

ANTI-RACIST TEACHING ETHOS

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Anti-Racist Theater (A.R.T) is defined as "practices and policies that actively acknowledged and interrogate racism, anti-blackness, and discriminatory practice, promoting, anti-racist ideas, values, and policies that counter the oppression of any people during the education of production of theatre" (Brewer, 2020). In alignment with Nicole Brewer's Anti-Racist Theater training (A.R.T), the following is an evolving statement of my personal Anti-Racist Teaching ethos and action plan:

ETHOS:

Guiding beliefs or ideals

Students have a right to express the fullness of their identity through the use of their voices. Students know themselves better than I ever will. The Western classical, Eurocentric, White ideals of vocal "beauty" cannot be prioritized and centered in the training of voices, particularly when studying musical genres that evolved from a historically Black etiology.

PRACTICE:

Behavior informed by A.R.T ethos

When first meeting a student, they will have the opportunity to offer a sharing of who they are vocally, musically, and spiritually. They will be thanked for their offering.

Students will have agency in selecting repertoire they identify with alignment with their vocal goals, development, and departmental curriculum.

I will be explicitly clear in the rationale behind specific vocal adjustments from a physiologic, acoustical, or musical perspective if the resulting timbre or use of voice does not feel in line with the student's identity.

Assigned repertoire will strive to bring works from BIPOC artists into the canon.

SUPPORT:

Ways you enable your practice to function

Wearing my academic hat:

Critical thinking and critical theory will be applied in the studio to help both myself and students uncover assumptions around voice use and musical style.

Wearing my facilitator hat:

As an instructor, I believe students and I have a shared responsibility in engaging in the learning process. Both students and I will have a hand in exploring new repertoire choices and artists. There is much I can learn from my students.

Wearing my artist hat:

Lessons will focus on unpacking musical and theatrical moments, supported by vocal techniques. We can return to the "why" of our passion for theater, through performance, not just skill-building. The *gestalt* approach to instruction honors the whole identity and participation of the student.

HARM REDUCTION:

I am committed to naming and calling out cultural appropriation, microaggressions, or other racist acts committed by myself and/or White students *in the moment*. The protocol for addressing such comments is as follows;

1. **Making explicit** - Stop and name the comment/behavior in question as racist. Folx of privilege may not realize the impact of their actions and thus, the invisible must be made visible to all.
2. **Disarm** - Stopping or deflecting the comments or actions through expressing disagreement, challenging what was said or done, and/or pointing out its harmful impact
3. **Educate** - Engaging perpetrators in a dialogue about what they have done that has proven offensive, what it says about their beliefs and values, and have them consider the worldview of marginalized group members.
4. **Seek support** - Sometimes the most effective approach is to seek external support from others or institutional authorities.

To achieve this, the classroom will be a "brave space" where the voices of BIPOC students and their lived experience will not be questioned by myself or White students.

HARM PREVENTION:

I will not impose my personal aesthetic ideals of beauty on students. Rather, they will be encouraged to find this ideal within themselves.

Students will have agency to self-select repertoire, or to propose ideas for study. My role will be to either adapt the selections so they are developmentally appropriate, or provide feedback and clear criteria for technical requirements/expectations of songs.

RELATIONSHIP REPAIR:

I am committed to listening to the needs of my students and providing opportunities for them to ask for what they need. Those silenced by systemic oppression will be asked directly for what their needs are.

In the event that a student is harmed by racist action on my part or the part of another student, this will be acknowledged. Before moving through the issue, a formal apology will be made with: an expression of regret, an explanation of what went wrong, an acknowledgment of responsibility, a declaration of repentance, an offer of repair, and a request for forgiveness.

In this process, students' feelings will be honored, in order to move through these towards the process of moving forward.

My personal A.R.T ethos is periodically reexamined, revised, and renewed as I continue to grow as an artist and educator.