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2019 Diversity, Equity, and Student Success Conference Association of American Colleges & Universities

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Instructional Development Travel Grant 2019 2019 Diversity, Equity, and Student Success Conference Association of American Colleges & Universities



Julie Apker, Professor, School of Communication

Instructional Development Opportunity

Three-day conference that addressed higher education teaching and learning, institutional programs, and policies regarding diversity and inclusion. Attendees—faculty, professional staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, and administrators—represented private and public colleges and universities from across the United States.

On day 1, I participated in a preconference, “Building Bridges, Creating Allies: Confronting Questions of Privilege and Power in an Age of Polarization.” I attended 4-6 sessions on days 2 and 3 on topics such as:

- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Both In and Outside of the Classroom
- Using Protocols to Facilitate Sensitive Conversations about Diversity with Undergrads
- Creating Globally Inclusive Classrooms

Instructor Objectives

- Identify students' diversity and inclusion needs and how they integrate with learning and student success
- Develop pedagogical skills to better convey diversity and inclusion throughout a course
- Anticipate and effectively manage instructional dynamics regarding sensitive topics when teaching health communication (e.g. health disparities related to race, socioeconomic status).
- Recognize and effectively manage instructional dynamics regarding sensitive topics when teaching organizational communication (e.g., multicultural workplaces, intercultural team interactions, discrimination).



Framework: Culturally Responsive Teaching

Principle	Instructor Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence – cultivating students' cognitive abilities to organize and understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly and frequently convey diversity and inclusion expectations • Teach using different modalities to meet different student learning styles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatedness – fostering positive, supportive relationships with course content, professor and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vulnerable • Tell your story • Be aware of personal assumptions/biases and how they contribute to your teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust – consistently assess of what is being learned, instructor makes sure that each student is getting desired information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with students • Use consistent, inclusive eye contact • Show up prepared and ready to teach

Source: Felicia Griffin-Fennell & Jane Lerner, Springfield Technical Community College, AAC&N 2019 Diversity, Equity, and Student Success Conference

First Day of Class

Syllabus Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Prominently feature a diversity statement that conveys my approach to diversity and inclusion in regards to teaching and learning as informed by WMU mission and values.

Spend time discussing this statement the first day of class use it to preview upcoming discussion of “ground rules” for respectful, inclusive behaviors held later in the week, and refer to the statement throughout the term.

“This class embraces an inclusive learning context in which diversity and difference are valued and respected. We will seek to understand and support the inclusion of diverse voices, worldviews, and behaviors even when they may differ from our own.”

Developing the Rules of Engagement - Active Learning

How it Works:

1. In groups, students generate lists of desirable and undesirable communication behaviors on sticky notes for 5 minutes

Example Behaviors

- Take turns and avoid interrupting/cross talk
- Debate the position, NOT the person
- Ask questions with curiosity, NOT confrontation

2. Post sticky notes and report out to larger group
3. Instructor facilitates consensus on behaviors
4. Instructor distributes “master list” and refers to it throughout the semester, emphasizing content in advance of sensitive topics



Active Learnings for Inclusivity

I Am From

“I Am From” teaches students about the importance of identity and how it shapes worldviews in ways that contribute to (mis)communication, such as in the workplace and in provider-patient interactions.

How it Works

1. Students complete the worksheet individually and then pair with another students to compare responses
2. Report out and identify patterns
3. Instructor leads discussion about how identity influences how we include/exclude others in different contexts (e.g., jobs, health care, classrooms).



Source: Jennifer Green, Weber State University

Additional Ideas for Teaching Interventions

Examining Microaggressions for Engaged Inclusivity - Active Learning

Microaggressions are verbal and nonverbal problematic behaviors (unintentional or intentional) directed at socially devalued group/marginalized groups. They contribute to negative outcomes such as feelings of exclusion, imposter syndrome, and lack of self advocacy.

How it works

1. Instructor asks students to answer “What microaggressions have you experienced in _____(e.g., higher education, workplaces, patient care settings)?”
2. Students brainstorm and display list of microaggressive behaviors on large post-its
3. Gallery time to view post-its and add remarks
4. Report out /respond to instructor question, “How do you think the microaggressions discussed impact marginalized groups (e.g., students, employees, patients?)”

Source: Claudia Leiras & Alisha Davis, Grand Valley State University

Instructor BioSketch

- Professor at WMU 18 years
- Teach graduate and undergraduate courses, made up of an increasingly diverse student mix
- Specialize in health communication, organizational communication, and qualitative research methods
- Associate Director, Office of Faculty Development



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