and offensive and alienating comments. Make it a teachable moment, asking students to reflect critically on assumptions and positions without attributing motives.

Principle 2: Set explicit student expectations. Give students clear guidelines for class components, so they know what learning they are accountable for, including how they will be graded and why. Explicit articulation of learning objectives and goals, transparency around performance expectations and criteria-based grading systems empower students to share the responsibility for their learning and to develop growth mind-sets.

Teaching Strategies
- Explicitly articulate assessment criteria. Share grading rubrics and practice applying those rubrics to anonymized work. Offer students multiple low-stakes opportunities for demonstrating learning.
- Provide timely, clear, and actionable feedback that helps students take ownership of their learning.
- Establish community agreements and discussion guidelines. Work with students to create those guidelines to promote an inclusive learning environment.
- Provide examples of exemplary work. Use those examples to communicate expectations, facilitate understanding, demonstrate discipline-specific skills, and help articulate assessment expectations and standards.
- Model expected behavior. Adhere to community agreements and display the skills that students are asked to demonstrate in their assessments and assignments.

Principle 3: Select course content that recognizes diversity and acknowledges barriers to inclusion. Effective instructors meaningfully consider the role that content plays in creating a learning environment where students see themselves reflected and valued. Content -- broadly defined to include metaphors, case studies, project and assignment topics, statistics and data, as well as textbooks and course readings -- sends powerful messages to students about their place in the discipline and in the courses we teach.

Teaching Strategies
- Select content that engages a diversity of ideas and perspectives. Consider whether some perspectives are systematically underrepresented or absent.

- Choose content by authors of diverse backgrounds. Discuss contributions made to the field by historically underrepresented groups.
- Use multiple and diverse examples that do not marginalize students.

Principle 4: Design all course elements for accessibility. Recognize the diversity of different learners' abilities and experiences and provide multiple ways for them to engage with course materials and express what they have learned. Using <u>Universal Design for Learning</u> (see below) approaches to course design and teaching ensures that all students will be able to demonstrate their learning without unnecessary challenges unrelated to the academic content of the course. Such approaches benefit all learners and eliminate the guesswork for instructors when determining whether the learning experiences they are designing will be both cognitively and physically accessible to everyone.

Teaching Strategies

- Provide multiple means of representation and supporting materials (illustrations, glossaries, etc.). Use a variety of modalities and adjustable formats.
- Provide multiple means of action and expression. Offer a range of assessments for students to demonstrate learning and frequent opportunities for feedback on progress.
- Provide multiple means of engagement. Encourage learner autonomy with choice of topics or assignment formats. Invite students to co-design elements of classroom activities or assignments.

Principle 5: Reflect on your beliefs about teaching to maximize self-awareness and commitment to inclusion. Examine your personal assumptions and views. Inclusive teaching requires that you be intentional and explicit about the strategies you want to use in your teaching. Thus, self-reflection is a necessary step for the planning, preparation, and implementation of those strategies. Ask yourself the questions outlined below.

Teaching Strategies

- What are my identities and how do my students perceive me? Consider your positionality and take inventory of the way your affiliations and identities shape your perceptions of others and their perceptions of you.
- What are my implicit or explicit biases? Do I propagate, neutralize or challenge stereotypes in my class? Take an honest inventory of your own conscious and unconscious biases and strive to create an explicitly centralizing classroom climate.
- How do I handle challenges in the classroom? Build your awareness of student behaviors (tardiness, lack of preparation, indifference) that trigger strong emotions for you and strategize how to maintain your equilibrium.
- How might the ways I set up classroom spaces and activities foster inclusion or exclusion? Be attentive to your own use of space in the classroom (where you stand and sit, for example) and vary your class

activities to offer opportunities for students to participate in large group, paired, small group and individual work.

We invite you to reflect on how many of these practices you already use in your classes, as well as to consider any new ones you might want to try based on areas that might need more attention in your teaching. This is not about students' preferences but about how students learn. The practices in the Guide for Inclusive Teaching at Columbia are based on decades of research that demonstrate how students' perceptions of class climate can significantly impact their learning. The very best result of choosing to teach inclusively -- transparency of intention, explicit conversations about learning and a sharing of power and responsibility for learning between student and instructor -- is that it creates equitable and transformative learning opportunities for all of our students.

V-4 Grading

(drawn from https://resilienteducator.com)
Inconsistent grading practices may inadvertently perpetuate achievement and opportunity gaps among our students, making grading an issue of equity. There are grading practices that are more bias-resistant and motivational that can improve learning, minimize grade inflation, reduce failure rates, and create stronger teacher-student relationships and more caring classrooms.

    a. (Not) Perpetuating Inequity
- Think about your grade book. Think about how you approach that stack of papers to grade. Do you grade students differently? Have you been harsh to one student and more lenient to another?

    b. Making grades meaningful
- Base grades on master of skills and growth not on compliance.

    c. Rethink the zero
- There is so much debate about the zero. While some argue that doing nothing warrants a zero, some educators use the zero for non-compliance, absence, behavior issues, and non-mastery. On a 100-point scale, where A, B, C, and D are 10 points apart, the zero puts the F over 60 points lower. A 50 or 55 is still an F. Do we need to grade using the harshest F possible? A zero is devastating to an average as well as a student's motivation. There are many factors that contribute to a student missing an assignment and it's our job to help that student learn and demonstrate that learning through revision and continued opportunities for mastery.

V-5 Facilitating and Navigating Difficult and Challenging Conversations and Material (from Indiana University)

- Teaching controversial subjects is an inherent part of some courses and disciplines. Topics like race, culture, gender, and/or sexual orientation can come up in many fields, and any course dealing with current events presents an opportunity for socially challenging or politically charged topics to arise spontaneously in class discussions. How we manage those discussions, however, can greatly impact how useful the conversations are to our instructional goals, and what sort of impact they have on the dynamics of the

class. Many of the suggestions below focus on pre-planned discussions, but many of the techniques can also be applied to discussions that pop up unexpectedly.

V-5-A Preparing for Discussions

In situations where you know you will be addressing a controversial topic, you can prepare for the discussion in ways that set the stage for success.

- Consider possible sources of student views. On many issues, students' viewpoints may be wrapped up in their personal identities, influenced by family members, or connected to religious/spiritual/moral beliefs. So, a challenge to an idea may be seen as a personal challenge as well. Just being aware of these deeper origins of student opinions—both for you and their classmates—may be useful in approaching delicate conversations.
- Lead with your goals. Contextualize the discussion within your class and disciplinary contexts. Be clear with your students why you are having this conversation and what learning outcomes you expect. Be ready to reiterate these goals during the discussion, and ask the students to redirect the conversation in ways that return to these goals.
- Provide pre-discussion assignments. Ask students to complete an assignment in advance that helps them understand and articulate their own views, as well as others they have heard. Such pre-discussion homework can help them reflect on those views, understand potential reasons behind them, and connect them to disciplinary content in the course. Such activities let them do some more logical thinking in advance, before any emotional barriers get thrown up during a heated discussion.
- Establish some discussion guidelines. Work with students to establish a set of guidelines for class discussion; their input is important here; so the rules are part of the classroom community, not just rules you impose. Some possible guidelines include:
    - Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
    - Allow everyone the opportunity to speak.
    - Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups.
    - Avoid inflammatory language, including name-calling.
    - Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know others' thinking or motivations.
    - Connect back to course concepts whenever possible.
    - Don't expect any individuals to speak on behalf of their gender, ethnic group, class, status, etc. (or the groups we perceive them to be a part of).
    - Talk candidly about the challenges ahead. Admit up front that the conversations may be awkward or challenging, but explain why they are important parts of the class. You can set an example by expressing some personal vulnerability, a willingness to take risks and make mistakes, and a willingness to learn and grow in a public setting.
    - Warm up first. Consider dealing first with some less complex or emotionally-charged topics, rather than just jumping into a very heated issue. Have a reflective discussion about how that discussion went, so students can learn how to handle the discussion and build trust with their classmates.

- ▪ Respect differences of opinion based on religion, cultural or other identity factors

V-5-B During Class
- Provide a framework and starting point. Prepare some questions to get the conversation started, balancing the needs for both focus and openness in responses. Avoid questions that seem like there is one right answer. In some cases, it works well to ask not for their own opinions, per se, but a sharing of what opinions they have heard about that topic; such an approach allows you to get the "lay of the land" without anyone feeling too exposed from the start. Structured discussion activities can also be useful for guiding conversations in productive and supportive ways. (Students should not and should not be asked to evaluate the legitimacy of the feelings and experiences of others.)
- Actively manage the discussion. Be ready to prompt students as needed for follow-up, additional explanation, or evidence. Be ready to remind students of the discussion guidelines, and let them practice re-stating comments as needed. And be ready to steer the conversation back to the stated goals of the discussion.
- Address the difficulty... Admitting your own discomfort in addressing such issues can make students more comfortable with their own discomfort, especially if you explain or model how you can work past it.
- Be ready to defer the conversation. If the conversation gets too heated or off-topic, you may want to reach some sort of closure to the immediate discussion and defer the conversation to another class period, for which everyone can prepare. Be certain to explain the purpose of this deferral, and give students some resource or assignment that will help them prepare to discuss the topic in a more meaningful way within the context of the course and discipline. This is particularly useful in situations where the conversation was spontaneous, not planned.
- Be aware of the implications of sharing your own views. Weigh the impact of you sharing your own opinions on an issue, knowing that it could silence students who hold other views. Illuminate the disciplinary and critical thinking you want them to do.
- Confront inappropriate language. If a student makes an inappropriate comment—racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive—letting it go without intervention can seem like a tacit endorsement of those views. And whether the slight is intentional or not, the impact is the same. Letting such comments pass unchallenged can seriously harm students' trust in you and their sense of belonging in the class and the university. Have some responses ready for how you are going to address such comments, including language that interrupts bias by calling out the behavior while calling in the person. Responding directly to microaggressions and other inappropriate language, including comments that may be perceived as an attack on students with certain religious and personal views may feel uncomfortable, but instructors need to mitigate discomfort experienced by marginalized and/ostracized students.

V-5-C Follow-Up
- Synthesize the discussion. Leave some time at the end of class for people to synthesize what they heard, particularly in terms of how it relates back to course

concepts and the activity's stated goals. Or consider giving students a follow-up assignment outside of class that asks them to do this synthesis and reflection, both for their own benefit and for you to assess how useful the activity was. Part of the purpose here can be to give students a way to process any cognitive (or emotional) dissonance they may have encountered during the discussion.

- Reflect on the conversation dynamics. Ask students what they would have liked to have done differently in the conversation—either a reflection on the whole group's behavior or (perhaps more importantly) on how they participated. You might remind them of any frameworks or guidelines as a structure for their reflections. In some cases, it might be worth giving the group a second chance at a discussion.
- Share relevant resources as needed. If you think some students may need assistance processing a difficult discussion, and who may need emotional or psychological support, make sure they know about campus resources available to them.

V-5-D (Challenges) with Discussion

- Getting Started: Students are often reluctant to get down to work in a discussion. Students are more likely to join in discussion if you divide them into pairs or small groups and assign a specific discussion question. After a few minutes of small group discussion, ask several groups to report out their ideas to the entire class. This often helps to get discussion going because students have had a chance to "try out" their ideas on their peers. Alternatively, give students time to write individually before opening up a discussion; they are much more likely to speak up if they have some notes to speak from. Further, by allowing for this kind of pre-discussion activity, you will be able to ask more complex and interesting questions. At the same time, you will be promoting equity in the conversation, allowing everyone in the class to gather his or her thoughts before speaking rather than privileging the bold or the entitled, who can otherwise dominate the discussion. (Be intentional about the makeup of discussion groups, especially when dealing with controversial and/or difficult topics. Avoid isolating members of marginalized groups in groups where they are the only person who is a member of a marginalized group.)
- Losing Control: One fear about discussion is the possibility that the discussion will be TOO enthusiastic or not remain civil. Develop ground rules as a class. Gently, students can be reminded that behavior X (e.g., interrupting, blatantly ignoring the conversation, showing disrespect) is not appropriate in the context of the rules the class agreed on. If no rules have been established, or if the inappropriate behavior doesn't seem to fit under the rules, you should address it immediately. Otherwise, you send a message to the students that such behavior is acceptable. Remember: never shame or humiliate a student, and don't take student remarks personally—although an attack may seem personal, it may be directed at authority figures in general rather than at you in particular. (Be aware that your sense of "appropriate" behavior is defined by your experiences and the society we live in. Different communities may have different ideas of what constitutes appropriate behavior. Be aware of your bias and positionality)
- Discussion Monopolizers: If the same students answer all the time, you might say, "Let's hear from someone else."

V-5-E Being an Active Facilitator

(The following suggestions are from the University of Michigan)

- In order to keep a discussion focused and purposeful, it is important to be an active facilitator rather than a passive observer. Be careful to maintain some control but not over-control. Your role as an active facilitator can include rewording questions posed by students, correcting misinformation, making reference to relevant reading materials or course content, asking for clarification, and reviewing main points.
- Students may expect their instructors to express their own point of view, or they may ask explicitly for this view. In deciding how to respond, instructors should consider their comfort in expressing personal views, and also the impact such expressions will have on this and future discussion in class. For instance, will sharing your perspective usefully model the way one can take a stance on a complex topic, or will it more likely shut down those students who may disagree with you? Or, will your sharing of your perspective helpfully respond to comments that marginalize or devalue students in your class?

V-5-F Summarizing Discussion and Gathering Student Feedback

- It is very important to save time at the end of class to conclude by summarizing the main points of the discussion. Students are more likely to feel that a discussion was valuable if the instructor, with the help of the class, synthesizes what has been shared or identifies the key issues explored.
- To obtain student feedback about the quality of the discussion and to identify issues that may need follow-up, you can save the last five minutes of class for students to write a <u>Minute Paper</u>. Ask them to respond to some or all of these questions:
    - i. What are the three most important points you learned today?
    - ii. What important questions remain unanswered for you?
    - iii. What did you learn specifically from what someone else said that you would not have thought of on your own?
- Review the student responses before your next meeting with the class. During the next class, briefly summarize the student feedback and thank the students for their participation.

V-5-G Handling Issues that Involve the Instructor's Identity

- Discussing an issue of social conflict can involve the instructor's identity in a number of ways. Students may make assumptions about the expectations an instructor has in leading the class discussion. Assumptions may be based on the students' perception of the instructor's identity, on the way that the instructor has handled other class sessions, and on their personal interactions with the instructor.
- In addition, some issues and events may trigger reactive responses in an instructor, and students may say things and speak in ways that trigger emotional reactions. Instructors need to be aware of the possibility (or even the likelihood) of having an emotional response, even if a discussion is thoughtfully planned. Recognizing the response and the trigger as such will

help an instructor to stay even-tempered in leading the discussion. To handle statements that trigger emotional responses, instructors will want to draw on techniques that will allow them and the class to step back and gain perspective (e.g., naming the triggering issue, giving oneself time by asking students to do a brief writing exercise, working with the class to reframe or contextualize the triggering statement). If an instructor needs to let such a moment simply pass by, it is important to find time later to talk through the experience, and to address the triggering issue with others who are outside of the class.

- In the event that one or more students try to draw the instructor into an emotional response, the ground rules for discussion can play a vital role, and the instructor can model constructive behavior in demonstrating how to unpack such a heated moment by reviewing what had led up to it, in pointing out differences between baiting, debating, and discussing, and/or steering the discussion into a more useful direction.

VI. Incidents on and off campus

A recent article in Inside Higher Education referred to "an epidemic of racist incidents at campuses across the country." These upsetting events have the potential to increase the stress levels experienced by members of the campus community, especially those from groups targeted by hate speech. It is useful to keep in mind that such incidents may still be on students' minds when they enter your classroom, and that such incidents take a toll on faculty and Graduate Student Instructors as well. What can instructors do?

A. Acknowledge the incidents: Research conducted in the wake of national tragedies, such as 9-11 or Hurricane Katrina, indicates that students find it helpful when their instructors simply acknowledge traumatic events, recognize that students might be experiencing distress, and show extra support (Huston & DiPietro, 2007).

B. Prepare to engage with the incident proactively or in response to student concerns: CRLT has developed a web page with guidelines for discussing incidents of hate, bias, and discrimination that can help you prepare. The site offers strategies for planned discussions, as well as suggestions for responding to challenging conversations when they arise spontaneously. For example, we provide sample discussion guidelines instructors have found helpful in both planned and spontaneous discussions of difficult issues.

C. Refer students to campus resources.

D. Attend to your own needs: These incidents and the ensuing classroom and hallway discussions can also be stressful for faculty and GSIs, especially for those instructors who feel personally targeted by the hate speech. In these cases, it is important to activate your own support network. For some concrete self-care strategies specifically for faculty of color in difficult times, see Kerry Ann Rockquemore's blog post on Radical Self Care. The Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FASAP, 936-8660) also offers counseling services for faculty and GSIs..

VII. Kent State University Support Resources and Grievance Procedures for Students and Faculty:

Graduate Student Instructors and Assistants–navigating the in-between space
It is acknowledged that graduate assistants are positioned as both instructors and students. Graduate students must contend with this positionality in the academic hierarchy: it renders them both privileged and not privileged. The resources previously set forth for instructors and students apply equally to graduate student instructors and assistants.

1. School of Theatre and Dance Faculty Handbook (Faculty and Staff)
2. Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
3. Student Ombuds
4. Division of Student Affairs
5. Student Accessibility Services
6. Student Multicultural Center
7. LGBTQ+ Center
8. Women's Center
9. Division of Human Resources (Faculty and Staff)
10. AAUP-KSU & CBA for TT CBA for NTT (Faculty)
11. School Director, Dean, Vice President for Student Affairs, Provost Student Grievance Procedures can be found in the university policy register Kent State University Policy Register and specifically Chapter 4: University Life
12. Administrative policy and procedures regarding class disruptions
13. Administrative policy and procedure for student academic complaints
14. https://www.kent.edu/policyreg/university-policy-regarding-faculty-code-professional-ethics