

Inclusion 2020: Moving Forward Together, November 26, 2020

Key messages on Inclusivity in Education

Based on the keynote address by Anthony McLean

Adult and continuing education can change the narrative for students who have had a hard time

- Adult and continuing education is a safety net to catch the student who fell through the cracks.
- The work of adult and continuing education is social justice work. We can help our students.
- When we show up for our students, we change the world. The work that adult and continuing education does repairs harm. It can bring families out of poverty, and help students reclaim their education who left school because of family issues or other struggles.

There is a difference between diversity and inclusivity

- **Diversity** – The composition of a group: e.g., Chinese student, Francophone student, two Black students
- **Inclusivity** – Making everyone feel welcome and sending a message to students that this is their classroom no matter what language they speak at home, what religion they practice, or their sexuality. All students belong.

Microaggressions contribute to exclusion

- Microaggressions are indirect, subtle and sometimes unintentional forms of discrimination that are aimed at someone of a particular group. They are actions that make people feel like they don't really belong or fit in—that they are “other”.
- They are experienced by many groups. For example, people who have brown skin are often asked, “I know you're Canadian, but where are you really from?” That implies a “Canadian” doesn't look like them.
- When we create an inclusive space in education, there is no room for microaggressions. All students are welcome and can be themselves. We must make classrooms where everyone feels valued.
- Taking the time to learn how to pronounce each student's name is an important way to make everyone feel welcome and that they belong.

Instead of going “back to normal”, let's create an inclusive culture

- Many people are waiting for things to get back to normal after the challenges of 2020. But “normal” is diversity without inclusivity. “Normal” is microaggressions and systemic racism.
- But 2020 is an exceptional year where everything can change. We can use this time to reset and be more mindful about creating inclusive classrooms and communities.

What we can do to create new conversations and make everyone welcome

- We can take action to be more equitable, create a more just society and build inclusive spaces everywhere we go.
- Listening to people's stories is key. For example, for people using a wheelchair, it can be very difficult to get around after a snowstorm. This is something that does not affect everyone, but by listening to that story, we can develop empathy. We can put ourselves in their position and speak out for more accessibility.
- Another example is survivors of residential schools. The last school closed in 1996. How many survivors live in our communities? We can listen and share their stories.
- Look for ways listen and create space for diverse stories. Seek out articles, podcasts, books and movies where we can hear these stories.

What is the difference between “Black Lives Matter” and “All Lives Matter”?

- For many Black people in Canada, the phrase “Black Lives Matter” is a call for an end to racism, police brutality and other systems of oppression that affect Black people disproportionately. The phrase “All lives matter” dismisses and minimizes these calls for justice and social change for the Black community.
- If you are not a Black, Indigenous or racialized person, you have likely never experienced what it is like to be looked at differently because of the colour of your skin.
- Much like an able-bodied person never having to navigate a snowy sidewalk in a wheelchair, a person who has never experienced racism may have never thought about what it is like.

Addressing inequity in the classroom

- If you are not a racialized or Indigenous person, it is important to be sensitive to the feelings of individuals from communities that continue to face injustice. You need to listen, be empathetic and try to understand.
- The curriculum needs to reflect the diversity of the students and resonate with them. This includes books and music. It shows students that you care about their culture and builds inclusivity.

Moving forward with empathy

- It is often easier to see differences in other people than it is to see how we are the same. We can address this with empathy and finding shared experiences.
- Everyone has experienced exclusion—we know what it feels like to be left out or the last one chosen. We know what it feels like to be looked down on or to not measure up to some standard because of our appearance or other characteristics,
- Let's use our own experiences to be empathetic, gentle and kind to others.
- Remember this quote: “Everyone you meet is fighting a battle that you know nothing about, so be good to people.” (attributed to author John Maclaren)

Resources and research

Research mentioned in the keynote

High school streaming and expulsions

- For decades, over 39% of Black students were streamed into applied classes versus 16% of white students. It was decided for them that university was not an option.

- [A 2017 study](#) determined Black students were streamed below their abilities. The practice of streaming was very recently ended by the Ontario Ministry of Education (July 2020).
- Black students are almost five times more likely to be kicked out of school than white students according to [statistics from the Toronto District School Board](#), which keeps racial data.

Opportunities decreased because of a Black-sounding name

- A recent study showed that, in people with identical credentials, those with a [Black-sounding name](#) were two times less likely to be called for a job interview than someone with a white-sounding name.

Anthony McLean's resource picks for more information

Videos

- [6 Ways to be an Antiracist Educator](#)
- [Sometimes You're a Caterpillar](#)

Articles

- [Four Ways Teachers Can Reduce Implicit Bias](#)
- [Three Social-Emotional Learning Skills You Need to Discuss Race in Classrooms](#)

Poem

- [Invitation to Create a Brave Space](#)

Activity

- [Mindful Reflection Process for Developing Culturally Responsive Practices](#)

Book

- [How to be an Anti-Racist](#), Ibram X. Kendi