

# Talking about Race in the Classroom

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# Agenda

Intro to the problem

Why is it important?

Barriers to talking about it

Strategies to help

Discussion

# Defining the Problem

Discussions of race and racism in the classroom are often avoided by teachers

These discussions are especially important given the current climate in the U.S., in addition to the frequency of microaggressions in classroom settings.

# Why is Talking About Race in the Classroom Important?

Encourages positive intergroup relations

Beneficial for students of color

Allows students to notice inequalities

Not talking about race can lead some students to feel anger, frustration, guilt

Empowerment and promotion of social justice

# Barriers

Fear of offending others

Lack of experience or feelings of inadequacy

May trigger strong emotions

Such as anger, anxiety, blame, and defensiveness

Violates social norms regarding politeness

Violates academic norms regarding objectivity and empiricism

Exposes students and faculty of color to microaggressions

# Strategies to Help

Understand self as a racial/cultural being

Be open and honest about biases

Develop knowledge, awareness, and expertise in race relations

Acknowledge, validate, and facilitate discussion of feelings

Validate those who make themselves vulnerable

Controlling the process and not the content of difficult dialogue

Teach others to be open to racial blunders

# Discussion

What have your experiences been discussing race in the classroom?

What are barriers that keep you from discussing race?

What has been helpful for promoting race talks?

# References

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