Creating an Inclusive Classroom

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Mission:

- The Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion provides leadership and expertise to West Chester University to advance its commitment to the principles of inclusivity, civility, service, and academic excellence. Through programmatic and educational initiatives, collaborative partnerships and outreach, we cultivate an environment that welcomes all.

VISION:

- To become a national leader of inclusive excellence in higher education by leveraging internal and external partnerships.

"West Chester University (WCU) affirms that diversity and inclusion are crucial to the intellectual vitality of the campus community.

It is through freedom of exchange over different ideas and viewpoints in supportive environments that individuals develop the critical thinking and citizenship skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Diversity and inclusion engender academic engagement where teaching, working, learning, and living take place in pluralistic communities of mutual respect."

~ Executive Summary,
2015 WCUPA Campus Climate Assessment Project

July 22, 2019

Moon Shot for Equity

The term **"Equity-Mindedness"** refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education. [USC Center for Urban Education]
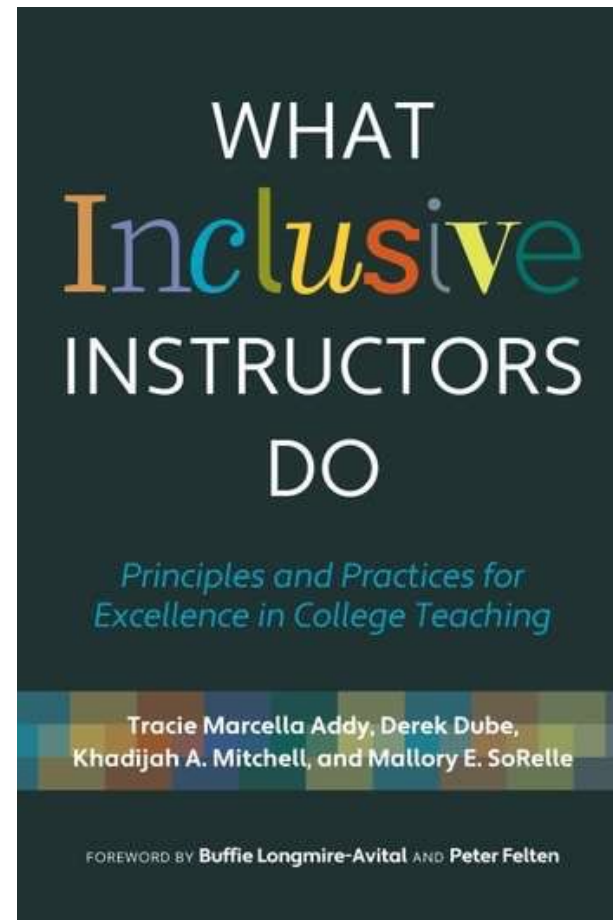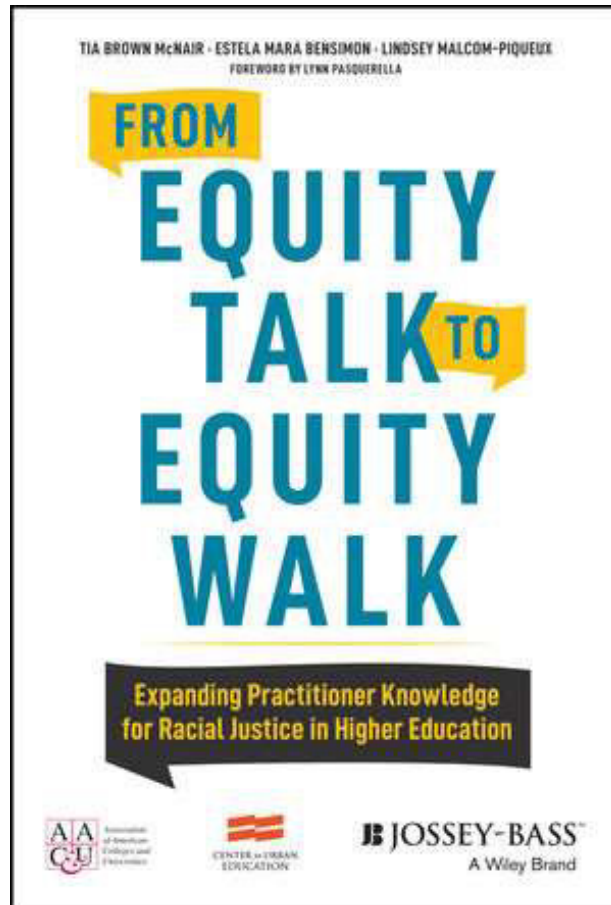
2019-2023 University Strategic Plan-

Pathways to Student Success
Diversity & Inclusion Goals

- Learn It!
- Live It!

Building Cultural Competence in Our Graduates

- **Cultural competency** among 21st century graduates has become imperative as the job market globalizes and the workforce continues to diversify.

Four parts of cultural competence:

Awareness of one's own worldview	Attitude towards differences
Knowledge of different practices and worldviews	Cross cultural skill building

Cultural Competence

"the ability to function with awareness, knowledge and interpersonal skill when engaging people of different backgrounds, assumptions, beliefs, values , and behaviors."

Benefits of Diversity for Modern Business Innovation

"Strength lies in differences, not in similarities." - Stephen Covey

Forbes

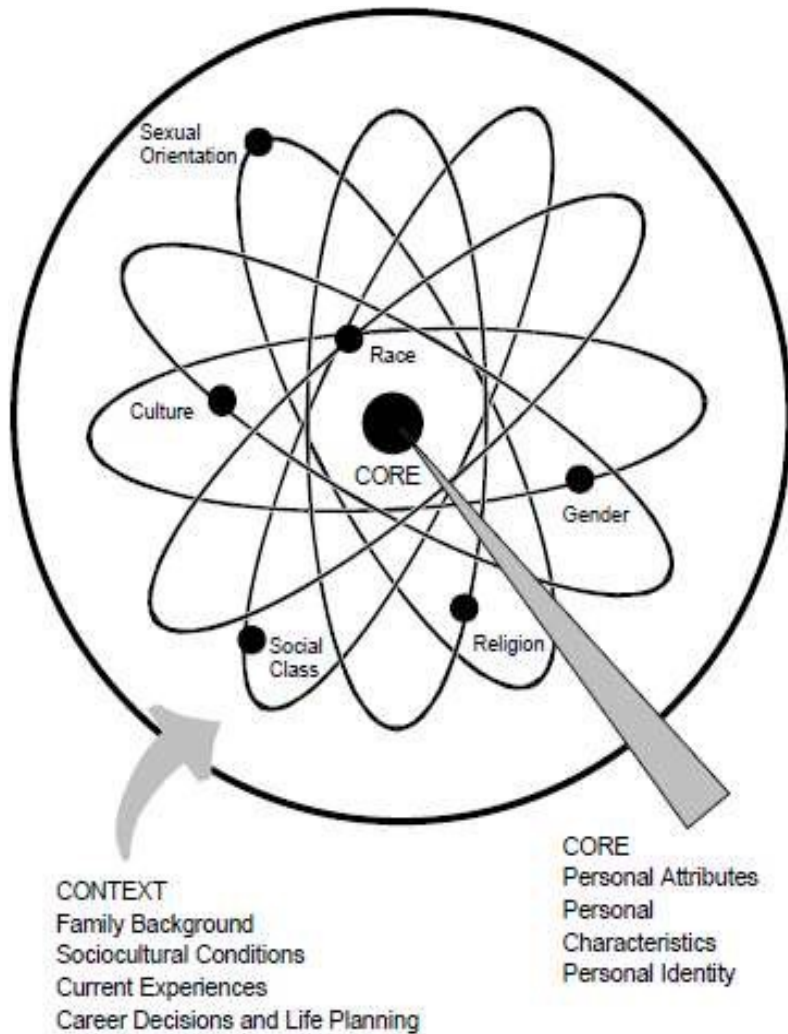- Workforce diversity and inclusion are key drivers of internal innovation and business growth.

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

- Multicultural networks promote creativity.

McKinsey&Company

- Companies with diverse executive boards enjoy significantly higher earnings and returns on equity.

Model of *Multiple Dimensions* of Identity

Sexual Orientation

Culture

Race

CORE

Gender

Social Class

Religion

CONTEXT
Family Background
Sociocultural Conditions
Current Experiences
Career Decisions and Life Planning

CORE
Personal Attributes
Personal Characteristics
Personal Identity

Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007

Scenarios-Agenda

Introductions

Is there an issue?

Scenarios

Strategies for promoting inclusion

Scenarios

Strategies for Promoting Inclusion

Approaches

On the Front End

- Set expectations - ground rules/operating guidelines
- Build pride in diversity into course content, syllabus, lab culture
- Develop your own awareness and empathy
- Be sensitive to the impact of discussions on marginalized students. For example, a class discussion on sexual assault, homophobia or racism can cause a student to revisit trauma associated with a personal experience.
- Group work: assigning teams and roles, provide instruction on team functioning, credit/contributions
    - Make it clear you value all students
    - Emphasize mastery and learning

Approaches

Setting Expectations

Include any of the following within your course syllabus:
- Diversity and Inclusivity Statement
- Class Diversity Statement
- Statement on Diversity
- Diversity Statement on Civil Dialogue
- Diversity Statement on Respect
- Discussion Guidelines

Multiple examples from various universities can be found here:
https://www.clemson.edu/otei/documents/Teaching%20Review%20Resources/Diversity_InclusionSyllabiSamples.pdf

Required DEI Syllabus Statement
Inclusive Learning Environment and Anti-Racist Statement

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to West Chester University's mission as reflected in our Mission Statement, Values Statement, Vision Statement and Strategic Plan: Pathways to Student Success. We disavow racism and all actions that silence, threaten, or degrade historically marginalized groups in the U.S. We acknowledge that all members of this learning community may experience harm stemming from forms of oppression including but not limited to classism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, and recognize that these forms of oppression are compounded by racism.

Our core commitment as an institution of higher education shapes our expectation for behavior within this learning community, which represents diverse individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. Courteous and respectful behavior, interactions, and responses are expected from all members of the University. We must work together to make this a safe and productive learning environment for everyone. Part of this work is recognizing how race and other aspects of who we are shape our beliefs and our experiences as individuals. It is not enough to condemn acts of racism. For real, sustainable change, we must stand together as a diverse coalition against racism and oppression of any form, anywhere, at any time.

Resources for education and action are available through WCU's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), DEI committees within departments or colleges, the student ombudsperson, and centers on campus committed to doing this work (e.g., Dowdy Multicultural Center, Center for Women and Gender Equity, and the Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy).

Guidance on how to report incidents of discrimination and harassment is available at the University's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Ground Rules

Goals and Benefits of Ground Rules

Examples

Ground Rules for Class Discussions/ Active Participation

RESPECT!

Activity

- Come to class prepared
- Be Respectful
- There are no "stupid questions!" Always feel free to ask questions and engage with any question that arises in the class.
- All members of the class are expected to participate in the various aspects of the class and classroom experiences.
- Discuss undiscussable issues
- Maintain confidentiality through information shared within and outside of the class
- Keep the discussions focused/ Relay information with context

- Disagree openly with any member of the class
- Share all relative information when sharing information
- Test your assumptions and inferences
- Avoid using generalizations
- Avoid offensive language
- Openness to ideas, thoughts and opinions that may differ from your own/ Seek to understand, then to be understood (Active listening)
- Save space for someone that hasn't spoken or engaged in dialogue
- Don't interrupt others

Approaches

Throughout the Year

- Assess the climate - mid semester feedback
- De-escalate rather than be Defensive (listen first, speak softly)
- Practice interrupting microaggressions, recognize teachable moments
- Become familiar with resources available at university
- Support the rights of students (religious holidays, pregnancy, accommodations for disabilities, etc..)
- Start with an assumption of honesty—don't believe the worst in students
- Get to know students to head off angry confrontations

Approaches

Course Adjustments

In any course, instructors may need to change their plans. As students respond to information that is presented, express frustrations, assert themselves or as incidents occur in class, more time or different ways to follow-up, process and respond may be needed. Consider online forums, discussions, quizzes or activities for students that help them process a topic further. Inclusive adjustments are sensitive to students' diverse learning needs and matched to course goals. Adjustments made despite student needs (e.g., to cover a predetermined amount of material) are typically deemed non-inclusive. (Laird 2014)

Practices, Structure to Promote Participation by All

- Active learning techniques
- Group work: assigning teams and roles, provide instruction on team functioning, credit/contributions
- Proactively present information in an accessible way
- Be an ally for their learning (not grade)

Policies

Disruptive Classroom Behavior Policy
- This policy includes harassment & discrimination as unacceptable forms of behavior
- A third party can be asked/invited in to observe your course upon request

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or veteran status.

Preferred Name Policy allows a preferred first name to appear in select University systems and records, even if individuals have not changed their legal name. While anyone is welcome to use a preferred name, this policy was developed to respond to the needs of transgender and non-binary communities, international communities, and anyone who prefers the use of a name other than their legal name. Student pronouns are also available on class rosters.

QUESTIONS

Resources:

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Gariby, Juan Carlos. 2016. Creating A Positive Classroom Climate For Diversity. Retrieved from UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development, https://equity.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CreatingaPositiveClassroomClimateWeb-2.pdf

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Sellers, Sherrill, with Jean Roberts, Levi Giovanetto, Katherine Friedrich, and Caroline Hammargren (2007). Reaching All Students: A Resource for Teaching in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics, Second Edition Guidebook. https://www.cirtl.net/resources/3

The Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence. (n.d.). Classroom Management Best Practices. Retrieved from http://www.usf.edu/atle/documents/handout-classroom-management.pdf