The *Just* Classroom: Strategies for Inclusive Learning Environments

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Abstract:
Attendees will consider how teaching choices around equity, diversity, and inclusion marginalize or invite students to engage in the learning process. Attendees will experience low- and high-tech (e.g., virtual reality) strategies and design potential strategies to take with them through rotating experiential stations, reflective dialogues, and idea generating activities.

Outcomes:
• Identify common challenges related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom
• Develop research-based teaching strategies for addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion challenges in the classroom (from teaching content related to and/or attending to diversity in the classroom)

Description:
In this session, attendees will explore and define equity, diversity, and inclusion within a scholarly context for their classrooms. This includes the teaching of challenging content related to inequity within the attendees’ respective disciplines, as well as addressing diversity and inequity in today’s learning environments. Attendees will consider the potential of teaching choices to marginalize or invite students to engage in the learning process. Additionally, the importance of strengths-based cultural approaches will be discussed.

Attendees will have the opportunity to experience the low-tech (e.g., pen and paper reflection) and high-tech (e.g., virtual reality) strategies, share concerns from their own teaching experiences, and design potential strategies to take with them to their own classrooms. This will happen in multiple forms throughout the workshop: rotating experiential stations, reflective dialogues, and idea generating activities.

References:
Perceived Challenges & Suggestions

Challenge 1: Students arrive with varied understandings of cultural context.

Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 2: Students have conflicting world views (from you and each other)

Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 3: Students struggle to understand the value of an inclusive classroom.

Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 4: Faculty comfort level with topics around inclusion.

Suggestions from the room:
Perceived Challenges & Suggestions

Challenge 5: Student comfort levels with topics around inclusion.
*Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 6: Creating a space of trust among the students and the faculty member.
*Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 7: Locating diverse perspectives in the course content.
*Suggestions from the room:
List Your Ideas of Perceived Challenges:

Challenge 8:
Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 9:
Suggestions from the room:

Challenge 10:
Suggestions from the room:
Establishing Just Classrooms

Ways to Encourage Student Buy-In

1. Avoid Assumptions - never guess about others’ social/personal identities or preferred pronouns (better to use they/them/their)
2. Use Inclusive Language - wait for others to self-identify, put people before abilities, show care—not political correctness—through language choices, avoid corrections of language as “right” or “wrong” (use “I” statements to share personal impact), recognize that language is always evolving (from the work of Vernon Wall)
3. Value Community-Building - icebreakers; whole group-, small group-, and pair-shares
4. Talk Less - facilitate learning, recognize student expertise, ask simple questions (e.g., “Tell us more about that.”)
5. Practice Active Listening - attend (SOLER), paraphrase, summarize, clarify
6. Attend to Intent vs. Impact - What is a possible positive intent? Negative impact? What could you do to improve the situation? (e.g., clarify, invite others to chime in, challenge with a credible alternative perspective)
7. Diversify Learning Activities/PoV - round robins, anonymous note cards, caucuses, case studies, experiential activities, simulations, fish bowls, panels, guest lectures
8. Reward Failure/Risk-Taking - recognize students for asking difficult questions/sharing/experimenting with ideas, reward risk-taking within formative/summative assessments

Course Development Worksheet

Beyond The Initial Course Design

Integrated and Active Learning
Are there questions you can ask that require students to pull from other sources of knowledge? How can you move the students from learning to application? Case Studies? Service Learning? How can you make the students “authors of knowledge” and begin moving them to space of scholarly pursuits? How might these activities ask students to think beyond their own experiences with the world? How can your students collaborate with others to gain a more diverse perspective?

Where does this fit in broader curriculum?
Is this course part of General Education? Does this course serve a particular major? What role does this course play in a student’s learning career? What is missing from the broader curriculum that encourages diverse understandings? Are certain narratives and bodies missing from the curriculum? How might you develop your course as a spring board for the next course in the student’s journey? How might this course open dialogue for students regarding diverse ways of knowing?
Course Development Worksheet

Step 5: Assessments and Methods of Teaching
What teaching and learning activities will you use? Do these align with your goals? Do these align with your assessments? How can you include a diverse perspective through the assignments you use? Will all of your students see themselves in the readings, assignments, and activities?

Establishing Just Classrooms

Ways to Encourage Student Buy-In

9. **Use Current, Real-Life Examples** - update examples to reflect current events/trending issues, use case studies/simulations, take learning outside of the classroom/bring guests to class

10. **Cite Personal Stories** - self-disclose as appropriate, model vulnerability/risk-taking

11. **Give Students Choice** - co-create the course syllabus, develop assessment rubrics that allow for student choice in projects/presentations/papers

12. **Moderate Reflective Activities** - interactive journals/notebooks/online posts

How Do You Create Student Buy-In:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Consider Bloom’s Cognitive Taxonomy: 
*Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, Create*

Consider Fink’s Significant Learning: 
*Learning How to Learn, Foundational Knowledge, Application, Integration, Human Dimension, Caring*
Establishing Just Classrooms

Course Development Worksheet

Step 3: Assessments of Learning
What types of assessments are you planning to use: tests, projects, papers? Open-ended tests or multiple choice? Are these inclusive of many learning styles or just one? How might all of your students showcase the knowledge they have gained?

Step 4: Compare
Do your assessments of learning reflect your goals? Are you “testing” in ways that coordinate with your desired learning outcomes? Do you have low risk assessments that allow your students to try new ideas in new ways?
Course Development Worksheet

Step 1: Situational Factors
List any know situational factors for this course: enrollment size, student audience, location, etc. Think about who is present and who is not. How might a diverse perspective be present or absent?

Step 2: Course Goals
What things do you want students to remember 3-5 years after the course? Who might be missing from these goals? How can you include a variety of perspectives and understandings through each goal?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
Debate vs. Discussion vs. Dialogue

**DEBATE**
- Competitive
- Succeed or win, often by proving others' logic to be "wrong"
- Focus on "right" and "wrong" through evidence
- Look for weaknesses
- Search for flaws in others' logic; critique their position
- Listen, in order to form counter-arguments
- Focus on conflict and difference as an advantage
- Disregard relationships
- Use silence to gain advantage

**DISCUSSION**
- Conceptual and/or conversational
- Present ideas, often in a "clean" or "sophisticated" way
- Share information; seek "neutral" conclusions
- Seek answers and solutions
- Give answers, often those in accordance with academic standards
- Listen, in order to find places of disagreement or to gather rational pieces of argument
- Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference
- Retain relationships
- Avoid silence

**DIALOGUE**
- Collaborative, towards a sense of community understanding
- Re-evaluate and acknowledge assumptions and biases
- Bring out areas of ambivalence
- Look for shared meaning
- Discover collective meaning; re-examine and destabilize long-held ideas
- Listen without judgment and with a view to understand
- Articulate areas of conflict and difference
- Build relationships
- Honor silence

*Table adapted from the Sustained Dialogue Institute, Washington, D.C. (based on the work of Kardin and Sevig, Kachwaha, and Nissan).*