

ANTIRACIST PRACTICE IN THE ONLINE WRITING CLASSROOM

Jude Miller - Rowan University - millerju@rowan.edu

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In our efforts to offer quality online instruction in response to the ongoing global pandemic, I believe that we must also not lose sight of using our classrooms as spaces to work toward dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy. In fact, in many ways, asynchronous elements of an online writing class can afford instructors the means to effectively facilitate discussions of controversial topics, like racism in America. Indeed, prerecorded video messages, private reflection writing activities, and asynchronous discussion boards, can be spaces for meaningful discourse, in that they provide students—and instructors—the opportunity to think through and carefully articulate their ideas; this is especially true when these approaches are mindfully used to implement antiracist teaching practices.

When “hot moments” do occur in the context of a class discussion—in which a participant has offered input that might offend others (inadvertently or not)—The Sustained Dialogue Institute offers a framework for facilitating a productive conversation that overcomes stasis points:

-Clarify: Invite the speaker to clarify their point

-Change: Shift the conversation to focus on the speaker’s past experiences, rather than opinions

-Create: Open up space for other participants in the conversation to offer their reactions

-Challenge: Respectfully pushback on the statement with a credible counterpoint

REFERENCES

- Kendi, I. (2019). *How to Be an Antiracist*. Penguin
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