

Do No Harm: One Department's Self-Help for Antiracist Action

Yakima Valley College

— Kristy Webster, Dodie Forrest, & Carolyn Calhoon-Dillahunt

Land Acknowledgement

Yakima Valley College rests on the home of the 14 Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The Yakama people remain committed stewards of the land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by elders through generations. We are grateful and give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants who continue to care for the land.

Today, we want to take a moment to acknowledge and honor that we are meeting on the homelands of the Santa Ana Pueblo people who have occupied central New Mexico since at least the late 1500s. We recognize the hospitality of the Tamaya people. We acknowledge that despite the fact that many Indigenous communities were forcibly removed from their homelands through genocide, religious inquisition and ethnic cleansing, Indigenous Peoples are still here persisting and resisting through ongoing colonialism and oppression.

Labor Acknowledgement

From the SBCTC AWAE Core Team:

The first 12 generations of Africans in America whose labor was extracted through the most violent of means, gave birth to this nation and built its foundations, allowing for generations of people to reap the benefits that continue to pay dividends today. The collective effort and labor theft of 10 million people enriched individual families and built exponential generational wealth for white people while enriching corporations and institutions. They worked as Unpaid Laborers for 250 years and another 100 years on meager subsistence with impenetrable barriers preventing the vast majority of them the freedom of self-determination and upward mobility.

(www.unpaidlabor.com)

Welcome and Overview

- About Yakima Valley College, an HSI
 - Demographics
 - Commitment to Equity
- Key terms, concepts (equity, antiracism)
- Our English Department's Ongoing Antiracist Journey
 - Awareness: Who we are and how we defined our antiracist problem
 - Education: Our CANVAS shell and department workshops
 - Self-interrogation: Reflecting on our teaching/assessment practices
 - Community action: Our portfolio of interventions
- Workshop
 - Introducing reflective frameworks
 - Creating a reflection tool

About Yakima Valley College

Yakima Valley College has been designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution since 2001. Currently, YVC is majority Latinx (nearly 60% of the approximately 6500 enrolled undergraduate students). Although the Yakama Nation is within YVC's service district, less than 2% of YVC's undergraduate population identifies as indigenous, and even fewer identify as Asian/Pacific Islander or Black. Nearly 2/3 of students are female, 83% are First Generation, and about 55% attend full time.

In contrast to its student population, YVC's staffing, especially its faculty, is predominately White. About 85% of the English department, which is mostly full-time faculty (17 of 23), identifies as White.

Yakima Valley College's Commitment to Equity

- **ESCALA**, works specifically with Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to close the gap in educational access and completion rates for Latinos, mainly through faculty development programming and remedial program evaluation: The majority of the English department have now participated in ESCALA.
- **TILT**, Transparency in Learning and Teaching is a progressive Universal Design project that aims to improve college learning and teaching experiences for the benefit of students and faculty. One cohort has finished and a second cohort starts this spring.
- **AWAE**, Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecology: A year long commitment to fostering antiracist practices and creating antiracist interventions in our English department's writing assessment ecology.

Key Terms and Concepts



Key Terms

EQUITY: “At the core of equity is **understanding who your students are and how to meet their needs**. We expect students to adjust to the schools, and if they can’t, we say something is wrong with them.” (Dr. Pedro Noguera, UCLA Distinguished Professor of Education)

According to the Center for Urban Education, the term “**Equity-Mindedness**” refers to “**the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes.**”

“Servingness” is at the heart of equity-minded practice.

Key Terms

ANTIRACISM: the “**active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes** so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.”

– *from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women International
Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity*

Antiracist work deliberately challenges and undoes racism.

Stages to Becoming an Antiracist

Adapted from The Antiracist Starter Kit by L. Glenise Pike

- **Stage 1: Awareness**
 - Stop engaging in behaviors that perpetuate white supremacy
 - Engage in behaviors that promote a system of racial equality
- **Stage 2: Education**
 - Get intentional: seek out information, and create the time and space needed to understand deeply
- **Stage 3: Self-Interrogation**
 - Ask yourself the hard questions that start the process of you identifying, unpacking, and dismantling your own past and present behaviors
- **Stage 4: Community Action**
 - Lead others in this work by example and in collaboration; begin collectively working toward restorative efforts that promote a system of racial equality

Our Department's Ongoing Antiracist Journey



Awareness: Who We Are

* Based on a fall 2020 survey with 15 of 17 full-time faculty who responded

- 17 full-time faculty on two campuses
- 85% White (*all others identify as Latinx*)
- 67% Include Spanishes in their curriculum;
53% Include Englishes
- Most use a blend of White-identified and BIPOC-identified authors, several mostly rely on BIPOC-identified authors, and a couple include mostly White-identified authors.
- Several include SAE in their curriculum; only a few describe meaningful engagement with Black English or multilingualism in their curriculum.



Figure 1: Cats in a tree. Image description: Seventeen orange tabbies lounge in various poses on the limbs of a purple tree. One cat sits on the ground at the base of the tree.

Awareness: Our Antiracist Problem

- Four department members participated in a year-long SBCTC Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecology Grant centered on the scholarship of Asao Inoue.
- We used an intensive mapping activity to explore our ecology.
- **PROBLEM:** We do not actively include students in the process of assessment. We need to collaborate with students in the process of assessment, examining the role of white supremacy/**Habits of White Language (HOWL)**, and support students to experience collaboration, empowerment, and autonomy in our classes.

Awareness: Our Antiracist Problem

- We recognize that we are not yet prepared to meaningfully do this work with students **until we address our own *cultural* problem with our faculty colleagues**, a problem evident in our initial survey, but also in our ecological mapping of our assessment, syllabi, assignments.
- As people within the department culture, we carry **HOWL** in our work. We want to develop awareness of that and how we replicate a culture of white supremacy in our classes on an individual and collective level.
- **SHORT-TERM GOAL:** We want to *begin* to shift the culture of our department to include intentional equitable, culturally responsive, and antiracist practices.

Education: Five Monthly Department Workshops

1. Introduction to **AWAE** and our [YVC AWAE Map](#)
2. Exploring our **Assessment Ecology** and [Reflection Tool](#)
3. Reflecting on **Antiracist Teaching and Assessment Practices**
4. Workshopping Our **AWAE interventions**
5. Reflecting on **Habits of White Language (HOWL)**



Figure 2: Online meeting. Image description: Twelve tiles of various colors on a computer screen depict faces and shoulders of individual participants in an online meeting.

Education: Our AWAE Canvas Course

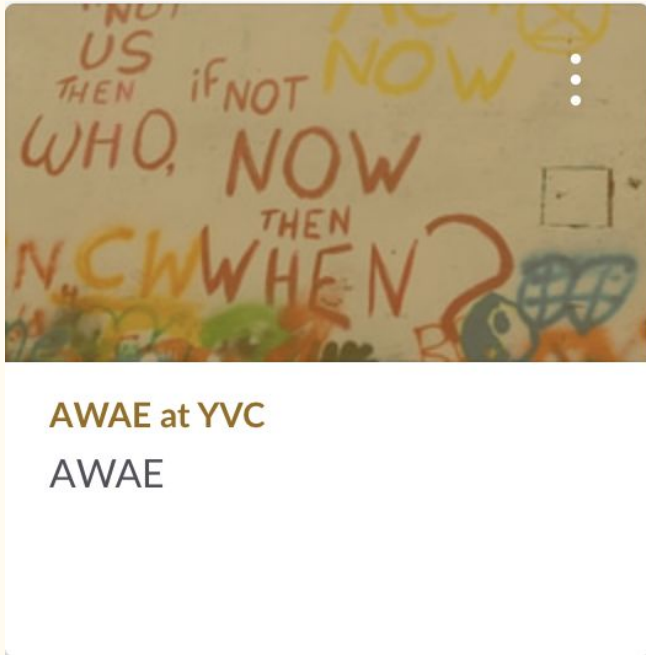


Figure 3: Screenshot of AWAE Canvas tile. Image description: Graffiti style words on a wall read, “If not now then when?”

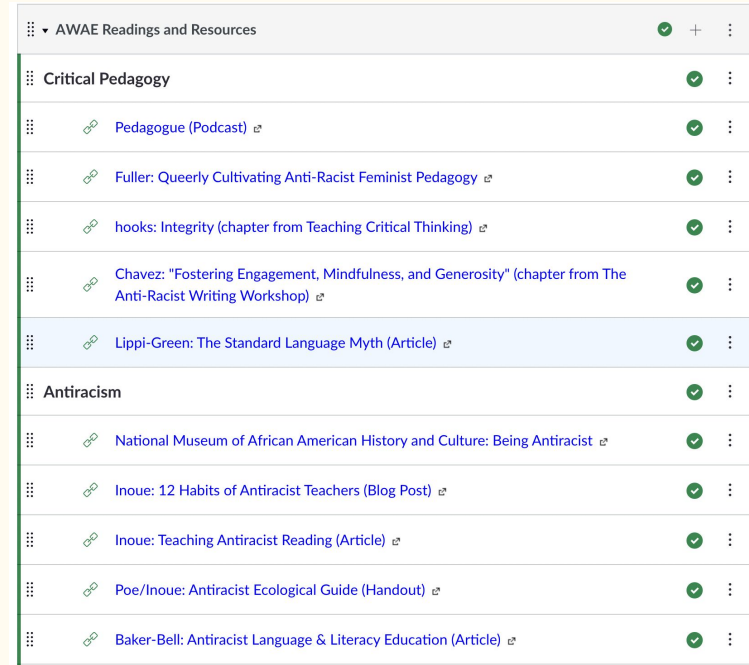
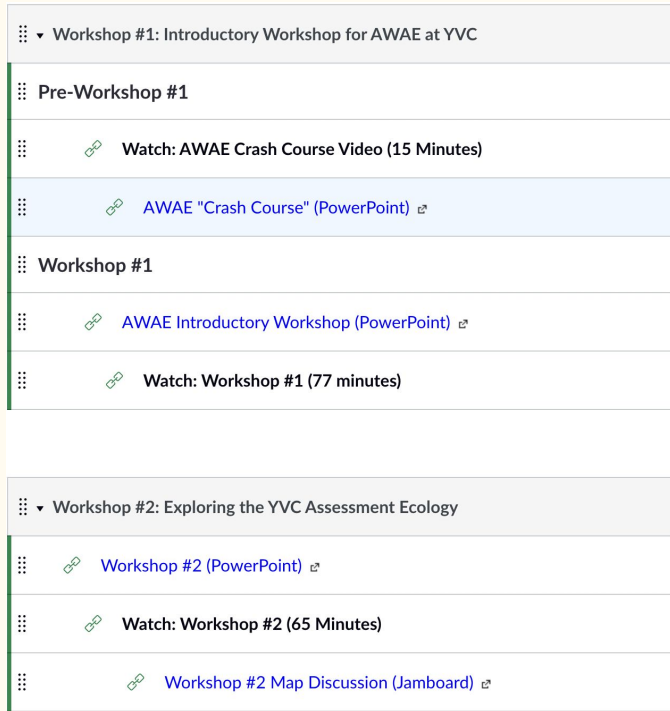


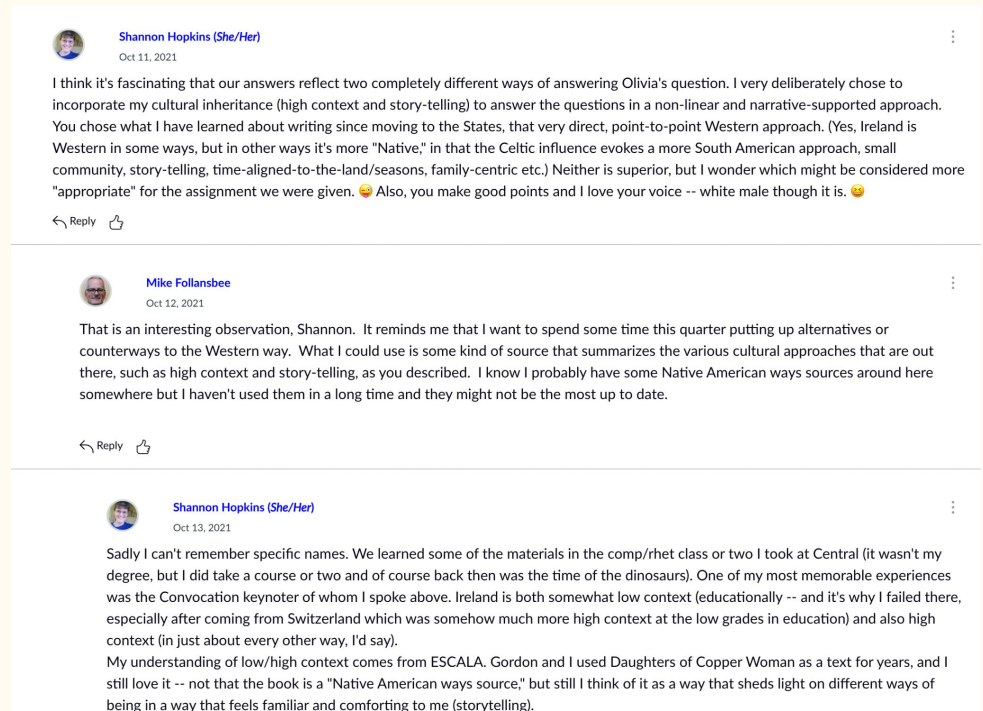
Figure 4: Screenshot of AWAE home page in Canvas. Image description: A list of hyperlinks to Canvas readings and resources appear under the headings “Critical Pedagogy” and “Antiracism.”

Education: Our AWAE Canvas Course



The screenshot shows a Canvas LMS page with two main workshop sections. The first section is titled 'Workshop #1: Introductory Workshop for AWAE at YVC'. It contains a 'Pre-Workshop #1' sub-section with three items: 'Watch: AWAE Crash Course Video (15 Minutes)', 'AWAE "Crash Course" (PowerPoint)', and 'Workshop #1' sub-section with 'AWAE Introductory Workshop (PowerPoint)' and 'Watch: Workshop #1 (77 minutes)'. The second section is titled 'Workshop #2: Exploring the YVC Assessment Ecology' and contains three items: 'Workshop #2 (PowerPoint)', 'Watch: Workshop #2 (65 Minutes)', and 'Workshop #2 Map Discussion (Jamboard)'. All items are represented by blue links with a chain-link icon.

Figure 5: Screenshot of AWAE workshops. Image description: Hyperlinks in a Canvas page appear under headings for Workshop #1 and Workshop #2.



The screenshot shows an online discussion thread with three posts. The first post is by Shannon Hopkins (She/Her) on Oct 11, 2021, discussing cultural inheritance and writing approaches. The second post is by Mike Follansbee on Oct 12, 2021, responding to Shannon's observation. The third post is by Shannon Hopkins (She/Her) on Oct 13, 2021, discussing educational context and the book 'Daughters of Copper Woman'. Each post includes a profile picture, name, date, and a 'Reply' button.

Figure 6: Screenshot of an online discussion. Image description: Profile pictures and names of two English faculty appear above blocks of typed text as part of a conversation.

Self-Interrogation: Our Reflection Tool

- Dimensions-based rubric to help participants reflect on their teaching through an equity and antiracist lens
- Generative rather than evaluative
- Participants identify areas of possibility for growth in teaching and potential sites for intervention/antiracist action
- Flexibly allows participants to engage with prompts that are particularly meaningful or interesting to them
- The reflection tool leads to one or more ideas for teaching/assessment interventions

Community Action: Our Collective Interventions

- We center the idea of learning alongside one another.
- All 17 FT department members participated in some way in antiracist education and self-reflection; approx. 60% engaged in antiracist classroom “interventions.”
- Department “Portfolio” of interventions for Winter 2022 feature the following:
 - Dialogue in feedback
 - Collaborative assessment practices
 - Assignment to help students critique HOWL
 - Video feedback as a dialogic tool
 - Student self-assessment
 - Single-point rubrics

Workshop:
Equity and Antiracist Reflection



Frameworks for Interrogation, Reflection

Practices of Antiracist Educators (*adapted from Asao Inoue's [blog](#)*)

- **Compassionate Politics and People:**
 - How do I/we attend deeply to my own and others' intersectional subject positions and decenter the status quo? In what ways are my/our systems, policies, and practices inclusive, collaborative, and compassionate?
- **Antiracist Purposes, Outcomes, Goals:**
 - How can antiracism be central to my/our purposes and goals? How can success be measured by antiracist outcomes?
- **Inclusive Curriculum & Materials:**
 - How are BIPOC voices (including student voices) integrated meaningfully and centrally to our work? How can we resist hierarchical logics (e.g. ranking) and instead focus on diverse ways of communicating, teaching, and assessing learning and achievement?

Frameworks for Interrogation, Reflection

Equity-minded/Culturally Responsive Orientation

Adapted from ESCALA Educational Services, Inc.

Relatedness: How can I/we build relationships between teacher/staff and students, among students, and between students and the content/the college?

Competence: How can I/we support and cultivate students' abilities to navigate the higher education system and become confident and capable learners? How can we make "servingness" central to our work?

Trust: How can I/we create transparency and clarity in the learning and assessment process and/or in college practices and policies? How do I/we intentionally plan, design, and decide with and for students?

Relatedness



Competence

Trust

Another approach to Interrogation, Reflection

Milner's (2007) Framework for Educator Self-Reflection:

- Reflect on self (cultural, racial self-awareness)
- Reflect on self in relation to others (consideration of culture and race of students in particular, but also colleagues, community, etc.)
- Reflect on self in relation to system (institutional history, politics, structures, policies, practices)

Sample Reflective Tools

[Reflection Tool for Equitable and Antiracist Teaching and Assessment](#) (created by Carolyn Calhoun-Dillahunt, Dodie Forrest, Olivia Hernández, and Kristy Webster, Yakima Valley College)

[Self Assessment for Culturally Responsive Teaching](#) (based on ESCALA's framework, created by Olivia Hernández and Carolyn Calhoun-Dillahunt, YVC)

[Anti-racist Educator Self-Examination Questionnaire + Rubric](#) (from ATLAS: ABE Teaching & Learning Advancement System)

[CUE's Racial Equity Tools](#) (from Center for Urban Education)

[NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education](#) (from New England Research Center for Higher Ed.)

More Sample Reflective Tools

[Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity](#) (from Coalition of Communities of Color)

[Equity Toolkit for Administrators](#) (K-12 focus, from Colorado Dept. of Ed.)

[Building for Equity: School Self-Assessment Tool](#) (K-12, from Center for Collaborative Education)

Workshop:

Developing Equity & Antiracist Reflection Questions

1. Form groups based on educational roles (e.g. administrator, faculty, staff, program director, student, other?)
2. In groups, introduce yourselves and discuss some of the equity and antiracist issues in your area.
3. Next, collaboratively brainstorm reflective/self-assessment questions or statements appropriate to your institutional roles using one of the frameworks provided.
 - a. Record your ideas on the Google doc link (or hard copy) provided, so we can continue to add to our work and share our ideas with others.
 - b. Please include your names and email addresses, so we can follow up!

Reconnect and Share

- Please be prepared to share one question or insight from your group's work today.
 - If you have ideas for next steps, please share one of those, too.
- Before you leave, be sure you have recorded ideas on your group's Google doc or hard copy reflection template.
 - Be sure to add your names and email addresses to the document.
 - If you worked on a hard copy template, please submit it to one of us, so we can record your notes on a Google doc we can share.

Gracias/Thank you

If you would like more information or further discussion, please contact us:

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