

# Developing Critical and Inclusive Teaching Pedagogies for Writing Courses



## Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2017

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### Project Overview

Comprised of faculty who teach in the English Department Writing Program (EDWP), our FCIT group aimed to:

- Specifically consider the affordances and limitations of the university as a locus of critical and inclusive teaching practices and social justice work.
- Produce and disseminate concrete strategies for implementing socially just and inclusive teaching practices in writing classes.

### Participants



- Dr. Stephanie Moody, Instructional Consultant, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

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- Ali Shapiro, Lecturer, Sweetland Center for Writing and English Department Writing Program

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- Dr. Megan Sweeney, Director, English Department Writing Program

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### Key Insights / New Questions

Several insights, tensions, and questions arose from our FCIT work:

- We value radical honesty as an inclusive teaching technique that encourages instructors and students to situate ourselves within broader conversations about social identities, power, and oppression. Yet, we also recognize the often unequal distribution of affective labor that this work requires, as well as the varied stakes for instructors and students across the university.
  - How might we develop multiple strategies for individuals to practice radical honesty in writing classrooms that recognize individuals' positionings within and beyond the university?
  - How might we foster radical honesty as an inclusive teaching practice for instructors who do not think that their courses are explicitly about social identity, power, and oppression?
- Students are uniquely situated within the university to experience the affordances and constraints of social justice efforts and to affect change on campus.
  - How might we support students' resilience, agency, and solidarity as they navigate and shape the university context?
- We recognize an increase in anxiety about grading for both instructors and students. Grade inflation, subjective and contradictory grading practices, and ideologies that value linguistic conformity to a perceived standard foster learning environments in which students may feel hesitant to engage in the kind of critical thinking and risk taking that writing courses can foster.
  - How might contract grading ameliorate some of these issues by explicitly valuing process, labor, and self-assessment?

### Artifacts

- For an example of how contract grading was used in a writing class to promote an antiracist pedagogy focused on process, labor, and self-assessment, contact Ali Shapiro at alishap@umich.edu.

### Resources

- Ayers, Bill. *Demand the Impossible: A Radical Manifesto*. Haymarket Books, 2016.
- Condon, Frankie, and Vershawn Ashanti Young, editors. *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication*. CSU Open Press, 2017.
- Engler, Mark, and Paul Engler. *This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*. Nation Books, 2016.
- Inoue, Asao B. *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*. Parlor Press, 2015.
- Tuitt, Frank, Chayla Haynes, and Saran Stewart, editors. *Race, Equity, and the Learning Environment: the Global Relevance of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogies in Higher Education*. Stylus Publishing, 2016.

### Next Steps

- Two EDWP Brown Bag sessions that will focus on two inclusive teaching practices for writing classrooms: contract grading and situating (ourselves, our course content, our writing) within broader historical and cultural contexts
- Formation of working groups for individuals interested in developing inclusive teaching resources
- A scholarly article developed from our FCIT work and ongoing conversations with EDWP faculty and GSIs