

14 November Sessions

Jessica Wei Huang

Healing as Radical Activism: Building a Sustainable Movement for Change

If we want to build schools where all students, no matter their identity, can thrive, we need to start with healing ourselves and our communities. As BIPOC, we have the responsibility to practice and model sustained self-care rituals and build healing practices, so that we can continue to do the work to transform the oppressive systems around us. Burn out, self-doubt, and working within oppressive systems takes a daily toll on our minds and bodies. Join us for a balance of theory and practical applications for healing in community.

Dr. Danau Tanu

Why are all the local kids sitting together in the cafeteria?

In 1997, Beverly Tatum wrote that, upon seeing a group of Black students on an American campus, “The question on the tip of everyone’s tongue is ‘Why are the Black kids sitting together?’ Principals want to know, teachers want to know, White students want to know, the Black students who aren’t sitting at the table want to know.” The same was true at the international school where Danau Tanu conducted her doctoral research, except the main concern was the “local kids” of the host country and the “Korean kids.” These students were seen as “self-segregating” and “not international.” But were they really?

In this session, Danau will demonstrate how the biases and prejudices held by the administrators and educators at the international school contributed to the issue of “self-segregation” on their campus. The mostly white, Anglophone teachers acted as gatekeepers for the dominant culture of the school and determined who was considered “international” and who was accused of “self-segregating.” The expectation they placed on students to assimilate into the dominant school culture acted as a crucial push factor that caused students to retreat into their language groups. Danau will also show that the high student turnover rate at schools catering to internationally mobile children can further exacerbate the formation of cliques based on race or language for students who do not fit in with the dominant school culture.

Danau’s research data is based on a yearlong participant observation conducted at an international school and over 130 in-depth, ethnographic interviews with high school students, their parents, alumni and teacher.

Doline Ndorimana

Could a Culture of Vulnerability help (international) schools become anti-racists?

Racial conversations can be pleasant, unpleasant, frustrating and exhausting. Taking a certain distance from these conversations have allowed me to go from a “you’ll never understand” approach to “let me truly listen to those who “will never understand” approach and only then to realize that we all have something in common: We all want to be included and we all hate to be excluded. When we give space and an opportunity to people to truly share and relive their own stories, we create a personal connection that might potentially bring us together for a common fight.

These stories mirror our lives, what we have and forgotten, who we are, or are not and how privileged we are. These stories make us better colleagues, friends, educators and individuals.

These moments give us the opportunity to belong and challenge one another in a non-threatening manner and look at ourselves, ask tough, uncomfortable and often painful questions that will move us forward as individuals and community.

In this workshop, I invite you to be vulnerable and embark with me on this intimate conversation. We will speak to one another and hopefully connect on a deeper human level, understand and challenge each other’s internal conflicts, doubts, fear and apprehension.

As we are having these somewhat uncomfortable and unsettling conversations, my hope is that you will deliberately and actively seek to practice anti-racism with me.

If you join this workshop, be willing to truly be seen, to lean into discomfort and to look at yourself, face your prejudices and biases because as Diangelo argues “our lack of understanding about implicit biases leads to aversive racism”.

When we are brave and strong enough to show our vulnerability and understand our shortcomings, we build together a community that is inclusive, which preaches a sense of belonging; a community that serves one another and schools whose mission is to raise an imperfect resilient anti-racist generation that is not afraid to speak up and have hard conversations. But it all starts within, with yourself. Join me and let’s explore together how a culture of vulnerability can help international schools become anti-racist.

Larisa Sharifi

Self-care and advocacy for international educators

This session will help you identify how our bodies and nervous systems thrive when they feel safe, seen, and cared for. You'll learn tools for bringing more awareness to your day, as well as techniques for grounding, relaxation, and regulation. If you have access to massage or therapy balls, keep them with you for the session. Otherwise, anything that resembles a tennis ball will do!

Benjamin Doxtdator

Indigenous Representation in International Education

In this session, we will have a discussion about what Indigenous representation looks like in our curriculum and why it matters. Beyond curriculum, we will explore what meaning 'international citizen' has amid struggles for the return of land to Indigenous peoples and what it would mean to 'decolonize' education to the extent that is possible in international schools.

Estelle Hughes

Diversity and culture: the tensions between visible diversity and culturally inclusive diversity in teacher recruitment

In this session a paper written on Africans in international education in order to start a discussion on blackness vs African-ness will be shared. This dichotomy will help us reflect on how essentialization reinforces tokenism while critical reflection on culture and identity paves the way to meaningful approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dr. Mariana Castro and Christina Nelson

Taking Action: Advancing Social Justice Through the Transformation of International Schools

What does social justice work look like in international schools? For many educators, the answer to this question can be elusive or even daunting. One place to start this discussion is through a critical reflection of the ways in which a school is staffed, organized and led. Participants will engage in critical reflection of the current systems in their schools and on the impact these systems have in the education of multilingual learners. Through personal stories and reflection, participants will use tools to help them identify and plan for actions that advance a social justice agenda in their schools. If you are ready for acting and taking your social justice work to the next level, join us to problem-solve together and re-imagine socially-just international learning spaces.

Dr. Vijay Ramjattan

Race and the Sound of Teachers' Work

Using the concept of aesthetic labour, which is partly defined as the work of “sounding right,” this presentation explores how race informs and structures the defining of a teacher voice, with particular regard to a teacher accent. This will be first seen in the English language teaching (ELT) industry, where sounding right for the job entails being a “native English speaker.” Because nativeness in English is closely associated with embodied whiteness, racialized teachers, even when they “sound native,” find it difficult to project a qualified teacher voice in terms of finding employment and/or their daily teaching practices. The second part of the presentation draws on the experiences of international teaching assistants (ITAs) to detail how a teacher voice involves managing perceptions of race. ITAs, who must deal with undergraduate student critiques of their “foreign-sounding” accents, may find that the best way to sound right for their academic labour is to distance from/further align with their racial categorization in society, which plays a major role in how their accents are perceived in the first place.

To conclude, the presentation argues that changing the sonic demands of teaching requires changing and dismantling the ideological and institutional processes that create these demands.



Shewa Dedeke

Testify for Healing: Self-Healing in the Age of the 21st Century

Shewa Dedeke's work closely examines the emotional impact of racism in the 21st century and how media affects the self-image of Black people. Dedeke will speak on the effects of 'Othering' and ways to self-heal from said effects.

Hedreich Nichols

Calling In Not Out

In this session, designed to inspire and inform, educators and leaders will be led through a series of do-this-not-that strategies designed to equip us to help non-POCs move from diversity to equitable inclusion.

Strategies will be discussed for:

- Framing uncomfortable conversations
- Reducing to the common denominator
- Including data and research
- When to walk away

Each of these strategies has its best practice use. Cues and clues for discerning the best strategy for different situations will also be discussed.