

Anti-Racism Education and Teacher Education

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Aims and Scope

1. Provide teacher education candidates with anti-racism education delivered through large and small groups.
2. Equip future teachers with understanding of racism, recognizing their own privileges and biases; and developing the ability to identify & address racism in schools and classrooms.
3. Surveying Teacher Candidates (TCs) 2019-2021 to analyze impact of embedding antiracism education in teacher education.

Survey Findings

2/3 responded - large group lectures strengthened their commitment to anti-racism education.

TC highlighted antiracism against the backdrop of colonialism, privilege, oppression, stereotypes, discrimination and the different ways in which these play out within the school system

“[Antiracism education] is cognizant of the ongoing hegemonic systems that maintain racial oppression in our schools and our society.....education that holds in tension its own position within these hegemonic systems while simultaneously seeking to unpack and undo them.” (Secondary Years TC)

“[Antiracism education] recognizes the racist foundations of the education system and the structures and forces that continue to perpetuate racism in education and schooling, ... [It] recognizes how power operates within the education system, how it works to oppress some groups of people and privilege others” (Elementary and Middle Years TC)

TCs noted

- Curricular misrepresentations
“... decolonizing our practices and representing Indigenous ways of knowing with the same weight and gravity as western knowledge systems. It also means that storybooks and media show a range of diverse main characters so that all students see themselves represented as heroes in the stories they read and watch.”



Resistance to antiracism education: A few respondents expressed different/opposing views on the purpose of antiracism education. One respondent from the Secondary Years cohort rejected the notion of antiracism education, describing it as:

“too reductionistic and profoundly unhelpful in its influence on our interactions as it takes away the emphasis on people's individual identity and emphasizes and empowers tribalistic, group-identification tendencies. The respondent further noted that “antiracist rhetoric and critical race theory will not help the antiracism movement rather it would make it worse.”



Conclusion

Subsequent iterations of this pilot survey will examine the usefulness of the survey as a summative and formative assessment tool of antiracism education.

Program designers and instructors should recognize the range of positions on antiracism education among TCs and the challenges they pose for a coherent antiracism approach to teacher preparation.

Survey revealed a gap between the contexts of antiracism education and Indigenous education in relation to teacher education in Canada, an aspect that is still awaiting to be programmatically accounted for.

The survey suggests that TCs enrolled in the elementary versus secondary programs place different emphases on antiracism education and the inherent challenges teachers face within their school and work contexts when articulating an antiracism pedagogy.

TCs emphasize the importance of a well-grounded analysis of the history of race and racism, its manifestations and implications in contemporary educational policy. This would help TCs articulate dynamic and engaged pedagogical approaches to antiracism education as part of their work in schools.