

Antiracist Pedagogy Workshop Reflection

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Track D: The Four Connections

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As part of the Anti-Racist Pedagogy workshop I participated in the group focused on how to build community using The 4 Connections. While there were some points of this learning that I felt I already did well in my classroom, I used the opportunity to try to think outside my usual box and was able to gain insight by reflecting with those from other disciplines. Here are some of the changes I made in each area.

1. Interact with Students by Name

While I already attempted to use students names in class, I had not thought enough about how impactful this can be. I challenged myself to do this better in the first few class periods. To help with this I had student create name tents. In some of my larger classes, with students being spread apart, I had trouble reading these at first. I learned to ask them to write very large, and to provide THICK Sharpies! Instead of attempting to pronounce names, I have also changed to having student introduce themselves for roll on the first day. That way they can identify themselves how they would like.

2. Check in Regularly

I do this informally during “lab” time while students are working on assignments during class. I decided to be more intentional about checking with each student on their progress and to see if they had questions. I also began to use “check-in” warm-ups (in-person classes) and discussion posts (online classes) where students need to reflect on their effort, but also on things both of us could change to improve the experience. I have found these extremely helpful.

3. Schedule One-on-One Meetings

In my online class I set up specific meeting times with students following a test. I used the website SignUp Genius to have students sign up for 10 minute slots each and then met with them on Zoom. For some students this was plenty of time, but for some it was a little short. There were also scheduling difficulties, so for some students, I had to resort to letting them turn in something written instead. I found these meetings particularly helpful in an online class where I have less contact with students. I did find that it took a lot of effort on my part, and in a term where I have a full teaching schedule, this is going to be difficult to sustain. I have not found a way to do this with my in-person classes because of the time it takes. I don't see how I can cover all of the content and take a class period to do this.

4. Practice Paradox

As a result of these discussions I looked at my Blackboard (now Canvas) courses with an eagle eye to decide if there were ways I could be clearer with my expectations. I provided a printed calendar with due dates, as there are a lot of assignments to keep track of in my classes. I also provided examples of how to do written homework, and how to show work. Then I developed plans for dealing with students who need flexibility when they are unable to meet all due dates.

I considered ways that I can create “contracts” with students and tried this out by sending detailed emails with the contract to students who need flexibility.