

# Pedagogy of Reflective Inquiry: Racial Inequity, Racist Policy and Anti-Racist Teaching

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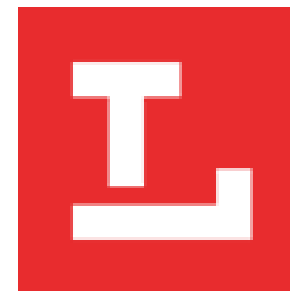
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Moderated by Aaron Baker

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Anti-Racism Teach-Ins  
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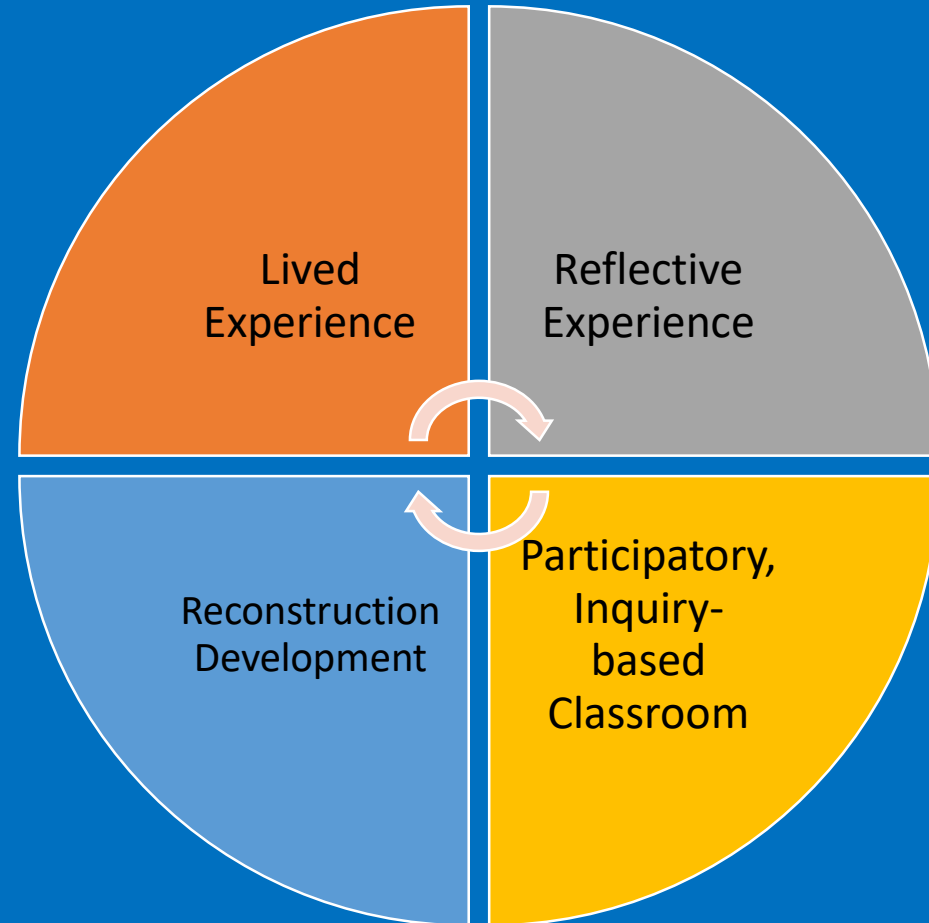


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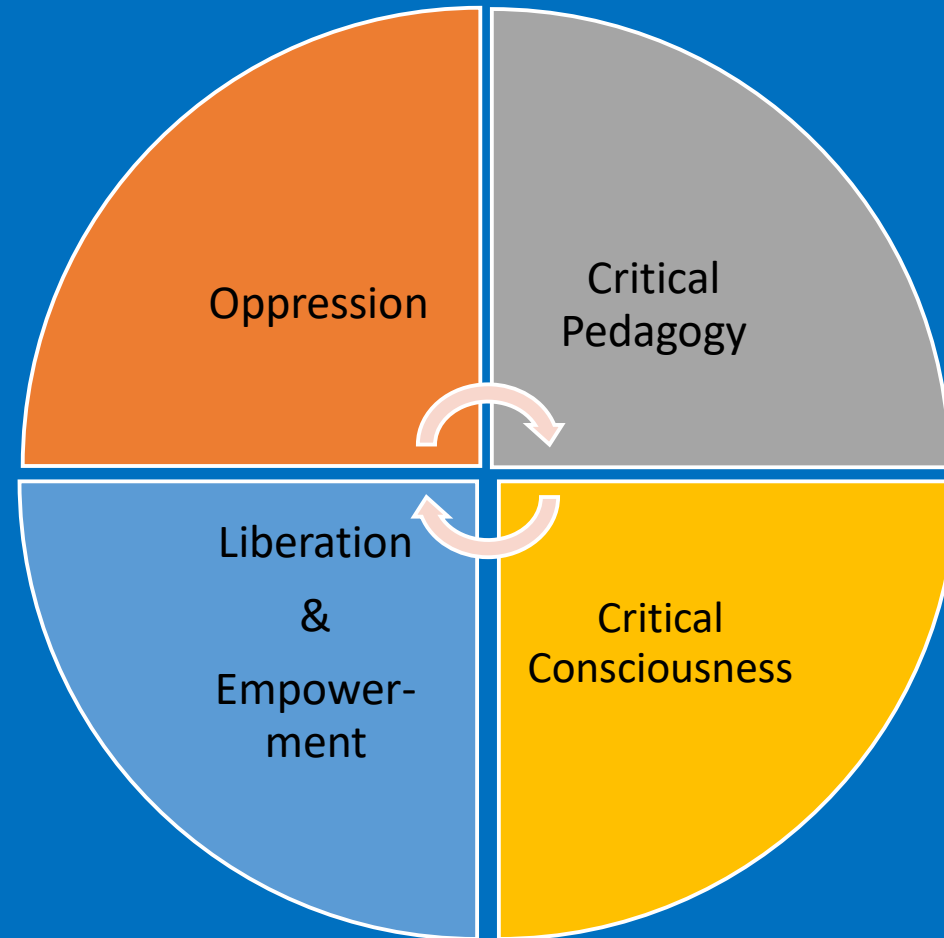
# Purpose

- The aim of this teach-in is to explore the theory and practice of a pedagogy of reflective inquiry as a form of anti-racist teaching. The teach-in will engage participants in the process of three forms of reflective inquiry pertaining to racial inequity, racist policy, and racism: critical, ethical, and contemplative reflective inquiry.

# John Dewey: Reflective Experience and Education as the Reconstruction of Experience



# Paulo Freire: Critical Pedagogy



# Pedagogy of Reflective Inquiry—Betty Reardon



# Pedagogy of Reflective Inquiry

- **Critical**

- pertains to the discernment of power, an understanding and critique of social institutions, analysis of the structural dimensions of social life, and a critical consciousness (in a Freireian sense) of the political–economic origins of violence.

- **Ethical**

- addresses normative questions of justice, and thereby the ethical validity of structural and cultural violence, guided by the principles of a human rights framework.

- **Contemplative**

- self-examination of internal moral motivation and commitment. It pertains to a reflection on what is meaningful and valuable. It also involves the exercise of imagination to envision alternative realities necessary for transformative action

# Racial Inequity, Racist Policy, and Racism—Ibram X. Kendi

- "A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups."
- "Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing."
- "Racial equity is when two or more racial groups are standing on a relatively equal footing." (Kendi, p. 14)
- "... if racial discrimination is defined as treating, considering, or making a distinction in favor or against an individual based on that person's race, then racial discrimination is not inherently racist. *The defining question is whether the discrimination is creating equity or inequity.* If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist. If discrimination is creating inequity, then it is racist ... *The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination.*" (Kendi, p. 15, emphasis added)
- "A racist idea is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society." (Kendi, p. 15)
- "Racism is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas. Antiracism is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas." (Kendi, p. 16)

# Injustice—Dehumanization

- Dr. King: "An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. ... Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust." "**Letter from a Birmingham Jail**"
- Dr. King: "To deprive man of freedom is to relegate him to the status of a thing, rather than elevate him to the status of a person."
- "racist imperialism": Racism, interconnected with economic exploitation and militarism;
- A society so structured dehumanizes, and thereby violates the basic civil, political, and economic rights promised by a democratic constitutional republic.



# Justice—the Beloved Community/Ubuntu

- The achievement of a beloved community is grounded in a form of “love” expressed by the ancient Greek word *agape*.
- *Agape* is the moral disposition to respond to others with unconditional respect and good will. Its exercise does not discriminate among persons but responds to their equal inherent dignity. In doing so it bestows membership in an inclusive moral community. Justice requires equal respect for persons.
- As Cornel West suggests: “Justice is what love looks like in public.”
- Anything short of mutual respect is unjustly dehumanizing.
- ***Ubuntu***: a relational, communal conception of personhood and ethics—affirming and pursuing communal relationships grounded in mutual dignity and respect (King's metaphor of being existentially situated within an “inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”)
- ***Injustice***: degradation of communal relations causing dehumanization

# Reflective Inquiry Regarding Racial Inequity and Racist Policy

- **Critical Reflective Inquiry:**

- How and in what ways do *social institutions* (e.g., schools and school systems) inflict and sustain racial inequity through racist policy: rules, policies, and practices?
- What *patterns of thought* (*racist ideas*—ideologies, beliefs, assumptions) work to justify and sustain racist policies that reproduce racial inequity?

- **Ethical Reflective Inquiry:**

- Does racial inequity and policy contradict the basic values and principles of a democratic constitutional republic—the beloved community? If so, why and in what ways?
- Do our values and principles need to be revised in any way to be consistent with racial equity?

- **Contemplative Reflective Inquiry:**

- What would a racially just/equitable society look like?
- What would a racially just/equitable school and classroom look like?
- What actions would we have to take now and going forward into the future to achieve a racially just / equitable society, school, and classroom?

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