

Antiracist Pedagogy Spring 2022

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Track B- Facilitating culturally competent conversations in the classroom

## Anti-Racist Pedagogy Reflection Piece

I must admit my interest in this project is birthed from a selfish place. I wanted to explore my own ethnicity and come to terms with my own place in the world. I am ethnically mixed. My father is a native Central Oregonian. His father's (my grandfather) side of the family has been in the USA for generations dating back to the revolutionary war. His mother (my grandmother) was an Irish Immigrant. They met during World War II in Oxford England. My grandfather was in the United States Army Air Corps and she was a nurse in the British Army. My mother is from rural Mexico and immigrated to this country in the 1970's to help her cousin with child care. She met my father and were married after a courtship. Since it was the 1970's both my brother and I were given American first names and since our father is white we got the last name from him. Therefore our mixed ethnicity is not apparent in our names or our appearance (white passing Latino). What this means is you sometimes get to hear what racist people say when they don't know minorities are present. However, I am fluent in Spanish and am very proud of my Mexican heritage. I am also married to a Mexican national. Latin culture is huge in our home. I am also proud of my Irish heritage as well as my generational roots to the USA.

In addition I work in law enforcement (Parole and Probation) which is a focus of controversy in the media. The media tries to make it seem that law enforcement is anti-minority. They report issues as if law enforcement officers are blood thirsty renegades looking to use physical force or lethal force on anyone of color or anyone who disrespects law enforcement. I feel the current environment tries to makes people of color feel like they are a traitors to their race by working in this field. In my experience of 17.5 years in law enforcement I have worked with some of the finest people who sincerely care about the community they serve. They are not the villains media would have you believe.

This brings me to this project. I have been fortunate to be allowed to instruct in the Criminal Justice Program which is a true passion. I love the idea of passing knowledge and helping open the minds of students so they can possibly have their own passion in criminal justice or some other career or their choosing. In order to do this right all students must see people who look like them whether it be gender, race, body type or some other human factor. To accomplish this I brought in speakers from different criminal justice disciplines of different genders,

ethnicities and back grounds. We touched on some hot button issues and cases such as the Kyle Rittenhouse case and Travon Martin. However, we didn't go as deep as I would have like to. In the fall term when I teach again I plan to conduct and exercise at least once maybe twice (depending on the outcome of the first time) where I split the class up into two groups where each side will take a position on a hot button topic related to criminal justice. However, I will need to be cautious to make sure the students stay on task and treat each other with respect. I will need to be prepared to confront any racially insensitive or discriminatory language/ideas. I will also need to do this at week 4 at the earliest as I would need the opportunity to better know the students to get a feel for what issues to anticipate and strategies to implement. I would like to have a small idea of their ethnic backgrounds as I would want to avoid any triggering statements or anything that would make them feel marginalized. At the same time I want to have honest conversations that may elicit strong emotion but present both sides of that particular issue. It will also be my intention for my personal opinions to be somewhat a mystery. I might give a little but the goal will be for students to discuss potentially intense issues but with respect and empathy. The end goal for me is to develop passion for a profession I hold in high esteem. I want to recognize there are flawed individuals and improvement/ evolution is a constant. I want to encourage a new generation they can be the solution to these issues. They can be the change in the world they want to see.