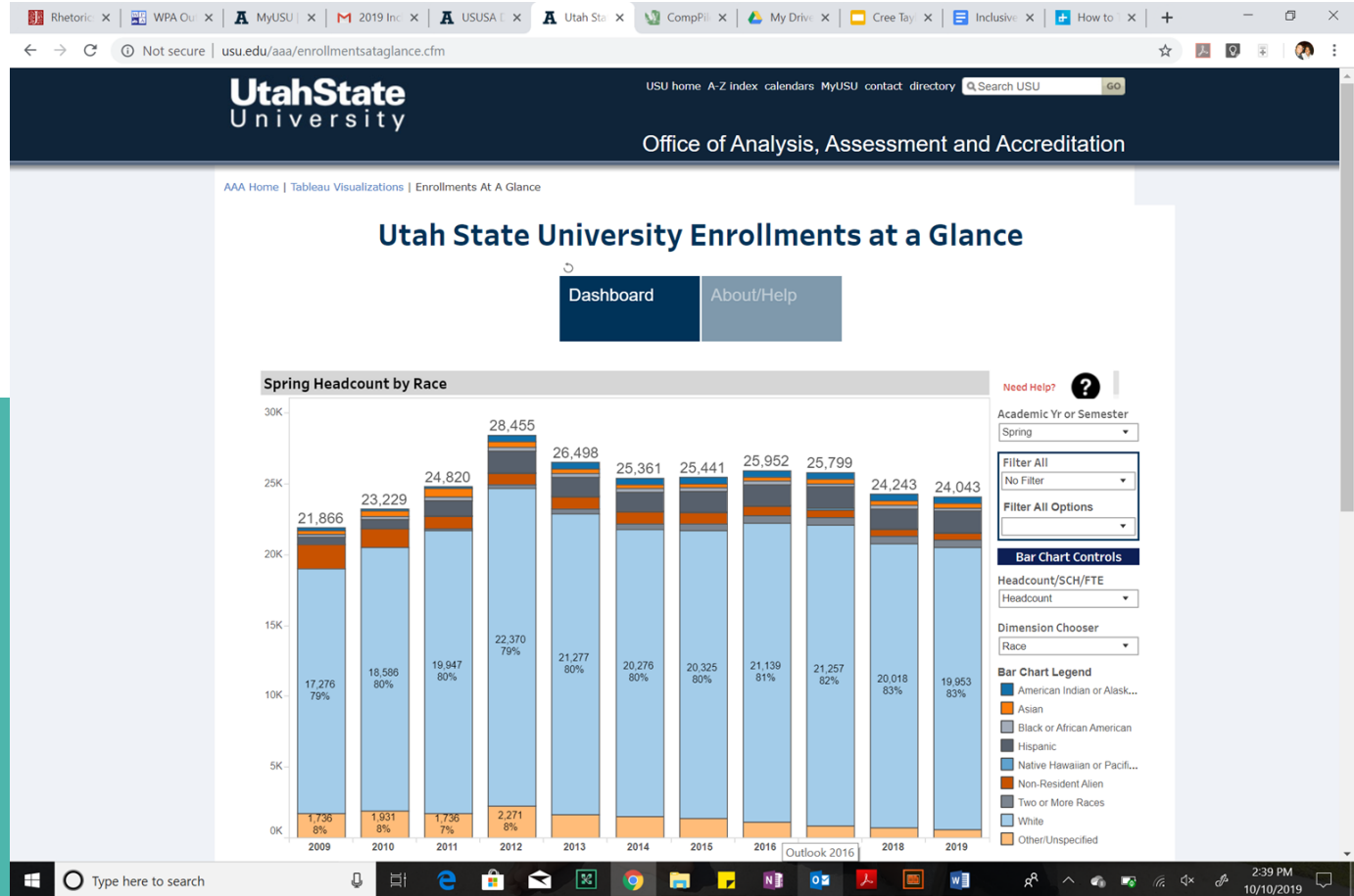

Race Talk in the Classroom

— Why is it important?
What does it look like? —



- ★ Raised in Rigby, Idaho
 - ★ BS English - Education, USU
 - History Education minor
 - Utah State Track & Field
 - ★ MS English - Literature & Writing, USU (May 2020)
 - Graduate Assistant Director of Composition
 - ★ Married, two kids
-

The Numbers



Can you think of a time when you felt valued because of your race or ethnicity while here at USU?

Why is Race Talk important?

“In general, persons of color are more willing to discuss topics of race than their White counterparts. To them, the actual avoidance of race talk...makes them feel silenced and invalidated.”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

“Honest race talk is one of the most powerful means to **dispel stereotypes and biases**, to increase **racial literacy and critical consciousness** about race issues, to **decrease fear of differences**, to **broaden one’s horizons**, to increase **compassion and empathy**, to increase **appreciation** of all colors and cultures, and to **enhance a greater sense of belonging and connectedness.**”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

**If Race Talk is powerful and important,
why is it so taboo?**

“No one is born a racist. Everyone makes a choice. Many of us made the choice in childhood...a white child taught that hurting others is wrong, who then witnesses racial assaults on black people, who questions that and then is told by adults that this hurting is acceptable because of their skin color, then makes a moral choice to collude or to oppose.”

-bell hooks, *Teaching Community*

“The negative reactions of parents, relatives, friends, and peers toward issues of race...begin to convey mixed signals [to children].”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

“Groups where white folks are in the majority often insist that race and racism does not really have much meaning in today’s world because we are all so beyond caring about it...while it is a positive aspect of our culture that folks want to see racism end; paradoxically it is this heartfelt longing that underlies the persistence of the false assumption that racism has ended.”

-bell hooks, *Teaching Community*

What is our role as educators?



When educators adopt colorblind ideology, refusing to acknowledge or discuss issues of race with their students, “they become part of the race talk problem...Instead of teaching children how to address and talk openly and honestly about issues of race, they model behavior similar to their parental counterparts: Race is a taboo topic and should be avoided or ignored.”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

“[Teachers] are in a unique position to teach children and young adults about issues of race, diversity, and multiculturalism. They have the ability to determine the curriculum...to teach about life events... And to facilitate difficult dialogues on race in the classroom when they arise.”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

“Without adequate intervention by enlightened parents and teachers during the pre-K through 12 years, our young will internalize the prejudices of society...multicultural education that has strong antiracist orientation is of utmost importance in helping children to develop a nonracist identity.”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*

What does Race Talk look like in your classroom?



English - Language Arts

- ★ Literature Selection
- ★ Current Events discussion
- ★ Composition Instruction

Now What?

“Just simply focusing on diversity is not enough...we must have conversations about how our campus, our communities can be inclusive, and how we can be respectful of our diversity.”

-President Noelle Cockett, *USU Inclusive Excellence Symposium*, Oct 2019

“Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.”

-Maya Angelou