ANTI-RACISM OR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT?

AR — Anti-racism work & training

Where we coincide

ICC — Intercultural competence work & training

MISCONCEPTIONS

The idea that our efforts should concentrate either on AR or ICC at a time can be more harmful than helpful and limit the effectiveness of initiatives within each area. Why? Because anti-racism work and intercultural competence development support and complement each other. One is not better than the other, but it is important to understand their focus to avoid offering one when the other is necessary.

VALUE

This framework will help you understand how efforts supporting both AR and ICC are more effective at making sense of one's positioning and background, learning to appreciate experience, difference, and challenges, and working towards developing the capacity to make positive changes to policies and practices more successfully. Besides clarifying the relationship between AR and ICC, this framework can be used as a reference when developing related programming.

USING THIS FRAMEWORK

AR and ICC initiatives are neither mutually exclusive nor interchangeable and, in fact, share commonalities. To help you appreciate how AR and ICC are related, the columns on the left show a comparison of their attributes under different categories; this explains how their aims differ. The column on the right illustrates how the two areas converge. Investing time to understand this relationship is important to properly value each field and how they support each other.

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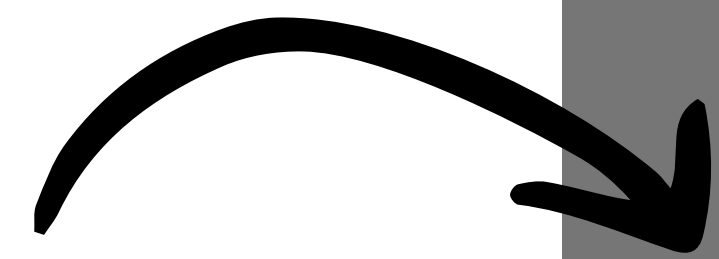| **AR** ANTI-RACISM WORK AND TRAINING		**ICC** INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE WORK AND TRAINING	WHERE WE COINCIDE
Emphasizes **addressing** and responding to large, societal issues involving oppression, privilege, and the need for social change	vs	Emphasizes **developing** awareness of self and others, gaining knowledge, changing attitudes, developing skills	Emphasize understanding own positioning, perspectives, attitudes, and experience; breaking discriminatory practices; addressing behaviours and consequences
Focuses on **changing** systems and structures that perpetuate inequity	vs	Focuses on **advancing** competencies among all members of society, across all contexts, for life	Focus on identifying ways to break existing, inaccurate, and unfair notions and beliefs about other groups
Seeks to **disrupt** racial injustice and White supremacy	vs	Seeks to **promote** respect and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities across intersectional identities	Seek to deconstruct bias, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism while creating awareness of microaggressions and practices that ignore or disrespect others' background
Addresses racism by explicitly **discussing** it, positioned in historical, political, systemic, and everyday contexts	vs	Addresses racism by **understanding** people's experiences (individual and group perspectives), backgrounds, and cultural identities	Address racism by contextualizing and problematizing different perspectives and backgrounds; actively support racial equity
Requires **genuine commitment** to interrupt racism and disrupt existing systems and attitudes	vs	Requires **constant engagement** across cultural lines for awareness, knowledge, and skills development	Require continuous engagement and ongoing learning, for life
Supports the **reassessment** of the curriculum disrupting Euro-centric content, to make it inclusive and consistent with equity goals	vs	Supports **internationalization** (at home and abroad) to promote appreciation of cultures, and learning from different perspectives	Support the development of training programs adjusted to various audiences for better impact; consider identity through different lenses (personal, intersectional and group)
Promotes **recognizing and understanding** the perspectives of racialized individuals and those who have been historically marginalized and ignored	vs	Promotes **understanding and adapting** to intercultural situations and come from a place of curiosity focused on understanding, engagement, and cultural humility	Promote respect and develop empathy focused on understanding and changing one's positioning and perspective
Creates open **spaces to discuss** and to bear witness to the strong feelings that come with racism, oppression, historical and systematic inequality	vs	Creates open **spaces to reflect** and share one's cultural perspective, experience, and to address negative or unfair attitudes towards other groups	Create open spaces for conversation, reflection, and sharing experience
Prepares individuals to **ensure** policies and practices are consistent with equity goals	vs	Prepares individuals to **interact** interculturally, supporting efforts aimed at racial equity and inclusion	Prepare individuals to be more adaptable, know how to react in difficult (cultural/racial) contexts, suspend judgement of others and inspire a positive change
Champions are **unwavering and engaged** individuals, activists, allies, supporters of social justice, dedicated members of the public	vs	Champions are culturally **adaptable and engaged** individuals, interculturalists, facilitators, mediators, communicators	Constantly engaged in conversations, actively promoting fair practices, committed to continue learning about and from different perspectives; demonstrate engagement through actions and participation

SCENARIO	WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING	WHAT KIND OF CONTENT/ TRAINING IS NEEDED
1 You overhear a conversation between a group of peer mentors supporting your programming, where they agree the best thing to do to interact with students from other racial backgrounds is to be "colour blind" and treat everyone the same.	The students may have the best intentions to support their peers, trying to be fair. Unfortunately, they are falling into a common trap whereby trying to be "colour blind" in fact means we are ignoring the experiences of racialized students.	AR training focused on understanding the experiences of different racialized groups (historical and contemporary perspectives); introducing a conversation of racial equity and the negative impact of having/promoting a "colour blind" perspective. For Greater Impact: Include ICC training focused on the process of intercultural development, learning about denial, minimization (where colour blindness is discussed), adaptation, and strategies to better appreciate different perspectives.
2 You notice that students working in your team seem unsure about how best to communicate with students who appear to have a cultural background different from theirs. They seem tense and afraid to make a mistake even if they are interested in connecting with their peers and getting to know them.	Students are often interested in interacting with peers who have a different cultural background, but they may not have the knowledge or skills to engage with them in a meaningful way.	ICC training involving how to be a better communicator across cultures, providing real-life examples; targeting strategies to ask questions and learning how to deal with cultural missteps, engaging with reflection, observation, and how to provide support. For Greater Impact: Include AR training focused on strategies to engage with racialized students and introduce language that encourages equity.
3 During a workshop, a student participant gives an example related to the workshop topic and shares some of their experience as a racialized person to make a point. The facilitator does not want the workshop to turn into a racial debate, so they interrupt the student to remind them to focus only on the topic of the session.	It is likely the facilitator wants to ensure the workshop stays on topic for everyone's benefit; however, it seems they invalidated the student's experience, which can have a detrimental effect for the student and all attendees.	AR training focused on creating open spaces to engage with the experiences of racialized students, recognizing the importance of validating experiences, normalizing the conversation about anti-racism, and learning to become an ally. For Greater Impact: ICC training focused on listening for understanding, ways to share experience, and strategies to further engage in conversations related to intercultural and racial experiences.
4 A student working in your team designs a poster for an upcoming event co-organized with the Office of Indigenous Relations that includes feathers, a dream catcher, a hatchet, and totem poles. The intention is to make the poster attractive and colourful. The student is very proud of the product, but they later learn this is not suitable and they have difficulty understanding the reason.	The student is relying on imagery shared in media, which often creates and reinforces stereotypes. Even if the student saw a similar visual used elsewhere, it does not mean it is an appropriate, accurate, and respectful representation of culture and racial background.	ICC training addressing cultural sensitivity and the impact of using images associated with cultural groups; introducing a conversation on the danger of perpetuating stereotypes, and the process towards incorporating fair, respectful, and more accurate images related to cultural and racial groups. For Greater Impact: AR training including the negative effects of stereotypes involving Indigenous populations, from a historical and contemporary perspective.

SCENARIO	WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING	WHAT KIND OF CONTENT/ TRAINING IS NEEDED
5 A faculty member is frustrated by what they perceive a failure to connect with international students from East Asia; students do not ask questions during class and do not seem to fully engage in discussions as most local students do; the assumption is that they are shy and do not like participating in class.	It is likely the faculty member has not had a chance to develop a better understanding of how students across local and international contexts approach classroom interactions. It is possible students may be used to a different form of classroom engagement; interactions between professors and students are comparatively different between East Asia and Canada.	ICC training focused on issues faced by international students and ideas to approach learning from a more inclusive lens, considering the variety of backgrounds, communication styles, and awareness of classroom interactions in other countries. For Greater Impact: Include AR in the discussion to highlight the experiences of racialized East Asian students in Canada.
6 While conducting interviews for a senior administrative position, the all-Canadian panel members seem to act differently when interacting with either a white or a racialized candidate although all candidates are Canadian nationals. When deciding on the best candidate, it becomes evident that white candidates receive most praise compared to racialized candidates regardless of their credentials and performance.	It is possible the process has been affected by racial bias and institutionalized racism. Perhaps practices and policies surrounding hiring processes have not been properly reviewed and interviewers lack appropriate preparation to ensure fairness to all candidates.	AR training for interviewers focused on strategies to engage with candidates observing equity and inclusive goals and understanding the systemic impact of oppression; a review of practices and policies involved in the hiring process will also be required. For Greater Impact: Provide ICC training to avoid minimizing differences, to concentrate on developing cultural humility, to understand intersectional identity and how we relate to each other; create awareness of how interviewing behaviour and nonverbal communication differs across countries.
7 An advisor meets with an Anishinaabe student who shares they feel uncomfortable because others continue to mispronounce their name and assume they are receiving a free education. The non-Indigenous advisor suggests trying to use a name that is easier to pronounce and ignoring what everyone else says; the advisor encourages the student to concentrate instead on their amazing academic performance and adds "You're exceeding everyone's expectations!"	The advisor seems to be invalidating the student's experience and is committing a series of microaggressions. It is likely the advisor may lack appropriate training and experience to engage meaningfully and effectively with students from a different background, starting with students from Indigenous populations.	Combined ICC/AR training focused on recognizing implicit and explicit bias, to identify and respond to microaggressions, and learning to validate experiences of racialized individuals with an Indigenous background. For Greater Impact: Include ICC training to develop skills to understand and appreciate different perspectives, to learn about and practice engaging with Indigenous peoples, to identify strategies to encourage correct pronunciation of names and places, and to create awareness of experiences of Indigenous students in Canada and in other countries. Incorporate AR training to address the ways colonialism has oppressed Indigenous groups, to educate about how the (intended or unintended) actions of those with white privilege may result in a continued discrimination and isolation of non-dominant groups, and to provide a greater context for the experience of racialized people.