



## Welcome

This issue of the Learning Loop focuses on strategies to meet the challenge of teaching about race and racism. We've highlighted techniques that can be applied directly to your classrooms as well as innovative pedagogical practices that may inspire some new ideas to help solve difficult challenges.

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### Teaching in Times of National Racial Trauma: What Can Faculty Do?

by: [Aaliyah El-Amin](#)

The United States is in the midst of racial turmoil, and the impact of that context affects students and faculty members in higher education just as it does all teachers and learners in the nation's schools. Ongoing [police killings](#) of unarmed Black adults and children have garnered significant national attention and community protest. Simultaneously, discourse in our election process is laced with racial tension. Whether or not we are prepared for it, these events are likely to be on students' minds.

Yet, many faculty members struggle to know what to do the morning after a traumatic racial event or how to address these events in class. We may not feel like we have the knowledge to lead a conversation or we may be worried about addressing the full range of student emotions. However, it greatly benefits our students if we address the events immediately after they occur.

There are three simple acts that you can do in your classrooms to build trust and to show your commitment to issues of racial inequity and justice:

1. **Acknowledge**

With little or no planning, and taking only a few minutes in class, we can acknowledge current racial events. This simply means saying to students that (a) we recognize there is a lot going on in the world and (b) we know

that there may be a range of emotions and questions on their minds. If desired, individual faculty members might also chose to share how they are feeling personally, and in so doing, model the array of emotions that one might experience.

## 2. **Connect**

Another possible route to engaging with recent events is to connect the work of the class to the work of the world. That is, show students how what they are doing in our courses is related to what is going on in society. Faculty members might consider the following questions: How can students use the content from your class to intervene in racialized patterns of behavior in society or to prevent what is happening from recurring? What role does your course or discipline have in moving forward and making a collective impact?

## 3. **Integrate**

Finally, we might integrate a conversation about recent events into our class plan for the day. This can be a discussion that lasts just 10 minutes or an activity that takes more time. It can be open-ended or guided depending on your comfort level and the size of the class.

Read more about these moves with examples of faculty use in [Teaching in Times of Racial Trauma: What Can Faculty Do?](#)

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## **Act for Equity at HGSE: Theater for Social Change**



Photo Credit: Jill Anderson | HGSE staff participating in Act for Equity workshop

The Act for Equity project began in early 2016 as part of HGSE's commitment to the Fulfilling the Promise of Diversity (FPD) community conversation. The inspiration behind the project was to leverage the power of theater-based learning to broaden and deepen the ways in which we as a community interact around critical topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. After a series of discussions,

Dean James Ryan decided that the inaugural Act for Equity workshop would be developed for staff members. The TLL, serving as the project lead for the initiative, worked in tandem with troupe director Margie Zohn (Ed.M. AIE '12 and faculty member in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences) to design the events with sustained input from the staff community.

Act for Equity hosted two workshops engaging more than 70 staff members in total. There were several goals for each event, including appreciating multiple points of views, learning about microaggressions, and practicing ways to create a more inclusive workplace climate. Feedback from staff members praised the acting and interactivity for creating rich opportunities for learning. "The theatrical component is a really wonderful way of sparking conversation by watching something played out that is relatable, realistic, and relevant," noted one staff member.

Next up for Act for Equity is an October 24th [workshop for HGSE students](#) focused on critical issues of racial equity and viewpoint diversity. [RSVP here](#). We hope you will encourage your students to attend!

To learn more about this initiative, see [Act for Equity at HGSE: Theater for Social Change](#).

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## Staff Spotlights



Aaliyah El-Amin is a Lecturer at HGSE with an expanded support role in the TLL. She is available for general support to faculty members and TFs on teaching about race, racism and education. Aaliyah offers consultations and support with syllabi and course activities, organizes group dialogues and workshops for faculty and TFs, and develops and shares



Josh Bookin is the TLL manager of instructional support and development. He engages with faculty members and teaching fellows to assist them in solving problems of practice to best meet the learning needs of their students. He also offers a wide variety of development opportunities including classroom observations, one-on-one consultations, one-off

practical teaching tools and protocols. Please [reach out to Aaliyah](#) if you are doing any planning or want to do work related to discussions on race and equity in your courses.

workshops, and on-going communities of practice. Please [reach out to Josh](#) if you would like support or assistance with your courses.

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## Resources and Opportunities

The TLL regularly consults with faculty on a wide variety of instructional challenges including:

- Designing a course
- Sharpening learning objectives
- Crafting and delivering a class session
- Incorporating inclusive teaching practices
- Making use of student feedback
- Leveraging learning technologies

Connect with us today: [tll@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:tll@gse.harvard.edu) or call Bill Wisser, TLL Director, at 617-495-3182.

