Strategies to Engage and Sustain the Diverse Classroom

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Pairs

• Turn to the person sitting next to you and share your name and one thing you had to set aside today to be here this morning.

• What do you bring to this discussion?

• What do you hope to take away from this discussion?
Workshop Learning Outcome Goals

• Understand the evidence-based principles of multicultural course design (especially aligning outcome goals, assessment and learning activities)

• Discern how the connections between teaching philosophy / values regarding learning can accelerate or decelerate a welcoming environment in the classroom, and

• Identify discipline-based and course specific improvements to foster inclusive excellence in the classroom.
What Matters Most in College?

Centrality of *relationships*:

- Meaningful relationship with a Faculty member
- Meaningful relationship with other students

## Backwards Course Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome Goals</th>
<th>Evaluation and Assessment</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is most important for students to:</td>
<td>How will students demonstrate their attainment of these goals?</td>
<td>What learning activities will provide the practice and formative feedback students need in order to succeed in the high stakes assignments?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Know?</td>
<td>What summative / high stakes evidence will you seek?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be able to do?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Value / Habits of mind?</td>
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Assessing & Evaluating Progress

- What do you want students to know?
- What do you want students to be able to do?
- What do you want students to value?
Goals – Institutional Level

• Graduates who will:
  • Think and act globally
  • Approach problems with a multi-disciplinary point of view
  • Have a desire to make the world (and not just themselves) better off
  • Create new knowledge from the information presented to them.
Goals – Course Level

• Cultivating a respect for diverse perspectives
• Developing an ability and willingness to work effectively in diverse groups
• Have a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to … {gender, class, race issues}
• Learn to identify and reject narrow / oppositional thinking that reduces issues to only two sides (right/wrong, us/them)
• Learn to stay engaged in intergroup dialogues.
Intercultural Competency

• Ability to discern greater complexity across similarities and differences. Built on:
  – Self-Awareness (experiences, biases, styles)
  – Empathy
  – Tolerance for ambiguity
  – Flexibility in thought and behavior
  – Patience
  – Curiosity
  – Active Listening
3 Domains of Learning

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Kinesthetic

Dynamics of Diversity in Teaching

Dimension 2: Who Are Our Students?

Stand back from the immediate experience of the course and, briefly, describe two things:

• where may students “be coming from” as they enter your course? and,

• How might the ideas, knowledge, skills and values from your course be used in their personal, professional, social, and civic lives after graduation?

Intersectional Approach to Social Identities

• Individual *social identities* are best understood as multiple, embedded in systemic dynamics, and, by nature, interlocking.

Student-centered Teaching Methods

- Small group discussion /"Think-Pair-Share”
- iclickers / Polling
- One-minute papers
- Interactive lecture demonstrations (making predictions)
- Case studies
- Concept mapping
- Tutorial worksheets
- Problem-based learning
- Just-in-time teaching
- Analytical challenge before lecture
- Computer simulations and games
- Group tests / pyramid exams
- Problem sets in groups
- Random calling
- Writing with peer review

Stereotype Threat

• Refers to being at risk of conforming to a negative stereotype about one’s group (racial, gender etc.).

• “Culturally shaped stereotypes suggesting poor performance can, when made salient in a context involving the stereotype, disrupt performance of an individual who identifies with that group” (Steele and Aronson, 1995).

Stereotype Threat in the Classroom

• Physiological effects for student experiencing the negative stereotype:
  – Avoid multiple evaluations (don’t re-do assignments, etc...)
  – Avoid spending time on threatening tasks
  – Have an overall lower willingness to receive critical feedback

• Classroom environments can contribute to stereotype threat:
  – Decorations for a stereotypical audience
  – An imbalance of students of a certain gender or race/ethnicity

• Instructor behaviors can promote stereotype threats:
  – Promoting a gate-keeper mentality
  – Fostering uncertainty when designing assignments or exams
  – Failing to provide accurate feedback to students

Instructors can...

- Individual instructors can diminish or remove the stereotype threat from their courses by:
  - Insure assignments are clear
  - Explicitly state learning goals for students on assignments
  - Explain to struggling students that they are not alone, and that many of their peers struggle in the course (if applicable), too
  - Insure students have accurate, timely feedback, so that they can adjust their study habits
  - Discuss stereotype threat with at risk students can help alleviate some of the stress
Mind Set

• Fixed Mindset – Intelligence is fixed (you only have and will only have a set amount)

• Growth Mindset – Intelligence can be cultivated and developed through focus, practice, and experience.

Implicit Bias

• The way we perceive, judge, and remember is often full of errors. Feeling confident ≠ being accurate
• What we already know affects what we see. Preconceived expectations influence current judgments:
  • Ordinary because they are by-products of normal mental processes (memory, perception, learned associations)
  • Ordinary because all of us are prone to these errors
  • Ordinary because errors are unintentional, occur without awareness or control.

Instructors can...

• Send clear messages to students that intelligence is nurtured with focus, application, and seeking out and utilizing appropriate and accurate feedback. Frame ability required to meet a challenge as learnable and incrementally expandable.

• We all believe we’re fair and unbiased = research shows otherwise – use “blind” grading practices.

• Social Relationship building. Get to know names, 1st day questionnaires, cultivate perception of accessibility.

• Rubrics to make expectations clear and transparent for all, provide a model for your perception of excellence.

• Preface feedback with generally assuring statements.

• DO explain your use of high standards in evaluating work and your belief your student(s) can meet them.
Solutions: How to prevent implicit bias from affecting faculty evaluations of students

1. Whenever possible evaluate students after masking their race, gender, or other group membership (Goldin & Rouse, 2000)

2. Ask evaluators to commit to specific merit criteria and rank order their importance before evaluating student work (Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005).

3. Reduce time pressure and distraction while making evaluative decisions (Bertrand et al., 2005; Martell, 1991; Sczesny & Kuhnen, 2004).

4. For student hiring where interviews are involved, use structured interviews with standardized questions instead of unstructured conversations (Bragger et al., 2002)

5. Use same criteria in all recommendation letters. Emphasize competence more than other qualities. Compare letters for male vs. female students, White vs. minority students to catch unintentional bias

Five Pedagogical Challenges

• Balance cognitive and emotional components of learning processes
• Acknowledge and support the personal, while illuminating the systemic
• Attend to social relations within the setting
• Utilize reflection and experience as tools for developmental learning
• Value and reward awareness, personal growth, and change as outcomes of the learning process

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Inclusive Teaching

• When core content (cognitive) and process (affective) goals are diversity related, effective teachers:
  – Disclose attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors
  – Create a climate of trust and no defensiveness, so that participants can examine and change/grow
  – Provide students with conceptual organizers, models, and frameworks that encourage self-reflection and analysis
  – Design opportunities to try out and practice new patterns of thought and behavior via experimentation, practice, and application.

Next Steps

• What is one concrete strategy or “tip” for teaching inclusively that you may consider implementing after today's session?