[A Guide to Coded Language in Education](#) by *Class Trouble* (from the Antiracist Pedagogy Reading [List](#))

Overview
- 84% of full-time college professors are white and 60 percent of those are men; 80% of elementary and high school teachers are white
- White education leaders are constantly inventing new language to hide the impact of white supremacist, ableist, classist, cis-heteronormativist policies on BIPOC students
- Education stakeholders need to shift the focus of education from generating racist outcomes (test scores, college-ready students, etc.) to meeting the "material and socio-emotional needs" of historically exploited students.

Coded Language Relevant to the College Environment (although the entire list is relevant since many college students have encountered the coded terms before entering college)

- **Grit/academic rigor**: asking students to toughen up against an education system that exploits and oppresses them; asking students to risk their mental health to complete assignments on time, attend class, etc.
    - **Questions faculty should ask themselves:**
        - Why am I asking students to complete an assignment on time/come to class prepared/write two essays instead of one, etc.?
            - It is necessary to interrogate the racism, ableism, classism, etc. that informs your reasoning.
        - What is the educational outcome my assignment aims to facilitate, and can I facilitate that outcome in another way that pushes back against white hetero wealthy able-bodied supremacist notions?
            - Offer extensions without judgment or a complex process of approval
            - Support students with research seminars, peer support groups, accessible and well-publicized office hours
            - Make classroom expectations clear

- **Standardized testing:** Tests are standardized to meet the needs of white, able-bodied, wealthy individuals.
    - **Questions faculty should ask themselves:**
        - Who is your test designed for? Is it based on readings from a textbook that not all students are able to access?
        - How will you accommodate students with learning (dis)abilities?
        - Why do you need to use a test? Can a project, paper, etc. replace it and accomplish the same goal?

- **Perfect Attendance**: Students are expected to put aside personal needs, mental health challenges, family obligations, etc. to attend classes.

- ○ **Questions faculty should ask themselves:**
    - ■ How did you come up with the number of days of class students can miss?
    - ■ When mental health challenges or personal obligations arise, are there structures for alternative participation that you can offer students?

- ● **Special Education:** The term identifies neurodiversity in the student population without challenging the ableist structures of education that require these students to be called "special" and segregated from the rest of the student population
    - ○ **Questions faculty should ask themselves:**
        - ■ BMC students have called out the college for its resistance to accommodating neurodiverse students/students with mental health disorders
        - ■ How can professors step up to provide access to the course for all students, which would lessen the need for accommodations?