

## Episode 7

Omar (Host): Welcome everyone to Episode #7 of the HEART podcast, everyone. In today's episode we focus on Intergroup Dialogue and Antiracist Teaching. Specifically, our guests will be guiding us through their process of how they help facilitate conversations between members of various social identity groups in an effort to create new levels of understanding, relating, and ultimately loving one another. Join us as we delve deeper into these themes and hear about how our guests integrate their knowledge in the classroom.

Omar (Host): We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the territory of the Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Nipmuc, and Lenape Peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

Milagros (Host): Thank you Omar. Joining us today is Danielle DeRosa who is a Clinical Instructor in the Sport Management Program at the University of Connecticut. In her role, Danielle oversees the instruction of the experiential learning of undergraduate students in sport management. She also co-teaches with me the only graduate-level intergroup dialogue course at UConn. It is a course that focuses on race and is offered in the higher education and student affairs program in the department of educational leadership.

Milagros (Host): Also joining us is Dr. Rani Varghese who is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work at Adelphi University. With a background in social work, social justice education and women, gender & sexuality studies, Rani brings an interdisciplinary and intersectionality approach to her teaching and research. She also teaches intergroup dialogue at Adelphi University.

Milagros (Host): With us also today is Dr. Wilson Okello who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. His research focuses on Black feminisms in education, anti-blackness in educational contexts, and anti-deficit curriculum and pedagogy, which we will hear more about throughout the episode.

Milagros (Host): Alright everyone, We hope you are excited to learn from them as we are. Let's get started! Danielle, Rani, and Wilson, thank you again for being here with us today. All of you are involved in research or teaching, or both with respect to Intergroup Dialogue, which is often referred to as IGD. From your perspective, what is IGD? And, what does it entail in terms of teaching? How does antiracist teaching show up in your IGD teaching? Danielle, would you be willing to get us started on our conversation today?

Danielle (Guest): Yeah, of course. Thanks. So much for having me so I teach Intergroup Dialogue as you had just said, in a spoiler alert for those in the call Milagros and I actually co-teach and intergroup dialogue. Of course, I'll refer to that I'm sure throughout this episode, but in our course we center race as a social identity so really it gives the opportunity for students to experience dialogue across racial

identities and we do that throughout an entire semester leading them through 4 phases in which they get to get to know each other. They have the opportunity to learn a bit more about historical context. We get to dialogue around contentious issues. And then we have the opportunity to think about what the path forward is for the students in terms of alliance building, or being an accomplice to each other. And really, we've started to see, as a shared responsibility, that we have to each other and students have really come to understand that. When I think about anti racist teaching and the connection between Intergroup Dialogue and anti racist teaching I think that there's a lot of underlying fundamental values that I bring to the classroom as someone who's facilitating dialogue and I also think about when I'm thinking about antiracist teaching so some of those things would be to have this essence of love and humility and humankind.

Danielle (Guest): Two years ago we had the opportunity to bring in [Paulo Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#), sorry I blink for a second, I couldn't read it and he really helps us to think about this idea of profound love and kind of faith in each other and in humankind and how that can drive us and dialogue to be hopeful. And we've really been thinking about that over the past years and the reason that I'm connecting it to antiracist teaching, Milagros, you helped us to understand or to think a few minutes ago about how sometimes anti versus teaching or anti racist work can be looked at kind of being in opposition to and pushing against something and I absolutely think that and I think that's part of the way that I orient myself to antiracist teaching. But I also think that love as part of that too. So, rather than fighting against the opening of someone's heart and just really being and acknowledging, humility and humanity and what happens when we're able to do that and that's extremely vulnerable. And I think takes a lot of trust. But I think can be really transformative. If 1, myself as an educator can commit to that, and two, I can also cultivate along with whoever I'm facilitating with classroom space that enables that for our students too.

Milagros (Host): Yeah, that's really powerful because love is something that. In, from my perspective, is central to antiracist work. But often the taboo work, or maybe even idea when it comes about thinking about the academy. And what learning really means. So I'm curious, Rani, would you be able to chime in and share? What are your thoughts about IDG and how it connects to antiracist teaching and maybe even your thoughts on this idea of "love" being central to that?

Rani (Guest): I mean, I don't know if it's helpful to, you know, I don't know, previously in your podcast have we explained what IDG is? So, you know,, I think it's always important to name what Intergroup Dialogue is. So, it's an evidence based model that first came out of the University of Michigan that brings people together of either different identity groups, so intergroup dialogue, or similar identities intergroup dialogue to have conversations that folks may not have or have the opportunity to have around social justice issues using a particular curriculum, many intergroup, their Intergroup Dialog programs, across the country, Intergroup Dialogue courses, across the country, and across the globe. And as Danielle said, it's a four-part model, four-part model for stages. First is like, understanding yourself, helping building a container for dialogue of building a community. Second, understand yourself in terms of your identities. The third, is to dialogue about hot topics and the fourth is to take action. And so, for me, part of building that intentional community or building that community with love is really looking at the building blocks of dialogue, which is around deep listening.

Rani (Guest): So one of the pieces of research I was involved in, in looking at Intergroup Dialogue was part of originally part of that 99 college study, looking at the impact of dialogue. And a lot of times, we think about dialogue, we really focus on voicing, but our work was really looking at the power of deep listening. And so, I think again, if we think about what love embodies, I think it's deep listening, having respect, holding judgments or biases, being reflective, and engaging inquiry and learning how to use your voice in thoughtful and productive ways. And so, for me, the building blocks of dialogue really embody what sort of we're saying. Is love and I think part of what is powerful for me about intergroup dialogue is. The use of self and again, use yourself as a term that I use in social work, particularly clinical social work, but for me, you know, many diversity and equity courses, center content, and I think process is part of it in terms of processing the content. But I think with IDG they center both the process and the content. So that you are intentional, like, you engage the content there process. You're intentional about how you set up the course, it forces you to slow down the process in ways that are very different. Um, then other courses, sometimes I didn't coin this, but a student in one of my classes once used the word like **Social Justice Cruise Control** and I, and I was thinking, like, when you're driving and you just like, you're just the car is going. And so for me with IDG it forces me to sit up and be engaged in a very different way. Um, so I'll stop there. I mean, I can talk more about, like, race and IDG, but I'll hand it off because someone else.

Wilson (Guest): Powerful powerful offerings and so thank you Rani for that the reflection and really this merging of process and content, and really walking us through the steps. Danielle I was struck just by your, this infusion of love and so I wasn't prepared to go here at this particular point, but I'm glad that you took us there because I agree with you, I think that love is oftentimes, uh, read as not only taboo, but often times we view it as sort of this romantic or so we only think about it and sort of the romantic sphere if you will, right? And so what does it mean to really sort of take up love as a critical practice right? So how might we begin to love? In my work, I'm trying to think about what it means to essentially love blackness in particular, right? And so what does it look like to affirm a bodily presence, a spiritual presence? A mental, emotional, spiritual, spatial, sort of being in this world that is mediated by history in full and effective ways, right? And so I'm thinking about [Beloved: Baby Suggs](#), Toni Morrison takes us here and she talks about this space in a clearing, in particular, and she said Baby Suggs was inviting us into sort of this collective love response. And I almost see that as a form of dialogue, right? The call and response that was enacted, in that particular moment is inviting a communal love practice, she's saying, love your flesh, love it hard, right?

Wilson (Guest): She's inviting us to say that in a world where you're going to move beyond this place where they don't love you. We have to think about what it means for us to intentionally ,to not only, sort of care for ourselves, but to love ourselves in some really powerful ways. And so, I think about IDG at its best as a communal practice of seeing right of feeling, and of doing on behalf of one another, right? It's the belief that individuals hold the capacity to make decisions about their lives and their communities, right? because oftentimes, as I think, as educators who are equipped with particular knowledge and training, we believe even if we say we don't sometimes, right, that we have the answer. Or we can steer individuals in directions that allow them move them towards solutions about their communities and about

their lives, right? I think IDG at its best, right, allows for individuals to take ownership, right? Or return power to individuals to make decisions about what their lives and be, what they ought to be. It's a belief that they have been doing the work. Um, negotiate the problems that are present their lives and so I'm thinking about, you know, again IDG at its best a face of representation. I'm thinking about it as a space of embodiment, of bringing the body to bear in the classroom, I'll probably talk about this a little bit more as I go throughout, but it really sort of hones in on my commitments to Black Feminist practice. And so I'll pause there and. Just kind of invite others into the conversation, but that's sort of where I was going. Uh, what I'm thinking about when I hear this notion of love and IDG at its best. I had something to build off that.

Danielle (Guest): So part of the question, I realized, after you asked it, Milagros, was this idea of what does entail in terms of teaching? And I think we all touched on it a bit but actually, Wilson, when you were just talking about this idea of a communal practice and seeing, feeling, doing, disrupting, this idea that. You know, a teacher has the answer and everyone is there to learn the answer from the teacher. Rani, you mentioned this as well. One thing that we've done in our class through the years, is that this notion of unclassing the class, because I think all of these things that we all just mentioned as part of our practice are really counterintuitive to the ways in which many of us are taught to see education or our place as educators, and our student's place as students. So, for us in our classroom, that looks like a lot of things. But when I was thinking about unclassing the class for some reason, I just thought about, I have two kids and when my son was in kindergarten, I would try to go into his classroom every so often. And I remember at first, it just being this place that was awesome. Like, I instantly loved it and I think, as I reflect back, the thing that I loved the most about it was that it was playful. It was fun. It was unexpected. It was kind of like all the things that I felt like, I had lost through my time in education, but then, in there, just being there with the kids was amazing and then thinking about our classroom that we've created.

Danielle (Guest): It's like, what happens in the educational process, and that we lose these characteristics. And then how do we recapture them back? So, some of the things that we have done is invite food into the classroom. Like, we have one class where we literally set it up to look like a kitchen and we put tablecloth on the tables. We have flowers, we have food, and we just use that as a communal space to connect with each other. So, I don't know if anyone else has experiences or unclassing the class is something that you all have done?

Rani (Guest): Yeah, I mean, I think for me IDG is described as sort of you know, this model, right? This model that you have the curriculum for. But I think IDG as a principle or practice is something I use in all my classes. Like, I do teach an Intergroup Dialogue course where I introduce undergrad students to IDG, give them the opportunity to participate in the IDG dialogue around a range of isms and then I give them a chance to co-facilitate and I move out of the classroom and allow them to, you know, facilitate a conversation with their peers around the things that which I think, um, Wilson, you mentioned about things that are important, that matter to them and their community across a range of identities.

Rani (Guest): And because most co-teach, or at least most co-teaching models, at least in my institution are not compensated, right? Like, most of these courses are usually co-taught. Um, I have to draw on

friends and family in the community so talking about love, come to my class, because they love IDG. They love me. They love working with students and co-facilitate this, these range of hot topics and so I think that is really important and yes, I think I say to students at first I was like, this seems like, you know, should I say this? I said, I will change your life and I have found, I was like, okay, I'm going to lean into it. It has changed. It changed my life.

Rani (Guest): I think it's changed the lives of students, because not only are they using these skills of dialogging in the classroom? It's, they're using it with their partners with their families. And I think some of that work is critical. It's again, like, oppression can gut you in this way and it allows them to feel hopeful and look at it from again, like, not antiracial justice looking, framing it from a place of liberation. And so, and again, I use it. And in faculty meetings, I mean, like, I try to embody this and it's hard work and I think you named it earlier. I wrote down "hard and head" connection and, you know, um, folks, I think one of the other podcast members talked about, like, "hard work because it's heart work" and I really see that. Um. So, yes, and I bring in food to all my classes, although this semester, it's been, you know, this year has been really hard of how you think of IDG, this interpersonal, face-to-face practice and do it on Zoom. So, you know, I've, I've been creative, I'm bringing in music. I'm trying to recreate and transform this online space in ways that are meaningful and allows connection because they're so disconnected, um, in this online world right now.

Wilson (Guest): I really appreciate those points. Danielle, I'm thinking about what you put forth as this idea of unclassing the classroom, I think is really important. So, I'm thinking about it in conversation with the assumption of un-schooling, that sort of takes place and I want to. And what I hear in that is this notion of, um, inviting a sort of self-directed type of learning, right? So how might we not only think about what it means to be facilitators, but invite individuals to chart the direction of their learning, right? And so I. Yeah, yeah, so I, so I appreciate that notion right? And I think there's the belief that individuals again have the capacity to make decisions about their own lives and what matters to their communities. So, there was another thought I had as it was. Oh, I was thinking about this structure Rani was mentioning about. IGD and inventory potential and so I, you know, I, I think I saw I've mentioned this in my first sort of comments, but I think it. At its best has the potential to do these things, but I've been trying to meditate on what white institutions do to liberatory pedagogies, right, and critical theories. And I think if we're not careful, I wonder how IGD can get swept up and sort of the mechanics, the sort of dispassionate the polite white supremacy that some exchange, or some discourse favors in White institutions and so I say the best I think is rooted in diverse cultural practices, right?

Wilson (Guest): I think, it was and existed long before we sort of thought about what it might look like within the institution. And so how might we return to that, in and through cultural modes right? And so, where food is one of them, right, you talked about music, Rani. I think about art, right? I think about the body and dance. I think about other opportunities to engage in sort of these dynamic cultural practices. Hip hop, for example. frees individuals up to express and be, and write poetry to do all the things. Or to locate knowledge in a different place, than in this sort of traditional, linguistic, verbal, verbal exchange that I think IGD can sometimes favor. And so I wanted to offer that as well.

Milagros (Host): That's just okay you all I just are having me go to all these happy places in my head, and I can't even keep up with my own excitement as I'm listening to you all because I'm just like, oh, yeah that and that too. Yes. And but I want to connect to two things that I just heard with you mentioning the multi-modal learning that's possible when IDG is at its best, you know, like, it really does allow for there to be the unschooling, the unclassing the class.

Milagros (Host): I think that that's really powerful, because it's a disruption. So, what you were saying happens to IGD when it gets kind of co-opted but when it's at its best, it's actually the opposite of whatever is traditional teaching and learning. So, you know, when it's been co-optimative, when it goes to smooth into the scenario, and I think even with students still, because students can even have some kind of like "wait, what's happening here, a graduate course program," or whatever it might be that disruption isn't, isn't the experience for everybody, and if it's not shaking up how we're learning and what we're learning that it isn't actually Intergroup Dialogue in its full form. And but I also want to go back to something, Danielle, you said earlier about unclassing the class and, you know, even those different approaches, whether it's turning the classroom into a kitchen, or going out on a field trip and doing classrooms in in different spaces like, outside of a real classroom, just making different spaces or learning space or whatever that might be something that strikes, or at least what I'm hearing is that students can learn in their full humanity and that that might spark joy in learning that I think Rani, you were seeing, like, there's a way in which oppression I think colonial and white supremacist learning guts, particularly for Black and Indigenous, and other students, guts the soul out of them along way and IGD is, in a way, I never thought about this. I like, you ought to check me when you're taking them the wrong direction. But I'm hearing you all and it's making me think, is it like a restorative practice? Because when we're restoring, and I don't mean, we started the practice, like the framework. I'm saying is it restoring what's possible when you teach with a full humanity at the center of a teaching? I don't know those are some thoughts that came to my mind and I'm curious what you all think?

Danielle (Guest): You're making me think so we do a final project and Rani had mentioned the framework before. So, as part of the IGD framework, there was a final project called the ICP Intergroup Collaboratory Project, and that looks different for every class and the way that the instructors decide to teach it. But for us, what it has looked like over the years. I guess what's fundamental is that you're bringing students, so, in our case, because we teach about race across racial identity together to work on a project together, and for our class, it's been a gallery walk and they have to create something visual that's tied to art. So, Milagros you just made me think about this idea of restoring some of this process for students and this project sticks out for me because it's always a struggle for some students, and we get a lot of pushback and thinking about how are we going to express ourselves in these ways? There's questions about the syllabus. I mean, sorry about the rubrics and how we're going to grade it and. But then there's always a small group of students who just flourish in this project, and they are so creative and it's so fun to watch them.

Danielle (Guest): And it just, I think it's this moment where I'm wondering, you know, it kind of makes all of the tedious, detailed questions about the rubric and when it's due, and how will it be submitted, totally fine

because I get to see this subset of students who are just loving this process and I can't imagine that they're asked to express their learning in this way really often and it's very powerful.

Wilson (Guest): That's a really powerful point and example, you know, I'm thinking about. Um, so many of the classes I've taught over time and the number of what I'll say. Black students, but I think broadly Black, Indigenous, People of Color who were aligned in front of my classroom and in some of the introductory classes, for example, um, and I think it's partially because of this sort of ways they've been taught or trained to, um, if I'm not seen in this sort of sort of white space, how do I ensure that the, the faculty member processes me, right? And so. When we think about what it means to decenter, not only decenter whiteness, but for me, again center something else center blackness. It, it means sort of working from an inverted space that says I'm not working up to the idea that something like racism or anti blackness exists, but that's the beginning place. Right? That's the fundamental starting place we begin and everyone else has an opportunity to then.

Wilson (Guest): Or I should say it centers the experiences of folks who might be at the front of the classroom, but often times for most of their schooling have not. I have had to sort of, um, participate in learning environments where I think whiteness was centered in a way that said, let's be patient with our those who don't have a firm understanding or who have a limited experience and let's let's be patient with them and allow them to sort of have free reign in the classroom and so I mentioned that to Daniel's point to say that I think something happens when we center a different cultural practice in the classroom that allows individuals to move to feel to, to express themselves differently. And I wonder what it looks like as. Um, a, um. I wonder what that could look like, um, as just a general way of being, right? So how do we invite individuals to rehearse a different way of being in the classroom and I think, as we center differently because of some of the practices within IGD I think we invite individuals into a different type of freedom moving forward. Right? Because they've been trained throughout the educational experience to say, this is how the classroom is going to go, but when you invite them into a different way of being, I think it allows them to begin to imagine different possibilities of being yourself. So, I agree with you and the practice that you're talking about sounds really important.

Rani (Guest): I mean, I think for me, I was going back to unclassing the class, I think, because my doctoral training is in social justice education. I felt like my doctoral training was all about unclassing the class and IGD was one vehicle or approach to doing this, right? And I think for me the ways in which we shift power or shift experiences for you know, I will just use myself because use the self is important. So, as a South Asian woman who embodies this brown body, and as somebody who grew up in Ohio, in Cincinnati, the "Nasty Natty," as we call it to give it a little flavor, you know, I learned about anti-Black racism as I was learning about anti-Asian racism being in a black and white. Community at the University of Cincinnati, and in this rap program, but it was also important to me in my social justice training to really understand the ways in which I had privilege. And so, for me, when I co-teach IGD with my students, I bring in my former students who took class with me, or current students, and I talk about my privilege around disability and they become, they get centered in a different way.

Rani (Guest): So, I think it's important to think about, or someone who is a personal color who has privilege around sexuality so I, I think for me, I think part of this conversation is about like, anti-racism and intersectionality and so, um, or racial justice and intersectionality. And, and I think when you talked about it, like, for me, I. I've been trained in social justice ad, like my homes are Social Justice Ed and Women/Gender Sexuality. Like, I've been trained I've been deeply influenced by Black feminists, so I can't teach in any other way, but through this intersectional lens, right I think about like [Elsa Barkley Brown](#), who talk about women, not having the same gender because the context of being women is really rooted in race, place, and time. And so, for me. It's IGD also gives you an opportunity for students to position themselves and think about how they hold multiple identities. So, my experiences of being a South Asian woman is rooted in my gender and my class and my sexuality and my ability and my nationality and my language. And so I can't disentangle those. I don't I don't know how to do it. How to do it? And I think it's important to hold up and unpack, go in and deep but to hold these, these different identities and the interlocking system at the same time.

Wilson (Guest): Yeah, I'm thinking about your question, Milagros, and so, in terms of what is restored and. So, I think about it as a political activity, right? And so how might we envision the classroom and our pedagogies, to Rani's point, as a political activity and when we do that, I think there's always something at stake in what we do and what we teach.

Wilson (Guest): Well, what we decide not to teach or not do in the classroom and so, I just yeah, I appreciate the notion that we're complicating identity and for me, and given my sort of commitments as well I think about it yeah, this very much as a political activity that we're engaged in and. I don't know what, maybe I trouble the notion of restore since we've been in the pandemic and folks talk about getting back to this notion of a norm. But for me, I'm trying to think about what does it mean to imagine a new world altogether? And I think those are the sorts of things that I think our students are yearning for. It's not just sort of a return to or a restoration of, but imagining what could be or is yet to be.

Milagros (Host): I love that because you're right like a restore assumes a place that was good before, nourishing before, but when I think of restore, I think about a lot of my scholarship focuses on an asset-based view on what student already know given their own racial cultural identities, and the communities that they come from. We often think that they, you never meet when I see me, I'm seeing in higher education. There's like this perspective that they, you know, they come into your classroom and you just dump all this new knowledge in there. But, you know.

Milagros (Host): So, when I think restoring is kind of like, what do we need to get out of the way so that you could be who you were always capable of being but that we probably messed up and destroyed or somehow limited or thorted with all these other restrictions about what was possible. So, I like that combination about also looking forward so even things we haven't even imagined is possible yet. Or even as something that we could collectively create together, which is really powerful to think about the collective imagination about what's possible. I'm curious to hear, Wilson and Danielle, intersectionality is something you also feel like, somehow gets, how does that inform your teaching if at all? I'm curious giving you know, given what Rani was saying about, there is no other way that she can teach and I really



appreciate, Rani, the way you entered that into the conversation and how much of it is just like your path, your work, your commitment, your training but also who you are, which curious what others think.

Danielle (Guest): Yeah, I would say for myself, thinking about, you know, I identify as a white woman. So thinking about the way in which race and gender, and then identities, such as sexuality, being able bodied. My socioeconomic status, how have those things come together to create who I am, how I experience the world and how the world experiences me? In thinking about that in life form.

Danielle (Guest): And then also, I think, when I was thinking about this question, prior to the podcast, I was also thinking about, in our Intergroup Dialogue class, we, we do Intragroup Dialogue so we'll have students engage in smaller group dialogs, based on their racial identity, and that's complicated in of itself. And the ways in which we do it is that students who identify as white, the students self identify for the purpose of when we engage in intragroup. We'll engage in dialogues with me and those students identify students of colors with Milagros. We have a teaching assistant this year named Truth and this year we did it or there was even separate readings for those students to think about the racial identity a bit more. So, when I'm thinking about intersectionality, I'm both acknowledging that kind of like, the culmination of who we are as people informs what we do informs how we interact with the world. Like I said before. But also, there is this interest. I have noticed, including myself among people who identify as white to want to talk about other identities outside of race. So it's kind of holding intention with. How do we allow for this?

Danielle (Guest): You know, whole person to be in the space and also for me, as a white woman facilitating, when I'm an Intragroup Dialogue with the white students, how do I allow for people to bring the nuance complexity of who they are but also hold them accountable for talking about race and a really straightforward way, because I think that that is disruptive and needs and needs to be done, right? As we're naming white supremacy and so we need to name whiteness and we have to own whiteness and the ways that it shows up and I do that for myself. I encourage my students to do that. So, I'm just thinking about that, as we also talk about intersectionality, because it's a fine balance. I think.

Rani (Guest): I mean, for me, I was going to say, you know, for me, intersectionalities the relational nature of difference and similarities. So I would say, you know, Danielle, you live the life you live because right because, well. It's intersectionality, is not just embodied in our body. It's the relational nature of difference and similarity.

Rani (Guest): And so, for me, you can't, it's not like you throw race out but, like, you know. A South Asian woman, you know, and again, I don't know how you all identify you named being a white woman. Wilson, I don't know how you identify your, you know, race and gender, but to me, this is the conversation. Like, it's not just. You know, it's because IGD is relational. It's about the intergroup, intragroup, experience as folks of color. My South Asianness and how South Asians live next to, in relationship to blackness I can't not talk about blackness when I talk about Asian this or South Asian is so I think it's, I think, to me, it's hard. Hard not to do it.

Wilson (Guest): Agreed. So, thinking about thinking about this notion of so so. To your question, Milagros, I think about power, as I think about intersectionality that's and I think about, to Rani's point, how do we exist in relationship to others and the world around us and so so. If we are particularly. It shows up in the sorts of questions and. Um, that I ask, right and so trying to sort of complicate the sort of single issue as I do, I might say, or the, the, the simplified sort of, um. Um, sort of overlay of an issue and trying to sort of think about what intersectional, intersectionality causes us to think about, which is sort of this compounding nature of impressions and how that affects individuals differently. Right?

Wilson (Guest): And so, for example, I began each class period with a what's going in the news, right? And so we think about an issue, a headline. And but we think about that, that sort of issue in relationship to individuals who might encounter those things, and how they might encounter it differently. So me, as a Black, Cis, man, I will certainly perhaps experience this differently than than a Black woman. Right? And how does our sort of ways of being historically come to bear on how I'm seeing and interpreted right? How are the ways in which society views and what's projected onto black women impact how they're going to be sort of seen and read right? And so these are these things that I hope to complicate, even if we're not naming intersectionality. Intersectionality explicitly, but hoping that's really driving the compounding nature of impressions and how individual lives are affected differently.

Wilson (Guest): And so, for me, this is part definition work as well because I think sectionality is probably one of the one of those, those ideas that is oftentimes underdefined and oftentimes misappropriated and just. Yeah, so to the point that the originator of those who sort of wrote initially about it to the point that it's almost unrecognizable, right? And we talked about it as multiple identities, for example, and we sort of just leave it there. And so that's why I sort of want to harken back to the assumption of power and the compounding nature of it because if we're not clear, right about what this is, what the, what, the term right? And really what is more than even a term. But what the, the force, and the thrust of the idea is calling on us to do that I think we minimize potential effect in our class.

Rani (Guest): I would say, Milagros, you mentioned IGD being co-opted intersectionality has been co-opt and I think [Jennifer Nash's book \*Black Feminism Reimagined\*](#) really gets it. I mean, I've heard her speak. I mean, she's really getting at. You know, taking the origin, and, you know, whether it's a, you know, it's a concept theory methodology however, we want to frame it, but that's been co-opted and it's been packaged in this way. That's in some ways unrecognizable.

Milagros (Host): Right, I know, for sure. And I think that's what I was really excited about this conversation because IGD, even if you don't, those four kind of stages of IGD, even if you don't use the word intersectionality, gets at it, because it is exposure to thinking about the systems and structures. And then thinking about that and connection to self and then thinking about that and connection to others and it's like, this is this intertwining between the self others and systems and how they're operating. And I feel like that to me is the conversation that can maybe make learning around intersectionality possible, because it is a fusion of systems and structures with self and community and that infusion is built into the phases to the structure or rather. So I feel like it's a potentially like, I like what Wilson says, "at its best" IGD is a really powerful way to maybe make that learning palpable in the classroom, so.

Omar (Host): First of all thank you all so much for sharing such a multi dimensional perspective of IGD. To be honest, wasn't not too familiar with it prior to this episode. So thank you all for enlightening me. Um, and, you know, Wilson, you mentioned something that really that really struck me as we're slowly, knock on wood, looking to return to spaces now, physical spaces now that, you know, COVID-19 is, uh, at least in the United States, it's, calming and you mentioned Wilson how how can we re-imagine a new world altogether coming back to and well, not not a world that we once knew, which was not great to begin with. Yet, there are these notions in rhetoric that it once was. And I don't think I definitely don't think you're alone on that one and I'm just, I'm just wondering how. I'm beginning to visualize how IGD can be used as a conduit as a very healthy and loving conduit to dismantle systems of oppression. And I'm wondering for our audience. That are in different spaces, whether, whether we're talking about scholars, whether we're talking about activists, students, and just human beings in general, I'm curious to know what's one piece of advice that each of you could offer to our audience on enacting antiracist teaching with a focus on intersectionality and perhaps in consideration of teaching IGD.

Rani (Guest): I feel like deep listening, right? Listening with your eyes, your head, your heart. Your ear, it's like that kind of deep listening perspective taking for me in terms of thinking about faculty, like, honoring my disciplinary training, but utilizing other disciplines to help you think about your teaching for social justice and particularly racial justice and also part of the issue with I think academia are the challenges is most faculty I meet, have been trained in their disciplines. They haven't been trained how to teach and their discipline, so they haven't even been trained how to teach. So, you know, getting them to make what's invisible visible? What theories? What values? What scholars undergird your teaching? Like, what what is driving, how you show up in the classroom, how you set up the classroom who you call on how you shape your assignments and so I think for me, that's a start just getting them to interrogate. How, and what they teach and then teaching them some skills around IGD just around deep listening, locating positionality, speaking of political when I ask faculty in DEI trainings to locate themselves. They, it's, it's, like, blows their mind.

Rani (Guest): They haven't even thought about who they are. As, as, as folks who are located. In systems, or systems of identity and so, um, those are some of those places and do it in community. Like, I, I'm like. When I come and meet folks, I'm like, let's write together. Let's lets, you know, let's come together and, you know, add to this community dialogue. So those are the things that came to mind.

Wilson (Guest): So, Omar as I'm thinking about your question about how do we begin to imagine differently I think we, I think it begins with our first asking ourselves some type of question. What type of what do we want? Right? And that's where I think we ask that question, we can begin to sort of see how our practice is by pedagogy our general ways of being, I think, create these all sorts of regimes right? Organized sort of ways. Um, that we, and expectations around what we, what we believe should happen in the classroom right? And so they lean into objectivity, they lean into the new child, they lean into some of these perhaps destructive forces that really don't invite this sort of [Freedom Dreaming as Robin Kelley](#) might say, that I think it's possible when we participate in an IGD sort of practice and so. What is the sound, look, and feel of this sort of New World? Right?

Wilson (Guest): And how might we invite individuals to consider. Um, what, um, um. That there are multiple worlds and have the capacity to do this type of dreaming. So I'm also wondering, I think, in order for folks to begin to live that out, they need to have places where they can practice it and to rehearse it. Right? And so, I think about the classroom as a site of rehearsal, more than anything is we can't expect the sort of dialogic, practice, outside in our meeting spaces, in corporate spaces, or anywhere else. If we haven't sort of invited individuals to literally rehearse what it looks and feels like to participate in this sort of work in the classroom and so think about so invite individuals to consider what type of world they want and again to rehearse those very things as the political project of the classroom.

Danielle (Guest): Yeah, I love those ideas that you both shared. Was thinking about is so Rani, you had mentioned community. I was just thinking about relationships tonight. I don't think that it's far off. Uh, from perhaps what you mentioned, when you were talking about community, may be a bit different, but just finding people to invest in this work with and to invest in relationships with. And I had the idea of the classroom as a rehearsal, but it's making me think about, Omar, when you first asked the question about going back or, you know, I forget how you initially framed it. But the thing that I immediately thought about was time, because I think in slowing time down, because I think that. There's this desire to kind of, like, jump back into things sometimes, without the acknowledgement that that thing that we're jumping back into, perhaps wasn't great or maybe if it was great for us, it wasn't great for everyone. So slowing down, kind of like the systems that be that force us to move at this pace that isn't sustainable for ourselves that isn't sustainable for others and to really slow that down to see then what is possible.

Danielle (Guest): I remember when the pandemic first hit we would go for hikes I think almost every day, it got us out of the house. Like I said before, I have 2 little kids, and I remember saying to my son, Max, that, if you kind of stand still in nature, there's always something moving all around. You just have to be slow enough to see it, so I just think about what happens when we slow down? What do we see and I'm thinking about Milagros, you and I, when we're teaching the class together. The amount of time that we pour into each other, and that we pour into relationships with our students and if we're not resisting the pace of the university, or the pace of the system, then none of that is possible.

Omar (Host): That is so, so beautiful. Thank you all so much for sharing your perspectives and that's such a beautiful way to end. Wow. I want to be mindful of everybody's time. So I'm. I'm sad that we have to end right now. However, um, I would like to thank all of you. Danielle, Rani, Wilson, thank you so much for joining us today and for unpacking what Intergroup Dialogue is, and how it aligns with antiracist teaching. We really appreciate the complexity you've brought to the conversation moving from embodied knowledge, emotions, such as love joy, as well as a complicated nature of intersectionality and how it can be a lens for antiracist teaching. You've all shared such powerful ideas for us to think about to advance our learning. And we're just so grateful for your work, for your teaching, for your willingness to share what you know with others. And so just, thank you and keep fighting the good fight.

Omar (Host): We would like to thank our guests, Danielle DeRosa, Rani Varghese, and Wilson Okello for bestowing us with their rich perspective and for conveying their continued commitment toward not only sharing love and joy in the classroom but also teaching/passing it on to their students.

Milagros (Host): As always, we are thankful for the support of the Office for Diversity & Inclusion and the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning at the University of Connecticut. "Because it takes a village and it takes heart."

## Items Referenced

- [Paulo Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#)
- [Beloved: Baby Suggs, Toni Morrison](#)
- [Elsa Barkley Brown](#)
- [Jennifer Nash's book \*Black Feminism Reimagined\*](#)
- [Freedom Dreaming as Robin Kelley](#)