

Invite, Welcome, Share and Engage: How Can We Do Better?

Students and teachers bring social, racial, and gender injustice into the classroom when they enter, even if that toxic mix has not already kept students from finding the door or even imagining that Latin exists! In this session, a veteran teacher, originally a nerdy White girl from New England, who taught for 11 years at an elite boys' Catholic school and for the past 12 years in a D.C. public high school, will describe how to encourage students of color to sign up for and continue to study Latin.

She will briefly review brain research to describe why the Latin classroom (and maybe even the Latin teacher) might be unintentionally unwelcoming to students of color. The teacher's and student's conscious and unconscious biases influence the interactions and the expectations of both parties. The teacher's biases can reinforce the student's negative self-perceptions or feeling of not belonging. The student's biases can provoke anxiety or negative emotions that shut down regions of the brain essential for learning.

The session will explore ways to help teachers mitigate their own unconscious biases and adopt strategies to lower student anxiety, build student-teacher trust, and create an environment that equips students for rigorous academic work. The session will explore ways physical movement and games can develop community to build the vital link between belonging and academic risk taking. Routines and regular conferencing or methodically tracking one-on-one interactions can support and nurture students of color. And, explicitly discussing racism and other forms of bias and that arise in the Latin classroom can give students valuable perspectives and tools for reflecting on and learning from the classical world. For example, the teacher might spotlight the assumption that classics is a "White thing" and then help students evaluate that

assumption using encaustic portraits from Roman Egypt. The teacher might also help students challenge that assumption by studying the place of classics in the post-Civil War founding of what would become the system of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or, by reading Dudley Randall's *Booker T and W E B* and discussing the 20th century debate over education policy for African Americans.

The session will also touch on grading: how traditional high school systems are inequitable and how teachers might mitigate those inequities by making their own systems transparent and designing them for learning rather than sorting.

Finally, having investigated lowering student anxiety and increasing trust, the session will present ideas for boosting students' ability to undertake rigorous academic work. They include two ways to strengthen vocabulary acquisition: a vocabulary game and a memorization tool called a *quinquies*. The session will examine helping students understand the importance of morphology, conveying the need to memorize endings, and teaching students how to memorize.

This presentation will draw on the work of Zaretta Hammond in *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Joe Feldman in *Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms*, and Annie Murphy Paul in *The Extended Mind: the Power of Thinking Outside the Brain*.