Inclusive Practices: Ideas for Classroom Integration From Millersville Classrooms to Yours

Edited by:

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Part 1: Introduction and Definitions

These first chapters introduce the work of this book in addition to the key terms and definitions that influence the pedagogical work of the contributing authors. We share these key terms and ideas to also help readers reflect on their own pedagogies as they consider and adopt these practices in their own courses.

Chapter 1

The Inclusive Practices Project: an Introduction

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Introduction to the Project

In Fall 2017 I began working with a group of faculty and instructional designers dedicated to raising awareness about Open Educational Resources (OER) throughout the University. We started with increasing OER adoption in our own courses, expanded to Open Education Week (OE Week) participation, and then developed a university-specific OER adoption initiative to mentor and support adoption in other courses. While I began adopting OER to support first-year composition writing learning, I expanded this to a mindset where OER adoption became the default practice as I continued to teach courses and designed new courses in the department's growing majors.

Until I read *Inclusive Teaching* by Hogan and Sathy (2022), I considered this an OER mindset. I found that OER allowed me to design my course in ways that I knew benefited student learning. I built a reading list to support student learning and reflect student experiences, offering diverse perspectives on writing and writing-learning to help them transition to college writing. I could more easily scaffold content first exposures and reflective learning (Bowen, 2012) when I adopted OER. I found I could more easily build courses drawing on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when I adopted OER. While OER adoption and OER mindset is not a precursor for inclusive practices within the college curriculum, I think my journey demonstrates one of many pathways for faculty toward inclusive mindset. My work with OER in my online and face-to-face classrooms became a way to center student motivation, student need, and student experiences (drawing from Bowen, 2012 and Hogan & Sathy, 2022). My work with OER led me to further explore UDL through CAST (CAST, 2018) credentials and to adopt inclusive teaching (Hogan and Sathy, 2022) as part of faculty professional development work. This progression draws on Bowen & Watson's (2017) work with the Teaching Naked Design Process, pointing to student motivation and content exposure as central ways to design student-centered courses. This progression then draws from UDL (CAST, 2018) and

Hogan and Sathy (2022) to ask who might be left behind, and how OER as central to student-centered course design can invite those students in (Bowen, 2012, p. 11).

As part of my work coordinating our campus work in faculty professional development, I have shared and discussed CAST's work with UDL in Higher Education (UDL on Campus, n.d.). Additionally, I have designed and supported faculty learning communities (with connected Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Projects) focused on Bowen's work *Teaching Naked* and Hogan and Sathy's work *Inclusive Teaching*. I am consistently awed and inspired as a member of these faculty learning communities with the creativity and ingenuity of faculty at my institution as they apply their learning to foster student learning. I am not the only faculty member to work through and connect these ideas as foundational to my pedagogical approach, and I am so thankful for my colleagues who have engaged these ideas alongside me. This book is to honor their student-centered assignments while also sharing and celebrating those same assignments. This book is about honoring their work.

My work with OER led to this project. This book builds on existing faculty professional development work integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into faculty pedagogical approaches across learning spaces. This book extends the work in its aims to broadly share repeatable, remixable teaching and learning approaches that foster inclusive student-centered learning.

As a campus who counts librarians, advisors, and counselors as part of our faculty, we are deliberately modeling inclusive mindset with our use of learning spaces instead of classroom spaces. This language shift not only includes the breadth of faculty authors contributing to this publication but highlights the value of all faculty to supporting student learning. This language shift also acknowledges the breadth of learning spaces students encounter. Learning happens in classrooms, and learning happens in many spaces beyond the classroom. This book seeks to add a variety of assignments, across a variety of learning spaces, to support faculty seeking ways to further inclusive assignments within their own spaces.

As a leader on campus with faculty professional development, I see a large portion of my work as faculty-centered to support faculty creating student-centered learning environments. I extend my thanks to Marie Firestone, Instructional Designer, for all her support in this work and her collaboration in shaping this mindset. As faculty we carve out spaces for faculty-centered work so we can be student-centered. In naming these virtual and real-life spaces, these

formal and informal spaces, we raise awareness and value for the faculty-centered work of faculty professional development. This book is about inclusive teaching practices that foster students' sense of belonging. This book shares lesson plans for students across a variety of learning spaces. This book is grounded in faculty-centered work designed by educators shared open source to support faculty across learning spaces across campuses. We all celebrate the work of faculty as they foster student learning and see the power in naming our collective work here "faculty centered." The naming of our work as faculty-centered raises the value of that work.

My work with OER led me to design this project as an OER publication, a design my co-editors agreed would help our work meet the needs of a large faculty population, a design the contributing authors approved as they submitted their chapter contributions. With an ever-increasing number of non-tenure track positions, and less support for teaching, we see OER publication as a faculty-centered approach to publishing and distributing ideas, practices, and assignments in a way that supports all faculty. I envision this work as sharing our inclusive practices, encompassing a variety of disciplines, course levels, and outside the classroom learning to center the needs of faculty.

Book Design

This book begins with a discussion of key concepts we think will help readers understand the assignments included. We see the chapters exploring key concepts connecting diversity and inclusion work to faculty-centered spaces to support student-centered learning space design. We invite readers to consider how our definitions support and expand the work of diversity and inclusion offices at their own institutions. We invite readers to consider how our definitions help them use and/or remix the inclusive assignments shared to further their inclusive excellence work.

Most importantly, we view these key words as working definitions, ever changing ideas provided to help educators adapt and change alongside their students – to help educators remain nimble in their approaches to supporting learners.

Finally, each of the assignment chapters includes reflective questions to support faculty readers working through the assignments and lessons shared. Our inclusion of the reflective questions celebrates the design of Addy, Dube, Mitchell, and SoRelle's (2021) *What Inclusive Instructors Do*. We hope the reflective questions invite faculty readers to find ways to remix the assignments and lessons to meet the learning goals of their own learning spaces. We invite all

readers to explore the resources shared as they grow their own inclusive mindset.

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Chapter 2

Equality

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In the context of inclusion, *equality* is a complex and often ambiguous concept. At its most basic, the term describes a state of being in which individuals or groups all have the same social value and the same access to opportunities. In the United States, equality has historically been set forth as a goal of some government institutions (including education and the law) as well as many social movements, especially those focused on civil rights.

Understood in this way, the concept of equality has driven powerful social, ethical, and educational interventions aiming to halt overt oppression and rectify injustice. Yet there are consequences attached to the reliance on the idea of "sameness" as a means of achieving or measuring fairness: most notably, that a rigid insistence on offering "the same" tools or opportunities to everyone risks overlooking the different needs of different people.

As a result, equality can both enable and limit inclusive thinking and inclusive pedagogy.

Equality Is a Prerequisite

The language of equality has historically informed social policy changes to reduce discrimination based on social identity categories. For instance, legal scholar Stephen Menendian (2023) describes the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, enacted in the wake of the abolition of slavery, as "essentially constitutionalizing and encoding the idea that the law must formally treat all persons the same, irrespective of their race, gender, or other identity or status." A similar conception of equality undergirded legislation around civil rights, which disability justice collective Sins Invalid (2019, p. 149) explains are "guarantees of equal social opportunities and protections under the law, including the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right to access services, the right to public education, and the right to use public facilities."

In sum, the concept of equality has played a foundational role in making our society more just and inclusive. Thus, monitoring and maintaining protections for

equality – as well as identifying and dismantling the structures that perpetuate *inequality* – continues to be an important goal for educators and many others who are committed to social justice.

The language of equality also continues to inform inclusive discourse in higher education. Proponents of inclusive pedagogy stress that all students should feel equal – equally valued and equally welcomed in college classrooms. Inclusive pedagogy, as defined by Georgetown University's Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (n.d.), is "a method of teaching in which instructors and students work together to create a supportive and open environment that fosters social justice and allows each individual to be fully present and feel equally valued…equally invited and included." Kelly Hogan and Viji Sathy, authors of *Inclusive Teaching* (2022) go further, characterizing an inclusive mindset as essential to "our collective ability to make education an equalizer" (p. 4).

Researchers also assess the effectiveness of inclusive pedagogy by measuring the extent to which students from different backgrounds achieve equal outcomes, reducing "opportunity gaps" (Kendi, 2019, p. 115). In *The Norton Guide to Equity-Minded Teaching* (2023), for instance, authors Artze-Vega, Darby, Dewsbury, and Imad identify a commitment to "equal outcomes among all student groups" (xxiii) as foundational to equitable teaching, which they explain as "teaching that is informed by principles, practices, and historical understandings that aim to realize equal outcomes among all students" (p. xxi).

To summarize, a value for and commitment to equality has provided historical grounding for movements toward fairness and justice in social, legal, and educational policy and practice. If we were to use the language of college curricula, we might describe the concept of equality as a "prerequisite" for the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) in higher education – a necessary first step that continues to inform inclusive pedagogy in important ways.

Moving Beyond Equality Toward Equity

Just as prerequisite courses build knowledge meant to be extended and nuanced in later coursework, so too has the concept of equality been extended and nuanced by the work of activists and scholars in the fields of racial justice, feminism, queer theory, disability studies, and others.

These cultural workers point out that a reliance on cultural values of equality can be limiting, especially when accompanied by a denial or minimization of

differences in people's needs, backgrounds, and circumstances. In his foundational work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2017, p. 112) describes "the myth of the equality of all individuals" as one of the myths that maintain an oppressive status quo. More recently, scholars have described the "illusion of equal opportunity" (Gale et al., 2017) as a barrier to achieving social justice through education.

One example of this misapplication of equality occurs in "color-blind thinking," a term that refers to those who claim to not "see race" or skin color (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Neville et al., 2016). As the American Psychological Association (2023) explains, "People who endorse color-blind beliefs believe that individual effort is sufficient for achievement in a meritocracy predicated on the assumption that everyone has equal opportunity for life success." Teachers who think in this way could perpetuate systemic racism in a myriad of ways – for instance, by overlooking the need to design a diverse curriculum to engage students of color, or by dismissing the well-documented existence of racial bias in standardized testing (Cunningham, 2019; Au, 2021).

This deployment of the concept of equality to justify an approach in which "everyone gets the same things" (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021) or "each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities" (International Women's Day, 2023) can be used to shut down educational approaches that foreground extra support, choice, options, variety, and diversity for different learners with different needs. When applied in this way, as Artze-Vega et al. (2023, p. 4) explain, "Equality in teaching and learning suggests that all students should have identical learning experiences regardless of their differences, which…does not align well with inclusive approaches to instruction."

In response to these limiting applications of equality, scholars and activists often augment it with the concept of equity, which Sins Invalid (2019, p. 154) defines as "Giving everyone what they need in order to have equal opportunities." In contrast to equality-based approaches in which 'everyone gets the same things,' equity-informed approaches "might mean some people are given more than others in certain situations, in order to make things more fair" (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 154).

The differences between equality and equity are often summarized visually as in the graphic below. The graphic shows three people reaching toward apples in an overhanging tree. On the "Equality" side, each person stands on a pedestal of the same height, so the tall person can reach an apple with ease, the medium-sized person must stretch for an apple, and the smaller person cannot reach an apple.

Figure 1
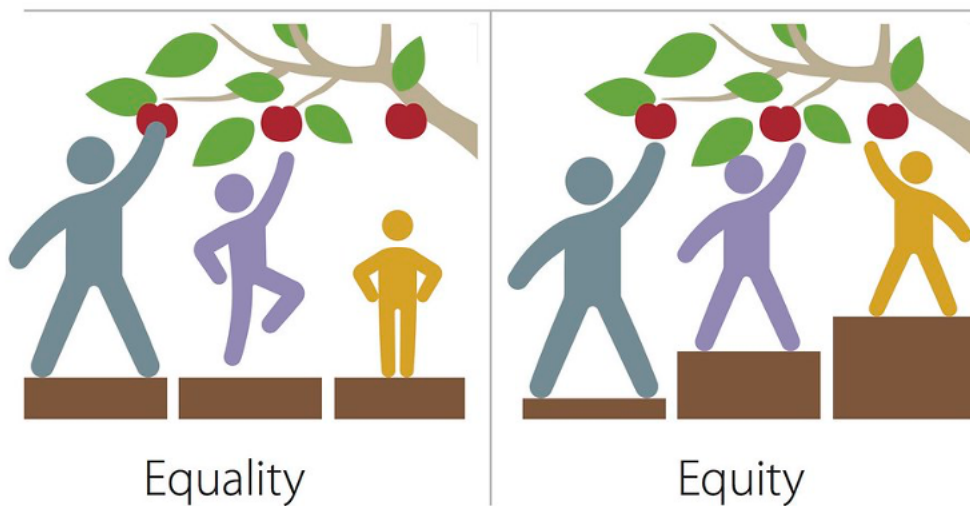
On the "Equity" side, each person stands on a pedestal appropriate to their height so that all three can reach apples.

"Equity vs Equality" by MN Pollution Control Agency is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

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Chapter 3

Diversity

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Diversity is an umbrella term that encompasses all dimensions of difference. Difference is a reality in all interpersonal interactions, all groups, all communities, and all societies. All of us are different from each other. The word 'diversity' refers to this state of being, characterized by difference.

In her book *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity* (Allen, 2023), communication scholar Brenda J. Allen invites readers to understand diversity along a sliding scale that extends from similarity to difference. While we all share similarities with other people – we are all human! – none of us is exactly the same as anyone else. We thus exist in dynamic relation with others, as we all inhabit multiple, intersecting identities that we express and that impact us in similar and different ways across various contexts (see Yep, 2015).

Social Identity

Social identity is a term that names dimensions of difference that we share in common with others. Race, gender, dis/ability, sexuality, age–these and many other categories are social identities that we all inhabit. Conceptually speaking, social identity helps us to think about diversity at a systems or societal level.

Social identity terms – e.g., *abled person* or *the LGBTQ community* – name groups of people. These groups may be dominant or nondominant. In her analysis of intergroup dynamics, Allen (2011) explains that "Dominant groups tend to have more economic and cultural power than nondominant groups, who tend to have less economic and cultural power" (p. 4).

Economic power is realized in higher-paying jobs and generational wealth. Cultural power is realized in privilege, systemic advantages that people have simply because of their group affiliation. Privileges "make life easier; …easier to get around, to get what one wants, and to be treated in an acceptable manner" (Rosenblum & Travis, 2003, p. 178). People in dominant groups tend to have more privileges than people in nondominant groups. And nondominant group

members tend to experience more systemic oppression characterized by disadvantage. "[M]ost of us simultaneously occupy privileged *and* [emphasis added] nonprivileged social identity groups" (Allen, 2011, p. 16).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept that describes how oppressions can compound and intermingle with privileges. This term "refers to how race, class, gender, sexuality, the body, and nation, among other markers of social and cultural difference, come together simultaneously to produce identities and experiences, ranging from privilege to oppression, in a particular society" (Yep, 2015).

Of course, individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression vary considerably and are, like social identities, always shifting across contexts. While social identity is useful for noticing patterns in groups of people, it is important to note that identity categories are neither monolithic nor predictive. Great diversity exists within social identity groups, and "everyone engages in power practices, including those who may be lower in …[a] societal hierarchy" (Allen, 2011, p. 26).

At the individual level, diversity includes differences that are more personal. Our personality traits, psychological and physiological states, personal histories, knowledge, beliefs, and ability to function in any given moment are also dimensions of difference that we all experience.

All of these differences make a difference for learning. We all enter classrooms with prior experiences and other stuff going on in our lives. Sometimes, our experiences put up barriers to learning. Sometimes, they're a catalyst for deep understanding. However we show up, all of us deserve to feel seen, affirmed, recognized (Madison, 2021).

Honoring Diversity

Honoring diversity in the classroom means appreciating and making space for all the different ways we show up. Teachers today can draw from a wealth of different approaches aimed at helping them create this kind of inclusive space, e.g., universal design for learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed pedagogy, inclusive excellence. All of these and other frameworks demonstrate how diversity can drive design.

Honoring diversity builds inclusive excellence, a foundation built with "the understanding that diversity, equity and inclusion lead to organizational excellence" (*Inclusive Excellence*, n.d.).

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Chapter 4

Inclusion

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Inclusion is one of six core values at Millersville University and is described as "creating a campus community where differences are welcomed and respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of belonging" (*EPPIIC values at Millersville University,* n.d.). For faculty beyond Millersville, this chapter offers opportunities for expanding your knowledge of inclusion and how it can enhance your pedagogical practices. In further discovering how inclusion is realized in our classrooms, this chapter contains an overview of several definitions of the perception of inclusion to help you consider ways of conceptualizing it. Also, these definitions are aimed at helping you think broadly about how you are implementing inclusive practices in your learning spaces.

The realization of becoming an enrolled student within an institution of higher education may, for some, meet the definition of being included as a full-fledged college student. An individual with a university generated identification card and schedule denoting that they are taking classes offered through the course catalogue does indeed indicate inclusion in the higher education environment. This definition is particularly noteworthy with the historical reminder of that it was not so long ago that admittance to higher education was but a dream for a number of diverse groups of individuals who now fill the halls of academia including but not limited to African Americans, women, and most recently individuals with disabilities (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990; Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008). In fact, the Merriam Webster Dictionary (n.d.) defines inclusion as "the act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded." This same authority provides a second definition of inclusion stating that inclusion is "the act or practice of including students with disabilities with the general student population." What is particularly relevant to this second definition is that in contrast the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) a very well-known federal law that protects students with diagnosed disabilities in individuals from birth through age 21 as they access education in the preK-12 public school system, does not clearly define the word inclusion (IDEIA, 2004). Professionals who

support and implement this law are left with the task of interpreting the meaning of the word inclusion how they see acceptable for each individual.

Inclusion, through the framework of the United Nations (n.d.), is one of "Social Inclusion" as "the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone regardless of their background can achieve their full potential in life. One might assert that accessibility to college classes does not necessarily denote equal opportunities unless content is made accessible to students. Engaging students actively in content that meets their learning needs would help to ensure accessibility of materials. . One might assert that accessibility to college classes does not necessarily denote equal opportunities unless content is made accessible to students. Engaging students actively in content that meets their learning needs would help to ensure accessibility of materials. Another accessibility factors that further promotes a more equitable learning experience for all students is the delivery of a culturally responsive curriculum.

Inclusion in Higher Education

Another perspective on inclusion is through the lens of the student, or the idea of "being included" in the college classroom. Students feel included or "seen" when they are valued within the class discussions and can see themselves as vital members of the learning community, promoting the sense of belonging (Oleson, 2021). Higher education instructors are the key to creating and sustaining the classroom culture that promotes students' sense of belonging. Cohen (2022) suggests that the quality of student-teacher relationships has a strong impact on a student's feeling of belonging. Research draws a clear connection between students' feelings of belonging and their academic, psychological and health outcomes (Jose et al., 2012). According to Hogan and Sathy (2022), a definition of inclusion that supports the feeling of belongingness is a "culture in which all learners feel welcome, valued, and safe" (p. 10).

As we strive in higher education to engage each of our students in the learning environment, it is critical to reflect on the modeling that we, as instructors in higher education, engage, promoting and creating learning communities for our students that are reflective of how the global community should be experienced. It is believed that "communities that are rooted in the humanistic aspect of including others as a moral imperative will produce a more just and civil society where everyone feels valued for their inherit contributions" (Licata, 2023). Although an ideal, we can begin to be realize this conviction through the intentional practice of incorporating pragmatic instructional strategies into the

course curricula and through the keen awareness that each student is a valued member of the class, bringing their own unique contributions to the learning community. These instructional changes, when added incrementally to one's course design over time, can lead to a paradigm shift where one's mindset about inclusion is transformed.

Self Reflecting to Foster Inclusion

To facilitate your own self reflections on how you foster inclusion in your classroom, consider the following:

- What assumptions and beliefs about students' learning do I hold (Grant & Perez, 2022)?

- Is the curriculum that I am using accessible for all learners? To what degree? How can I make it more accessible? Do I look to provide choice and agency for each of my students?

- What is the quality of my student – instructor interactions? Am I building relationships with my students that will support them in feeling like valued members of the learning community and contributing to their overall sense of belonging?

- Do I include everyone as I am planning for a course? Are the syllabus and accompanying course materials meeting the wide variety of learners' needs from a diverse perspective? Am I asking myself the question, "Who might be left behind with the pedagogical decision that I am making?" (Hogan & Sathy, 2022).

Including everyone in the college classroom takes conscious effort. The commitment that higher education faculty make to know their students and each individual's unique learning preferences will transform the learning environment. As students engage with the course content, outcomes, and learning activities, they are appreciated as authentic members of the learning community where they will flourish and feel as sense of belonging.

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Chapter 5

Reflective Practitioner

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Reflective teaching is a self-evaluation of one's teaching to grow our understanding of our pedagogy and praxis. The goal of reflective teaching is to understand teaching so we can increase our inclusive practices repertoire and so we know where to find evidence of student learning based on our chosen practices (Association of College and University Educators (ACUE)). Most important for me, developing a reflective practice helps me sort through my ideas and feelings about teaching and learning experiences so I can grow as a pedagogue. When a class session goes particularly well, or particularly poorly, emotions may be heightened. A weekly reflective practice can help me sort through what elements of teaching practice went well, and how to understand my learning spaces to make informed choices about future practices.

Reflective teaching is not a moment-by-moment accounting of a lesson in a learning space (e.g., a classroom, advising session, office hour meeting, or co-curricular space). Instead, reflective teaching offers ways for educators to understand the choices they made in learning spaces, to examine why things happened in the learning space connected to choices made, and to understand why students responded within the space in the way they did.

Reflective Teaching for Inclusive Teaching

While most inclusive practitioners understand and include student reflection as a valuable space for learning, we often sacrifice our own reflection time to other tasks like emails, grading, meeting notes, large university projects, assessment, and more. I want to emphasize that I understand the many demands on faculty time. I understand why teaching reflection can be sacrificed to continue as the student-centered practitioners we are. I ask that you approach this chapter with a growth mindset, as a way for you to find 5-10 minutes a week to reengage reflective practices. Rachel A. Rogers, in the *Reflective Teaching Log* (n.d.)*,* discusses how reconnecting with reflective practices "helps foster an environment for professional growth" (p. 1). Reflection time will help and encourage you to know and name your inclusive teaching practices. This will help and encourage

you to understand the impacts of those practices in your learning space so you can continue developing as an inclusive practitioner. Taking 5-10 minutes per week can and should be understood as part of your professional growth, it is important time you spend growing as a pedagogue.

Practicing reflective teaching can be as easy as asking yourself the following questions (one per week!):

- What am I proudest of in my teaching?

- What is an experience I had teaching that I return to as an example of why I teach?

- What is an experience I had as an educator where I made an impact within a learning space (focused beyond the classroom)?

- What worked in my class(es) this week?

- What worked in my learning spaces this week?

- What needs improvement in my class(es) this week? What is the basis for my assessment of 'needs improvement'?

- What needs improvement in my learning space(es) this week? What is the basis for my assessment of 'needs improvement'?

- How did I ensure all students understood the materials/assignments (inclusive practices focused)?

- How did I ensure all students found a way into the materials/assignments to support their learning success (inclusive practices focused)?

- How can I understand the distribution of scores on the major assessment this week to ensure all learners know how to approach the next segment of class (inclusive practices focused)?

Importantly, as an edited collection focused on inclusive practices, I want to draw attention to the breadth of spaces included in 'learning space'. When we consider 'reflective teaching', too often we consider the face-to-face college classroom. These learning spaces include students who knowingly registered and arrived for class, with varying degrees of preparation for learning, and all their student understanding. These are important spaces, but students experience learning in so many additional spaces during their time as students with us.

One of the inclusive excellence goals of this book is to help you consider where student learning occurs, and how you can help that space be more inclusive for all. As you move through the chapters included in this book, and as you find time and space to expand your reflective practices consider ALL the spaces we support student learning, formally and informally.

Many of the chapters share classroom learning activities and assignments, offering ideas and suggestions for implementing these ideas within a classroom to support all learners. Many of these can be adapted beyond the boundaries of the face-to-face classroom!

We know that student learning happens beyond the classroom learning space including during advising sessions (with faculty, faculty-librarians, faculty-advisors, librarians, advisors, and administrators). We know that student learning happens when students meet with Librarians, and Writing Center tutors, and math tutors, and science tutors and so many more areas that provide content and skill development support. We also know that students interact with department administrators, department chairs, Dean's offices, student support services, and other administrative roles. When we see these additional spaces as learning spaces to support the growth of students, we can help students connect their learning to all their interactions.

Reflecting on where and when we connect students with these supportive spaces, and sharing how we value these spaces in supporting ALL learners is important work. As part of our inclusive practices reflection work, we can undermine the myth that only struggling learners need support. We can undermine the myth that only struggling writers need the Writing Center, etc. Growing as inclusive practitioners through that reflection is important student-centered work! Reflecting on our teaching practices can help us understand where and when we connect learners with these various supports. We can recognize where and when we share how valuable these spaces are to all learners.

At least once per month I have a student visit me during office hours who apologizes for bothering me. While I remind them that my office hours are dedicated to them and their learning – there is still a lot of work to be done in shifting that understanding of office hours. Reflecting on what teaching can happen, and what mentoring can happen during office hours, then sharing that with students is an important part of reflective teaching.

I think it is important to point out how co-curricular spaces support students as learners. When students join clubs and organizations, they build peer networks

and support networks, they develop professional skills and experiences that will help them beyond higher education. Reflecting on how we communicate, how we value these co-curriculars, is important to our efforts to support learners. Co-curricular spaces can include clubs and activities, but also participation with sports, fraternities and sororities, student government organizations, and so much more – there are so many opportunities awaiting our students. In communicating how we value those opportunities, students are more likely to participate and benefit.

Reflective Prompts for Inclusive Teaching

Given the breadth of possibilities in learning spaces, practicing reflective teaching can include the following questions (asked once per week!):

• What learning spaces (beyond a classroom) do I work within and/or support?

• Who am I as a mentor?

• How did I connect all my learners with content and skill support networks like tutoring centers and Writing Centers? How did I integrate that step into my assignment encouraging all students to use the peer learning spaces available to them?

• Who am I as an advisor? What am I proudest of in my work as an advisor?

• How can I ask questions to help students beyond just course scheduling, to demonstrate care and support for all learners?

• What is an example of an office hours meeting that demonstrates who I am as a teacher?

• What is an example of an office hour meeting that demonstrates who I am as a research mentor?

• Who am I as a club advisor? Why do I choose to advise student clubs?

The goal of reflective teaching is to improve teaching. Having an understanding of who we are as instructors will help us determine where to grow and seek out professional development opportunities. I encourage you to use the questions provided here, and to visit resources like Rogers' *Reflective Teaching Log* (n.d.) as you grow your reflective practice. This will not only help you develop as a pedagogue, but it will help you name and know your inclusive instructional practices informed by real data and real students. You will understand where to

look for evidence of the ideas you develop while reflecting. You will know where to look in your learning space design to understand how to invite struggling and reluctant learners into the learning within your spaces.

The questions provided here are simply a starting point for reflection. I invite you to visit the resources cited below, in addition to these prompted reflections, to develop a reflective teaching practice that works for you.

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Part 2: Before and Beyond the Classroom

As this collection came together, the editors noticed some chapters shared ideas and practices that would need longer stretches of time to implement, such as multi-week assignments and approaches to continuous advising. The chapters included in Part 2 share ideas, assignments, and strategies for inclusive practices that could be implemented across the span of a full semester. Part 2 also shares ideas and inclusive approaches for learning spaces beyond the traditional classroom space.

Chapter 6

The Benefits of Daily Quizzes & Group Work Via Student Response Systems

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Professor, Biology

Abstract

A major part of inclusive teaching is improving student engagement: the more students are engaged, the better they perform. Despite their frequency and possible associated stress, daily quizzes (i.e., active group work questions given during lecture) administered via clickers or student response systems (SRS) can be associated with higher student academic success. Students respond favorably to daily quizzes implemented with SRS. I allow quizzes to be open notebook and open for group discussion. After each class, I tally points from each student to record their quiz grades and identify which students were present or absent from class. Students also evaluate group members based on their participation in answering daily quiz questions. In this chapter, I go over the literature that has quantified the value of SRS use in classrooms, the types of inclusive SRS activities I use in my courses, and the positive relationships I found between successful student participation in daily quizzes with SRS and group work and the grades they obtain on course exams and final course grades.

Background

As technology evolves, new options have emerged to transform the traditional learning environment by integrating innovative and accessible tools that can better accommodate student needs. One tool that has gained popularity in the classroom is remote clickers or student response systems (SRS). This paper will discuss how this tool enables inclusive pedagogy, increases learning opportunities among college students, and improves student course performance.

Remote clickers or SRS represent a way to bridge the gap between traditional and digital technologies, providing students with increased class engagement, motivation and learning (Hall et al., 2005). SRS allows instructors to pose questions to an entire class or a small group and receive responses from each student concurrently (Ward et al., 2003). This can also be done in the form of

daily quizzes (i.e., active group work questions given during lecture). The use of SRS to conduct daily quizzes allows the instructor access to the data—such as the number of students who answered each question correctly, answered incorrectly, or did not answer (Ward et al., 2003). This can help with tracking student attendance, keeping students active in the class period, working in teams with other students, and gauging student understanding of content. The use of daily quizzes with SRS systems is an effective way to promote participation and engagement in the classroom, in addition to providing students with the opportunity to practice self-paced and collaborative learning activities with other students (Aljaloud et al., 2015).

Inclusive pedagogy is an innovative way of teaching that supports and encourages the engagement of all learners by providing meaningful and intentional opportunities for their participation in the classroom environment (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This pedagogy is an integral component of an effective learning climate, and it encourages the use of strategies that can benefit both the teacher and student (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). The incorporation of SRS with daily quizzes and group work into the classroom can help make learning more accessible and inclusive by analyzing student responses to questions or activities in real-time and track student progress (Aljaloud et al., 2015).

Using SRS with daily quizzes via group work has the potential to improve the inclusivity of college learning and teaching assuming the promise of student anonymity when providing feedback to the whole class (McGivern, 2023). This could provide a sense of security and a safe space in which students feel comfortable providing honest feedback while increasing student engagement, especially when students can share their responses and hear from others (McGivern, 2023). This in turn has the potential to inform educators about ways to better meet student needs across the classroom. Moreover, using SRS with daily quizzes is not limited to larger lecture halls; it's also suitable for smaller lecture classrooms.

In addition to SRS providing opportunities for greater student engagement in a nonthreatening environment (opportunity to practice with anonymity and without fear of embarrassment) (McGivern, 2023), SRS can also be used to improve accessibility for students with disabilities in the classroom, as the systems can be used to accommodate various types of learners, such as those with emotional or behavioral disorders (Blood, 2010). SRS systems can also be advantageous for cross-cultural learning, as it allows instructors to use questions and activities that are more tailored to students from diverse backgrounds while allowing students to learn from each other during group work.

Incorporating a structured environment that allows for daily quizzes and group work via SRS helps improve equity and inclusivity in teaching. By providing practice in the way of daily quizzes and group discussion, students have more opportunities to succeed in the classroom (Carnaghan et al., 2011). Firm structure helps level the playing field for diverse groups of students who have not been provided guidance in the past to meet the requirements for college learning (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). In a high structure course, active learning via classroom participation is graded and more quizzes are given. Daily preparation for class and active learning via more quizzes increases practice with course content, decreases cramming and improves learning (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Also, having required completion of pre-class readings and then having students participate in daily quizzes using SRS and group discussions can help reduce difficulty of understanding course content and provide multiple opportunities of exposure to course content rather than just hearing something once in lecture and then cramming for an exam.

While inclusion of SRS can improve classroom dynamics in student engagement, there are limitations. For one, it is important to make sure all students have access to the necessary technology to be able to participate in daily quizzes (Orwell et al., 2020). Also, some students might feel more comfortable expressing themselves verbally, therefore, providing opportunity for verbal student feedback is still worthwhile. However, the inclusion of group work into daily quizzes addresses this limitation. Finally, SRS need to be properly set up and managed before they can be utilized easily by students, so extra effort may be needed by the instructor (Orwell et al., 2020). Although one can argue for the use of a student's personal smart phones as a SRS (Aljaloud et al., 2015), based on a literature review by Dontre (2021), smart phones are more disruptive to student learning then beneficial. In sum, while incorporating SRS with daily quizzes has the potential to improve inclusive learning for college students, instructors must address the limitations of these systems to maximize the potential learning benefits.

Once incorporated into the classroom, data from SRS and daily quizzes can be used to assess the progress of all students in the classroom and to inform curricular development and course design (Orwell et al., 2020). SRS systems provide instructors with valuable feedback in real-time, enabling them to make timely adjustments to their instruction and curricula (Carnaghan et al., 2011; Grazulevicius et al., 2021). This information can also be used to evaluate student learning and make informed decisions regarding course design and content. For

example, a professor might be able to identify topics that are difficult for students to understand and revise the curriculum accordingly.

In conclusion, the use of SRS with daily quizzes and group work provides a more inclusive pedagogy that can improve college course design, student engagement, and student performance. By providing a nonthreatening environment and increasing accessibility for students with disabilities, SRS with daily quizzes and group work encourages collaboration and self-paced learning activities. Furthermore, these systems can provide instructors with valuable data regarding student progress, learning, and content comprehension, which can be used to improve upon course design and development. These tools provide a unique opportunity for instructors to engage with students in the classroom in a meaningful way that can be tailored to the needs of a diversity of students.

Classroom Context

The use of SRS for active learning via daily quizzes and group work were implemented in early major biology-based lab courses including Principles of Biology (BIOL 101) and Concepts of Zoology (BIOL 211). These are required courses for all biology majors to take, from Preprofessional Degrees (Pre-Med, Pre-Dental, Pre-Pharmaceutical, etc.), Environmental Biology, Molecular Biology, Botany, Animal Behavior, and other biology options. Traditionally, the Concepts of Zoology course had an extremely high 'DFW' rate (i.e., when a student earns a D or F grade or withdraws from the course), around 33%. In response, several strategies were implemented to incorporate inclusive learning practices into this course. I also utilized these tools in my upper-level biology courses and have flipped all my lectures to consist of group-based work and daily quizzes to replace traditional lectures. I have obtained IRB approval to share the results of my findings from my courses (#902381995).

Assignment

In my courses, I employ student engagement strategies to try and create a dynamic teaching environment. Lee (2014) found that student behavioral and emotional engagement in a course predicted better performance. I have worked to improve upon my engagement techniques based on comments from student evaluations and my own course assessments, and I have found that the more students are engaged in my courses the better they perform.

Based on student feedback, students respond favorably to daily quizzes and appreciated their purpose. Students are instructed to prepare, before the lecture

or lab, by reading book chapters or watching videos. At the beginning of lecture, I give a couple of daily quiz questions on the chapter readings and/or videos. I allow quizzes to be open notebook and open discussion. Students have 1-2 minutes to discuss each question with other classmates and then select the answer using clickers (i.e., SRS) After each class, I tally points from each student to record their quiz grades and identify which students were present or absent from class. Appendix A provides several examples of the types of daily quiz questions I use in my courses.

At the end of the day, for each class period, students evaluate each other's preparedness and performance. This is done using a simple grading scale score of 0-3. With 0 being the lowest grade and 3 the highest. Students received instructions and completed evaluation forms for group members using a Microsoft Forms document. This document was available on the course Learning Management System and automatically recorded student responses that were then saved on the Microsoft Forms Cloud and made available to instructors as a spreadsheet when accessing the Microsoft Forms program. Groups were randomly assigned before each class period so students did not work with the same group every week. Appendix B provides an example of a student form that students would complete to conduct group evaluations.

Figure 1
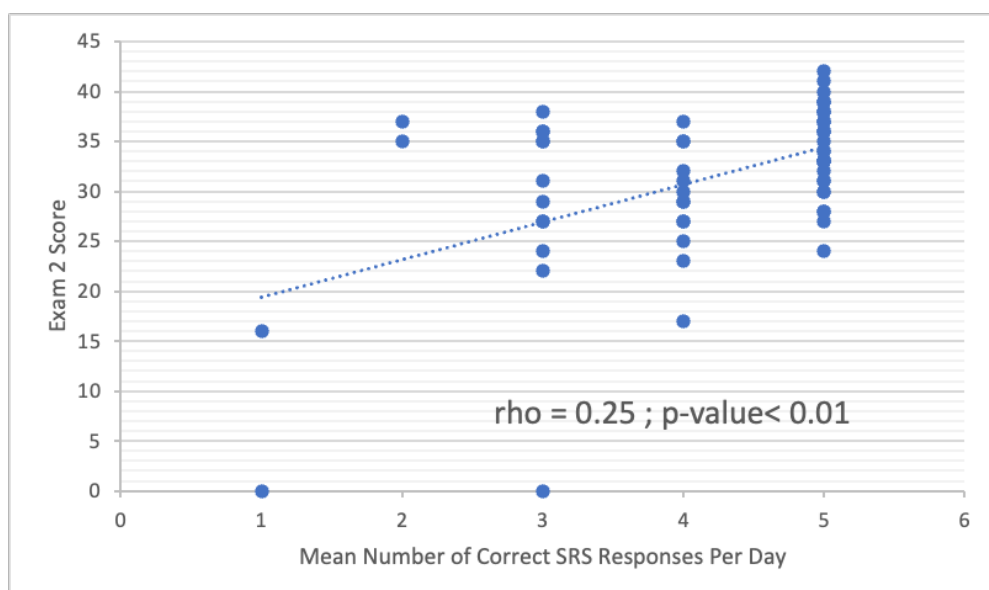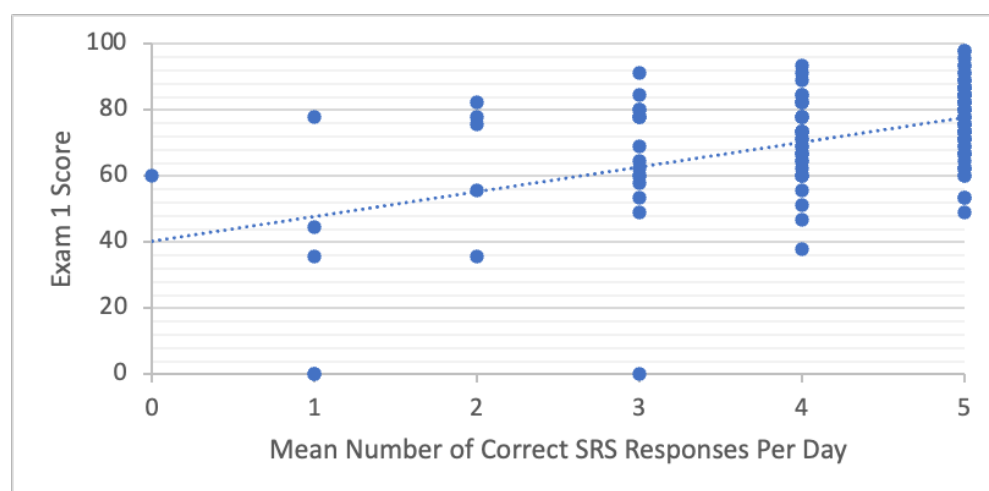
A significant positive linear relationship (spearman rank) between mean number of correct SRS responses per day and Exam Scores 1 (rho = 0.24; p-value < 0.05) (top) & 2 (rho = 0.25; p-value < 0.01) (bottom) for Concepts of Zoology Lecture (BIOL 211) (n=60). A student's exam score was positively associated with the mean number of correct responses they provided for questions given during lectures leading up to the exam.

Reflection

Overall, evidence suggests that remote clickers used in the classroom engage learners and improve student performance (Aljaloud et al., 2015; Brady et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2005). In my courses, I used the SRS to conduct daily quizzes via group

work to review previous course material, textbook reading assignments completed before class, and course material covered in class the same day. Despite their frequency and possible associated stress, Poljičanin et al. (2009) found that daily quizzes were associated with higher student academic success in biology-based courses. I have found a positive relationship between successful student participation in daily quizzes using SRS and group work and the grades students obtain on course exams (Figure 1). In general, students who participated in daily quizzes and worked to obtain the correct answers had a significantly positive linear relationship with higher exam scores.

Student peer evaluation scores were a good predictor of overall student performance in the course. Students who received high

Figure 2

A significant positive linear relationship (linear regression) between the final lab grade a student earned in Principles of Biology Lab (BIOL 101) and the mean group evaluation score they obtained from group mates during the whole semester (n=22) (Top). Same relationship was found for an upper-level biology Ornithology course (BIOL 346) (n=21). Student evaluation scores were transformed from a 0-3 continuous grading scale to a 0-100 grading scale (Bottom).

evaluation scores from their peers in class also obtained high final grades in class (Figure 2). Participation grades for daily quiz group work only consisted of 5% of the final grade. Therefore, students that prepared for class by reading the textbook, taking notes before class, completing assignments before class, etc., were better able to help peers with daily quiz questions and thus obtained higher group evaluation grades from classmates. This in turn better prepared students to do well overall in class, as indicated by their final course grade (Figure 2)

Including daily quizzes with group work into my course structure helps improve active classroom learning. Preszler et al (2007) found that across six biology courses, SRS had favorable responses from students and increased student learning. Students involved in these active learning activities improved their class performance. In addition, based on student feedback, students preferred having daily quizzes with group work, over traditional lectures, and this was especially true for my early 8am courses. Evidence suggests that having students actively participate in daily quizzes in groups and having them actively prepare for these quizzes to help classmates leads to both higher exam grades and higher final course grades overall.

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Appendix A

Examples of daily quiz questions for group discussions. Students answer questions using student response systems (SRS) post discussion. Responses are then recorded and tabulated. Course title and number are provided for each example given below.

Examples of Daily Quiz Questions Given for a Zoology Lecture on Phylum Cnidaria (Biol 211).

1. How many germ layers do Cnidarians have?

  A. 0

  B. 1

  C. 2

  D. 3

  E. 4

  F. None of the above

  G. Same number as Poriferans

2. What is a sessile form of a Cnidarian?

  A. Medusa

  B. Planula

  C. Nematocyst

  D. Choanocyte

  E. Polyp

  F. Spicule

3. Which of the following allow Coral Zooids to communicate?

  A. Septa

  B. Solenia

C. Zooxanthellae

D. Siphonoglyph

E. Mesoglea

Examples of Daily Quiz Questions Given for an Ornithology Lecture on Avian Flight (Biol 346).

1. Which of the following below has the greatest wing loading? Which of the following below has the greatest wing aspect ratio? **Each of the options below will have an image of a different bird species in flight.**

   A. Cooper's hawk

   B. Tree swallow

   C. Wild turkey

   D. Sooty shearwater

   E. House sparrow

   F. Magnificent frigatebird

2. Match the following soaring types to the **images below** (thermal, slope, and dynamic) and be able to explain how each works.

   A. Have an image of a hawk over a mountainside

   B. Have an image of a turkey vulture over an urban landscape

   C. Have an image of an albatross over the waves of an ocean

3. Have students work together to illustrate the Bernoulli Principle of flight. Then have students label **an image showing the parts of the bird wing** using the terms below.

   A. Airfoil

   B. Angle of attack

   C. Low air pressure

   D. High air pressure

Appendix B

Group evaluation form submitted virtually by students through a course learning management system and hosted on Microsoft Forms.

Group Member Assessment Form Zoo Lab

Give a grade for yourself and your group mates. Give a score from 0-3, with 3 being the highest score showing excellent participation to zero showing no participation.

A score of 3 indicates a group mate who represented the group, had robust notes prepared before class, did not check phone or social media, textbook was ready, was not late to class, did not leave early, and they helped the group answer all the questions.

A score of 2 indicates a group member that tried to represent the group, had some notes ready, little to no phone or social media use, textbook was ready, was not late to class, did not leave early, and they helped the group answer most of the questions.

A score of 1 is a group member that did not represent the group, no notes were prepared, checked phone or social media, late to class or left early, textbook was ready and they helped the group answer some of the questions.

A score of 0 means no participation, no notes prepared, actively checked phone and social media, no textbook, late to class or left early, and did not help answer questions.

Feel free to use decimal scores (e.g., 2.5 or 1.25). A score over 3 will not be counted.

1. Please give your name

   Enter your answer

2. Please give yourself a score

   Enter your answer

3. Group Member 1 Name

   Enter your answer

4. Group Member 1 Score

   Enter your answer

See text version below:

Group Member Assessment Form Zoo Lab

Give a grade for yourself and your group mates. Give a score from 0-3, with 3 being the highest score showing excellent participation to zero showing no participation.

A score of 3 indicates a group mate who represented the group, had robust notes prepared before class, did not check phone or social media, textbook was ready, was not late to class, did not leave early, and they helped the group answer all the questions.

A score of 2 indicates a group member that tried to represent the group, had some notes ready, little to no phone or social media use, textbook was ready, was not late to class, did not leave early, and they helped the group answer most of the questions.

A score of 1 is a group member that did not represent the group, no notes were prepared, checked phone or social media, late to class or left early, textbook was ready and they helped the group answer some of the questions.

A score of 0 means no participation, no notes prepared, actively checked phone and social media, no textbook, late to class or left early, and did not help answer questions.

Feel free to use decimal scores (e.g. 2.5 or 1.25). A score over 3 will not be counted.

1. Please give your name (open ended)

2. Please give yourself a score (open ended)

3. Group Member 1 Name (open ended)

4. Group Member 1 Score (open ended)

Chapter 7

Inclusive Advising

Dr. Margaret Mbindyo

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Abstract

This chapter lays the foundation for inclusive advising based on the Global Community for Academic Advising NACADA's Core Values, Core Competencies, and the Concept of Academic Advising. Inclusive advising is defined as a compassionate, welcoming relationship between a faculty advisor and the student which helps the advisor know the students' backgrounds, strengths, and needs, as well as leveraging that knowledge to support them in meeting high academic expectations. If clearly understood, faculty advisors can create advising environments in which all students feel like they belong and are appreciated for who they are and what they bring to the learning space. By implementing inclusive advising practices based on these core values and core competencies, the advising interaction becomes more meaningful for both parties.

Information Connecting Inclusive Advising Pedagogy Research

The college transition can be rough and overwhelming for students from certain populations and inclusive faculty advisors can help students cope with the challenges involved. Nationally, higher education demographics have shifted, with more diverse students enrolling as first-year students. The main function of a faculty advisor is to bring holistic support to students as they navigate their transition to higher education (Thach, 2022), with shifting student demographics, the function of advising is an important conversation. Inclusive advising is sensitive to the needs of diverse students. According to a recent study by the University of Michigan, there are some differences related to certain aspects of advising between student subgroups and therefore advisors need to be aware of differing student needs and intentionally pursue training in inclusive advising skills and practices (Wakefield, et al, 2022). Advising in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) is performed by faculty yet, very few have formal training in how to advise students. The National Academic Advising Global

Association (NACADA) has created inclusive guidelines about how all advisors can leverage these guidelines for better advising experiences for all students (NACADA, 2017). These guidelines are embedded in:

• NACADA Core Values

• NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies

• Concept of Academic Advising

NACADA Core Values

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Academic Advising Core Values: There are seven advising core values which include caring, commitment, empowerment, inclusivity, integrity, professionalism, and respect.

Figure 1

NACADA Academic Advising Core Values

This image reprinted with permission from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising https://nacada.ksu.edu/.

Caring

Academic advisors respond to and are accessible to others in ways that challenge, support, nurture, and teach. Advisors build relationships through empathetic listening and compassion for students, colleagues, and others.

Commitment

Academic advisors value and are dedicated to excellence in all dimensions of student success. Advisors are committed to students, colleagues, institutions, and the profession through assessment, scholarly inquiry, life-long learning, and professional development.

Empowerment

Academic advisors motivate, encourage, and support students and the greater educational community to recognize their potential, meet challenges, and respect individuality.

Inclusivity

Academic advisors respect, engage, and value a supportive culture for diverse populations. Advisors strive to create and support environments that consider the needs and perspectives of students, institutions, and colleagues through openness, acceptance, and equity.

Integrity

Academic advisors act intentionally in accordance with ethical and professional behavior developed through reflective practice. Advisors value honesty, transparency, and accountability to the student, institution, and the advising profession.

Professionalism

Academic advisors act in accordance with the values of the profession of advising for the greater good of students, colleagues, institutions, and higher education in general.

Respect

Academic advisors honor the inherent value of all students. Advisors build positive relationships by understanding and appreciating students' views and cultures, maintaining a student-centered approach and mindset, and treating students with sensitivity and fairness.

Inclusivity Core Value

For purposes of this chapter, out of these seven core values, I will spotlight INCLUSIVITY. The inclusivity core value is described as follows "Advisors respect, engage, and value a supportive culture for diverse populations. Advisors strive to create and support environments that consider the needs and perspectives of students, institutions, and colleagues through openness, acceptance, and equity."

Since college can be an overwhelming experience, the inclusive faculty who utilize this inclusive core value help their students to feel supported and included.

It is the responsibility of all faculty advisors to value their students irrespective of their backgrounds (NACADA, 2017), in a book dedicated to inclusive teaching practices, this discussion of inclusive advising practices furthers where and when inclusive educators support students. Centering inclusive advising is likely to lead to positive relationships that can provide a sense of safety, security, and stability. In addition, it can lead to increased cooperation and engagement in the advising experience leading to better student outcomes.

The advising interaction starts before the student comes to meet with me. I usually call or email the student reminding them about the meeting and its agenda and assuring them with such statements as "I look forward to meeting with you". This simple statement is powerful and assures students that they are welcome in the advising space. I have also done the following to make my office space welcoming and inclusive.

- I try as much as possible to eliminate clutter and get rid of unnecessary paperwork that crowds the advising space.

- I try to personalize my office space by adjusting the lighting and having personal pictures of my family. I have found that these always elicit a few questions as conversation starters. In addition, I always make sure I have soft tissue, hand lotion and sanitizer for whoever may need to use it.

- I arrange and decorate my office with posters that empower and encourage students in their efforts to be better students. In addition, some of these posters promote resilience, self-confidence, and positive communication among other skills.

- I keep a jar of candy or chocolate for students to help themselves. An old African proverb says that "A dog knows the places he is thrown food" (Acholi Proverb). In advising circles, this means that the student will be more likely to come back because they feel valued, this simple offering can foster a sense of belonging. In addition, depending on the origin of the candy or chocolate, the treat may also serve as a symbol of inclusivity.

- I always stand to welcome students in my office and see them out of my office, usually with a smile.

- After welcoming them, I always engage them briefly about different issues, it may be the weather, how the day is going etc. This makes students feel relaxed and at ease during the advising interaction.

Examples of questions include;

- How was your class? If coming straight from a class.

- Is it still raining out there? If it was raining earlier.

- Is there any improvement to your living condition? If the student shared their living condition recently.

- Do you feel better now? If the student was previously unwell.

NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies

The NACADA Core Competencies complement the NACADA Core Values, forming a foundation for building an inclusive advising practice. Without these competencies, the advising session cannot be successful and the student's advising outcomes will not be met. The NACADA Core Competencies include thorough knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Conceptual competencies

- Informational competencies

- Relational competencies

The three core competencies for academic advising serve as the cornerstone for effective advising practice. These core competencies help advisors build a broad range of understanding, knowledge, and skills specifically to support academic advising. NACADA draws attention to the advisor core competencies to guide the faculty advisor in creating space to ensure that the knowledge gained by a student-advisee during an advising session is contributing towards student development, progress, and success.

Within each core competency are specific skills that support inclusive advising. In the next parts of this chapter, I highlight key elements of these skills to support readers adapting their advising practices and offer my own example of these skills from my advising practice.

Working With the Conceptual Component

The *Conceptual component* provides the context for the delivery of academic advising. It covers the ideas and theories that advisors must understand to effectively advise their students. Within the conceptual component academic

Figure 2
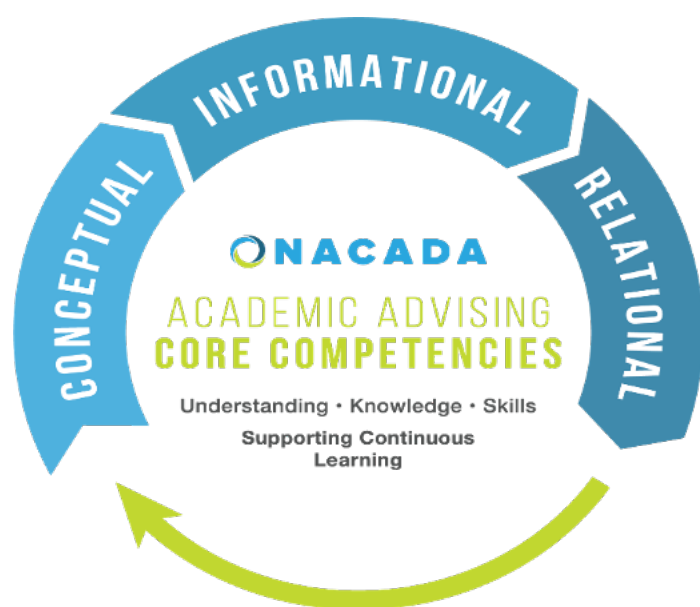
Academic Advising Core Competencies. Reprinted with permission from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, https://my.nacada.ksu.edu/About-Us."

advisors must understand h*ow equitable and inclusive environments are created and maintained.*

Readers can use these ideas by

•Examining their own identity and the role it plays in their personal advising practice?

•Listening and responding with empathy

•Supporting the student while empowering them to support themselves.

•Building an advising culture of ongoing feedback.

•Participating in forums that share and encourage different advising approaches and strategies.

I adapt these ideas into my own advising practice by considering the following:

• Am I aware of the power dynamic between myself as the advisor and the student? I try to empower and let the student drive the conversation as I listen while interjecting accordingly. In the end, we agree on the way forward.

• Am I striving to understand that in an equitable and inclusive advising environment, every student has equal access to advising? I strive to treat students equitably.

• Am I aware of different social identities and as an advisor? I strive to demonstrate that I understand the impact of systematic inequities and these crucial factors guide me in creating a supportive and inclusive advising environment.

• Am I am respectful of their religious and social orientation? I strive to engage students from various backgrounds, remembering not to make assumptions.

To summarize, these ideas encourage and help ensure that every student feels included, has a space to learn in their own way and is given a chance to succeed. In addition, the strategies enhance each student's sense of identity, and foster inclusion in the advising space. Furthermore, demonstrating a genuine interest in learning about each student helps to establish trust and allows the advisor to

form a bond with them so they feel valued. If students feel a bond and are comfortable with the advisor, there's a better chance they'll feel comfortable sharing their academic issues.

Working With the Informational Component

The *Informational component* provides the substance of academic advising. It covers the knowledge advisors must gain to be able to guide the students at their institution.

Within the informational component the inclusive advising knowledge faculty advisors must know are the *characteristics, needs, and experiences of major and emerging student populations.*

There is great student representation in higher educational institutions including students from different faiths and sexual orientations, veterans, first generation college students, underrepresented, minoritized, and nontraditional students. Any higher education professional, whether administrators, faculty, or staff, must remain informed of the changing higher education student population. Changes impact more than just retention; they impact how to support populations of students on college campuses. Attending professional conferences and selecting presentations that address these topics will be beneficial to faculty advisors. In addition, consulting different advising communities within NACADA is extremely helpful. This is where colleagues share ideas and strategies for serving specific student populations (NACADA, 2019).

I adapt these ideas into my own advising practice by considering the following:

- I avoid discussing religion or people's sexual orientation. During each advising interaction, I am conscious of any biases that may creep in, and continuously reflect on how I check my own biases.

- I try to understand and respond to the students' unique needs and situations so that I can be able to refer them to the right resources while helping them to reach their academic goals and personal aspirations.

- I may spend more time with some students than others, depending on the students learning style and understanding. I do this by acknowledging that all individuals are at distinct phases of awareness and change.

Readers can bring these ideas into their Inclusive Advising through the intentional collaborative practice of asking open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals,

and potentials (Bloom, Hutson & He, 2008). Readers can also develop and hone the faculty advisor advising philosophy by creating a warm and supportive advising environment that will encourage students to be receptive to what is being discussed. Finally, faculty advisors can further build Inclusive Advising practices by partnering and participating with a center for teaching and learning (CTL) or a campus-based faculty professional development community for continuous training and updates about university policies and procedures.

Working With the Relational Component

The *Relational component* provides the skills that enable academic advisors to convey the concepts and information about advising to their students. The advisor must know their students and create a rapport with them. This will help them be able to articulate and explain the institutions, programs, and policies clearly.

Among core competencies in the relational component skills faculty advisors must demonstrate is the ability to: *Communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner.*

I adapt these ideas into my own advising practice by considering the following:

- I try to create a positive attitude no matter the topic while encouraging students to do their best.

- I always treat my students with dignity and respect and offer a non-judgmental space for them to express themselves freely.

- I let my students know that they have something to contribute and that their perspectives matter.

- I keep in mind that, often, students are going through a lot and so I try to be sensitive to how they present themselves. Sometimes, the discussion may be interrupted by tears, in that case, I pause and allow the student to cry.

- I have created and set boundaries within the advising relationship which is clearly understood by myself and the students.

Readers can adapt these ideas to their own inclusive advising by creating and setting clear standards and expectations to help students navigate the advising appointment. Inclusive advisors are mindful of the language choices and words used in the advising interaction. This requires actively and continuously challenging the self to accept other views and perspectives, listening to students

with empathy and responding accordingly, developing techniques to build rapport with students, and also, intentionally learning how to communicate better with different student populations.

Learning Space Context: Concept of Academic Advising

Advising is a widespread practice in higher education in the US, supporting both undergraduate and graduate students. Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education (NACADA, 2019). Academic advising engages students beyond their own world views, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit the institution. Through good academic advising, inclusive advising, students learn to survive as members of the higher education community, to think critically about their potential as students and as emerging global citizens. Academic advising encourages students to appreciate different world views and perspectives, while appreciating their individual characteristics and identities as they navigate through college. The faculty advisor is critical in helping students craft a clear educational plan based on the students' aspirations, interests, and goals.

The concept of academic advising has three components: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising).

The Curriculum of Academic Advising

The curriculum of academic advising includes helping students to make the right decisions about their academic work, the selection of academic programs and courses and the understanding academic policies, and procedures.

The Pedagogy of Academic Advising

Academic advising, as a teaching and learning process, requires a thorough understanding of curriculum and progression of academic requirements. and the process is characterized by mutual respect, trust, and ethical behavior.

Student Learning Outcomes of Academic Advising

The learning outcomes articulate what students will demonstrate, and benefit as a result of participating in academic advising.

Application for the Faculty Advisor

Figure 3
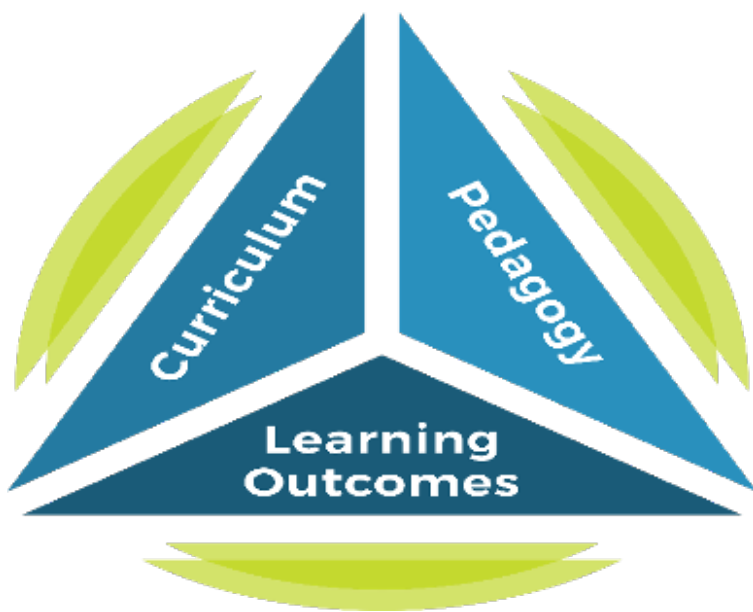
Three Components of Advising. Reprinted with permission from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, https://my.nacada.ksu.edu/About-Us

Using each component of academic advising, the faculty advisor should be able to gather and use information from various sources to help students set goals, reach decisions, and achieve those goals. In addition, they should help students understand their role and responsibility for meeting academic program requirements. Finally, the faculty advisor should articulate and explain to the students the meaning of higher education and the intent of the institution's curriculum which includes cultivating the academic, social, and personal habits that lead to a lifetime of learning and self-regulation.

Some videos that contain supplemental information about inclusive advising and teaching are *Inclusive Advising Strategies* (Arkansas Academic Advising Network, 2022), *Inclusive Practices for Supporting First-Gen, Lower-Income Students in and Beyond the Classroom* (Harvard – Office of the VPAL, 2020), and *Advising Students of Diverse Racial and Ethnic Identities – Intro* (Haynes, 2017). Particularly, readers will gain more insights and strategies about advising students of diverse racial and ethnic identities.

Educator Reflection Questions Connected to the Core Values and Core Competencies

Reflection Questions Aligned With NACADA Core Values

1. Are there stereotypes or prejudices that my advising practice may implicitly promote? (Professionalism/Respect)

2. How might my beliefs about certain student populations, hinder me from giving the best during my advising sessions? (Integrity/Inclusivity)

3. How might you better build rapport with your students and foster a sense of trust during an advising session? (Caring/Commitment/Respect)

4. Am I getting my own personal biases interfere with my advising practices? (Professionalism/Caring)

5. What are your advising core values and are they in line with the NACADA core values? (Professionalism/Caring)

6. What specific changes to your advising practices can ensure that all students feel that belong and their perspectives are welcomed and valued in your office? (Integrity/Empowerment/Respect)

7. Does my advising practice promote diversity, equity, and inclusion? (Inclusivity/Empowerment)

8. Am I aware of any personal biases? (Integrity/Inclusivity/Caring)

Reflection Questions Aligned With NACADA Core Competencies

1. Am l making assumptions about advisees' knowledge of the higher education process? (Conceptual/Informational)

2. Am I aware of the new or updated institutional policies? (Informational)

3. What advising strategies do you implement that creates opportunities for students to share their diverse perspectives with you? (Relational)

4. What is your advising philosophy? (Conceptual)

5. How do my values guide my advising practice? (Conceptual)

6. Am I familiar with new trends in higher education arena? (Informational)

7. Am I getting advising feedback from my students? (Relational)

8. How might you improve your advising philosophy to support your students better? (Conceptual)

Conclusion

Inclusive advising is an intentional interaction using an advising curriculum for better student learning outcomes. The inclusive advisor offers a safe space while synthesizing and contextualizing students' backgrounds, educational experiences, and their career goals, to help them succeed in and beyond college. In advising, safe spaces consist of appropriate physical arrangement, trust, respect, lack of judgment and censorship, willingness to share, and high-quality listening (Kisfalvi

& Oliver, 2015). In addition, advising practices that utilize safe spaces maximize students' sense of belonging (Tamakloe, Mbindyo & Ibrahim 2021). The inclusive academic advisor understands the need for keeping the learning outcomes associated with academic advising attainable for students from all backgrounds.

Lastly, the reflection questions and strategies provided in this chapter highlight the connections among the faculty advisor institutional knowledge, professional development, the advising process, and student inclusion and empowerment which leads to student success.

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Chapter 8

Student Support Policies in the Syllabus: Supporting Students Before the Class Begins

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Abstract

This chapter includes a Graduate Growth Statement and Undergraduate Course Policy centering student growth and learning within a learning space. The chapter focuses more heavily on the value of high structure to support graduate learners, and the need for design changes as the graduate level to invite more learners to this level of education. The chapter briefly discusses ways of adapting the attention to learner empowerment by course level to support all learners, to show students how they can be empowered learners.

Background

I have served as the Graduate Coordinator, overseeing students enrolled in the Master of Arts and/or Master of Education in English degrees for over five years (at the time of this publication). My role as Coordinator is to support graduate students in these programs. While some of that support involves helping students navigate the paperwork side of their degree, reading degree audits and submitting graduation documents, more of that support work involves supporting graduate students as they navigate the hidden curriculum of graduate education.

I see graduate education as offering the opportunity to develop research, writing, and creative critical thinking skills made possible through deeper theory reading and deeper engagement with the discipline. An added dimension of this important skill building is that scholars typically argue that "graduate education makes a college a university, produces national and international leaders, and creates new knowledge and technology for societies" (Hall-Hertel, Brandes, Shepard, 2022, p. 3). Graduate education and graduate courses serve the communities in which the students live; they serve the discipline through deeper conversations designed to produce new knowledge; and they serve the students by opening up new opportunities for career growth and advancement as future leaders.

While graduate education may imply the students arrive prepared with skills to successfully navigate the hidden curriculum of education, it should be noted that graduate education offers new complications for all students. Graduate students don't necessarily know or understand the implied skills that should develop through the assigned readings and assignments. Graduate students still benefit from supportive curricula to help them uncover the hidden curriculum and navigate the workload successfully.

From January to March 2022, I completed the "Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Online Learning Environment" course offered as a part of the ACUE faculty training. (ACUE, 2022). This course offered many useful ideas for building inclusive courses – focused predominantly on undergraduate courses. Shortly after, I began university-level work with *Inclusive Practices* by Hogan and Sathy (2022). As a pedagogue, I was focused on developing my understanding of inclusive teaching. I was finding ways to expand entry points to my curriculum, and I was working to expand choice within assignments.

At the same time, I continued to consider my graduate students, wanting to center the specific needs of graduate student populations in my growth as an inclusive educator because I felt this was an underrepresented student population within most conversations about pedagogy, course design, curricular growth, and inclusive practices. To begin this work, I returned to reflective educator practices (Rodgers, n.d.), focusing specifically on graduate students and graduate student populations needs.

Specifically, I started by adding a "Graduate Growth Statement" to my syllabus which added high structure to the graduate course (Hogan & Sathy, 2022, pp. 28-32). I purposely start the course by adding a structural element typically missing from graduate education. Too often we assume graduate learners built all the skills necessary to be "good" students while they were undergraduate learners. Graduate education then focuses on deepening and enriching the existing skills. However, even at the graduate level, students arrive to our learning spaces with a variety of skill sets and skill awareness. By creating a learning space that didn't acknowledge the skills necessary for success and the goals of the space, my learning space would have privileged students with a strong skill set, and alienated students still developing the skills. Ultimately this would impact who felt accepted within a graduate learning space, and within a graduate program. While this one practice cannot undo the racial and class inequities within graduate education, it can help educators consider how we bring transparency to graduate course design to invite all learners to grow and

develop. It can help more students see themselves reflected as graduate learners.

Including the Graduate Growth Statement helped me return to a statement I created to support students, to reflect on how and where I support students throughout my course design. I now use the following questions to consider how I integrate inclusive practices within my graduate course design:

- How and where am I unpacking the hidden curriculum of graduate education, and graduate education design?

- How and where am I helping graduate learners understand the depth and breadth of the research, writing, and creative critical thinking skill development they engage in their coursework and graduate student work? This needs to include conference presentations, grants they may apply for, and other work that is routinely a part of graduate education because it aligns with valued graduate skills – but isn't discussed in relation to those skills.

For me, the Graduate Growth Statement provides a strong way to start the course design, to return to inclusive practices. Additionally, the Graduate Growth Statement provides a strong way to start the course with students, centering their needs. A Graduate Growth Statement would immediately include these ideas within my courses. Importantly, this statement helps draw attention to my pedagogical approach as graduate-student centered, communicating to students how I see graduate student specific needs.

I also realized that undergraduates would benefit from this focused attention, so I modified my Graduate Growth Statement to support the needs of learners in my 300-level general education writing course as well. I now include a version of this statement in all courses that I teach. The statements not only communicate to students, they serve as a reminder to me to point out the high structure elements I assign and explain why to my students as a way to support their success.

Below, I share my Graduate Growth Statement and Undergraduate Course Policy. I invite readers both with and without graduate programs to consider how similar statements would help you convey student-centered inclusive practices within your learning spaces, while also drawing attention to important skill development and growth.

Classroom Context

As the Graduate Coordinator of an English graduate program, at a master's level public institution, our graduate enrollment is about half "traditional" graduate students and half current K-12 teachers. Because we are a small university, we do not have many Assistantship positions for our graduate learners, so most of the graduate students in the program work full-time.

The Graduate Growth Statement developed during a time when our program was increasing online course offerings to better meet student needs and demand. As with most institutions, graduate enrollment decreased as a result of the pandemic. Graduate enrollment in face-to-face courses never rebounded after the pandemic, but online course enrollment remained strong. With more asynchronous design, and less space to build conversation toward unpacking hidden curricula, it became obvious that there was a need to explicitly address the high structure format of my online asynchronous course design. In part, I want graduate learners to know I recognize them as graduate learners. The design is not an extension of my undergraduate design; the assignment asks are not busy work because this is an online course, but rather skill- and content-enrichment activities to support graduate learning growth.

A brief context note: I use this thinking with all levels. The Undergraduate Course Policy shifts to clearly draw attention to the course level. Students in my 300-level course are reminded of what they know and what they've experienced already as learners. Students in my 100-level course are invited into a new learning community with careful attention to supporting conscious skill transfer. Each course context benefits from attention to who the learners are within that space.

Graduate Growth Statement

I value the function of graduate education, but want to create positive change to shift toward inclusivity. Whenever and wherever possible I will be transparent about the hidden curriculums informing the design of graduate education, and the purposes of my pedagogical approach. A part of that transparency is also a reminder that graduate students are expected to grow and develop - researching on their own, building working representations of a field of study within English. In this course specifically, we will focus on Writing Studies as a subfield, exploring content, methods, methodologies, ways of knowing and thinking, ideologies, and ways of understanding that form the field of Writing Studies. Research and exploration in addition to the assigned material is expected to help

you understand the ideologies and ways of understanding. Be sure to put in the work, ask the questions, seek out additional research and current research to help you grow as a scholar of English while enrolled in this course.

After receiving several positive comments from Graduate students about how the growth statement helped them understand and write their own goals, I modified the statement for undergraduate courses. I have broken this into the "Course Policy" because I feel this is language the undergraduates understand and recognize, and the "Student Support Policy".

Undergraduate Course Policy

We are all here to learn and grow as scholars. I am here to help you grow, I have designed this course to help you grow. Your job is to reflect on your learning so you leave class a more empowered learner. Your other job is to help your peers grow as empowered learners. Policy #1 is my policy that we all work together to support idea development and growth in all our interactions. For this to work, we need to be willing to be vulnerable (in the ways that you are comfortable), to receive feedback, and to grow as learners.

Student Support Policy

I accept late assignments. Please email in advance, if possible, if you know an assignment will be late. I don't need an elaborate explanation - I am prone to believe students.

While I have this late policy, I am willing to work with any student who wants to complete the course who encounters life difficulties. I understand how little we control those difficulties. I need you to communicate with me at the earliest you are able to.

Assignment

First is the "Graduate Growth Statement" which drove my work with teaching through inclusive mindset in this way. I want to point out that I start the statement with an acknowledgement that not all courses will be designed like mine, but the skills students build in my course should be transferrable to all learning spaces. I highlight my goal of transparency, then follow this up in the curriculum with an explanation of why I require the assignments I do.

For this to be most effective, I have started asking students to write their goals for the course, and their goals as graduate students. This early reflection asks

students to sit with what they know about graduate education, and what they hope to gain.

Then, I add in discussions on why I assigned the various assignments, specific to what I consider the hidden curricular items. For instance, it is very common for graduate seminars to include graduate student presentations. From a curricular design perspective, educators are providing practice opportunities for students wishing to present at conferences – more directly, the assignment is reifying the value of presenting research at conferences as important within graduate education. In following my Graduate Growth Statement, I offer this discussion as part of the assignment introduction. As a regional public institution with master's degrees in English, half my students are currently teachers. That means half my students may never present their work at a conference, seeking a master's is related directly to their current employment and employability in the field of K-12 education. In addition to explaining the graduate skill development of an oral presentation assignment, I also explain the value for graduate students who may choose not to present at conferences. I ask students to reflect on how the skills developed in the assignment help them work toward their personal course goals, and their personal graduate career goals. This invites all students to align the skill development with their individual goals, so all students find their way into the assignment.

Reflection Questions

1. What skills are in development within your learning space? What skills do students transfer into your learning space?

2. What is the goal of your course, and how can a learner-centered growth statement help communicate student's active participation with your course goals?

3. Drawing from the skills and goals – what would you like to communicate to learners in your learning space about how the design focuses attention on their individual growth?

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Chapter 9

Inclusive Teaching: Macro Practice Course Design To Support a Real-World Project

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Abstract

This chapter provides guidance on how to create a macro practice course that utilizes inclusive teaching techniques including a welcoming syllabus, high structure, and group work that can be customized to fit any field of study. The macro practice course is designed to assist students in examining social problems, conducting research, proposing solutions, developing interventions, and honing practical skills when collaborating with organizations and communities through structured assignments. The course utilizes experiential learning methods to establish an inclusive learning environment. Each assignment is created to aid student groups in achieving program competencies and learning objectives. Completing these assignments can help students develop leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills, as well as learn to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Background

When designing a course that promotes equity and inclusion, it is critical to ensure that students feel like they belong. According to Keene (2023), "belongingness is a psychological term that refers to a person's perception of the amount of social support and acceptance [they] receive. A high sense of belongingness and social support positively correlate with [the] quality of life, improved physical health, and a sense of well-being" (p. 2). Honest discussions arise naturally in class when students feel included and purposefully meet assignment expectations. Additionally, honest discussion enhances skill acquisition and improves the ability to reflect and self-correct as students mature. To achieve this, instructors should view students as unique individuals with traits, personalities, attitudes, and experiences contributing to the classroom environment and learning process (Addy et al., 2021). In other words, instructors should view students with unique learning styles and involve them in creating knowledge alongside their peers.

To create a welcoming educational environment for students, the instructor should start by setting the tone through the syllabus design and structured assignments. To achieve this, instructors would revise the syllabus to align with project objectives and use first-person language to deliver structured content effectively. The first-person language (I, you, and we) used in the syllabus should invite the students to engage with the syllabus, learning management platform, and the instructor (Addy et al., 2021; Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This approach helps students feel like the instructor is speaking specifically to them and demonstrating a keen interest in their learning and success in the course.

Hogan and Sathy (2022) also recommend that including an inclusive statement directed to specific groups and a general statement directed to everyone helps create an inclusive learning environment for all students. It is also encouraged to include statements encouraging students to seek help if they spend over ten minutes attempting to understand assignment instructions but still find them challenging (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This approach helps students perceive their instructor as invested in their learning and overall success.

The syllabus introduces assignments and tasks to improve students' knowledge and skills. Course assignments are designed to cater to the needs of students with varying learning abilities, ensuring successful completion. Addy et al. (2021) argue that pedagogy scholars in higher education have recognized the crucial function of the syllabus in ensuring a successful course. The syllabus can serve as a vital instrument for establishing principles of inclusivity and communicating course expectations to students. Effective communication is essential to creating inclusive learning environments where all parties are responsible (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). In other words, clear and effective communication between the instructor and student is essential.

Hogan and Sathy (2022) discuss the "concept of high structure … as it establishes the practice required for learning … that helps students [learn], when minimal requirements and expectations are put in place" (p. 29). The authors argue that implementing structure in education creates an equitable learning environment for students who lack specific skills, providing an inclusive opportunity for all to learn (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This pedagogical method promotes collaborative learning, skill development, and meaningful concept acquisition while fostering a sense of belonging in the educational setting. Additionally, "whole class and small group discussions" is an inclusive teaching strategy that helps students develop cultural norms for group conversations, such as "pausing, [observing] silence [maintaining] eye contact, interrupting, and affirming others' answers" (Hogan & Sathy, 2022, p.137). This approach

acknowledges the differences in how individuals may engage in a group context and promotes a respectful and supportive learning environment.

Considering their unique experiences and backgrounds that can positively impact the learning environment, it is vital to view students as a whole person. Addy et al. (2021) assert that when implementing a holistic approach to teaching, ". . . instructors [should become] aware of student's intersecting identities and diverse attributes and view them as essential components to consider cultivating the classroom community" (p. 39). This approach engages students and instructors, creating a learning environment that benefits the student and the instructor.

Classroom Context

High structure "students [learn], when minimal requirements and expectations are put in place" (Hogan & Sathy, 2022, p. 29). The authors argue that implementing structure in education creates an equitable learning environment for students who lack specific skills, providing an inclusive opportunity for all to learn (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This pedagogical method promotes collaborative learning and skill development. Additionally, whole-class and small-group inclusive teaching strategies help students learn from diverse perspectives, develop active listening skills, and develop problems solving skills which will allow them to collaborate effectively (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This approach acknowledges the differences in how individuals may engage in a group context and promotes a respectful and supportive learning environment. Welcoming syllabus, high-structure and group discussions inclusive teaching strategies were implemented in the Macro Practice Course will be discussed below.

Welcoming Syllabus, High–Structure, Whole and Small Group Discussions

The Macro Practice III course is a 400-level undergraduate course in the social work program's practice sequence. It focuses on the theoretical aspects of organizations and communities at the macro level while combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience (DeJesus, 2023). The leading course textbook *Generalist Practice with Organization and Communities,* by Kirst-Ashman, K.K., and Hull, G. H. (2018), supports students' understanding of how to apply the Generalist Intervention, the PREPARE, and the IMAGINE models within communities and organizations. The models mentioned are applied to the course project's assignments (social problem and macro intervention assignment). The supporting text, *Navigating Policy and Practice in the Great Recession* by Borasky, S., and Ferguson, M. (2018), helps students research

organizations, providing them with insights into how the organization within the text addresses issues that could affect the quality of their services. In doing so, students are able to identify gaps in services and develop programs or interventions to better meet the needs of their clients.

At the beginning of the semester, all students receive an email with a welcoming syllabus. The syllabus is created using first-person language, which encourages all students to interact with the instructor during office hours and weekly in class. This approach helps students perceive their instructor as invested in their learning and overall success. Additionally, it features an inclusive statement that aims to foster an equitable and inclusive learning environment in the classroom. Hogan and Sathy (2022) recommend that including an inclusive statement directed to certain groups coupled with a general statement directed to everyone helps create an inclusive learning environment for all students. It also sets the tone and supports student success in the course (Hogan & Sathy, 2022).

During the first class, the instructor utilizes an inclusive teaching strategy of high structure by providing an overview of the course syllabus. This includes a detailed explanation of the various components of the course structure, such as the preparation work that needs to be completed before, during, and after each class. This preparation work includes reading assignments, in-class active learning exercises related to the course project, and assessments after each learning module. The instructor facilitates conversation with students related to the overview reinforces students "sense of community and belonging" (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Following the discussion, the students are advised to carefully read the first assignment (social problem assignment) and refer to the syllabus and learning management platform for more information for further discussion on the second day. The social problem assignment is written with specific instructions which spans six weeks, covering the first half of the semester. Hogan and Sathy (2022) conclude that taking this approach of high structure to a course offers students a "clear road map or know-how" to meet course expectations (p.32).

As part of this homework assignment, students are required to choose a group and conduct a pre-check to prepare for discussing their thoughts on groups and expectations. Students are allowed to self-select their preferred group for the entire semester, with each group comprising of 3-4 members. During the initial group meeting, students share their responses to the questions posed in the pre-check and listed below:

1. Why are workgroups important in professional settings?

2. What are some dos and don'ts when working in groups?

3. How do they work best in a group setting?

4. When do they feel heard in a group setting?

5. What common things frustrate, upset, or discourage them when working in group settings?

6. What are your strengths and areas to improve when working in groups based on their previous experiences?

This strategy helps students get to know each other, find commonalities, and develop shared goals. (Hogan & Sathy, 2022).

The second day of class focuses on macro practice history and social issues lectures and workgroups. The classroom setting structure is modified to serve as a workplace with group seating arrangements. Before beginning their work, the members receive written and verbal instructions on what is expected of them while in their groups, including creating group contracts, holding weekly meetings, and alternating as the leader and note-taker. The aim is to provide students with the necessary tools to overcome barriers and actively participate in collaborative learning. (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Then, the whole class discusses the initial task - the Social Problem Assignment. During this discussion, students are presented with a real-world project. The chair of the School of Social Work helps contextualize the project, offering real-world experiences to students by introducing multiple levels of perspective on a project. I share with students that the chair of Social Work sees this project as investigating "a sense of belonging as it relates to retention and graduation rates" (Rice, K., Personal Communication, July 12, 2022). The project scaffolds students through a project to build experiences working through a framework for identifying a social problem. To help students connect with project relevance, this project connects to the social work program – their major. This relevancy demonstrates where other faculty could modify this assignment, with connection back to their own major, to support learners across disciplines.

Throughout this project's work, the instructor reviews the social problem exercise, which includes detailed instructions, a definition of social problems, and a sense of belonging. Throughout the course, I utilize whole class and small group discussion strategies to support student's understanding how to build cultural norms for group conversations, such as "pausing [observing], silence [maintaining], eye contact, interrupting, and affirming others' answers" (Hogan &

Sathy, 2022, p.137). This approach acknowledges the differences in how individuals may engage in a group context and promotes a respectful and supportive learning environment.

Within their groups, students are instructed to define a sense of belonging and what it means to them, then review the given definition for 5-10 minutes before sharing it with the class. This exercise helps students share their understanding and definition of a "sense of belonging" as it relates to social work undergraduate students. Next, the instructor and student groups engage in a discussion about the significance of the task and explore ways to gain a better understanding of the project requirements. Students share their opinions and are asked to devise ways to gauge the project's significance by interviewing the "client" who assigned it. The instructor shares written and verbal instructions for interviewing the department chair and opens the class to discuss the interview and how it would be performed. This allows students to share thoughts and make modifications to support their understanding of the task. Then, groups work on creating interview questions, share and discuss them as a class, and develop the final list of questions. They also talk about the meeting logistics, including the format and room setup. Once all decisions have been made and arrangements put in place, students contact the chair to schedule a meeting to discuss the project and expectations further.

On the interview day, the students transform the classroom into a conference room by arranging it accordingly. They place the department's chairperson at the head of the table to make it resemble a professional meeting setting. During this interview, two students serve as facilitators and lead the discussion. One group of students asks questions while another group takes notes related to the projects expected outcomes. This activity typically occurs within the semester's first two to three weeks.

After interviewing the chairperson, each student group meets both in and outside of the classroom to review the interview responses and develop research tasks aimed at evaluating the magnitude of the sense of belonging in other university settings across the country. Groups conducted research and developed strategies to promote a sense of belonging that fosters student retention in a university setting. During group meetings, students discuss their findings, resolve any issues, share their critical thoughts regarding the issue studied, and develop tasks until the assignment is completed. Groups maintain weekly minutes to keep track of their progress. On workdays, the instructor conducts check-in meetings with each group to address any questions or concerns that may have come up. In the fourth week of the semester, student groups write a memo to

the instructor about their progress, conflicts, or issues that have arisen during the collaborative meetings and ask questions that would help them move forward with the assignment. Finally, in week 7 (the midpoint of the semester), groups complete the assignment and prepare a presentation of their findings to the class on week 8. After presenting their findings and ideas on ways to support the program and create a welcoming environment for undergraduate social work students, peers provide feedback and positive reinforcement. After finishing the task, every student takes time to ponder how it has enhanced their comprehension of macro practice, social issues, and group collaboration.

During their work on the social problem assignment, students encounter the Human Service Organization Assignment, navigating multiple, complementary assignments. In the second assignment students complete assigned weekly readings starting week four of the semester from the Navigating Policy through the Great Recession to support their understanding of organizations that meet the needs of their target population. This complementary assignment work helps them identify the university departments dedicated to supporting student success and promoting a sense of belonging – further building their understanding of sense of belonging and the context under investigation in the social problem assignment.

Students are introduced to the Macro Intervention assignment in the ninth week of the semester. The instructor provides written and verbal instructions during class and thoroughly discusses with the students to ensure mutual understanding and identify any necessary modifications. The assignment requires each group to research interventions that could help the school of social work foster a stronger sense of belonging among its students, regardless of whether they are in an online or face-to-face program. These complementary assignments share a goal of exploring support retention and increased graduation rates.

Assignments

The course includes two major assignments: the Social Problem and Macro Intervention Assignments, each equally graded. The Human Service Assignment is a minor assignment that receives a lesser grade. The assignments are designed to facilitate student problem-solving, leadership, critical thinking, and decision-making skills as they worked to complete the tasks. The assignments above will be explicated below with teaching strategies used such as high structure, group contract, whole and small group discussion.

Social Problem Assignment

This task is designed to help the student and group members improve their research and teamwork skills as they explore the extent of a social issue. After the research is completed, groups can develop a proposal for a school of social work intervention. It is recommended that students critically analyze the social problem of "sense of belonging" presented by the school of social work and how it impacts retention and graduation rates. The main deliverables for this assignment include a group contract, a memo, a social problem course presentation, a social problem paper (report), and an individual journal entry. To assist students from their group and write and research the assigned social issue, they are given instructions for a group contract, a social problem exercise, a memo, and a presentation.

Group Contract

When working on a task within a group, whether it be for a course project, organizational project, or community project, it is important to establish an agreement for completing the work. This agreement is commonly known as a group contract, guidelines, or rules, and will vary depending on the type of task group. For this task groups consisted of three to four members. Guidelines for participation were assigned to be developed for the completion of assignments in the course. Hogan and Sathy (2022) state that this strategy helps students get to know one another and teaching students to write team agreements (p. 141).

Social Problem Exercise

Inclusive teaching strategies are highly structured and include small group work. Group members learn from each other and share their perspective on the subject matter. The exercise on social problems is a structured approach for students to create their report on the assigned social issue impacting retention and graduation rates. Through this exercise, students gain insight into how professionals in the macro area of practice analyze issues and develop intervention strategies to improve or offer alternative services to clients. To aid in this process, practitioners create a problem-solving framework to comprehensively comprehend, define, and prioritize obstacles and issues (Asana, 2022).

This activity aims to help student groups understand what a social problem is and then develop a feasible solution. To better understand the assignment, it is recommended to review the General Intervention Model's change process, which is outlined in Chapter 1 of Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018), with a particular

emphasis on assessment. As students research and work on their assignment, they should consider the definition of a social problem put forth by Brueggemann (2014), "A social problem is experienced collectively by an identifiable group of people, caused by a source external to them that harms their welfare in specific ways and can only be resolved by people themselves in partnership with the public and private sectors of society" (p. 85). According to this definition, a social problem is harm to the well-being of a specific group of people caused by an external source. It can only be resolved by the collective efforts of the group and the public and private sectors of society. This definition is broken down to allow students to understand how it can be applied to social work students in online and face-to-face programs.

During the exercise, students learned a four-step framework (Asana, 2022). This framework helps students understand how to define, describe, and prioritize problems in order to develop effective solutions. To guide students in addressing social issues, the National Association of Social Workers code of ethics is used to encourage the analysis of ethical considerations within the framework. It is crucial to consider the relevant ethical standards in such scenarios.

Memo

Students are given the reason behind this assignment, which is that administrators, managers, and supervisors often need to inform others (such as staff, advisory boards, investors, clients, and organization administrators) about the progress of projects. This is typically achieved by circulating information within the organization or sending a memo via email. For this assignment, students write a memo addressed to the course instructor the first week of the semester (social problem assignment) and then again in week 12 (macro intervention assignment). The memo should contain a summary of the group's progress and challenges, along with details on past and upcoming meeting dates, the leader of each meeting, an outline of the work distribution, and the completion deadlines. Groups should also consider social work ethics and prepare questions for the instructor.

Journal Entry

The purpose of this task is to assist students in improving their understanding of macro practice by reflecting on their knowledge and skill development. Students evaluate their overall macro practice knowledge through a real-world project and consider how they can contribute to change at this level of practice. Students are instructed to analyze their learning and experience after completing two

significant assignments (social problem and macro intervention papers) and while working in groups on the real-world project.

Human Service Organization Assignment

This assignment aims to aid students working in human service organizations to conduct interviews. It is an individual project that requires students to interview a staff member from a selected agency, organization, or university department to gain a deeper understanding of various organizations. Prior to beginning this assignment, students must meet within their groups to research and discuss various organizations and university departments that support students in achieving a sense of belonging and overall success. Each group develops an organizational chart that reflects the organization/university department student group researched. The chart should contain a list of various organizations/ departments with the following information, contact information, website, and programs offered to the community. Then, each member chooses an organization or university department for their interview. Once this is completed, each student develops interview questions that will help them better comprehend their chosen organization.

Macro Intervention Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to enhance the research and teamwork skills of students and group members while creating an intervention that promotes a sense of belonging. Once the research is finished, groups can create a proposal intervention that fosters a sense of belonging in a social work program. It is advisable for students to critically examine the social problem of "sense of belonging" introduced by the school of social work and its effects on retention and graduation rates while developing the intervention. The primary assignments include a memo, a macro practice presentation, a macro-intervention paper (proposal), and an individual journal entry. To aid students in their research and writing of the assigned social issue intervention, they are given instructions for a macro intervention using the PREPARE and IMAGINE Models and a presentation outline.

Memo

Each group is required to submit a memo detailing their progress and any potential areas of concern, similar to the Social Problem Assignment memo. This memo should contain information about the dates and times of meetings, attendees, decisions made, assigned tasks, completed tasks, and next steps.

PREPARE Model

This exercise guides student groups through a seven-step process to determine if their goals are worth implementing a significant change in an organizational setting (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Specifically, the focus is on the school of social work within the university. Essentially, it's a way for students to conduct an initial assessment of the identified problem. This task also assists students in evaluating the scope of the problem and determining if they have sufficient resources to initiate change. The framework is adapted from Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018) to create the exercise which is summarized below:

1. Identify *problems* to address.

2. Review your macro and personal r*eality*.

3. Establish primary goals.

4. Identify relevant *people* of influence.

5. *Assess* potential financial costs and benefits.

6. Review professional and personal *risk*.

7. *Evaluate* the potential success of the macro-change process (p. 213).

Students are assigned readings out of the main text, Kirst-Ashman and Hall (2018), to guide them in answering all areas of the seven-step process found in chapter 9 of the text. They also learn in this chapter how to develop logic models to support their efforts. After this exercise is completed, students then proceed with the IMAGINE model, which is a process for initiating and implementing change.

IMAGINE Model

Once the assessment is finished and students figure out their available resources, they proceed to discuss how to initiate and pursue a large-scale transformation in the social work department. This exercise guides student groups through a seven-step process to initiate and pursue macro change in an organizational setting (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Specifically, the focus is on the school of social work within the university. Essentially, it's a way for students to develop a proposal for change efforts for the identified problem. This task also assists students research interventions and develop their own to initiate change. The

framework is adapted from Kirst-Ashman and Hall (2018) to create the exercise which is summarized below:

1. Start with an innovative *idea*.

2. *Muster* support and formulate an action plan.

3. Identify *assets.*

4. Specify *goals*, objectives, and action steps to attain them.

5. Implement the plan.

6. Neutralize opposition.

7. *Evaluate* progress (p. 248)

Students are assigned readings out of the main text, Kirst-Ashman and Hall (2018), to guide them in answering all areas of the seven-step process found in chapter 7 of the text. After this exercise is completed, students then proceed with writing their macro intervention paper using the outline below:

• Introduction

• Statement Of the Problem

• IMAGINE Model

• Ethical Considerations

• Conclusion

• References

Reflection Questions

1. How can the instructor structure a Macro Social Work Practice course or a similar course for students to foster a sense of inclusion that will aid their learning and understanding of the course subject?

2. What actions must an instructor take to assist students in feeling like they are below and that what they have to say matters?

3. How can the instructor create or enhance a welcoming current syllabus?

4. How can the instructor develop or enhance highly structured assignments?

5. Which areas of inclusive teaching do I need to work on?

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Chapter 10

Use of Grading Rubrics To Improve Student Academic Performance & Inclusivity

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Abstract

This chapter covers the use of academic teaching rubrics in biology-based courses and their ability to improve inclusive learning for college students. The chapter addresses the benefits of using rubrics, such as increased assessment clarity, student support, and motivation. It also discusses the limitations of academic rubrics, including lack of teacher guidance and a decreased ability to assess student effort. The chapter ends with recommendations on how to put academic rubrics together and assess them for teaching effectiveness.

Background

Grading rubrics are instructional assessment tools used to provide information on performance expectations of students (Larson, 2022). Rubrics help in the development of student learning and provide clarity and organization for teaching objectives, assignments, and other activities in the classroom (Stevens & Levi, 2023). In education, rubrics are instruments used to assess the quality of student work and are designed to describe what constitutes good performance and what criteria must be met for successful performance (Stevens & Levi, 2023). A rubric is a tool consisting of either a document, table, or chart to assess performance of student tasks in an equal and consistent manner. Rubrics are usually composed of criteria and levels of performance that are used to grade numerous activities such as essays, projects, presentations, and other classroom tasks (Larson, 2022). Rubrics identify two main parts: the criteria and the levels of performance for each criterion. The criteria are the essential elements that students must demonstrate to successfully accomplish the assigned task, while the levels of performance are set by the instructor and are used to evaluate how well the student understands the criteria (Brookhart, 2018).

The use of rubrics has proved to be beneficial in improving student learning, especially regarding inclusive learning. In a review of 46 studies that utilized the

use of rubrics in higher education, Brookhart (2018) found that all studies found a positive outcome of using rubrics. In the science classroom, rubrics help make assessments more consistent, fair, and equitable especially when assessing a diverse student population (Finson & Ormsbee, 1998).

By providing structured guidance on assignments in the way of rubrics, educators provide students with more opportunities on how to succeed in the classroom. Firm structure helps level the playing field for diverse groups of students who have not been provided guidance in the past to meet the requirements for college learning. In a high structure course, more guidance is provided on assignments by making them clear, visible, and accessible to all. The utilization of rubrics provides students clear expectations on assignments to improve their performance, especially for difficult assignments (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Rubrics also help alleviate confusion and ensure all students understand the tasks and can complete them with the same level of expectation. Rubrics are beneficial to students because they provide assessment clarity, clearly articulated instructions, and criteria for what is expected of the student, and this allows students to understand the expectations for the assignment and avoid mistakes (Chowdhury, 2019). This helps support learning by reducing confusion, so students can focus on improving their work.

Because college students come from diverse backgrounds, it is important for educational institutions to recognize and implement strategies that create an environment where all students can learn and reach their potential. The use of grading rubrics can be an effective tool to promote inclusion and ensure all students have access to the same criteria and performance levels to successfully demonstrate understanding of course materials, thus supporting an equitable learning environment (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020). Grading rubrics can demonstrate to students that an instructor cares about the quality of their work by providing support and structure but also acknowledging their individual differences and strengths. In other words, rubrics have the potential to humanize the grading experience, since instructors can interact with students and accommodate different learning styles, developmental levels, and educational backgrounds (Finson & Ormsbee, 1998). Furthermore, rubrics can be useful for course design as they can provide instructors with valuable feedback regarding student understanding and provide guidance on how to adjust course material and assignments to better align with student learning needs (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020).

Through workshops and self-assessments, I have developed detailed grading rubrics to utilize in my courses. I provide examples of how students who have accessed grading rubrics perform better on assignments than those who do not.

In my courses, I inform students of the rubrics that they can access on a learning management system (LMS). In this chapter I will go over the value of rubrics, examples of rubrics I use in my courses, how rubrics have improved student performance in my courses, and how I currently use rubrics as part of my inclusive teaching philosophy. For example, I believe providing and mandating the use of rubrics ensures that all students see the expectations of the assignment before turning it in. This promotes a student habit of reviewing teacher expectations for assignments instead of defaulting to their own, which can lead to student frustration and poor course performance. I have obtained IRB approval to share results from data collected in my courses (#902381995).

Classroom Context

I use assignment rubrics in all the courses I teach, including Concepts of Zoology (BIOL 211). Traditionally, the Concepts of Zoology course had an extremely high 'DFW' (i.e., a student earned a D or F grade or withdrew from the course),

Table 1 Concepts of Zoology Lab Fall 2019 (n=24)

Teaching Resource	Mean Introduction Grade for Students Who Accessed Resource	Mean Introduction Grade for Students Who DID NOT Access Resource	Statistical Results
Grading Rubric	17	13	p-value = 0.04; t-stat 1.81>t-critical 1.72
Instruction Video	16	11	p-value = 0.01; t-stat 2.38>t-critical 2.08
Paper Template	16	9	p-value = 0.01; t-stat 3.13>t-critical 2.08

T-test results comparing mean grade of Zoology Introduction Section Assignment (out of 20 points) for students who accessed teaching resources compared to mean grade for students who did not access teaching resources. Students who accessed teaching resources had significantly higher grades.

around 33%. Thus, it was important to identify teaching strategies that helped students better understand expectations required from course assignments and what must be done to maximize performance on assignments.

Howell (2011) found that grading rubrics improved student performance in the classroom. To validate this in my courses, I conducted multiple analyses of how students who have accessed grading rubrics in my courses performed better on

Table 2 Concepts of Zoology Lab Fall 2019 (n=24)

Assignment	Mean Grade for Students Who Accessed Rubric	Mean Grade for Students Who DID NOT Access Rubric	Statistical Results
Methods Section	17	13	p-value = 0.04; t-stat 1.81>t-critical 1.72
Introduction Section	16	9	p-value = 0.01; t-stat 2.38>t-critical 2.08
Starfish/ Development Photoessay	18.5	15	p-value < 0.01; t-stat 6.06>t-critical 2.08

T-test results comparing mean grade of three assignments (out of 20 points) for students who accessed grading rubrics compared to mean grade for students who did not access grading rubrics. Students who accessed rubrics scored significantly higher on assignments.

assignments than those who did not. Currently, I inform students of the rubrics that they can access on the LMS. The use of more complete rubrics was based on student feedback from course evaluations that included *"More clarification of what the final paper should be about", "More guidance on lab reports", "Grading should be more clear*." Based on these comments, I provided students with more grading rubrics for various assignments, papers, and student presentations.

In my courses, I used rubrics on all assignments. This practice made students consistently refer to rubrics to complete assignments throughout the semester to improve their performance. By providing rubrics for all assignments, I was also able to develop a scaffolding approach to teaching, as rubrics continued to increase in complexity as the semester moved on. This allowed students to continue completing assignments through the semester, even as assignments increased in rigor and difficulty. The more complex rubrics also reminded students of previous expectations and new expectations for later assignments. In addition, rubrics allowed me to grade assignments more easily while also promoting consistency and equity while grading.

Assignment

To build my rubrics, I first reviewed templates of rubrics used by other colleagues and found in the literature (e.g., Clabough & Clabough, 2016), modified them to my own course work, and then revisited these rubrics while analyzing student performance on assignments. This allowed me to identify areas of the course that

needed improvement, such as adjusting to the difficulty of assignments or providing clearer instructions. I then made it a habit to review a rubric before mandating an assignment for a course that required this rubric. My motivation was to increase clarity of expectations, improve student understanding, improve grading equity, and improve ease of grading. Assignments are easier to grade for students who closely follow the grading rubric expectations.

Teaching scientific writing to students is extremely important but can be a challenge in many science-based courses (Clabough & Clabough, 2016). To address this, I provide students instructional videos on how to write scientifically, rubrics on how I will grade their papers, example templates on how papers should be written, and examples of writings from scientific literature. During the fall semesters of 2019 and 2020, I monitored students' use of evaluation tools in my lab. The use of evaluation tools was not mandatory; students could choose whether to access the tools or not. Students uploaded their assignments onto the university LMS and all assignments were checked for plagiarism using the automated 'Turnitin' tool available on the LMS. I graded all assignments using the rubrics provided to students and recorded the grades on the LMS. After grades were recorded, I reviewed student history on the LMS to determine if students accessed the assignment learning tools (e.g., rubrics, videos, templates). I then separated student grades between those that accessed learning tools compared to those that did not.

Figure 1

rho = 0.27 ; *p-value* < 0.05
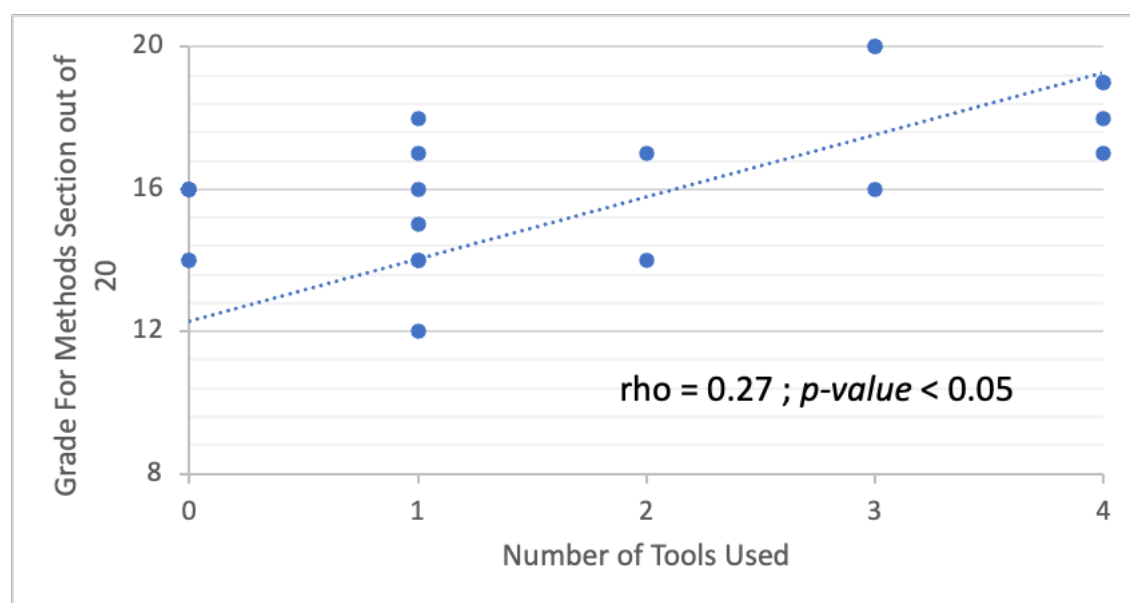
The more resources (e.g., rubrics, templates, videos) a student uses for their assignments the better their grade on that assignment for a Concepts of Zoology Lab taught in Fall 2020. Analysis was conducted using a Spearman Rank Test (n=24).

Overall, I have found that students who use more learning tools tend to do better on their writing assignments. For example, when writing their Methods section for an experiment in Zoology Lab (BIOL 211), students who accessed more resources earned higher grades for this assignment than students who used less of these tools - including rubrics (Figure 1).

When I looked specifically at the use of multiple tools, including grading rubrics, used to prepare students for their assignments, students who used these tools performed significantly better on the assignments (Table 1). When just looking at the use of grading rubrics, I found students did significantly better on the assignment compared to students that did not utilize the grading rubrics. This comparison was done for students writing an Introduction section assignment, a Methods section assignment, and a Seastar/Animal Development Photoessay assignment (Table 2) for my Zoology labs (BIOL 211).

Copies of the rubrics for the Introduction and Methods scientific writing assignments and Seastar/Development Photoessay can be found in Appendix A. In addition, in Appendix B, I have included two rubrics that outline how to scaffold learning while using rubrics. In Appendix B, notice that for the rubric for the Discussion section which was submitted sometime after the Results section, I place reminder bullets for writing style and the literature cited while expanding on more difficult content for students to write their Discussion section in comparison to the Results section.

Reflection

Firm course structure helps level the playing field for diverse groups of students who have not been provided guidance in the past to meet the requirements for college learning. In a high structure course, work is not optional, active learning via classroom participation is graded, more assignments and quizzes are given, and more guidance is provided on assignments by making them clear, visible, and accessible to all (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Preparation for class and active learning via more assignments increases practice, decreases cramming and improves learning.

Based on the results of my analysis, I now make it a requirement that students access rubrics before turning in assignments. The benefits I found from using grading rubrics matched my motivations their use. Evidence suggests that assignment rubrics increased clarity of expectations and improved student understanding of the assignment. This was shown with students accessing the rubrics having significantly higher grades on the assignments compared to students that did not access the rubrics. These findings also suggest that the use of rubrics can improve grading equity. The variances around the mean grade scores for students who accessed the rubric was lower compared to the variance around the mean score for students who did not access the rubrics. Lastly, I personally enjoy using rubrics to grade as it makes it easier to be more

consistent in my grading and provides me an opportunity to return rubrics to students so they can understand how they obtained the grade they earned.

Although rubrics have numerous benefits, there are also some limitations. A big issue is that there is a decreased incentive for students to use their own autonomous thinking and just rely on rubrics (Torrance, 2012). Also, rubrics only measure performance quality, not the amount of effort put into completing the assignment, unless some measurement effort is included in the rubric. Some instructors also find that rubrics are restrictive as the criteria and set of performance standards do not always reflect their own opinion of excellence or the intended learning outcomes of the assignment (Sadler, 2009). Instructors should consistently modify and update their rubrics to overcome these restrictions. In totality, rubrics help provide clarity to students, alleviate student stress, improve student performance, and reduce assessment bias, but they are not always comprehensive, and instructors will need to continually access rubrics to ensure guidance to students on how to complete assignments successfully (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020). Consistent reviews and modification of rubrics is needed to address limitations. Refer to Appendix B for examples. These rubrics for the Results and Discussion section have been modified many times over the years based on student feedback, ease of use, and updates in teaching objectives.

To improve my use of grading rubrics in the future, I will continue to evaluate their use and edit them as needed. I believe this effort will continue to increase clarity of my expectations, improve student understanding, improve grading equity, and improve ease of grading in my courses into the future.

References and Recommended Reading

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Appendix A

Assignment rubric used to guide students into writing an Introduction section and Methods section for a scientific paper, and a rubric for the Seastar/Animal Development Photoessay assignment. All rubrics were for the Concepts of Zoology (BIOL 211) course. Rubrics were modified from Didier et al., 2021.

Introduction Section Rubric

Name_____ **Grade** _____ **/ 25**

Professionalism and Following Instructions (1 pt. each):

☐ neatly typed, name on top

☐ double space text

☐ use of correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

☐ genus names capitalized and species binomials italicized

☐ internal citations follow correct style as indicated in the lab manual

Effective Writing Style (2 pts. each):

☐ Introduction states and discusses the biological rationale for your experiment. **Figure 1 of** *Daphnia* **image.**
☐background study 1 is adequately and concisely summarized and includes an explanation of the experimental results and relevance to your experiment (i.e., not just mentioned)

☐ background study 2 is adequately and concisely summarized and includes an explanation of the experimenta results and relevance to your experiment (i.e., not just mentioned)

☐ background study 3 is adequately and concisely summarized and includes an explanation of the experimenta results and relevance to your experiment (i.e., not just mentioned)

☐ research hypothesis is clearly stated

☐background research is relevant to stated hypothesis

use of scientific writing style appropriate for college level (1 pt. each):

☐ Goal/objective of the paper and hypothesis are outlined in the final paragraph.

☐ use of complex, compound sentences; no choppy sentences. WRITE IN PAST TENSE.

☐ use of appropriate scientific language, concise and to the point; no colloquialisms

☐ avoid redundancy; does not restate same obvious statement over and over (e.g, "this is relevant becaus . . .; this is relevant because . . . etc.) DO NOT USE QUOTES.

Literature Cited

☐ minimum of five peer reviewed articles are cited

☐ references are appropriate and relevant to your topic

☐ literature cited according to instructions in the lab manual

☐ Literature cited in alphabetical order

☐ Missing citations

☐ first page of cited articles (i.e., the first page of the full text PDFs) are attached at the bottom of the document

Comments:

Methods Section Rubric

Daphnia Methods Rubric   Student: _____

Key Elements:		Comments:
Exp. approach clear & appropriate	_____	
Proper control group described	_____	
Ind. variable / manipulation clear	_____	
Dependent variable clear	_____	
Subjects: species, age, size, number	_____	
Counting area: size, location, condition	_____	
Tubes: size, materials, orientation, portion covered	_____	
Trial time interval	_____	
Sample sizes	_____	
Statistical analysis	_____	

Other Notes: _____

Writing Style:		Comments:
Use of past tense	_____	
Methods in Logical Order	_____	
Clarity of writing	_____	
General Conciseness	_____	
Redundancy & TMI Avoided	_____	
Formal, scientific style	_____	
Document Format	_____	
Grammar	_____	

(Grammar includes: typos/spelling, scientific names, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, punctuation, sentence structure, affect vs effect, contractions,)

METHODS GRADE = _____ / 10

Seastar/Animal Development Photoessay Rubric

Animal Development Photoessay Rubric

Figure 1

Panels: **Comments:**

unfert. ovum	_____
zygote	_____
cleavage	_____
blastula	_____
early gastrula	_____
late gastrula	_____

Required Labels : _____

ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm, blastocoel, blastopore, fertilization membrane, archenteron

Caption:

Explanatory	_____
Panels Defined	_____
Total Mag	_____
Mag as Printed	_____
Writing Style	_____

(brevity, clarity, grammar)

Figure 2

Panels: **Comments:**

bipinnaria	_____
brachiolaria	_____
juvenile	_____
adult	_____

Caption:

Explanatory	_____
Panels Defined	_____
Total Mag	_____
Mag as Printed	_____
Writing Style	_____

(brevity, clarity, grammar)

Professionalism

Figure Quality: **Comments:**

Focal Object Salient	_____
Image Clarity	_____
Appropriate Mag	_____

Photoessay Requirements:

Professional layout	_____
page limit	_____
scale bars	_____
date/time stamp	_____
name embedded	_____

Additional Corrections:

_____

_____

GRADE: _____ / 20

Appendix B

Multiple assignment rubrics used in scaffolding student learning from writing a Results section to a Results-Discussion section for a scientific paper. Note the reminder bullets for writing style and use of literature cited from Appendix A. All rubrics were for the Concepts of Zoology (BIOL 211) course. Rubrics were modified from Didier et al., 2021.

Results Section Rubric

Student _____

Daphnia Results			
Narrative:	Comments:	**Table:**	Comments:
Reminder of Objective of Study _____		Appropriate Contents _____	
Ind. & Dep. Variables Clear _____		(mean, s or s^2, n, df, t_{crit}, t_{stat}, p)	
Definitive, Quantitative Statements _____		Table Format _____	
Groups Clearly Compared _____		Explanatory Caption _____	
Correct Statistical Inference _____		**Figure:**	
Summary in Plain Language _____		Appropriate Contents _____	
Some Key Elements:		(means ± SE; correct axis labels; n)	
Narrative before Tables/Figures _____		Figure Format _____	
Table/Figure Referenced Parenthetically _____		Explanatory Caption _____	
Stats Summarized Parenthetically _____		**Writing Style:** _____	
Condition/Location of Counting Area Clear _____		(brevity, clarity, scientific style, grammar, verb tense)	
Avoided Conclusions Regarding Hypothesis _____		**Section Grade = _____ / 15**	

Notes:

Discussion Section Rubric

Name _____ _____/20 pts.

Revised Results

- ☐ begins with a concise narrative that states objective of your study
- ☐ narrative includes quantitative statement(s) of your results
- ☐ all graphs and tables are referenced in sequence in your narrative
- ☐ all graphs and tables follow guidelines for data presentation
- ☐ results of statistical analyses are interpreted properly, clearly stated, summarized parenthetically (see pg. 15)

Discussion

- ☐ statement regarding whether your original hypothesis is supported or not supported
- ☐ meaning and *significance* of results obtained in your experiment are interpreted biologically (not repeated from Results section)
- ☐ minimum of 3 different studies cited
- ☐ research studies discussed and compared to your results (not just mentioned)
- ☐ interpretation of results is correct and consistent with data presented in results section
- ☐ explanation of results <u>does not</u> rely on human error as the source of your results
- ☐ ends with a quality summary statement

Literature Cited

- ☐ 5 appropriate references, properly cited according to instructions in the lab manual
- ☐ internal citations follow correct style as indicated in the lab manual
- ☐ documentation attached

Writing Style

- ☐ sentences grammatically correct; complete sentences with noun and verb agreement; correct spelling
- ☐ italicize genus names and species binomials
- ☐ use of scientific writing style appropriate for college level; concise clear style (avoid redundancy and short choppy sentences)
- ☐ double space
- ☐ work has been appropriately revised based on prior comments
- NOTE: This is my "fee" in the form of lost points for having to waste my time repeating the same comments I made on prior versions because you did not take the time to look at my comments and correct your work – even more points will be taken from the final draft if I do not see appropriate revisions!

Comments:

Chapter 11

Structuring Inclusive Group Work

Dr. Kaitlin Mondello

Assistant Professor, English & World Languages

Abstract

This chapter considers the benefits and challenges of group work. In particular, it examines the use of consistent small discussion groups in general education literature courses. Take-aways include the role of group work in promoting active learning, peer-to-peer learning and support, and sense of belonging, as well as the need for increased structure in group work to address challenges, including barriers to inclusivity in groups.

Background

Group work is one of the most essential skills students can learn in college that will directly prepare them for any future career. Student-led groups help students begin to take ownership over their own learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007), and give them practical experience they can use to lead meetings, work in teams, write group reports, etc. Despite its direct applicability in skills, many students and instructors dread group work's potential inefficiencies, such as groups getting off task and unequal distribution of work among group members. Group work's many benefits outweigh its challenges, which can be addressed through increased structure and communication (Tsay & Brady, 2010). In addition to being a powerful tool for active and deep learning, group work can increase students' sense of belonging (within the group, the course and the university). It further facilitates peer-to-peer learning and mentoring, which benefits students in reciprocal roles of offering and receiving feedback from their peers—another key skill they will need in their future careers and lives (Beckman, 1990).

Terrell L. Strayhorn (2019) defines college students' "sense of belonging" as "relational:" "a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering, or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by and important" within the university community (p. 4). This experience of mattering within a specific course can come from interactions with the professor, but the feeling is

significantly amplified when it applies to the whole class: a sense of belonging to that particular course. Feeling valued by one's peers further enhances student success. With a similar focus on relationality, Peter Felten and Leo M. Lambert (2020) likewise argue that "[s]tudents' interactions with peers, faculty, and staff positively influence the breadth and depth of student learning, retention and graduation rates, … critical thinking, identity development, communication skills, and leadership abilities" (p. 5). Sense of belonging has myriad benefits, including as a powerful means for learning.

In their recent survey of the state of peer learning in higher education, editors Omid Noroozi and Bram De Wever (2023), focus on what they call "Collaborative Teamwork" (CTW), "a structured form of collaborative learning requiring members to work together in small groups to achieve a common goal" (p. 4). Within this collection, Jasperina Brouwer and Carlos A. de Matos Fernandes (2023) demonstrate the importance of what they call "Collaboration Intentionality" (CI), defined as "students' willingness to collaborate" (p. 104). For a classroom to be inclusive, the instructor has significant responsibility to structure both these elements of peer learning. Hogan and Sathy's *Inclusive Teaching* (2022) emphasizes this point: the importance of "high" structure to avoid reproducing inequities, especially in student groups (pp. 140-2). Students often experience some form of anxiety in group work, which is elevated for marginalized students (p. 141), especially women and racial minorities. Keeping this anxiety and inequity in mind, Cathy Davidson and Christina Katopodis develop strategies in *The New College Classroom* (2022) Chapter 5, "Group Work without the Groans," to structure group work for full participation so that "there is no room to hide and no room to take over" (p. 146). Both these extremes contribute to inequality in groups. They can be mitigated through more structured activities and roles and explicitly addressing such issues with students early on.

Classroom Context

One of the first things I do with students as we prepare for group work is to ask them what has and has not worked for them in the past. Students' primary responses indicate that communication is key and that the most significant issue is unequal contributions. I created a word cloud of one course's key terms in response to what makes successful group work (Figure 1). After communication, comfort levels were the next most important factor toward success, followed by active engagement ("contribute," "sharing"). Students need to feel comfortable in their group to be able to work together toward their shared goals for the assignment/course. Building this comfort for students takes time but is a

worthwhile investment. Comfort can be built through team-building exercises to help students get to know one another in their groups, brief but meaningful informal interactions with the instructor, and the instructor's overall pedagogical approach of support in navigating new and challenging content or skills.

Overall, groups can create an important sense of connection, community, and belonging for students that provides accountability and resources in the course, as well as the opportunity to engage multiple perspectives related to course content to deepen learning. In my end-of-course survey, students consistently rank their group work experience on average on a scale of 1-5 (1=worst and 5=best) at above a 4 out of 5 each semester.

Benefits of Group Work (Summary)

1. Key Skills

2. Active learning

3. Sense of Belonging

4. Peer-to-Peer Learning

Challenges

1. Time on Task

2. Unequal work

3. Group Dynamics

4. Grading

Though group work has many benefits, its challenges can be daunting. Below I discuss the top four I have encountered and how to manage them.

Figure 1

Group Work Word Cloud (Mondello, 2023)

Time on Task

Invariably throughout a class period, students veer off topic. Small groups inhibit the ability to completely "check-out" (vs. a lecture format) and provide some socialization and interaction to keep attention. The group must have a clear

deliverable by the end of class, such as a slide, brief presentation, a shareable document, etc. to keep students on task and motivated. Within groups, students tend to veer off topic when the social element of the group overwhelms its role in their learning. I try to be attentive to this in the classroom in real time, especially as groups conclude their work at different time intervals, so that I can circle back to any group that seems off-task. It is beneficial, however, sometimes to allow for a limited amount of time off-task as this can create bonds within the group. I try to build this time in explicitly with exercises and icebreakers, especially at the beginning of the group formation, but some unstructured socializing can help a group cohere. The goal is to refocus the group back on task within a reasonable timeframe rather than to penalize students for occasionally getting off topic. If a group is consistently off topic and underperforming, this requires more intensive supervision and sometimes meetings with the group members, as well as reminders about grading and the learning goals of the group work.

Unequal Work

There is consistently 1 group out of 5 in each course for me that does not fully cohere. In a group of 5 students, for example, 1 student may be doing most of the work, 2 others are willing to help, and 2 others may be somewhat disengaged. Sometimes these groups end up needing to split up due to the dynamics. This is the reason I allow for flexible choice in group work for the final project because not every group will come together fully. A student who is disengaged from their group is likely disengaged from the course. I take the time to meet with these students one-on-one, but often the disengagement is due to factors outside the classroom. It is necessary to accept that not all groups will cohere, to do what is possible toward cohesion, and to offer flexibility when a group cannot continue to work together successfully. Group work is graded, which can provide some level of motivation for performance in a group, but ultimately the goal is for the group work to become its own reward, both socially and academically.

Group Dynamics

It is important to be aware of the power dynamics within groups, particularly around gender, race, sexuality, disability, etc. Many of these categories are something we actively study in our course material so they are already part of the discussion in groups. These are also discussed in our class community agreement (below). One of my more challenging experiences in group work related at least in part to gender. In one group, a dominant male student made two of his female groupmates uncomfortable with his insistence on his vision for

their project. I met with each of them one-on-one to discuss and ultimately allowed this group to split up for their project. While I would have liked to have mediated this conflict toward a successful collaboration, I concluded that in this instance the male student had already done significant work on the project and the female students should not be forced to remain in an uncomfortable environment that was not conducive to their learning.

Resulting from this situation, I now include and share the following Classroom Community guidelines with my classes:

> Classroom Community
>
> Together as a class we will work to build an inclusive environment for learning for all students. This kind of community takes work and will require all of us to be open to learning from each other. All comments made in discussions need to be respectful. Our course content will address how groups (by gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) have been wrongly marginalized, stereotyped, and subject to multiple forms of violence, so it is important to avoid reproducing any of these harms in our class. Please read and abide by the Student Code of Conduct: see the online handbook for information.

Grading

Projects receive group grades (based on overall quality), but each individual student also receives an individual grade for their group work (based on effort). This helps to eliminate any form of resentment among students over fairness in grading and workload. Students are asked to assess themselves and their groupmates fairly, in addition to my own assessment. As the instructor, it is important to consider that marginalized students (particularly by gender and race) may tend to rank themselves lower regardless of performance. Grades for both quality and effort can motivate students to succeed in both categories. As with all forms of grading, clear expectations, benchmarks, and feedback are critical to grading groups.

Assignment

Key Take-Aways

1. Build community, connection, and identity toward a sense of belonging in groups

2. Define roles and tasks in groups and rotate these when possible

3. Have regular check-ins and reflections with groups (in person, by survey, written) toward accountability/assessment

Before assigning students to stable small groups for the semester, I mix them up in groups frequently so that they get to know each other and to see how group dynamics work. These early days of group work are practice for the deeper work they will do once they have a consistent routine. During this time, I am working to help build students' individual senses of community and belonging in the course. When they are working in small groups, I come around and speak with each group throughout the class period. Talking one-on-one more informally in this way helps to break the ice. It is also quite powerful to shift the spatial/power dynamics: I leave the front of the classroom and come into their space. I am careful to sit or kneel so that we are on eye-level rather than standing over them.

Once the class has begun to come together (usually toward the end of the first of three units), I ask students to complete a survey for their discussion group assignments (Appendix A). This includes important questions about their experiences with group work, comfort level with the course, what types of roles they tend to play in groups, etc. as well as choices about whom they do or do not want to work with in their groups. By this point in the class, students often have already formed groups both inside and outside of the class; I have found that honoring their preferences has mostly had more benefits than drawbacks. I then use the remaining data to form the groups to ensure diversity within them (particularly around their responses to comfort level with the course material and which roles they tend to play). They are assigned to read a brief academic chapter on group work ("Group Member Roles," 2013) with an expanded list of roles that explicitly calls attention to group dynamics. I allow them to choose 2 of these roles since these can vary within different groups for individuals, as well as the option to write in their own terms for roles in the final question.

On the first day when the groups meet, I assign a 20–30-minute exercise to get started:

Discussion Group Exercise

Before settling into your group work, spend some time getting to know each other in your discussion groups.

1. Introduce yourselves.

2. Decide on how you want to communicate as a group (text, email, app, etc.).

3. Discuss what roles you usually take on in a group and what makes productive vs. unproductive group work.

4. From this discussion, establish some ground rules/goals for your group.

5. Come up with a group name.

While all these steps are important, #5 naming is one of the more creative ones where students must brainstorm together to find common interests. This often helps the group come together and begin to form a sense of identity.

Unit 2, the first in which they work in their stable discussion group for the full unit, culminates in a major creative project where students must divide up roles. Students comment that this project's creative nature helps the group come together. Creativity allows for a lot of freedom and self-direction (which I discuss in another chapter in this collection, "Fostering Creativity in Inclusive Teaching"). This helps to minimize some of the power dynamics or "groupthink" that might emerge more quickly if the project were solely based on academic ability. I ask students to assess their own and others' performance in their group in the mid-term check-in survey. This gives me a sense of what issues may be arising that are not immediately visible to me in the classroom.

By Unit 3, students can complete the final project for the course individually, in pairs, in small groups, or in their full discussion groups. Most of the class chooses to stay in their discussion groups because they already know how to see a project through to completion together. This freedom to work on the final project allows students to choose the best options for themselves.

Reflection Questions

1. Where can you make space for small group discussions in your course? Keep in mind that the more structured the group and tasks are the better. What will be the deliverable? How much time can you devote to discussion groups or allowing students to get to know each other in their groups?

2. How will you assess group work and how will you hold individuals accountable within the group? This can take many forms, including doing brief check-ins with each group, having group members write brief reports/reflections, surveying individuals about how the group work is going, etc.

3. What are some strategies for dealing with issues that inevitably arise in group work? This can include establishing clear expectations up front, reflecting

explicitly on the nature of group work, creating time and activities for groups to connect and bond, having regular check-ins with groups, and allowing some students to work individually when needed.

References and Recommended Reading

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Appendix A

Discussion Groups Survey

1. What is your experience of our course so far? (1-5 scale)

2. Factors that affect your experience of our course so far (positive and/or negative)? (Open text)

3. How confident/comfortable are you with the primary skills for this course (literary analysis, writing)? * (1-5 scale)

4. In a group, which 2 roles are you most likely to play? (Multiple Selection)

   Group Leader (overall)

   Expediter: getting things done, watching time

   Social and emotional leader

   Recorder: Takes good notes for the group

   Gatekeeper: Keeps everyone on task, sense of fairness and inclusion

   Information Giver: brings a lot of ideas

   Information Seeker: asks useful clarifying questions

   Emotionally supportive

   Harmonizer-Interpreter: helps mediate conflicts

   Tension releaser: often uses humor (See Group Member Roles, 2013)

   Other (please specify in the last question)

5. What has been your overall experience with small group work in our course so far? * (1-5 scale)

6. In your experience, what makes group work go the best? the worst? (Open Text)

7. Are there specific students in this course that you would like to work with and/or anyone you do not want to work with? (Open Text)

8. Which means of communication do you use/prefer to keep in touch with classmates about a course? (Multiple Selection)

Email

Texting

App or Social Media platform

Something else (write in last question)

Any of these

9. Anything else you would like to share? (Open Text)

Part 3: Ideas for Inclusive Assignments: Designing Assignments To Foster Learning

As opposed to Part 2, the chapters included in Part 3 share ideas, assignments, and strategies for inclusive practices that can be adapted, adopted, and implemented within a short time frame. These chapters provide ideas for class activities tomorrow or next week.

Chapter 12

Sustaining Effort With High Structure: the Mini-Workshop Project

Dr. Susannah Boyle

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Abstract

Drawing on research about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the value of high- structure courses to support inclusive teaching (Hogan & Sathy, 2022), this chapter will provide a sample project that faculty can adapt to reduce barriers to student success without reducing the rigor of the course. This mini-workshop presentation project, first done with upper-level education students, provides a substantial amount of structure that helps sustain students' persistence over time through use of goal setting, mastery-oriented feedback, varying demands to optimize challenge, and fostering of collaboration and community. Simultaneously, students are granted choice-making and flexibility that aid in meeting both academic and life challenges while engaging with materials that both reflect human diversity and are highly relevant for their professional futures.

Background

Students often face not only academic challenges but financial, health, and other life difficulties as they work to succeed in higher education. Faculty can help students navigate those challenges by reducing barriers to student success in their classroom without reducing the rigor of the course. A Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach can give educators the tools to create assignments and assessments that support students' learning while providing them flexibility to balance their needs outside the classroom. UDL guidelines provide a framework for offering choices that promote students' active engagement in learning (CAST, 2018). Specifically, faculty should examine how best to sustain effort and persistence, which includes heightening the salience of goals, varying demands to optimize challenge, fostering collaboration, and increasing mastery-oriented feedback (CAST, 2018). This can help students both acquire and maintain knowledge and skills throughout the course and beyond.

In this chapter, I walk readers through a mini-workshop presentation project that is scaffolded to sustain effort and persistence while also offering students choices that promote both flexibility and ownership of the material.

Mini-Workshop Project Workflow

Preparatory

- Case study

- Mini-workshop topic

- Goal-setting

- Article Search/Intervention Selection

- Pre-Workshop Plan

Presentation

- Mini workshop engagement by team

- Mini workshop engagement by audience

Review

Post-workshop debrief

Along with the UDL guidelines, this project is an example of using high structure to promote inclusive teaching (Hogan & Sathy, 2022) in that it includes required (and graded) preparatory and review components as well as high levels of student engagement during the presentation. Courses with high structure have been shown to improve the performance of all students on average but may be particularly helpful for students from marginalized groups, such as first-generation, low-income, and Black students (Casper et al., 2019; Eddy & Hogan, 2014). Thus, I will discuss how each component (preparatory, presentation, and review) of the mini-workshop project is structured to support active engagement of students with the content and each other.

First, please note the following about the classroom context: The mini-workshop project was designed to be a challenge for upper-level special education majors taking a required course on methods for teaching learners with significant disabilities. I will use "students" to describe college level students and "learners" to describe children in PK-12 schools throughout the chapter. These students

have all previously taken a course focused on supporting learners with significant disabilities in inclusive PK-12 settings, where they were introduced to evidence-based practices for teaching such learners and provided with scaffolded practice on reading special education research articles.

Assignment Preparation

The project begins with choice-making and goal setting. I inform the students that my goal is for them to 1) fulfill course objectives on how to teach learners with significant disabilities by working together as a team to find interventions that are effective for such learners, 2) select one intervention, and 3) present that intervention to their classmates. I then present four case studies (an inclusive preschool class, an elementary autism support class, a middle school emotional support class, and high school life skills class) and let them know they will be able to choose to be on one team focusing on one of the case studies. The case studies include depictions of at least three profiles of specific learners, which reflects diversity that students will encounter as educators in the classroom (see Case Study B and Mini Workshop Plan Template).

Case Study B: Elementary Autism Support Class

You are a teacher in a K-5 school, responsible for teaching a Grades 3-5 Autism Support class. You have a class of 7 students, all with a primary classification of autism. Students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including two English language learners. Your curriculum used to focus primarily on verbal communication, listening skills, and following directions. However, this year your district provided new literacy and math curricula for autism support classrooms that are specifically designed for students with significant disabilities, including those with limited speech. Social-emotional learning will be addressed in social skill groups and a peer mentoring program. Connections with science and social studies must be provided by you. Similarly, you must implement more intensive interventions in academic and social skills as needed. Students are also supported in life skills as needed. Students attend 5 days a week and you have an open period for planning and professional development once a day.

Staff

Classroom staff includes two class paraprofessionals and a one-on-one aide for a child with emotional/behavioral needs. The speech language pathologist works with learners out for 30 minutes twice a week. An occupational therapist works with children who receive OT twice a month. A behavioral specialist consults as needed.

Resources

Your classroom materials include literacy and math curricula designed for students with significant disabilities, a class library, and children's engineering materials. You also have a designated Calm Area, access to a sensory room, and a playground. Technology includes a Smartboard connected to a teacher computer, 1-to-1 laptops for each student, and AAC and other technology for students who require it.

Learner Profiles

The following includes profiles for three learners in your class. When selecting an intervention to present for a mini workshop, you can either consider the strengths and needs of a specific learner or the class as whole.

Akio: Akio is a 3rd grade student. He is an English language learner whose home language is Japanese. He uses gestures, signs, and a few words to communicate. He has recently been given access to an AAC system on a tablet with both English and Japanese vocabulary. Akio has a strong receptive vocabulary but has not received literacy or math instruction since preschool. He is very interested in your engineering materials and enjoys sharing Youtube videos about robots. Akio is easily over-stimulated and has a tendency to hide under furniture or elope. He is working on asking for a break when he feels this way. Akio will engage with a peer when prompted but will not initiate an interaction. He is also working on developing personal hygiene skills (hand-washing, hair-brushing, and tooth-brushing).

Destiny: Destiny is a 4th grade student. She uses gestures, vocalizations, an AAC system (a dedicated speech-generating device) to communicate and has emotional/behavioral needs. She enjoys the Disney channel, telling jokes, and making sound effects. She also loves to move and enjoys both the sensory room and the playground. Destiny can be aggressive towards staff and peers when asked to do a non-preferred task. This usually manifests in shouting and throwing materials. Destiny will occasionally bite her arm when frustrated. She is working on asking for help when she feels this way. Destiny can read and write her name, identify some sight words, and participate in a shared writing activity. She can identify some shapes, numbers, and weather patterns. Destiny enjoys interacting with peers but has difficulty with turn taking. She is working on following classroom routines independently.

Malik: Malik is a 5th grade student. He uses speech and a few signs to communicate. Malik is very shy and interacts more with adults than with peers.

He attends math and English Language Arts classes in a general education classroom with the support of a paraprofessional and has received modified academic instruction this way since 2nd grade. Malik enjoys listening to both rap and country music and can tell you the current top 10 hits in both genres. He also enjoys drawing and looking at music magazines. Malik is very sensitive to changes in routine and will get upset if a change has not been communicated to him beforehand. He rarely engages with peers independently but will do so if prompted (i.e., in a social skills group). His guardian is working with him on preparing his own lunches.

Within each case study team, each student or pair of students (depending on class size) will present a mini-workshop on an intervention shown to be effective for learners with significant disabilities in one of five topic areas: literacy, math, science/social studies, life skills, or behavior/social skills. Since students may end up teaching learners in any of the classrooms described in the case studies, this set of choices has immediate relevance to them as future educators (Assor et al., 2002) while also allowing them some flexibility as the topics are spread out throughout the term. For example, a student who knows they may be distracted by a wedding or anniversary of a death on a certain week may choose a topic that does not fall on that week.

After case study teams are formed and mini-workshop topics are chosen, each team is then asked to set a goal for the project. A sample goal may be "Our team will evaluate teaching practices for preschool learners and demonstrate to our classmates how to effectively use these practices." Teams will receive feedback on whether their goals are specific and measurable. Such explicit goal setting helps sustain effort because faculty can tell students to refer back to their goals throughout the project while simultaneously fostering community by identifying a common objective (e.g. Schultheiss & Brunstein, 1999).

With goals set, we can now turn to helping students find and select an intervention appropriate for their case study and mini-workshop topic area. Each student (or pair of students in a larger class) is required to find three academic articles appropriate for their case study and topic and select an intervention described in one of those articles to present to their classmates. I provide a model of how to do this in class and encourage students to follow along before providing some time in class for them to begin on this component. Students have said that they appreciate being able to ask questions and get immediate feedback, especially since this is a new skill for most of them. While this is a graded component, I do provide mastery-oriented feedback (which is feedback that guides students towards mastery of a skill instead of performing a skill

correctly the first time) that helps students persist and succeed in selecting an intervention (El-Alayli & Baumgardner, 2003). This kind of feedback emphasizes the role of effort and demystifies the process of investigating research literature for effective practices, a competency that might be particularly critical for first generation college students and students with disabilities.

Once students select interventions, they can begin preparing for the workshop itself. I provide a template for a pre-workshop plan (see Fig. 3) which is also a graded component due before the presentation. The feedback they receive on the plan helps sustain effort in presenting an effective and engaging mini workshop. I also provide a model mini-workshop presentation and tell students to track what I do for each part of the mini-workshop with the template. I remind students to review their goal(s) for the project and set a goal for what they hope their classmates will learn from their presentation. They are also reminded that their audience consists of fellow future educators, and they should present as if providing a workshop to teachers in a school. In addition, they can plan to use no-tech, low-tech, and/or high-tech resources to provide a model of the intervention. This is an opportunity to practice implementing both the intervention for their classmates and a formative assessment that will provide data about whether their classmates met the goal they had set. Lastly, the team leader(s) is (are) required to list the team members responsible for each part of the presentation. In this way, students' persistence is supported in reminding them of relevant goals, providing them resources, and encouraging interactions with peers (CAST, 2018).

Table 1 Mini-Workshop Plan Template

Workshop Overview	
Title:	Provide a title for your workshop
Team members names:	Provide team member names
Topic (and standard if applicable):	List your topic and subtopic (e.g., Literacy: Vocabulary)
	If this is an academic topic, insert an applicable state standard here
Goals	
Objective(s):	Describe what you expect your classmates to be able to do after the workshop

Methods	
Definition of instructional topic and intervention:	Provide a definition of the instructional topic you are presenting on. Describe the intervention from the article that you are presenting. List the team member(s) responsible for this section
Model new knowledge:	Describe the information you will share and/or the activities you will do and/or the questions you will ask in order to introduce and model the intervention. List the team member(s) responsible
Provide practice:	Describe how you will provide practice for your classmates with the new knowledge they have learned. List the team member(s) responsible
Assessment:	Describe how you will provide a formative assessment activity to determine what your classmates have learned. List the team member(s) responsible. Describe how you will keep a physical copy of the assessment results to analyze for your debrief

Presentation

The mini-workshop project is designed to provide a major high-structure component for the course. In high-structure courses, students talk for more than 40% of the course, which leads to improved performance for all students, including students of color and first generation students (Eddy & Hogan, 2014). In my current course structure, about 50% of class time is reserved for mini-workshop presentations. Although I may ask a clarifying question during a presentation or provide more information about how best to implement an intervention after a presentation, students are the ones presenting the material

and leading activities and discussion with their peers. I require workshop leaders to check in on their classmates during activities and remind them to use discussion strategies such as asking for signals to show agreement or disagreement, calling on non-volunteers, and asking follow-up questions.

Similarly, the students in the audience are participating in the activities and discussions prepared by the workshop leaders, which requires them to engage with and talk with other students. Activities are usually small group based while discussions are usually whole class based. This helps to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. To encourage such sustained effort, I also complete any practice activities designed by the workshop leaders. In this way, students in the audience and workshop leaders are co-creating a community based on a common interest of learning about the presentation intervention specifically and how best to teach learners with significant disabilities in general. Participation in communities of common interest is part of the UDL Guidelines to promote inclusive learning (CAST, 2018) by fostering collaboration among diverse students.

Review

The final part of the mini-workshop project is a graded review assignment in which workshop leaders are asked to reflect on the goal(s) they set at the beginning of the project. Students are encouraged to write about if they met their goals and reflect on the reasons for reaching or not reaching their goals. In this post-workshop debrief, students can use the formative assessment results, discuss the experience of running a workshop, and think ahead about how this experience could apply to teaching K-12 learners or working collaboratively with other education professionals. I then provide feedback on how to refine goal setting, collaboration, and reflection practices. This is mastery-oriented feedback designed to help guide students in more effectively using such skills and practices in the future. These graded review assignments are the third component of high structure courses (along with graded preparation assignments and student engagement in class) that have been found to improve performance for all students (Eddy & Hogan, 2014).

In my experience, I found that students reported improved ability to find, implement, and share information about evidence-based interventions for learners with significant disabilities. They also appreciated the opportunities in the project to meaningfully engage and collaborate with other students as colleagues and felt more prepared to effectively teach learners with significant disabilities.

Summary

The mini-workshop project is designed as an inclusive teaching activity, based on the value of high-structure courses (Eddy & Hogan, 2014) and guidelines to support universal design for learning in goal-setting, providing feedback, and fostering collaboration (CAST, 2018). This activity has been found to improve student knowledge and skills in an upper-level methods course for special education majors. However, the mini-workshop project can be adapted for use in other courses. Here are the key components to include:

- A graded preparatory assignment in which students set goals and select a workshop topic

- A presentation format that requires students to plan interactive activities for their classmates to engage with the topic

- Willingness to let students lead during the workshop while modeling engagement in workshop activities

- A graded review assignment in which students reflect on whether they met their goals and the experience of conducting the workshop

- Feedback for the preparatory and review assignments that are focused on guiding students towards more effective goal setting, collaboration, and reflection

Reflection Questions

1. How could you adapt this project to make it relevant for your own students and their futures? For example, science majors may need to present their progress to the rest of their lab, business majors may need to prepare pitches, and history majors may need to share local history with the public.

2. What is a sample goal you could provide your students?

3. What parts of the project do you think your students would need extra support in? How could you include more mastery-oriented feedback for those parts?

4. How will you gather feedback from the students as the project unfolds and then after it is completed?

5. How will you determine success and areas that you would change next time?

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Chapter 13

Promoting Belonging, Agency, and Reflective Culture With Support of Digital Tools

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Abstract

Inclusive Pedagogy centers students and their interests, learning preferences, background knowledge, and strengths to content that needs to be understood. Inclusive teaching is more than facilitating engagement in learning. It creates a learning community, so students' academic learning is positively affected. One way to ensure students feel engaged and included in the classroom is to make sure the instructor is not the "sage on the stage." Rather, students should have a choice in their learning, how they learn, what they choose to learn about more deeply, and with whom they conduct this learning. We want students to feel welcomed and included in our learning spaces. The long-term goal is to have students use positive learning and collaborative experiences to develop agency to direct their own learning. While this work starts with us as faculty, through careful, thoughtful, strategic planning of our courses, we then must step back to allow students to drive their learning. One way to accomplish this is through intentional reflection times throughout the semester. Reflection is at the core of inclusive pedagogy, through talking and writing to process and refine understandings, whether about the content, the student's personal journey through the course, or the process of learning that needs to occur for this experience to be meaningful and purposeful to each student. Thankfully, this work, from community building to agency, to reflection, can be facilitated through digital tools.

Background and Inclusive Pedagogy Research

Inclusive Pedagogy centers students and their interests, learning preferences, background knowledge, and area(s) of strengths within the curriculum and content that needs to be taught because, "student engagement and faculty-student interaction matter most in student learning" (Bowen, 2012, p. x). The focus on what's of most interest and motivating for student then supports shifting content learning to before class meetings so when students are together,

they can experience hands-on, practical application of the content, and, more importantly, focus on the whys of learning and how the information can specifically support them in their career. Hogan and Sathy (2022) describe how instructors can increase their teaching engagement and student-centeredness: "[o]n one end of the spectrum…, students are passive, such as when they are listening to a lecture. Students become active if they take notes while the teacher lectures. As we move along this continuum, we see students become more engaged as they construct ideas, such as when students are answering a question posted by an instructor…. If we envision interactivity in a classroom, we might see an instructor circulating around the room to assist pairs or groups of students as they solve problems together and the room might be quite noisy. Student engagement changes as an instructor makes pedagogical decisions" (p. 20). This facilitation promotes active learning where students and the instructor are co-constructing understandings in a collaborative environment (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). This is how adults learn and are best engaged in learning. That's why inclusive teaching practices are essential, now more than ever, given the impoverished learning environments students have been educated in throughout the pandemic.

Inclusive teaching is even more than facilitating engagement in learning. Some recent surveys detail that approximately 60 percent of people in the U.S. currently consider themselves as feeling lonely on a regular basis (Yang, 2023). Especially when living away from home, students need to feel safe and belong to a community for learning to be relevant and effective (Maslow, 1943). Gooblar (2019) shares that we want to attend to both the academics and the social emotional aspects of students: "[d]efining course climate as 'the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical environments in which our student learn,'… discussing climate as existing on a continuum between 'marginalizing' (in which the student in question feels excluded or discouraged) and 'centralizing' (in which individual students feel included and welcomed)" (p. 181). By creating a true community of learners, students' academic learning will be positively affected.

One way to ensure students feel engaged and included in the classroom is to avoid the instructor as "sage on the stage." Students should have a choice in their learning, how they learn, what they choose to learn about more deeply, and with whom they conduct this learning. "Many instructors have found ways to help their students see each other as sources of useful experiences, perspectives, and expertise. We can turn our classrooms into learning communities, where our students learn from and with each other" (Bruff, 2019, p. 144). Using techniques such as those described in *Total Participation Techniques* (Himmele & Himmele,

2017), or activities such as think-pair-share or muddiest point (Gooblar, 2019), students will be involved in discussing important aspects of the learning, which facilitates a community of learners. Because "[a]nything that asks students to actively take part in their own learning—frequent testing with immediate feedback, group work, discussion, role-playing games—seems to be better than students passively sitting and listening to a lecture" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 18).

We want students to feel welcomed and included in our learning spaces. The long-term goal is to have students use these positive learning and collaborative experiences to develop a sense of agency to direct their own learning. "If we wish for students to learn content deeply and develop a capacity for wicked thinking, we have to structure our courses in ways that ask them to do the kind of authoritative work we do in our own fields" (Hanstedt, 2018, p. 42). While this work starts with us as faculty, through careful, thoughtful, strategic planning of our courses, we then must step back to allow the students to drive their learning. One way to accomplish this is through intentional reflection times throughout the semester. Reflection is at the core of inclusive pedagogy, through talking and writing to process and refine understandings, whether about the content, the student's personal journey through the course content, or the process of learning needs to occur for this experience to be meaningful and purposeful to each student. Gooblar (2019) recommends the following: "Throughout the semester, get into the habit of explaining the justification behind each activity as you introduce it. Let your students know why a particular exercise or topic will be useful to them, either for their final grade or (better yet) in their lives outside the classroom walls" (p. 22). This will help students understand the whys behind their learning. Likewise, Bowen (2012) notes, "[i]mproving student learning requires articulating learning outcomes, collecting data, and embracing a feedback loop that uses results to inform change" (p. xii). Once we do this, we can "...encourage students to take responsibility for their learning" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 65). As students reflect on their own learning, "this journey toward deeper, more long-lasting learning [will become] continuous" (Hanstedt, 2018, p. 13).

Thankfully, this work, from community building to agency, to reflection, can be facilitated through digital tools. When strategically implemented, "...student participation becomes nonnegotiable" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 23). It also allows us "to come at [the] material in a variety of ways so that your students learn within a variety of contexts" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 78), which respects students' various interests and learning preferences, which certainly centers them in the work of planning and implementing a course. "People learn better when multiple

modalities are used…. One reason is what's known as dual coding. We have both verbal and visual channels in our brains that we use to process information. When we encounter a new idea or concept through both words and pictures, we tap into both of these channels, and when the channels are working together, they help us understand and remember that idea or concept" (Bruff, 2019, p. 111). Of equal importance, "[a]t its best, interactive technology provides not only content, but also practice and individualized feedback that can be difficult to administer in a typical classroom environment" (Bowen, 2012, p. 5). Specifically for my students seeking a degree in early or middle level education, "[f]uture educators will need to understand how games take the part of school that most students dislike the most and make it fun" (Bowen, 2012, p. 59). We need to remember that our students could have been those students, bored or marginalized by "school." They will teach students who need a teacher mindful of inclusive teaching practices to (re)engage them in their learning. This is what needs to be done in our own classrooms and serves as a model for our students to affect the lives and learning of their students for decades to come.

Classroom Context

To create a sense of belonging, agency, and reflective culture in the classroom, I started before the semester began with the choice of texts and technology to use with students. It is essential to "live" this work; I used professional learning, online training, blog posts, or resources shared by someone in my field as authentic resources to be used in the classroom instead of a traditional textbook. Cohn (2021) shared, "[a]s instructors, when we put together a course syllabus and develop a reading list, curation is probably one of the main skills we practice… we're constructing our own educational galleries: pairing and matching our materials to create the perfect learning exhibit" (p. 139). Students also seem to engage more strongly with "real" readings in-service teachers might be reading to guide their practice.

I have employed a few different activities to put students at the center of the course from the very start of the semester. This is because "[i]n your syllabus and on the first day of class, you can set a tone of inclusion and mutual respect" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 182). One student commented that even the resources I listed throughout my syllabus, regarding mental health, possible housing or food insecurity, helped them feel they were more important to me than the curriculum.

One start of semester, I followed Gooblar's (2019) suggestion and posted the last date of the course on the first slide and began talking to them as if they were

attending the last day of class. He shares that the instructor should, "write the date of your last class session on the board, along with the main concepts that your exam will cover. And then launch into it: start summing up the course, exactly as you would on the last day of the term. Review the important ideas that the course will have covered. Refer frequently to exciting details that the students would surely remember. Let them know that they should study if they want to do well on the exam. Make a point of reminding them that this is stuff they should know, that you've gone over it before (you want them to get the joke)" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 61-62). I shifted the approach a bit, as I don't give an actual exam at the end of the class, to discuss and share excitement with students about all they had accomplished throughout the course. Gooblar (2019) writes, "It starts off class exactly how you should be starting off class—by thinking about, and encouraging students to think about, the desired outcomes of the course" (p. 62). I definitely captured their interest that semester, but also seemed to generate an understanding of the importance of what we would be studying, how it would apply to their professional lives, and how I would be extremely proud of them for all of their hard work and learning (it's a six credit course in a semester in which they are in the field full time three days a week).

During that same semester, I assigned all my students a "Student Goals Assignment" (Gooblar, 2019). I was compelled to have "students articulate their goals—both academic and otherwise—to see whether an intervention would lead to better academic performance" (p. 63). While not all students were equally goal-oriented, or even knew what they wanted to accomplish in that semester, I learned a great deal about students' priorities, their general feelings of a lack of confidence in their abilities (in the face of the semester's academic demands and/or being in the field, really teaching), and a bit about how they were starting to define themselves as an educator. Paul Hanstedt (2018), shares, "a goals-based approach to course design… foreground(s)—to the student as well as to us—the idea that education is about more than memorizing content" (p. 12). Moreover, it helps us answer the question, "What do we want students to be able to do with the content we teach them?" (Hanstedt, 2018, p. 12). It was a valuable activity for me, and I hope it helped them to perceive that I cared about them.

More recently, I started each class with two survey tools. The first was a "Sense of Belonging" survey modified by Good et al. (2012). This started each class with a powerful conversation about what it means to belong to a literacy community, why students might engage with such a community, how they are already a part of this type of community on a micro level, and how fostering this type of belonging would positively impact their teaching career. Many students did not

realize they should want, or they needed to belong to a literacy community as a future educator. For some, this was a novel idea they did not further pursue, but for others, it established a line of thinking about belonging to a community of educators as a practicing professional. It was an eye opener to them about how they were not just studying content, but engaging in a larger conversation that embodies strong understandings and beliefs about various aspects of education (especially literacy). This will serve them well when they obtain a position in a school or district, as they will potentially be asked to join a teacher union and/or other professional organizations from which they can derive a sense of belonging and collaboration.

Of note, 67% of students surveyed across all three of my courses responded either positively or very positively to the statement: "When I am in a literacy setting, I feel I belong to the literacy community." Extremely telling of how students' past experiences in the classroom can affect their study in a certain subject, 50% of students responded positively or very positively to the statement: "When I am in a literacy setting, I feel anxious." As their instructor, knowing they could have had negative experiences in learning to read and write, is something we want to try to address, if possible, so they don't affect how the students approach these subjects with their own students. Luckily, 86% of students responded favorably or very favorably to the statement: "When I am in a literacy setting, I trust my instructors to be committed to helping me learn," which shows instructors at Millersville University are aware of early childhood and middle level education majors' possible academic and social/emotional needs and respond accordingly.

Others who were further along the continuum of feeling connected to a literacy community, many of whom identified with communities/groups on campus such as a sorority, a student organization, or a club, were ready to jump in and engage. This led many students to attend authentic, outside of the university, literacy learning opportunities with local, state, and national organizations. These were offered as extra credit, but not required opportunities. Students attended in the evenings and typically online, to gain additional learning, but some also attended in person events on campus that were education related. The impression they shared with me was they were eager to learn about opportunities to engage with literacy organizations and thought it a positive next step for them as some were getting close to the end of their time in college. After the first class and the survey, one student shared that she didn't realize there was a community to get plugged into and she was excited for me to start sharing all the ways she could become more involved with literacy. Another shared this

feedback: "I wanted you to know that [I] have loved having you and the impact you made on [me] is everlasting."

A different type of survey I used in a different semester asked students to rate their content understanding prior to class starting. I took the course objectives and put them into an online survey to gauge which topics I would need to focus on and explicitly teach, and which content students had learned in previous courses. This was especially helpful with our middle level majors who take four classes in the English Department, which covers some similar English/Language Arts content outside of our knowledge. Students typically said they were moderately versed in all the learning objectives, except for vocabulary and writing instruction scoring lower than the rest, and technology, differentiation, and connections between reading and writing scoring the highest. While this certainly served me as the instructor, it also provided students with an opportunity to really think about and reflect on what we would be learning in the course (because not many read through the objectives anyway). It also provided them with an immediate opportunity to offer feedback to me as the instructor about how the course should be taught. Thankfully, when sharing responses to the same survey at the end of the semester all scores, even the ones on which students felt the strongest at the beginning of the semester, came up 15-30 percentage points. It was great for them to see these results at the end of a semester's worth of work.

As a different take on this, this past year I asked students to record questions they had about the course content or purpose on a Jamboard, a digital whiteboard that allows for collaboration in real time. This also operated as a guide for me, to know what they are expressing an interest in learning more deeply throughout the course and to orient them to what the course was about. I don't comment on them at all in class, just accept all questions or statements. I read through them at the beginning of the semester, to ensure my teaching plans align with the needs and curiosities of the students at the outset. At the end of the course, we revisited these questions. I asked them to log back into the Jamboard and find their post (they put their initials on it, as I don't expect them to remember what they wrote 15 weeks prior). If their question had been answered throughout the course (in other words, if they knew the answer to their question), they deleted it. If it was still a question, they left it there and we held a discussion, first by asking if others had a response to the question still in need of an answer. I also provided a response and then directed them to where this learning would have taken place (within the course or possibly somewhere else in their program). This facilitated reflection and an awareness of all they had

learned throughout the semester. This past spring, no questions were left unanswered across three courses.

Assignment

I am always thinking about the most practical, but academic, assignments for students to complete in my courses, so they can practice "real world" activities (that would be a part of their life as a teacher), as well as be able to gain this practice while having the opportunity to receive feedback before trying it out in the field. I believe these assignments to be somewhat low stakes (Elbow, 2000), where students can take some risks as a learner without worrying about the evaluative part of the assignment, as I offer students the opportunity to revise and resubmit after receiving feedback.

First, for my seniors, I have designed a "problem of practice" activity. We have shifted towards an Action Research project as their culminating student teaching assignment, which I brought to the department from my experience as a National Writing Project fellow. The "problem of practice" activity and the action research project are examples of a Student Learning Objective (SLO) that Pennsylvania teachers employ and are evaluated on each year. The "problem of practice" assignment facilitates students talking with their cooperating teacher and looking at the data of students who are not engaged in meaningful or successful learning throughout the school year. Once the seniors identify a potential topic or group of students with whom to work, they research ways to address this "problem." This shouldn't be their first exposure to research, but it could be only a second or third experience using research published amongst the educational literature.

The directions are as follows:

Take a literacy 'issue' you see in your placement, use an intervention, activity, or strategy to address the issue (think intervention or enrichment) and present your mini-action research to the class. You will need to try out your strategy/activity with students in your placement to share how students responded to your teaching/practice. Presentations to our class should be 8-10 minutes long, include a handout for the class to follow, a presentation (Smore, Google Slides, Canva, Nearpod, Peardeck, etc.) to guide your talk (the handout and presentation can be similar), and include an interactive demonstration. You will need to make an appointment (F2F or online) to meet with me for a brainstorming session at least a week prior to your presentation.

Elaboration:

For your presentation/handout to your classmates:

1. What was the problem you chose to solve?

2. What activity (intervention/enrichment) did you choose? Remember, I don't need you to 'prove' that a published, evidence- or research-based program works. It's already proven. Try something unique and creative/original to solve the issue student(s) are having.

3. What is the 'research' behind the activity/strategy? Describe what the field of literacy is saying about this activity, strategy, approach, or technique?

4. Conduct a brief demo of your activity, strategy, approach, or technique with your classmates?

5. Share how students in your placement responded to this activity, strategy, approach, or technique? Be prepared to share a video clip, audio recording, or pictures of student work.

I got the idea of having them make an appointment with me from (Gooblar, 2019). These appointments are a way to build relationships with students outside of the classroom and allow me to personalize feedback (instead of "scrawl(ing) comments in the margins" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 141). "The idea here isn't to give [the professor] more work to do, but rather to take time you have to spend anyway and make it pedagogically useful. Conducting student conferences may seem like a lot of work, but they can replace some of the time you would have spent [writing comments] and offer the possibility that students might actually understand and make use of your [feedback]" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 141). This project engages students in inclusive teaching through "It's far better to fill our class periods with 'active learning strategies': activities designed to get students to engage with the material, confront the limits of their understandings, see how their thinking must change, and practice the skills we hope they will develop" (Gooblar, 2019, p. 14). It has also led to providing them opportunities to share innovative teaching with other teachers at state-level conferences each fall or Made in Millersville, a university-wide conference that allows students to showcase their work, in the spring.

For special education students who are studying assessment and interventions, in collaboration with Dr. Jennifer Shettel at Millersville University, we have initiated

a "Strategy-in-Action Presentation" to have students gain hands-on, up-close experience with teaching techniques and the research behind them, based on student literacy needs. We share with students that an important component of the Curriculum-Assessment-Instruction (CAI) Cycle (Cauley & McMillan, 2010) is to understand how to use effective teaching strategies to support specific student needs. Each student then selects one research-based strategy that corresponds with a module topic being taught by the instructor of the course and prepares a presentation demonstrating the teaching strategy.

This assignment provides students with choice and an opportunity to lead class. It allows them to utilize a technology platform of their choice and become an expert to their peers. It encourages them to engage with information/materials to extend learnings that have been presented in class and in readings, to apply these understandings to new concepts. This is the work of a true teacher—seeking out resources with the ability to vet them based on their academic knowledge. By referencing the CAI Cycle (Cauley & McMillan, 2010), the instructor is also making students aware of why they are being assigned this work. Finally, it allows for other students to access information in the form of a handout to keep with them for future use. Students use this information as a part of their final exam preparation and responses.

Likewise, in this same class, we provide special education students the opportunity to work with a partner school entity in a one-to-one assessment and tutoring experience with elementary students who have been identified as being at-risk learners. Field-based, authentic work with learners who struggle enhances the preparation of these undergraduate students. This project also fosters relationships and connections to the community and provides a service-learning experience to the undergraduate students who take the course (VanDemark & Haraway, 2020). Student success is "more probable when students find meaning or purpose h in their college experience, for example when they perceive relevant connections between what they're learning in college and their current life or future goals" (*Defining Student Success*, 2018, p. 7). By learning about what teaching practices are most effective with elementary students, the undergraduate students are being steeped in experiences that cannot be replicated by case studies or a textbook alone.

The steps to create this partnership were to reach out to local districts or after school entities who could provide time for undergraduate students to work with an elementary aged student about two times a week throughout the semester. Both times I have formed partnerships, the organization or district already had an after-school program established. Undergraduate students worked with school

administrators, reading specialists, and the parents to identify who would benefit and be able to meet after school. In class, students learn how to assess students, and through the "Strategy-in-Action Presentation" activity described above, how to plan learning activities based on student data.

Students in the fall and spring were positive about this learning experience as a part of the courses. They have shared they would not have learned about assessment, instruction, or even behavior of elementary students quite as effectively without this project. They say, as long as I am flexible in how some students need to work with a different student (not one who goes to the partner school), or receive a case study, when their schedule does not allow them to tutor (athletes, or someone who has a heavy work or course load throughout the semester), this is a wonderful learning opportunity for all. They especially talk about how they never realized how much planning goes into teaching. This is a valuable understanding for them to learn prior to their special education blocks, where they are assigned to work in school for larger chunks of time throughout the semester. We reflect during each class about what's working with students, how to manage after school or off-task behaviors, and how they are providing additional opportunities to students who are at risk. Reflecting upon their practice is their being an inclusive teacher themselves.

Reflection Questions

1. Do my students feel a sense of belonging with the content of my course: do they see themselves as educators, mathematicians, historians, literacy advocates, etc.?

2. Do my students feel a sense of belonging in my classroom, with their peers, and with me as their instructor? How can I facilitate a stronger sense of engagement and ownership over various elements of the course?

3. How can I facilitate real-world connections and applications through assignments and learning opportunities for students in my course?

4. Which of my course assignments provide my students with choice and active engagement in their field of study/in practical ways they will recognize as beneficial to them as an adult?

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Chapter 14

"Actual Concern for our Wellbeing": the Self-Care Assignment

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Abstract

In this chapter, I describe the "Self-Care Assignment" that I assign to each of my education students. This project requires students to create a proposal for an individualized self-care plan which they then implement throughout the semester. They submit regular check-ins as well as reflections at midterm and the end of the semester. In addition to describing the rationale for this assignment, as well as the adjustments I have made since first introducing it, I discuss several reasons why I find it to be an effective inclusive practice. This assignment recognizes that learning involves not just our brains but our bodies, our relationships, our psyches, and more; we need to take care of our full selves in order to learn well, an especially essential lesson for pre-service teachers. Additionally, this assignment helps me get to know my students outside of the classroom which then helps me teach them more holistically. Finally, the format of the submissions is entirely up to the students, so they can demonstrate their commitment to and reflection on self-care through photos, writing, videos, screenshots of their fitness tracker device, etc.

Background and Inclusive Pedagogy Research

I began teaching undergraduates in the Fall of 2016 while I was in my second year of my doctoral program. As I got to know my students, I quickly came to see firsthand the effects of rising mental health concerns among college students (Flannery, 2023). Many of my students were preservice teachers, education majors who were planning to become classroom teachers upon graduation. As a group, they seemed even more stressed and anxious than students from other majors, perhaps partly because they were well aware of the stressful career they were beginning (Will, 2022).

I could commiserate. That semester, I was a full-time PhD student, I was teaching two 30-student sections of a course for the first time (which required

me to create my own syllabus and text set), I traveled to and presented at 3 different conferences, I was a leader in an on-campus group, and I had just started dating my future spouse. There was a highly contentious and consequential presidential election and closer to home, an attack on campus in which one of my students was stabbed (thankfully, they recovered). As was the case nationwide (Flannery, 2023), suicides were on the rise on our campus and there were long waitlists to get appointments at the student counseling center. In short, things were stressful, if not outright scary, and rather than being a source of support, school seemed to be making things worse.

My professors tried their best to help us doctoral students. They'd review the homework for the week and then, seeing our drooping, frazzled eyes, they would end class by encouraging us to "get some sleep" or "go for a nice walk." I appreciated their intentions, but at some point that semester, I found myself wanting to reply with exasperation, "You need to choose *one*! I can't read and understand these ridiculously long and dense readings *and* take care of myself. Which will it be?"

As a teacher who cares deeply about her students' wellbeing, I feared I was being hypocritical when I encouraged my students to take care of themselves. Moreover, I knew that when I did so, it was just as futile as when my professors passed on their self-care wishes to my peers and me. So, a few semesters later, I finally concluded that if my students weren't going to take care of themselves without being required to, I would have to require it of them. And thus, the Self-Care Assignment was born.

I used it for several semesters as I finished my PhD, and when I started as a full-time faculty member in a teacher preparation program in the Fall of 2020 during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, I decided to continue using it. I was confident my students would not be *less* anxious and in need of self-care. Indeed, they consistently gave me such enthusiastic feedback about this assignment that it has been a part of my courses ever since. As with any assignment worth repeating, I have made adjustments to ensure it is as useful and inclusive as possible for my students.

I describe the assignment in more detail below, but in short, I ask students to create an individualized plan for their self-care for the semester. Then, they need to implement the plan to the best of their ability with reflections on their experiences at midterm and the end of the semester. The point of the assignment is to learn about which self-care practices work and which don't during this season of their life, not to have a perfect track record (many of my

students are self-described perfectionists and, in my view, they don't need another opportunity to aim for flawlessness!). I tell them about how some students will change their plan at midterm or even earlier. Some might change their plan in minor ways (e.g., from going to the gym 5 days a week to going 4 because that is more attainable), while others might change it in more significant ways (from reading a novel for 15 min every day to spending time with family once a week because that feels more life-giving at that point). While I hope that the self-care project is helpful *during* the semester students are with me, my bigger hope is that it helps them consider how self-care will be a part of their lives *after* we part ways.

I use this assignment as one way to welcome students into my classroom. As the first assignment students encounter, they understand that "various student differences are openly acknowledged and accepted" (Addy et al., 2021, p. 74) in my classroom and in the assignments they will complete. My students are likely coming from (and heading to) educational environments with a high degree of standardization. With this assignment, I attempt to communicate to them, *I see you—specifically* you*—and I expect that you show up as a unique individual in this course; as such, your work will necessarily look different from that of your peers.*

Indeed, one of my favorite parts of this assignment is the plans students put together. Every semester, certain types of ideas inevitably come up. Students always set goals around: going to the gym, going on walks, eating more healthily, sleeping, reading fiction, journaling, coloring/drawing/painting, and more. However, students occasionally select more unorthodox plans that challenge me to expand my ideas around self-care. One student chose to play Tibetan singing bowls several times a week as he meditated. Several have chosen to stop everything they are doing for a time, close their eyes, and simply listen deeply to music. One chose to tend to her beloved house plants for an hour each week. One turned off all electronics and all artificial lights an hour before she went to bed so that she could sleep better. One went on backwards walks (yes, it's exactly what it sounds like!) with her boyfriend and dog so that she could encounter the world from a new perspective. Through their ideas, my students have given me a new perspective on how to live well.

Throughout the semester, in the final reflection for this assignment, and in the end-of-term feedback that I solicit, students typically rave about this assignment. They often appreciate being given the chance to work on goals that they have had for a while but haven't been able to prioritize. They report feeling healthier, happier, calmer, more focused, and/or more successful academically. Some have

come to value self-care so much that they even discuss how they will focus on it with their future students! One told me recently that this assignment was the first time that an instructor has shown "actual concern for our wellbeing." I hear this kind of feedback often, but I don't believe that I care about our students more than my colleagues do. In fact, I know from conversations with them that they care *deeply* about our students. However, by incorporating the inclusive teaching practice of soliciting and learning from the students' perspectives a number of times throughout the semester (Hogan & Sathy, 2022), I've discovered that it can come across as lip service. This assignment is one answer to the question: *how can we build care for our students' wellbeing into our course design?* This question comes out of a broader one posed by Fritzgerald (2020): "How do you intend to build trust [in your course] to decrease stress?" (p. 36). In other words, in the area of student wellbeing, how can we move beyond lip service?

One challenge I have experienced is making space for this assignment in my course. It would be counterproductive to simply add self-care into the course requirements without also taking away some assigned work. Students (and instructors!) have only so much time, energy, and bandwidth in a semester. If we really want to give students credit for the work it will require to take care of themselves, we need to make room in our courses for that to happen. In my case, this has meant that I have needed to find alternate ways to cover course objectives such as through in-class activities and formative, ungraded assessments. To me—and, I believe, to my students—those adjustments have been worth it.

In addition to the benefits to the students that I listed above, this assignment benefits me as a teacher. Through their proposals, I learn about the benefits of certain self-care practices. Through their submissions, I learn about how students are doing at any given point. This gives me a better sense of how to support them in their coursework and beyond. I learn about my students' areas of expertise and have grown in my own understanding of the world. Because I have gotten to know them through their submissions, I have interacted with students' pets, significant others, and parents. Students have showed off their crafting projects and have made food for me. They have recommended musical artists and authors to me. Of course, when I know more about my students, I can incorporate that knowledge into my teaching to better support them. For instance, when illustrating a challenging concept in class, I can rely on a particular student and their dog by name because I've been reading about (and

seeing photos of!) Dexter all semester. This personalizes learning and builds community, both keystones of inclusive classrooms (Addy et al., 2021).

Moreover, I believe that most people are looking for ways to reveal their humanity, and this assignment allows me to get to know my students more holistically. In turn, it invites them to participate in "the infinite process of becoming more fully human," that is, living into one's "individuality, creativity, and humanity" (Blackburn, 2014, p. 43). Too often, school is a place devoid of these qualities, a place of "spirit murdering" (Love, 2019), particularly for marginalized students. In this assignment, students are required to tend to their spirits in some way and, in so doing, consider how they can do the same for the children they will one day teach.

Through this assignment, students tell me things that I would never learn about otherwise. I hear about romantic breakups, tough family dynamics, mental health struggles, and more. To be clear, this assignment is not intended to function as or take the place of counseling, and when I believe it is necessary, I remind students about resources on campus that could be useful. This assignment helps me understand how individuals in the class are doing and how the class, as a whole, is doing at any given moment. If I think of the class as a body, the Self-Care Assignment helps take the body's pulse while simultaneously helping it maintain a healthy level.

Self-reflection is an essential component of inclusive teaching (Hogan & Sathy, 2022), and I continue to consider how to make this assignment as inclusive as possible. As I have listened to more voices from marginalized perspectives, I have been challenged in my own understanding of self-care. Audre Lorde (2017) wrote, "Caring for myself is not an act of self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (p. 130). I include Lorde's (2017) words in my introduction to the assignment partly because I want to be sure to model the inclusion of diverse voices in my course (Addy et al., 2021; Fritzgerald, 2020; Hogan & Sathy, 2022), but mostly because they challenge me to understand that people with varying perspectives and identities may experience self-care in significantly different ways. For some with more privileged identities, self-care may be experienced simply as an individual act of relief and sustenance (albeit a highly necessary one). For others who have experienced the violence of systemic racism, ablism, sexism, homophobia, or other forms of institutionalized discrimination, self-care can be truly "radical," an act of claiming one's humanity in the face of systems that attempt to deny it. I continue to learn about how the wellness industry—where self-care meets capitalism—is "constituted by whiteness" (Rodino-Colocino, 2021). I am constantly pondering how to make the

self-care assignment more inclusive and less supportive of industries that serve primarily people with various forms of privilege. For example, while I applaud my students for caring for their physical health, I worry that students may use this assignment to pursue unhealthy and culturally biased standards of beauty.

One way I have attempted to expand my students' understandings of self-care is to highlight how self-care is tied to community care. While Western notions of the self (like Western approaches to education) typically focus on isolated individuals, many others favor a view in which the self is fundamentally and inextricably tied to community. I mention examples of how previous students' self-care plans affected those around them (e.g., a commitment to creating something each week turning into a craft night with roommates, a desire to communicate with family more frequently resulting in regular phone calls with a grandparent, etc.). I also show students Parker Palmer's (1999) quote about self-care: "Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others" (p. 30). My students are heading into a service profession and I consider this assignment to be an essential component of their professional development; I want them to understand that to be a "good steward" of their talents, passions, and training, they need to care for themselves in a variety of ways.

Classroom Context

Though I situate the Self-Care Assignment in the context of education for my undergraduate pre-service teacher students, discussing the challenges of the profession and the realities of teacher burnout (Robbins, 2023), this assignment is not specific to education students. Indeed, because it is not itself an academic assignment, but rather one intended to *support* students' academic endeavors, it can be utilized in conjunction with any discipline.

Likewise, there are no specific required materials for students or instructors who use this assignment. Because the students have so much flexibility in what they choose to focus on for self-care, they could choose an activity that does not require specialized materials/equipment/resources or use ones they already have. The assignment spans the entire semester and, now that everything is in place, takes me about 20 minutes a week to grade a 30-student section.

Assignment

The Self-Care Assignment has four components. The Proposal, Midterm Check-in, and Final Reflection are all reflections that ask students to consider how their

self-care will work/is working/did work for them. Students have the option to respond by writing, or through a video or audio recording. Because I work with preservice teachers who themselves need to understand the processes and purposes of assessment, I make it clear that they have the choice of format because my goal with this assignment (unlike in others!) is *not* to assess their writing but rather to get a sense of how students are understanding their self-care. This is in keeping with the Universal Design for Learning goal to provide multiple means of action and expression so that "learners can choose the best option to demonstrate that they met the [learning] goal" (Fritzgerald, 2020, p. 50) and to "account for student differences in pattern recognition, perception, and development" (Addy et al., 2021, p. 62). For the Self-Care Submissions, students have even more choice in the format. Below, I describe each component in more detail.

Proposal

The first assignment students complete is their Self-Care Proposal. Starting the semester with the Self-Care Assignment serves at least three purposes: 1.) students see from the beginning that I value them as whole people who have mental, physical, spiritual, and relational needs as well as intellectual and academic ones, 2.) students are able to get started on their self-care habits right away, which gives them as much time as possible to learn from their attempts at caring for themselves, and 3.) students are more likely to start the semester feeling successful since most students do well on this assignment.

In the proposal, students are asked to:

• Identify one or more practices that would be sustaining for them (as opposed to being indulgences)

• Include at least 2 credible sources that support their proposal (how does research back up their claim that this is a sustaining practice?)

• Include a description of how they will submit their weekly submissions (e.g., photos, screenshot of a fitness tracker, video log, written description, etc.)

• Say how frequently they plan to engage in the practice

• Provide specific guidelines for themselves (how will they know if they are meeting their goal?)

While students do need to submit a reference page, they can choose between writing or recording (video or audio) the rest of their proposals.

Midterm Check-in

Around the middle of the term, students submit a brief reflective check-in which is intended to give them a chance to pause and assess whether they want to make any changes to their goals or to how they implement them. The check-in is slightly shorter than the proposal and can also be submitted as writing or a video/audio recording. Students are asked to:

• Briefly describe their self-care plan

• Assess how their self-care has been going in the first half of the semester including a description of what has worked well and what has not worked well

• State whether they want to make any changes to their plan or the implementation of their plan (and if so, what specific changes they plan to make in the second half of the semester)

Final Reflection

Like the Midterm Check-in, the Final Reflection is a brief written or recorded statement intended to help students reflect on their efforts at self-care and consider next steps as they think ahead to the rest of their time in their program as well as their future careers as teachers.

For this assignment, students are asked to:

• Briefly describe the self-care plan they proposed as well as any changes they made at midterm or any other point in the semester

• Describe what the experience of doing the assignment was like for them

• Articulate what they are taking from the assignment and what, specifically, they will bring with them into the rest of their program and their teaching career

Submissions

Students need to complete their self-care weekly. Initially, I asked students to submit their self-care reports weekly, but to make grading more manageable, I have shifted to having them submit every two weeks (meaning that each submission is responsible for two weeks' worth of self-care).

The format of the submissions is entirely up to the students, providing they can turn them in through our learning management system. Some students turn in

written descriptions of what their self-care was like for that time period, but many use other formats such as photos of the activities they did, images of journals they wrote or drawings they made, screenshots from a fitness tracker, or video updates. I emphasize that *the submission should not be much work*; the work should come in the self-care itself. If students want to write a long 2-page report about how their self-care went, that's fine, but they won't get more points than someone who simply submits photos from several walks they went on that week. I also let them know that even a brief statement saying, "I wasn't able to get to my self-care this week" will get them full credit for that submission, though if they have a few weeks in a row where they aren't able to prioritize their self-care goal, they should make adjustments (to their goal or to other factors in their life).

Assessment

The Self-Care Assignment typically comprises 10% of a student's overall grade. This percentage is meant to demonstrate that while other assignments in the course may be worth more points, those for this assignment do add up; in other words, *students cannot get an A without taking care of themselves.* That said, each of the individual components of the assignment is worth only a fraction of their final grade which, as Hogan and Sathy (2022) note, "helps provide a more consistent reflection of a student's learning and allows both a student and the instructor to identify an anomalous grade" (p. 77).

Table 1 clarifies the value of each of the components of the assignment and indicates how each is assessed. In short, I grade the Proposal with a simple rubric dividing the points among these four criteria:

1. Proposed activity is described clearly and specifically. It is clear why you are proposing this activity in particular for who you are and what you need at this point in time. In other words, it is clear precisely what you will do each day/ week and why

2. Proposal clearly describes the format of the student's weekly submissions (photo, writing, video, etc.) as well as how student will measure their goal(s) each week

3. Proposal includes 2+ credible sources that demonstrate why the proposed self-care activity is a sustaining practice AND includes correct APA references for the sources

4. Proposal is between 200-300 words (written) OR 3-4 min (audio/video recording)

I grade the rest of the assignments as complete or incomplete. I provide brief written feedback for the reflections and aim to write brief personal responses on students' self-care submissions at least one or two times throughout the semester.

Table 1 Assignment Components & Assessment

Component	Format	Value/Assessment
Proposal	200-300 words (with references) OR 3-4 minutes audio/video recording	20% of assignment; 2% of final grade Graded with simple rubric
Midterm check-in	150-250 words OR 2-3 minutes audio/video recording	10% of assignment; 1% of final grade Graded complete/ incomplete, brief written feedback
Final reflection	150-250 words OR 2-3 minutes audio/video recording	10% of assignment; 1% of final grade Graded complete/ incomplete, brief written feedback
Submissions (every other week)	Student's choice	In sum, 60% of assignment; 6% of final grade Graded complete/ incomplete, occasional written comments

Reflection Questions

Educators wishing to implement their own version of the Self-Care Assignment might want to consider the following questions as they prepare for, implement, and then reflect on/adjust the assignment.

Preparing the assignment

- From what you can tell, how are students in your major doing in terms of their mental and physical health? Are there particular areas of need that you notice? Without singling anyone out, how can you help students who are struggling to understand they are not alone?

- How can you connect self-care to your discipline? In other words, why should your students care about self-care both as students in your program and as future professionals in your discipline?

- How might you want to bring in questions about how self-care and community care are distinct and overlap?

- How might you bring in questions about how people with different identities have different experiences with and access to self-care?

- How much bandwidth/time do you have for grading this assignment? How can you design it in a way that does not come at the expense of *your* self-care? What adjustments might you need to make if you are teaching a large lecture course? [Note, if you are planning to have a teaching assistant grade the submissions, that should be clear to the students so that they know exactly who will be viewing/reading what they submit.]

- Are there boundaries you want to set around students' submissions for one reason or another? (E.g., no personal journal submissions, no audio/video recordings longer than 2 min, etc.)

Implementing the assignment

- What trends are you noticing among your students in terms of the format, content, or reflections they are making about self-care? What significant outliers are there and what are they telling you about your students?

- How is this assignment helping to "fill out the picture" of who your students are? How is it helping you see your students in a more humanizing way?

- How much feedback are you able/wanting to provide? How can you make this project manageable for you while also finding meaningful ways to connect with your students?

- How are students doing with their self-care? How frequently are they meeting their self-care goals?

- How can you support students when they are not meeting their goals? How can you help students understand that the objective of the assignment is to learn what does and doesn't work for them rather than to have a perfect record regarding their goals?

Reflecting on/adjusting the assignment

- What worked well? What do you want to keep?

- What did not work as well? What changes would make the assignment work better next time (better for your students and/or better for you)?

- After reading the Final Reflection assignment, what are you seeing as students' main takeaways from the assignment? As you look over any course evaluations (either created/administered by your institution or by you), what are students saying about this assignment?

- How can you model self-care for your students? How can you prioritize self-care/community care in other ways in your courses? How can you advocate for self-care and mental health in your department and across campus?

It is undoubtedly cliché, but self-care is like an oxygen mask in an airplane. If we don't prioritize it, we will not be able to attend to other important concerns. Making space in your course for students' wellbeing not only shows them that you care about them as people, but it also sets them up to do better in your course. Students who are well rested, physically active, relationally rich, spiritually active, and mentally healthy are better equipped to handle complex thinking and rigorous coursework.

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Chapter 15

Using Mixed Materials To Promote Equity and Inclusion

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Abstract

It is important for educators to recognize that not all learners benefit from all activities, assignments, or methods of instruction provided in a course. Using a mixture of materials to vary students' learning conditions is one strategy to meet the diverse needs of learners. A mixture of materials allows students to learn within a variety of contexts; perhaps learning the same content through listening to a lecture, reading text, watching videos, engaging in a discussion board online, working through case study scenarios, and/or working within small groups to problem solve. Not only does using mixed materials provide students with varied means of learning, but it helps to actively include all students in the classroom. The example lesson discussed here incorporates mixed materials in the context of learning about Diabetes Mellitus. Lectures on background concepts would first be delivered in class. Reading materials and supplemental videos are provided as well. Students are then asked to watch a TED Talk online that relates to Diabetes and provides an interesting perspective on ways in which to treat the disease. Tied to the TED Talk is an online discussion board where students are asked to address questions and interact with one another online. The discussion board is completed prior to a class period where students work in small groups to discuss and solve a case study on Diabetes. Not only does this mixture of activities help reinforce content in a meaningful and intentional way, but the activities ask students to apply information in different ways. Our goal as educators is to help students learn, and the objective of mixed materials is to help each student learn in the best ways that work for them.

Background

Inclusive pedagogy includes having the best interests of the students in mind at all times and doing what we can as educators to create an environment that allows all students to feel safe, comfortable, seen, and valued, and that fosters learning and exploration. It is taking what we think might be best from our own

pedagogical preferences and putting that to the side in order to pay attention to the backgrounds, experiences, differences, styles, personalities, demeanors, participation levels, strengths/weaknesses of students and provide instruction in ways that meet their needs. Inclusive pedagogy embodies kindness and acceptance in the classroom. It employs strategies that lift students up and give everyone a chance to succeed with what they bring to the table. "Inclusive teaching includes the intentional ways instructors interact with students, provide multiple opportunities to practice the work in a discipline, and demonstrate care" (Hogan & Sathy, 2022).

Active learning strategies are an important component of inclusive pedagogy, as they promote multiple and different modes of engagement in an effort to reach all students. It gives students various opportunities to practice and apply course concepts, synthesize information to understand what they're learning, and identify gaps. Active learning strategies have been shown to reduce differences between minoritized and non-minoritized groups in the classroom (Theobald et al., 2020). Active learning should be an intentional collaboration between the instructor and students. In a commitment to use active learning strategies in the classroom, we must also be committed to inviting our students to join us as partners and see learning as driven by goals bigger than ourselves (Gooblar, 2019). "At the heart of the idea of active learning is the students themselves – the students *must* collaborate in their own learning" (Gooblar, 2019). To that end, students must feel that a course they're taking is theirs, that they are crucial players in the course's dynamics and outcomes. Research suggests developing course expectations with the students at the beginning of the semester facilitates collaboration, and, creates space to develop the values of the class environment.

In a course that uses a lot of small group discussion activities, one strategy to employ at the start of the semester is to work collaboratively with students and empowering them to structure their small group activities. In other words, helping students see small group activities as collaborative means of working together and collectively generating knowledge (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005). While it has been shown that small group discussions are often a more effective tool in student learning over lectures (Roshni & Rahim, 2020), barriers exist with small group activities as well. One such barrier is getting students to interact with one another. Students may be asked to arrange their seats in a circle to make interaction easier, encouraged to introduce themselves to one another and exchange information if they desire, given a plan of tasks to accomplish within their group – and yet, some groups will sit in silence and work individually in a

circle instead of speaking to one another. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a frequent occurrence for students to work individually in the classroom, as opposed to working together. Collaborating with the students at the start of the semester on how we can collectively have responsibility in handling how small group activities are conducted, provides the students ownership and investment. It also allows students to voice their opinions on preferences, while at the same time the instructor can convey the reasons for using small group discussions.

Brookfield and Preskill (2005) identify four purposes of in-class discussion that are worth considering and describing to a class: "(1) to help participants reach a more critically informed understanding about the topic or topics under consideration, (2) to enhance participants' self-awareness and their capacity for self-critique, (3) to foster an appreciation among participants for the diversity of opinion that invariably emerges when viewpoints are exchanged openly and honestly, and (4) to act as a catalyst to helping people take informed action in the world." Students can then convey their preferences and concerns based on previous experiences with small group discussions. After multiple semesters of struggling to get students to communicate with one another, I explained the purpose of why I felt small group discussions were important in our course. I noted the importance of discussion as a way to explore "supposedly settled questions and develop a fuller appreciation for the multiplicity of human experience and knowledge" (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005, p. 3).

I also conveyed the observations I had been making about student interactions in previous courses, as well as feedback from students on their struggles to reconnect with peers after COVID-19. Students then broke into small groups and discussed how they felt about working in groups inside the classroom and how they would like to structure group discussions and activities. They determined things such as: wanting to form their own groups with peers sitting around them so they could just easily turn their desks and chairs; preferring a small number of people in each group for a more intimate and focused feeling; having roles for each person in the group to lead the discussion or take notes or be the spokesperson for a whole class discussion, and those roles changing each class period; and knowing ahead of time if their group would be called upon to lead a larger group discussion so they were not put on the spot. Having early and honest conversations as a class, and students seeing my investment in their learning, allowed students to make important decisions about their own learning. Furthermore, it allowed them to set the tone and expectations with one another for respectful and productive discourse throughout the semester.

We wrote out the agreed upon guidelines and I posted them on our learning management system class page. From there, students typically start out the semester following these guidelines and taking responsibility for their group dynamics, holding personal accountability for making sure all voices are heard and included. As the semester progresses, I often begin to see less interaction as students become tired and stressed. But instead of trying to poke and prod students to change their behaviors because I want them to, we can bring students back to the original structures we agreed upon in the beginning of the semester. That allows us all to reflect on how things have been going, where we might be starting to miss the mark, and how we can get back on track. Again, inclusive pedagogy includes having the best interests of students in mind and creating an environment where students feel safe and valued. Circling back to our collective guidelines as a class puts students at the center of the conversation, reinforcing their importance in the classroom. Truthfully, that discussion typically opens up dialogue about how students are feeling overall with their academics and other life stressors. And sometimes it's important to truly listen to students in those moments, and let what they're saying change the trajectory of the class period for overall greater connection (Gooblar, 2019).

Structure is a form of organization, but also a means of thinking and acting intentionally as an educator. Adding structures that intentionally benefit some students does not disadvantage or harm others. Varied modes of participation help many more students feel comfortable contributing to classroom discussions and activities. As a result, a more diverse set of ideas are shared (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Furthermore, students feel a greater sense of self and belonging in the class. Structure conveys intentionality in course design, which ultimately helps students feel cared for.

The interactive, constructive, active, passive (ICAP) model of cognitive engagement is an active learning continuum (Chi & Wylie, 2014). This continuum is foundational to providing structure to the types of activities employed in a classroom – pushing students to move along this continuum depending on the activities and tasks at hand. Hogan and Sathy (2022) describe this continuum in the following way: "on one end of the spectrum, students are passive, such as when they are listening to a lecture. Students become active if they take notes while the teacher lectures. As we move along this continuum, we see students become more engaged as they construct ideas, such as when students are answering a question posted by an instructor in a pause in the lecture. Students become most engaged during interactivity, such as when they are constructing ideas collaboratively…Student engagement changes as an

instructor makes pedagogical decisions." Hogan and Sathy (2022, p.20) challenge us to think about how inclusive teaching fits into this continuum. They stress that we need to counter every pedagogical decision we make with two questions: (1) "Who might be left behind as a result of my practice?" and (2) "How can I invite those students in?" Making small tweaks in our classrooms can potentially avoid passively excluding most students and actively including all voices (Hogan & Sathy, 2022, p.11).

With all of these ideas in mind, how then can we structure our courses to include all of our students and help them engage with content, learning, and each other in meaningful and beneficial ways? One way is to vary learning conditions and use mixed materials to come at content in a variety of ways so that students can learn in a multitude of contexts. Diversity in how students learn best is an asset to be leveraged in the classroom. Providing students with a variety of activities, assignments, and resources helps bring transparency to students on how to succeed in a course, while also creating desirable difficulties for students' brains to work actively (Bjork & Bjork, 2011). Furthermore, a variety of contexts through which to learn material allows students with diverse preferences in learning to succeed. For example, the same material can be learned and reinforced by the following: listening to a lecture, reading at home, watching provided online videos at home, completing an open-note online quiz to self-reflect on retention, participating in discussion boards, working in groups to analyze case studies, and engaging in small group discussions to synthesize and apply information. One might think this is too much, that there are not endless activities for every bit of content being taught in a course. This is true, the list of materials and methods just described may not be available for every lesson. Though, we should come back to the questions of "Who might be left behind as a result of this practice?" and "How can I invite those students in?" This is a reminder that we can make small tweaks when possible, so maybe for a given lesson it's just the inclusion of a supplemental video. And when possible, we may have a more robust structure to content-related assignments.

Informed by an inclusive mind-set and embracing structure, it is important to focus on overlaying structure in our active learning approaches while also meeting the needs of diverse learners. In a lesson I've taught on carbohydrates, hormonal regulation of glucose, and Diabetes Mellitus, the end goal of the content lesson is for students to be able to collaboratively work through multiple medical case study scenarios and diagnose Diabetes patients based on their learned knowledge. But to lead students to that point, scaffolding and structure has to be in place. The lesson begins with the students on the passive/minimally

active end of the ICAP model, listening to an instructor-led lecture and perhaps taking notes. This is typically two periods of lecture to cover the basics of carbohydrates, types of carbohydrates, how our bodies digest and use carbohydrates, and then moving onto a focus on glucose and how it is regulated hormonally in our bodies. Once the described content has been delivered, there is a natural lead-in to learning about Diabetes Mellitus, the pathophysiology of it, and clinical aspects. Readings from open educational texts are provided to supplement lecture content and aid those who prefer reading vs. learning audibly. Furthermore, various basic YouTube videos I selected are provided to supplement student understanding. For the depth and comprehensive nature with which I would like students to understand glucose and Diabetes, lectures, readings, and videos are not enough.

Intentionally providing further structured materials of different varieties encourages students to deepen their thoughtfulness about the topics. Students often think that by hearing or reading something, they understand it. But by following up those more passive activities with something interactive (and specifically aimed toward common deficits in understanding) like a discussion board where students are asked to watch a thought-provoking TEDx Talk and then provide their knowledge-informed opinions and justify their thoughts to one another – allows a significant improvement on understanding concepts. When students become interested in the topic at hand and begin to gain understanding, it often motivates students to look deeper into topics as well. The discussion board is done through the learning management system online. Some students are more comfortable engaging in the online format, which again, invites students to the table to share their unique thoughts. All of these activities lead to a final case study that students work on in small groups.

The students are given ample time in class to work collaboratively to address all case study questions, employing the parameters of group work that they put in place at the start of the semester. This is then followed by a whole class discussion with the instructor guiding what groups provide input to try to avoid only a few voices being heard. Depending on the robust nature of the discussion, this typically takes 1.5 class periods. Furthermore,I read the online discussion board prior to the in-class case study discussion, allowing me to tie the discussions together. This allows me to bring up more questions for discussion, highlight important points, and highlight unique views of various students. Doing this also gives me the opportunity to reach out to a student who may have brought a unique view forward in the online setting and asking them to share in-person if they feel comfortable. Again leading with an inclusive mindset.

The mixed activities and resources used in an effort to meet the diverse needs of learners and encourage all students to engage are all required items. Educators can make endless amazing resources to help students learn, post them on the learning management system for students to access, but typically students will not access them even with reminders. Hogan and Sathy (2022, p.46) encourage educators to "bake it into the course requirements and do not make it optional." However, explaining course design decisions to students aids in helping them understand the purpose of the materials and hopefully helps them learn better instead of viewing it as busy work. The types of structure and diversity in materials discussed here will give students insight about who they are as learners and how they learn best, building their confidence to take responsibility for their learning and their role in the class (Hogan & Sathy, 2022).

Classroom Context

This lesson and set of activities are intended to be carried out in a traditional in-person classroom with the use of an online learning management system. The mixed materials offered in the lesson bridge the in-person and online settings, and coordinate for optimal learning between the two environments. Saying that, this lesson has been modified and successfully executed in a fully online asynchronous environment. The materials are intended for a 300-level course, though they have been used in a 200-level course as well. This particular lesson includes a variety of materials to learn, synthesize, and apply content on the topic of Diabetes and its related background concepts. The lesson is typically conducted approximately in the middle of a semester after students have had several weeks to acclimate to the course and the types of strategies and activities used. By the time this lesson is conducted, I have had many conversations with the class about the purpose of using mixed materials and how the various types of materials synthesize together. I believe it is important to explain to students the purpose of the various activities I'm having them complete. I have found that students are more invested and willing to put forth more effort if they understand that, for example, a lecture, TED Talk and subsequent online discussion board, and in-class case study and discussion, are all connected and acting to help them integrate knowledge.

The lesson begins with a traditional lecture coupled with background readings and supplemental videos. These provide the foundational information needed to move forward through a sequence of activities. For example, at baseline, in order to understand Diabetes it is important to understand the physiological basis of how our bodies normally regulate glucose, the hormones involved, the pathology of the disease. This baseline knowledge then leads into students being able to

understand a TED Talk about Diabetes, diving deeper into how Diabetes would be treated and why. The various types of materials and the content they offer is scaffolded in such a way that the students are building knowledge and synthesizing information as they move through the activities.

The last portion of the lesson involves a medical case study where students analyze patient symptoms, blood work results, etc. and make a diagnosis of the type of Diabetes the person in the scenario has. The face-to-face time in the classroom that is dedicated to case studies involves students completing the activities in small groups of 3-5 students. Students are directed to move their chairs and desks, break into small groups, and read through the scenarios individually before discussing and answering the questions as a group. I remind students at this point of the agreed upon guidelines we established for small group discussions to help reinforce their commitment to these types of activities. Ideally, everyone in a group contributes to a discussion about each question associated with the case study. One of the hurdles that is often experienced in student group discussions is the differences in preferences of how students like to interact and volunteer thoughts and ideas. Often, there is a consolidation of responsibility where the discussion will be consolidated by the voices of a few students, while others are passive observers or only occasional participants (Karp & Yoels, 1976).

One strategy to combat this is to develop the course expectations for small group discussion activities together. Ultimately, the instructor and students are creating guidelines together. It is first important to explain the notion of consolidation of responsibility to students and discuss differences in preferences in participation methods, but also convey the importance of everyone's unique voice being heard and that voice being an invaluable part of the discussion. Then allowing the students to determine how they would like to handle small group discussions is crucial – would they like to choose their own groups? Would they like the instructor to choose groups? Will the groups stay the same each time or will they change each activity? Will there be requirements for participating in the discussion? Will there be designated roles within each group to help facilitate everyone's participation? Coming up with strategies and guidelines to follow that are created by and agreed upon by the entire class and instructor provides a continuous touchpoint to remind students how important their perspectives are.

Assignment

A traditional lecture will first cover the relevant background material to lead to the understanding of the physiological mechanisms of Diabetes Mellitus and the

impacts of nutrition. This would include types of carbohydrates and how carbohydrates are digested and used by our bodies. An emphasis would be placed on glucose and how glucose is hormonally regulated in the body. The different types of Diabetes would then be discussed. Open educational resource readings on carbohydrates and glucose regulation are made available, as well as online videos on glucose regulation and the types of Diabetes.

Congruently, a discussion board on the learning management system platform would be made available. This discussion board asks students to review the standards of medical care in Diabetes from the American Diabetes Association (2019) and watch a TEDx presentation by Dr. Sarah Hallberg (2015) on her views on the treatment of Diabetes. Students are then asked to provide detailed responses to specific questions. They are required to post their own original thoughts prior to being able to review peers' responses, to which they are asked to respond to at least two. The discussion board activity is a graded assignment, though graded in a formative manner with points given for effort on the original post and points for replies to at least two peers.

The students are asked to complete the discussion board assignment prior to working on the related case study in class. The intent is that students would write their thoughts in the discussion board, the instructor reads the discussions, and then is able to pull points made by students online into the in-class discussion of the case study, or ask students who wrote impactful ideas online to speak about those in class. This allows the instructor to highlight student views, particularly by students who may not be comfortable voicing their thoughts in the physical classroom.

The case study is completed by students in-class in small groups of 3-5 students. Students are given time to read through the background of the case study and then join with fellow students to discuss the associated questions and problem solve the cases. The case used in this particular lesson is entitled, "Living the Sweet Life" from the National Science Teachers Association (Harris, 2016). It describes multiple patients and allows students to diagnose them using what they learned about carbohydrates, glucose regulation, and Diabetes Mellitus in the lectures, readings, videos, TED Talk, and discussion board with peers. Once all groups have completed the questions, the scenarios are then reviewed as a whole class. During that review, students participate in a whole class discussion (based on parameters that had been set as a class at the beginning of the semester on whole class discussions) and the instructor guides students with additional questions and further details to deepen understanding of the concepts. The instructor uses this time to highlight any main points that need to be

emphasized and encourages questions from students. Understanding that some students are not willing to raise their hand and speak out in class, it is a great option to leave a few minutes at the end of class for students to write down questions they may have. These questions can be addressed by the instructor during the next class period or even in a post online in the learning management system so students have it to reference. The 3-2-1 exit slip strategy is one in which students summarize their learning by writing down three things they learned, two things they find interesting, and one thing they have a question about. There may not be ample time for this specific strategy, so this could also be modified to have students write down one thing they find interesting and one or more questions they have. This is an inclusive strategy to allow a level playing field for students to ask any questions they want without feeling like it's a wrong question.

Reflection Questions

• Who might be left behind as a result of my practice? (Hogan & Sathy, 2022)

• How can I invite those students in? (Hogan & Sathy, 2022)

• Are all voices in the class being heard in some way?

• Are students interacting with one another and meeting activity goals together?

• How can I engage students who don't seem to want to engage?

• Are there more effective ways I can increase transparency and buy-in for high structure methods?

• How can I encourage students to consider the learning processes they're engaging in and how they might best be learning?

• How might I assess the success of using mixed materials in my course?

• Where could I use existing videos to support content in my courses?

• Where could I find existing OER materials to support content in my course

• When would students benefit the most from multiple modes of learning in my lesson structure?

• Where can I integrate active learning in my course?

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Chapter 16

Fostering Creativity in Inclusive Teaching

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Abstract

This chapter explores the use of creativity toward an inclusive classroom. It details how to build in creative choices in general education courses. It considers how creativity allows for self-direction and agency, which are important elements of inclusive teaching. The chapter ends with the value of pairing creative and critical thinking, and how to manage grading and other challenges.

Background

Creativity is not typically associated with inclusivity. In fact, it is often thought of as something restricted to certain disciplines (the arts) or types of people ("creatives"). Yet, creativity is a kind of exploratory freedom that encourages choice and self-direction, and it has increasingly been valued in many different fields and careers, including business and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), as "innovation." Creativity is a way of seeing the world, solving problems, expressing oneself, and fostering deep learning. This chapter explores how to promote students' own creativity as a powerful tool for learning that can create more inclusive environments and assignments, especially in general education courses.

While there is often some flexibility in courses to fulfill general education requirements, students may view these courses as hurdles to jump through or boxes to check off. These courses also can increase anxiety and disengagement for students, particularly if they have been labeled (by others and themselves) as "not good" at a particular subject. In the liberal arts, faculty often view these kinds of requirements from a very different perspective: as creating a breadth of learning, knowledge, and skills that defines a central value of the college experience. Instructors must bridge this gap for students, acknowledging their concerns and working closely with them to find value Gen Ed courses. In my own Gen Ed courses, this process takes a variety of forms, but one of the most

important is the incorporation of creativity. Creativity allows individuals to engage and (re)make content in ways that are unique to them.

Often in our classrooms we teach students to think, read, and write "critically" with an emphasis on logic, argumentation, and research. Students respond strongly and positively to the opportunity to be creative because they feel empowered to personally engage with course material. The pedagogical goal is to deconstruct the binary of critical/creative through assignments that flow across these modes of knowledge.

In his foundational work, Paulo Freire (1968) highlights the role of creativity in liberatory pedagogy:

> Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits *creative* power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality... Problem-posing education bases itself on *creativity* and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and *creative* transformation. [emphasis added] (p. 84). It is as transforming and *creative* beings that humans, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods— tangible objects—but also social institutions, ideas, and concepts. [emphasis added] (p. 101)

For Freire (1968), creativity is central to the process of learning, with a transformative power for both the self and society. Rather than depositing knowledge, which robs the student of the process by which knowledge is produced, the teacher becomes a facilitator for students to discover knowledge.

These fundamental ideas were developed further by bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994). Though hooks (1994) does not use the term "creative" as Freire (1968) does, her emphasis on freedom likewise speaks to the value of students as individuals who find their own ways of connecting to course content. In defining "engaged pedagogy" she claims "Such teachers approach students with the will and desire to respond to our unique beings… To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (p. 13). By allowing students to bring elements of themselves into contact with course work, creative assignments and options offer students a potential space to participate more personally and

deeply in their own learning process. This can create a greater sense of inclusion, as well. In *Inclusive Teaching*, Kelly Hogan and Viji Sathy (2022) describe inclusive education as "a culture in which all learners feel welcome, valued, and safe" (p. 5). Creativity allows students to bring their own unique perspectives and talents, which can become part of the course. This inclusion can lead to the stronger sense of belonging in the classroom that Hogan and Sathy describe.

In this way, creativity is an essential part of "active learning," which encourages students to take responsibility for how they engage with course material. In *The New College Classroom*, Cathy N. Davidson and Christina Katopodis (2022) argue for the need for active learning as a part of a "democratic and egalitarian" practice (p. 9), emphasizing "the fundamentals of agency, independence, problem-solving, and collaboration" (p. 29). Creativity undergirds these categories as a powerful force by allowing students the freedom to direct their own work and by encouraging them to "remix" course content for themselves, which requires looking at the material from different vantage points. These skills can then strengthen both problem-solving and collaboration.

Assignment

In my courses, students interweave critical reflective writing and creative work, in both low-stakes ungraded in-class exercises and in major written assignments and projects. Prior to ChatGPT, I always offered a creative option for students, but also accepted more traditional essays. With the advent of ChatGPT, I chose to require creative engagement. Rather than turning in lackluster creative responses (a concern of mine in implementing the requirement), students became *more* engaged as they had to become creative about how to be creative.

One student, a Computer Science major who was anxious about our English course, began to ask me questions about how he might proceed with something creative. I always encourage students to connect course content to their major, intended career, interests, or hobbies in a creative response. As we began to talk, his peer, also in his same major, suggested that he use his strengths in coding. We then began to discuss how coding is a language and how it involves creativity. The student went on to write several computer programs in code based on our course texts, including one that analyzed word choice and one that allowed you to a play a game as different characters from a play. This kind of creative crossing of disciplines and domains helps students discover interconnections between various types of knowledge and methods of inquiry.

Students' creative projects have included playlists, musical performances, musical scores, DJing; paintings, drawings, sculptures, costumes, sewing, and collages; spoken word performances, videos, and creative writing in different genres. This range of expressive forms helps students to find and develop their own voices. In a recent general education literature course, an Engineering student brought in a clock he had hand-made in his Woodshop course. This clock meant a lot to him: it was symbolic of a kind of freedom to be creative, to make mistakes, and to follow through a process to a product. In his final class presentation, he connected the clock (and his experience of making it) to the poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by William Butler Yeats (1955). As research for his final project on the poem, he read part of the poet's autobiography where he describes his experience of writing the poem. Yeats (1955) recalls "it was my first lyric with anything in its rhythm of my own music" (p. 153). As the student presented, it was clear to me that this clock was the student speaking his own language and that he had managed to connect himself to this poem through the clock. This is one of many examples of how students' creativity can deepen their learning. The student could better understand the poem's meaning by relating to a time in his own experience when he had similar feelings. By incorporating course content into their sense of themselves, students transform the content as a part of their learning in memorable and lasting ways.

Given all the benefits of creativity, it is worth overcoming the challenges of implementation. As with all assignments, students need models and scaffolded (practice) steps along the way. In the major papers, I give detailed instructions, prompts, a rubric, and past successful examples for creative work. This involves responding to our course texts in a creative way and then writing a critical reflection that analyzes their own creative work in connection to the readings, as in the example of the student connecting his clock to a poem. This ensures that students demonstrate the relations between their creative interpretation and the texts themselves, creating a kind of bridge or entry point to the material. Students get to be in the position of the writer or maker who makes choices for desired effects and to be inspired by our writers as exemplars.

In terms of grading, it is much more interesting to see how students connect to texts creatively than to read many similar essays on a text. My rubric only has one criterion strictly for creativity, which states that it "demonstrates time, effort and care in making." ranked Excellent, Good, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, or Not Present. The remaining criteria assess the connections between the creative work and the texts in critical writing. This allows me to reward students for their creative work regardless of their level of ability or talent in a particular genre/

mode. Students tend to self-select a creative mode in which they have some confidence, i.e. most students will not select drawing unless they have some skill; students may instead choose to collage others' images, for example. This is why a wide range of creative options is important if creative work is graded.

Another way to incorporate creativity throughout a course outside of major graded assignments is to offer low-stakes usually ungraded creative exercises to help students develop their own relationship to course content. I often reserve the first or last 5-10 minutes of class for a creative exercise. This can be as simple as what is called stylistic imitation (try writing something in the style of the author) or as involved as designing a word cloud of themes that cross several of our readings for the day. Though these are ungraded, I tell students that the creative work in class counts toward their participation grade in a holistic way. I often have them share their creative work in a small group and sometimes those small groups will share with the class. Sometimes I ask that they submit the creative work by email or in our learning management system for accountability, but I try to emphasize that its primary purpose is part of their learning process.

Reflection Questions

1. Where can you make space for creativity in your courses? This can be as brief as a creative exercise during class time in response to course material or as involved as an optional or required part of a larger assignment.

2. Do you use any creative content in your courses already (such as visuals or media)? Is teaching itself a creative act/process for you? How can you make these forms of creativity explicit to your students and help them foster their own forms of creativity in response to your course content?

3. How will you assess creativity? Remember that creativity in inclusive teaching is more about the process and reflection than about the objective quality of the final product. Students should not be assessed on pure merit in creative work, but rather on the effort, depth of thought, etc. See the sample assignment sheet and rubric for more details on this.

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Appendix A

Creative Assignment Ideas and Options

(Never be bored grading again!)

These are usually accompanied by a piece of reflective/analytical writing or a presentation that is graded

Creative interpretations of course material

• **Flash fiction** or other creative writing (poem, play, short story)

• Create a piece of **artwork** (any medium, mixed media)

• Develop a **playlist** to accompany a reading or essay

• Give a **performance** (spoken word, dance)

• Write or record **testimony** as a witness

• Create a **vlog** on an issue/reading

• Record a **podcast** on a topic for a specific audience

• **Map** course content (What is Missing, n.d.)

• Write a **travel narrative** or gather materials about travel in a place

• Write a **piece of satire** in the style of *The Onion*

• Report on a **news event**

• **Propose** a new book, toy, game, etc.

Allow students to channel their creativity toward activism/public outreach

• **Design their own**: class, app, workspace, business/start-up, garden, etc.

• Develop a **grant proposal** inspired by their research

• Propose a **public memorial** in response to a reading/issue

- Write a commentary or **op-ed** inviting the public to reconsider a contested issue (Encourage students to send their writing to various outlets, especially online platforms)

- Write to a member of Congress to convey their findings

Adapted by Kaitlin Mondello in part from the Princeton Writing Program

Chapter 17

Interdisciplinary Perspectives Assignment: Increasing Student Interest, Engagement, and Sense of Belonging With Diverse Topic Exploration

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Abstract

This chapter highlights an Interdisciplinary Perspectives (IP) discussion board-based assignment within a mostly asynchronous culinary chemistry general education course. Students learned about the chemical properties of the ionic compound sodium chloride (table salt) through course videos and formative assessments. As a complement to the chemistry topics, students completed an IP discussion board-based assignment by learning about salt and its history, production, role in physiology, and/or influence in religion or daily speech. Students were given agency to choose the specific topic of focus which could relate to their majors or other interests and increased the relevance of the assignment. Following Universal Design for Learning (UDL) best principles students were provided a curated list of media through with they could engage including text, video, and audio options. The articles, videos, and podcasts incorporated diverse voices and perspectives from different global regions and disciplines, including topics in history, economics, physiology, and sociology. After an initial post on their chosen topic, students read and responded to posts about a different topic related to salt, expanding their perspective about this historically important compound. By incorporating discussion in an asynchronous course, students were engaging with each other respectfully, fostering community building through peer interactions.

Background

Development of an inclusive course requires creating a class environment that is supportive and welcoming for learners from all backgrounds. Inclusive best practices were used in the design of an online, culinary chemistry course for non-science majors as a part of the general education curriculum. Incorporating

interdisciplinary course assignments challenged students to consider how chemistry relates to other disciplines and provided space for them to engage in the course in a personally meaningful way.

In general education courses, students are challenged to take courses outside of their majors in different disciplines, often about topics in which they are not intrinsically interested. These courses tend to be low priority for students who are also enrolled in courses in their field of study that are more relevant to their preferred career path. Additionally, students may have significant extracurricular interests that can pull time and focus away from a course. As learning science indicates, students are more motivated to learn and engage in a course when they are curious or when they understand or appreciate the relevance of a given topic (Ambrose et al., 2010). While intrinsic motivation is the most beneficial for achievement of learning goals, inclusive-minded instructors emphasize the relevance of a topic to assist students who do not have an intrinsic interest in the course material (Artze-Vega et al., 2023).

In motivation research there are several unique theories about what can motivate students to engage in a course and learn course content. Interest theory suggests that students with situational and personal interest will also show an increased motivation for learning (Renninger & Hidi, 2011). Additionally, when learners develop a strong personal connection or establish personal meaningfulness with a topic, the brain is even more receptive to retaining new information than a topic with situational interest (Priniski et al., 2018). In diverse learning environments, promoting meaningfulness includes incorporating Culturally Responsive and Relevant Education (CRRE) theory which considers students' cultures in learning spaces. Kumar et al. (2018) propose learning is meaningful when culturally relevant content is incorporated into the curriculum that reflects students' cultural diversity and when culturally informed student approaches to learning are recognized.

In the culinary chemistry course, the course structure upfronts the everyday relevance of chemistry by framing the entire introductory chemistry course with food and cooking. Students can relate chemistry topics to observations and phenomena observed daily in their kitchens, increasing situational and personal interest. The course uses a constructivist pedagogical approach to encourage students to bridge prior knowledge and experience from food and cooking with chemistry-based course material (Richardson, 2003). As food is an essential part of culture, there is potential to create meaningful, personal, and culturally relevant connections to course topics following CRRE. Additionally, most students in the culinary chemistry course are non-science majors and relating topics from

the course to student majors, interests, and priorities can further enhance their motivation and engagement. This increased interest and engagement can have a positive impact on course grades, can increase learning of course material, and fosters student sense of belonging (Handlesman et al., 2005; Skinner et al., 2017).

One component of the culinary chemistry course asked students to complete Interdisciplinary Perspectives (IP) discussion board-based assignments to relate topics from the chemistry course with perspectives from other disciplines, including from the humanities and social sciences. As an example, during the module entitled "Salt," students were introduced to foundational chemical principles related to the atom, valence electrons, ions, and ionic compounds including sodium chloride, or table salt. The importance of salt for taste and flavor and its effect on texture during cooking were discussed in asynchronous videos, a laboratory assignment, and during a synchronous laboratory session. Within this module, the IP assignment focused on salt, its production, and its role in history, physiology, and daily speech.

Students were allowed to choose the topic of their choice for the IP assignment within the salt framework and encouraged to follow their interest to learn more about salt. Providing students with the agency to choose a relevant topic is an inclusive practice that increases students' motivation and encourages the students to take an active role in their learning (Brooks & Young, 2011; Deci et al., 2016; Evans, 2015). As students in general education courses have a wide range of majors, they can choose topics and resources that are meaningful to their interests to enhance their learning (Hidi, 2000; Brooks & Young, 2011). Students were provided a list of topics related to salt to choose from, providing guidance and support for their choice. A more flexible "write about some aspect of salt" would be unclear and could decrease student engagement due to the lack of clear guidelines for the assignment (Flowerday et al., 2004).

Considering Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the curated list of media through which they could engage included text, video, and audio options. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that emphasizes use of options and choice to create an accessible learning environment to maximize student access and participation (Meyer et al., 2013). One of the core tenets of UDL is to provide multiple means of engagement for students to use to learn about a given topic and provide content in different ways (CAST, 2018). By providing audio, video, and text resources that can be used to engage with material, students with sensory or learning disabilities can fully participate without the need for specific accommodations. Students can choose the format

which best suits their needs or inclinations. For example, students with long commutes to work or campus can listen to a podcast while driving. Students who are unable to listen to video or audio in their study environment can read an article instead. Providing students with flexibility and choice provides them with the ability to meet their own needs and increases their sense of belonging in the learning space (Nelson, 2021).

Recommended resources provided to students for the IP assignments incorporated diverse voices and perspectives. In addition to the different formats provided for students, a concerted effort was made to incorporate perspectives from different genders, cultures, global regions, and academic disciplines. The time-intensive task of assembling a wide variety of recommended resources is important to encourage students to bring their authentic selves to the learning spaces and can increase personal meaningfulness and student sense of belonging. Students are more likely to see a topic that captures their curiosity and might relate to their culture or lived experiences. For the IP assignment, students were also encouraged to relate the topic to a personal experience which welcomes them into the space as their authentic selves. In a culinary chemistry-themed course, highlighting different global regions, cultures, and cuisines was a priority. Resources from a wide range of disciplines were listed, including biology/ physiology, history, and economics; Additional disciplines were discussed in general podcasts.

In addition to diverse topics, it was important to feature unique voices and global perspectives. Students were directed to two resources about Ghandi's Salt March, or Dandi March: an overview of the march from history.com (Andrews, 2019) and a retrospective from the India Today magazine written from a distinctly Indian perspective (India Today Web Desk, 2017). It is important to consider the identities of authors and editors of resources and ensure that minoritized identities are portrayed in a way that does not reinforce stereotypes (Arteze-Vega, 2023). For topics related to salt production, students could watch a video from Business Insider that highlighted an indigenous Mexican salt maker and the traditional salt making process (Barth, 2021). Importantly, the video focused on the salt maker's perspective and voice and highlighted the importance of this process. Considering diverse perspectives and voices is important for culturally relevant and inclusive instruction.

To ensure all students have access to course materials, almost all of the recommended media were open access and free for students. Exceptions included television and streaming programs that students might have access to that would be of particular interest. For example, the Salt IP assignment

recommended watching Alton Brown's (2004) "Eat This Rock" episode on the cable channel Food Network and Waffles and Mochi's "Salt" episode on Netflix (Thormahlen et al., 2021). If students did not already have access, they were encouraged to use a different resource with no penalty.

As a component of the asynchronous culinary chemistry course, the IP assignment was discussion-board based. However, as not all students might be familiar with discussion boards and each instructor might structure these assignments in different ways, it was important to set clear expectations for students. Having a defined structure for a course and assignment, and setting clear expectations is an inclusive practice that sets all students up for success. In *Inclusive Teaching*, Kelly Hogan and Viji Sathy (2022) argue that setting clear expectations and due dates reduces stress and instructs students how to succeed in the assignment and in your course. Clarifying how the assignment will be graded can also help students complete the assignment with mastery.

In the IP assignment, students were provided with a specific prompt for an initial discussion post including recommended word length and a due date. After an initial post on their topics, students were instructed to read and respond to posts about a different salt topic, expanding their perspective about the historically important compound. Expectations for the responses were clear, also with unique due dates and recommended word lengths. A discussion post rubric is also available to students for clarity of grading.

Previous activities in the course had focused on respectful discussion and how to discuss potentially challenging or personal topics in an appropriate way. Acknowledging the importance of respectful communication and demanding students treat each other and other cultures with consideration is essential for fostering culturally competent students and reassuring students they are welcome to share their experiences with each other (Fritzgerald, 2020). Incorporating inclusive practices and culturally responsive teaching into an assignment or a course encourages students to engage in the topic in a personally meaningful way. This creates an environment of belonging where students feel comfortable being themselves and can enhance learning for all students and contribute to increased persistence and student retention.

Classroom Context

Culinary Chemistry is a fully virtual, 100-level general education course that is an introduction to foundational chemical principles framed with food and cooking. It has an asynchronous lecture component and a virtual synchronous/asynchronous

blended laboratory including group activities and kitchen laboratory experiments. Within the current general education program at Millersville University, the course satisfies requirements for 'Critical Thinking in Science and Mathematics' and 'Cultural Diversity and Community' components.

The IP assignment was included in the second module of the course, called "Salt." Over the two-week module, students learned about chemistry topics such as the atom, valence electrons, ions, and ionic compounds and considered the impact of salt on taste and cooking. During the module students engaged with topics related to the chemical properties of salt (sodium chloride) through course content videos, homework assignments, and a laboratory assignment. They were concurrently completing this assignment as a complement to the chemistry topics to enhance the interdisciplinary discussions and perspectives.

Assignment

Students were asked to learn about different aspects of salt in history and culture and share their findings in discussion board post format. Students engaged with recommend media to learn about one of the four primary topics:

1. Salt in history

2. Salt in human physiology (salt and the body)

3. Salt production and types of salt

4. Salt references in daily speech and religion

A brief overview of salt was available in the textbook "On Food and Cooking" by Harold McGee (2004) and a curated list of recommended resources was provided (Table 1). Students were allowed to use additional resources they found independently; however, they were reminded those resources or references should be accurate and from trustworthy sources. The instructor was available to approve or verify sources as needed.

Curated Resources for Salt Interdisciplinary Perspectives Assignment

Readings

• "What is Kosher Salt – And Is it Really the Best?" (Elbert, 2022)

- "Vitamins and Minerals Involved in Fluid and Electrolyte Balance" (Callahan et al., 2020)

- "When Ghandi's Salt March Rattled British Colonial Rule" (Andrews, 2019)

- "The End of Dandi March: The protest that shook the British establishment ended this day, 87 years ago" (India Today Web Desk, 2017)

Videos

- "The Untold Superpowers of Salt" from *Big History* Season 1 Episode 1 (Rotello, 2013).

- "Meet One of the Last Salt Makers Keeping a 2,000-Year-Old Mexican Tradition Alive" (Barth, 2021)

- "Mining for Salt" (How to Make Everything, 2017)

- "Eat This Rock" in "Alton Brown Good Eats" available in food network online (Brown, 2004)

- "Salt" in "Waffles and Mochi" available on Netflix online (Thormahlen et al., 2021)

Podcasts

- "The Salt Wars" by GastroPod (Graber & Twilley, 2016)

- "Salt and its Diverse History" by BBC Documentary Podcasts (McGovern, 2015)

- "How Salt Works" by Stuff You Should Know (Bryant & Clark, 2014)

Students were asked to start a thread in the discussion board focusing on one of the salt topics listed above. In a target post length of about 150 words, they shared something they learned and/or something surprising from the media they engaged with. Students were encouraged to relate the new information to what was discussed in class. They were then asked to read classmates' posts about a different topic related to salt and respond to a classmates' thread with a thoughtful comment or question in approximately 75 words. There were unique deadlines for initial post and response. Posts and responses were assessed with a discussion rubric focusing on (1) Timely and active participation, (2) Thoughtful and complete responses, and (3) Thoughtful contributions to the learning community (Chen et al., 2014).

Reflection Questions

- Were recommended resources varied in format (audio, video, text)?

- Did recommended resources contain diverse and varied perspectives and voices?

- Which topic(s) did students choose to engage with? Were all topics chosen?

- Which recommended resources and formats did students use most?

- Were all the resources used?

- Did the resources used contain diverse and varied perspectives and voices?

- Were the instructions sufficient for assignment completion?

- Did the students prepare thoughtful discussion posts with sufficient depth?

- Were the responses appropriate and substantial (more than just "interesting post!")?

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Chapter 18

Visual Methodologies as Inclusive Practice To Support Diverse Perspectives and Critical Reflection in the Classroom

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Abstract

Inclusive Pedagogy teaching strategies that fall into two categories: a) incorporating diverse perspectives and b) creating an inclusive climate. The inclusive practice that I describe in this chapter involves using digital imagery to inform inclusive instruction. Specifically, I describe two models – Photovoice (PhotoVoice, 2023; Wang & Burris, 1997) and Literacy Through Photography (Ewald et al., 2011) – that enable participants to reflect on images that others have created and to create their own images to explore issues related to identity, diversity, and inclusivity. Students enrolled in my teacher education courses, first learn about reading and making meaning of images. Along with images and prompts, they engage in both small and large group discussions. Students also create images on several themes including: a) their own identity and intersectional identity factors, b) how their identity relates to their own profession and professional roles, c) and how their identity can be seen as an agent or target in social contexts. Finally, students work in groups to address how we can strive to incorporate diverse perspectives and create inclusive climates in and through our own work.

Background

Using visual imagery can be a powerful tool for enacting inclusive pedagogy by promoting diverse perspectives, facilitating understanding, and fostering a sense of belonging. Some ways visual imagery can be used in the classroom to create an inclusive learning environment include:

A. Representation and diversity: Select visual materials, such as photographs, illustrations, videos, or artworks, that represent diverse cultures, identities, abilities, and backgrounds. Use visuals that showcase a variety of races, genders, ethnicities, body types, ages, and abilities. This helps students see

themselves and others represented in the learning materials, promoting a sense of inclusivity, and validating diverse identities

B. Culturally responsive teaching: Incorporate visual imagery that reflects the cultural experiences and histories of students in the classroom. This can include images of diverse cultural practices, traditions, celebrations, and historical events. By incorporating culturally relevant visuals, educators show respect for students' backgrounds and create opportunities for students to share their own cultural knowledge

C. Multiple perspectives: Use visual imagery to present different perspectives and viewpoints on topics, issues, or historical events. Show a range of visual representations to highlight diverse interpretations and narratives. This encourages critical thinking and helps students develop a more nuanced understanding of complex subjects

D. Visual narratives and storytelling: Utilize visual storytelling techniques, such as photo essays, infographics, or visual timelines, to present information and engage students in narratives. Visual narratives can convey emotions, experiences, and diverse stories that resonate with students on a personal level. This encourages empathy and helps students connect with different experiences and perspectives

E. Accessible learning materials: Ensure that visual materials are accessible to all students. Use alt-text descriptions, captions, or transcripts to provide additional information for students who may have visual impairments or difficulty processing visual information. Incorporate a variety of visual formats, such as diagrams, charts, or pictorial representations, to accommodate different learning styles (Papadatou-Pastou et al., 2021)

F. Collaborative visual projects: Engage students in collaborative visual projects that encourage them to create and share their own visual representations. This can involve group work, digital storytelling, or visual presentations. Encourage students to express their ideas and experiences visually, fostering a sense of ownership and shared learning

G. Critical analysis and media literacy: Teach students to critically analyze visual imagery, including advertisements, media, and social media content. Help them understand how visuals can perpetuate stereotypes, biases, or exclusionary narratives. Encourage students to question and challenge representations that may reinforce inequalities or misrepresent diverse communities

H. Visual prompts for discussion: Use visual imagery as prompts for class discussions, debates, or reflection activities. Show thought-provoking images that raise questions, challenge assumptions, or spark conversations about social justice, equity, and inclusivity. Visual prompts can stimulate dialogue and help students explore complex issues in a visual and accessible way.

By intentionally using visual imagery, educators can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Visuals can amplify diverse voices, foster empathy, promote critical thinking, and provide students with opportunities to connect with different perspectives and experiences.

Visual Methodologies in the Classroom

Literacy through Photography (a.k.a. Learning Through Photography) and Photo Voice are two visual methodologies that can be used to enact inclusivity in the curriculum. Likewise, it is a curricular model that integrates photography into the learning process to enhance students' literacy skills, critical thinking, self-expression, and social awareness. It combines visual literacy with traditional literacy skills to empower students and provide them with a unique tool for communication and exploration (Duke Center for Documentary Studies, 2023).

The concept of literacy through photography was developed by Wendy Ewald in the 1970s. It has since been implemented in various educational settings around the world. The approach typically involves the following elements:

1. Photography as a medium: Students are introduced to photography as a means of visual expression and communication. They learn basic photography skills, such as composition, framing, and lighting, as well as technical aspects like using cameras and editing software.

2. Self-expression and storytelling: Through photography, students are encouraged to explore their own lives, communities, and identities. They use the camera as a tool for self-expression, capturing images that represent their perspectives, experiences, and stories.

3. Critical thinking and observation: Photography fosters critical thinking skills as students learn to observe and analyze their surroundings. They develop visual literacy by examining and interpreting images, understanding visual messages, and considering the cultural and social contexts in which photographs are created and consumed.

4. Literacy integration: Photography is integrated with traditional literacy skills, such as reading, writing, and oral communication. Students use photographs as prompts for writing narratives, descriptions, or reflections. They also engage in discussions and presentations centered around their photographs, improving their verbal communication skills.

5. Social and cultural awareness: Photography provides a platform for students to explore social issues, cultural diversity, and community engagement. They can capture images that reflect social injustices, cultural celebrations, environmental concerns, or personal narratives. This process encourages students to become more aware of the world around them and develop empathy and understanding.

6. Collaborative learning: Photography can be used as a collaborative tool, encouraging students to work together on projects, exchange ideas, and provide feedback on each other's work. This fosters teamwork, communication skills, and the ability to appreciate diverse perspectives.

7. Exhibition and reflection: The culmination of literacy through photography often involves showcasing students' photographs through exhibitions or digital platforms. This provides an opportunity for reflection on the learning process and for students to share their work with a wider audience, promoting confidence and pride in their achievements.

Literacy through photography encourages students to become active participants in their own learning, fostering creativity, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

At the Duke Center for Documentary Studies (2023), staff engage with students and teachers in the Durham North Carolina Public Schools by working across different curricula and disciplines to connect picture making with writing and critical thinking. According to the Duke Center for Documentary Studies (2023) website:

> recent collaborations include "Stories from Stagville," a multimedia exploration of the lives of individuals enslaved on Durham's former Stagville plantation; "Song of Myself," a project inspired by Walt Whitman's literary classic; and the "Un-Selfie Project," which takes a critical look at the selfie craze. An undergraduate LTP class at CDS integrates college students into this work, and includes review and discussion of teaching, photography, and contemporary social issues relevant to public education. Through the LTP Arusha DukeEngage summer program in Arusha, Tanzania, Duke

undergraduates participate with LTP staff in training Tanzanian teachers in LTP's philosophy and methodology and work with Tanzanian students on classroom photography and writing projects. Hundreds of teachers and thousands of Tanzanian students have participated in the program. Workshops throughout the United States and abroad train artists, educators, and others in LTP's methods for combining photography and creative writing while encouraging participants to design individual plans for their own LTP-based projects. With support from Duke University's David M. Rubenstein Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, LTP has archived photographic and written work made by Durham students. This archive is a resource for researchers and the general public. LTP guidebooks include the book *I Wanna Take Me a Picture* by Ewald and *Literacy and Justice Through Photography: A Classroom Guide* by Hyde, Lord, and Ewald (Duke Center for Documentary Studies, 2023).

My own experience with LTP projects with diverse children living in poverty conditions, including work in Title 1 (predominantly low income serving public schools), early childhood and care facilities that serve diverse and underserved populations, and summer enrichment programs provided free of charge for students who are eligible for free and reduced summer programs.

Photovoice is a participatory research and empowerment method that uses photography as a means for individuals or communities to express their perspectives, experiences, and concerns. Originally developed by Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the 1990s, photovoice is a process that enables marginalized or underrepresented groups to use photography as a tool for social change, advocacy, and storytelling. In photovoice, participants are typically given cameras or smartphones to take photographs that capture their lived experiences, challenges, and strengths. These photographs are then used to stimulate discussions, raise awareness, and promote dialogue among participants and with broader audiences, including policymakers and community members (PhotoVoice, 2023; Wang & Burris, 1997). Key elements of the photovoice process include:

1. Visual storytelling: Participants use photography to visually communicate their personal narratives, perspectives, and community issues. The photographs serve as a medium for storytelling, allowing participants to share their unique experiences and insights in a visual and accessible manner.

2. Participatory approach: Photovoice is rooted in principles of participation and empowerment. Participants actively engage in the entire process, from taking

photographs to analyzing and interpreting them. They have control over the images they capture and the stories they want to convey.

3. Group discussions and reflection: The photographs serve as catalysts for group discussions and reflection. Participants come together in facilitated sessions to share their photographs, explain their meaning, and discuss the social, cultural, or systemic issues they represent. These discussions provide opportunities for collective sense-making and analysis.

4. Community engagement and advocacy: Photovoice aims to generate dialogue and promote social change. The photographs and narratives created by participants can be shared with the wider community, policymakers, or stakeholders to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for social justice. Photovoice projects often include exhibitions, presentations, or publications to amplify the participants' voices.

5. Research and evaluation: Photovoice is not only a form of creative expression but also a research method. It can be used to collect qualitative data and generate insights into social issues and community experiences. Photovoice projects often involve analyzing and interpreting the photographs and narratives to inform policy recommendations, program evaluations, or academic research.

Photovoice has been widely applied in various contexts, such as public health, community development, education, and social sciences. It has been used to address topics such as health disparities, environmental justice, youth empowerment, gender inequality, and community resilience. Photovoice projects have the potential to empower individuals and communities, promote dialogue and understanding, and contribute to social change by amplifying marginalized voices and highlighting their lived experiences.

Literacy through photography and photovoice can be valuable components of an inclusive pedagogy by providing diverse and inclusive learning experiences that empower students. These approaches involve valuing student perspectives. Both literacy through photography and photovoice prioritize student voice and perspective. By incorporating these approaches into the curriculum, educators can demonstrate a genuine interest in students' lived experiences, cultures, and identities. This fosters a sense of inclusion and validates the diverse backgrounds of students. Likewise, both methodologies promote self-expression and agency. Literacy through photography and photovoice encourage students to express themselves through visual media. These approaches provide a platform for

students to share their thoughts, experiences, and emotions in a way that goes beyond traditional modes of communication. By allowing students to choose subjects and themes that are meaningful to them, educators empower them to take ownership of their learning. In addition, both approaches foster critical thinking and reflection by encouraging students to analyze, interpret, and reflect on the photographs they create or encounter. Students can engage in discussions and explore the social, cultural, and historical contexts represented in the images. These processes enable them to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and challenge existing stereotypes which encourages empathy and cultural competence. For example, Literacy through photography and photovoice provide opportunities for students to explore and engage with different cultures, communities, and social issues. By capturing images and narratives that reflect diverse experiences, students can develop empathy, understanding, and cultural competence. This contributes to a more inclusive and compassionate learning environment.

Integrating literacy through photography and photovoice into the curriculum helps diversify the learning materials and perspectives. Educators can incorporate photographs and narratives that represent various identities, backgrounds, and social issues. This helps students see themselves and others reflected in the curriculum, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting a more inclusive educational experience. Likewise, both methodologies amplify marginalized voices. Therefore, both approaches have a strong social justice component. Literacy through photography and photovoice enable marginalized individuals or communities to share their stories, shed light on social inequalities, and advocate for change. By engaging in these practices, educators can support the amplification of marginalized voices, address systemic inequities, and empower students to become advocates for social justice (Saunders & Kardia, 1997).

Moreover, these methodologies help in building community and collaboration. Literacy through photography and photovoice can be implemented as collaborative projects that encourage students to work together, share insights, and engage in constructive dialogue. This collaborative aspect enhances the sense of community within the classroom and promotes an inclusive learning environment where students learn from and support one another.

By incorporating literacy through photography and photovoice into an inclusive pedagogy, educators can provide students with opportunities to express themselves, develop critical thinking skills, cultivate empathy, and engage with diverse perspectives. These approaches enable students to become active

participants in their own learning and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable educational experience.

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Chapter 19

Picture This: Tableaux in the College Classroom

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Abstract

Tableaux—still, silent images participants make with their bodies to convey a scene, text, theme, character, or idea—are a staple in theatre and improv classes. They have also been used in educational spaces to help learners explore important concepts (Dawson & Lee, 2018; Edmiston, 2014). In this chapter, I discuss how they are not only effective teaching strategies but are also helpful tools for inclusive educators. Using examples from my own courses, I emphasize the highly flexible nature of tableaux and argue that they are adaptable to almost any learners and to essentially any context.

Background

It's the second week of my "Creative Experiences for the Young Child" class and we have an ambitious goal: define the term *creativity*. My students—almost all preservice teachers—have read the assigned materials and taken visual and verbal notes on them in preparation for today's class session. Knowing the value of giving students independent time to reflect in class (Hogan & Sathy, 2022), we took some time in class for them to review the readings and their notes individually and remind them of key takeaways, quotes, and questions they have about creativity. I tell them that rather than their definitions being individual and verbal (the traditional way to assess learners' understandings of important concepts and terms), their definitions will be both communal and visual; they will be embodied in a group setting. Your group will make a frozen image, I tell them. It can be literal or abstract and you can use any props, costumes, or furniture you can gather in the allotted time. The only rules are that there is no talking or moving and that every group member must be involved in the scene.

After a short time for discussion and planning in their groups—"Too short!" some insist—the first students share their definition. I ask everyone else to close their eyes while the six students get in formation. We open our eyes and look at the

still, silent image the group has made. Four students face inward, each with their arms at 90-degree angles. Another student is in the middle of their arms, her one hand scratching her head and the other holding a pen in a frozen gesture that makes her appear to be writing. Her face is serious, and she appears to be concentrating hard. The last student faces away from the group and, though still, appears to be jumping out of that cluster of people with an exuberant smile on her face.

"Okay!" I say to the rest of the class. "What do you see? I mean, what, literally do you see?"

Students chime in with descriptions of the image which vary depending on their vantage points. Some focus on the person inside the cluster: "She looks serious. Or stern or something." "Maybe she's thinking about what she's writing?" "Maybe she's trying to write about what's happening around her?" "Maybe she's doing homework and doesn't like it!"

Some speculate about the four students making a shape with their arms: "It looks like they're making a square," one says. "Yeah, like a box," says another. "Oh! Like 'thinking outside the box'!" The students from the group, in their now-slightly-wobbly poses, nod excitedly.

"Alright," I say, pulling out a pen of my own. "It sounds like we have some questions about this situation. I have a microphone here. Who do you want to hear from first?" We take a few minutes to ask questions of the six in the group learning more about what role each person is playing. The student bursting out of the group of four says, "It's like they said: I'm thinking outside the box!" I ask how she is feeling. "Triumphant," she says, "and energized."

When I ask the student inside the box how she is feeling, she says, "I'm kinda constrained, but it's not necessarily a bad thing. Like sometimes, you need a box to help you think things through."

"So, it sounds like your group is saying that with creativity, sometimes you need limits and sometimes you need to break free from limits?" I check, and they nod. I point out that they have provided a great preview into one of our topics later in the semester: the role of limitations in creativity. I invite the students to relax their bodies and tell us anything about their thinking in designing this image that we didn't already consider. When they have shared all that they want to, we move on to the other groups' still images.

In just a short amount of time, these students have worked collaboratively to synthesize important information from their readings, take abstract concepts and make them embodied and concrete for an audience, and explore different perspectives around a central theme in the course. This technique, called *tableaux*, originates from the world of theatre but has also been taken up in a wide range of educational settings. From the French word for "painting," *tableaux* (*tableau* is the singular) ask participants to represent something—a theme, an idea, a scene—using their bodies and not words. Because they are so open-ended, tableaux can be used in any discipline, from social work (Mayor, 2020) to education (Branscombe & Schneider, 2013) to history (Mattson, 2008), and can be used to explore topics as diverse as colonization (Athiemoolam, 2018), sustainability (Gałązka, 2017), gender (Van Wyk, 2014), and evaporation (Anderson, 2018). Tableaux are especially helpful tools when educators want to help students take an abstract concept and make it tangible or visible or when they want to help students get at the essence of an idea or question.

I use tableaux in my courses not just because they are effective teaching strategies but because they are an important tool in my repertoire as I seek to build an inclusive classroom. I have found at least four main reasons that I consider tableaux to be inclusive. First, they require everyone in a group to be involved in the production of knowledge in the classroom. As Hogan and Sathy (2022) note, a class discussion "often takes a consistent pattern with certain individuals dominating and others unwilling to contribute" (p. 133). Unlike class-wide discussions or small group or think-pair-share discussions, which are challenging for an instructor to assess, tableaux insist that every person in the class is essential in the consideration of the topic at hand; if even one participant were missing, the image would be incomplete.

Additionally, when instructors encourage students to take time to view and discuss a tableau before the presenting group reveals their thinking, there is often a high level of participation from the class. Asking questions like, "What, literally, do you see?" or "What kind of an expression is she making?" or "Does anyone see anything different from their perspective?" allows a "way in" for all students in the room. In fact, I have had class periods in which I have quietly noticed that every single person in a 30-person class commented on the tableaux within the 20 minutes or so that we did the activity not because I asked them to, but because they were interested in what their peers were presenting and because they didn't feel like there was a risk to sharing their ideas.

Tableaux are also inclusive because they—like all drama techniques in education—inherently connect the mind with the body, teaching the "whole student" and

"enab[ling] students to be active participants in their learning" (Addy et al., 2021, p. 39). In other words, they don't just invite participation from more students *across* a class, they invite more diverse participation *from each student*. Strategies in which learners are asked to move around the classroom and use their bodies to connect to the course material ask students to *bring more of themselves to their learning*. When we welcome multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding of a topic, we signal to them that we are seeing them as people, as complex individuals who experience the world in diverse ways (Addy et al., 2021). As Artificial Intelligence becomes increasingly prevalent in college classes (for better and for worse), it is perhaps more important than ever to give students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are embodied and uniquely human.

Third, tableaux are inclusive because they require a modality of expression other than written or spoken words. There are a number of students who may not be comfortable sharing their thoughts aloud in a large group setting: those who are still learning the language of instruction; those who struggle with anxiety or other mental health concerns; those who are more introverted; those who have experienced harsh penalties in past educational settings for getting incorrect answers; those who are nonverbal or who have a speech disorder; and more. Providing an additional modality invites all students into deeper learning (Addy et al., 2021; Watts-Taffe, 2022), but especially those who have not experienced as much success with activities that are dominated by (and assessed through) words.

Finally, tableaux are inclusive because they are inherently open-ended. They rely on prompts that do not seek one right answer and I tell my students that the only "wrong" way to do the activity is if one or more people are left out. Low-stakes formative assessments like this encourage students to try new things without the fear of being penalized with a low grade. Most of the time, when groups are given the same prompt, they come up with vastly different tableaux. Only one group defined creativity using the "thinking outside the box" metaphor. Other students defined creativity by portraying flowers being nourished and still others relied on symbols of the arts like paintbrushes, a music note, etc. However, even when groups take the same basic approach, the embodied nature of their response ensures that each tableau is different in ways that are worth discussing and help us tease out additional nuances of the prompt. For instance, in a series of tableaux asking students to explain why there is a "creativity crisis" (as described in one of the assigned materials for the day), the majority of the groups in one section of my course focused on the role of technology in

distracting students from opportunities and habits that foster creativity. As each group shared their tableau, it became clear that though the overall topic was the same, they were emphasizing different ways that technology could cause a "creativity crisis": one showed learners on their phones facing away from either other, ignoring the importance of community in welcoming creativity in the classroom; one showed a teacher being distracted from fostering creativity in his students by his personal device; yet another showed children at home and, rather than playing, a foundation for creativity, they were all facing a TV screen passively. Open-ended activities like tableaux prioritize students' collective meaning-making and the connections to the ideas in the assigned materials over a predetermined correct answer established by the instructor that students must attempt to guess.

Fritzgerald (2020) writes that inclusive, antiracist educators provide multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression, the core tenets of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (p. 50). Adding dramatic strategies to my teaching repertoire has significantly increased my ability to open up my teaching to more students. While I find many dramatic techniques effective for both teaching content and promoting inclusion in the classroom, tableaux is one of my favorites because of how versatile they are. Below, I provide more detail about how I have relied on them and how educators in other contexts might take them up.

Classroom Context

While I have relied on tableaux in my teacher preparation courses, as noted above, I can't imagine a discipline or group of people for whom they couldn't work. Because they can be literal or figurative, instructors can use them to assess students' understanding of concepts at both lower and higher order levels. For instance, an instructor in a US history course might ask students to portray an historical scene they had read about for class, making sure to account for the various perspectives of those in the scene. This would help students demonstrate they *remembered* the fundamental facts their reading had covered. Or, that same instructor could assess students' *application* of an approach to understanding history by asking them to portray how a scene would look if viewed through that particular lens. For example, students might portray the "First Thanksgiving" through the lens of colonialism. Finally, the same instructor could ask students to form a tableau representing their *synthesis* of a major theme that spanned multiple historical events. For instance, a group who is focusing on the rights of women across several key events in the early 20th century might portray a birdcage with an open door to represent the limitations that still existed for

women alongside their increased freedom with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

As I mention above, I introduce tableaux as early as the second week of class. There may be some circumstances in which it makes sense to introduce them upon meeting students for the first time, but I have found that spending the first day of class asking the students to get to know each other and me makes them more ready to jump into the dramatic (albeit low-stakes) work that tableaux require. I use tableaux throughout the semester and once students understand the basic concept, we can make the activity more complex and interesting. For instance, after student groups present their tableaux explaining why there is a "creativity crisis," I ask the rest of the class to "fix" the crisis by making adjustments to the image before them. Students facing away from each other now turn in and can see each other. A teacher goes from being distracted by his device to using it to teach his students some aspect of creativity. Juxtaposing two or more tableaux can help participants isolate essential characteristics or elements of related topics or scenes and allow them to discuss change over time, a sequence of events, possibilities for improvement, and more.

Until now, I have discussed using tableaux in small groups, but there are times when a whole class tableau can be powerful. This works best when examining a complex topic or idea with multiple perspectives. In a course on early literacy and language development, I ask students to form a tableau to help us understand the ramifications of the so-called "Word Gap"—the belief that children living in poverty are exposed to significantly fewer words than those living in wealthier environments and therefore are less likely to succeed in reading. First, we create some kind of dangerous gap. Sometimes, it's a canyon, sometimes, a gap between skyscrapers in a city, and sometimes, it's the ocean between neighboring islands. Students then take on different roles in this scenario. On one side of the gap are children and their families who live in poverty and on the other are those who are wealthier. We bring in additional key players such as teachers, policy makers, curriculum publishers, and researchers. I "interview" the participants, asking them how they feel about their position in relation to everyone else in the scene. Inevitably, though the discussion, it becomes clear that the term "gap," which educators, policy makers, and others can throw around flippantly, can have a significant and harmful impact on the people defined (and limited) by it (Adair et al., 2017). Because this is a complex topic with varying perspectives that are sometimes at odds with each other, it is useful to have the whole class involved. Even if I don't interview each student in the

class, all are nevertheless participating; everyone is asked to view the question from a particular vantage point and then consider additional ones.

With technological advances in platforms like Zoom, dramatic techniques, which have traditionally been found only in face-to-face, in-person courses, are now possible to the creative online educator. Indeed, some have already taken up the challenge of incorporating tableaux into their synchronous online courses. Cook et al. (2020) describe what they call "solo tableaux," in which students in an online synchronous course create an image on their own, wherever they are. Though it may be more challenging to coordinate, it is conceivable that small groups could make a tableau even though group members are in different locations.

Inclusive educators must balance the needs of multiple students simultaneously and of course, there may be times when one inclusive practice may seem at odds with another, depending on the needs of the individual students in the class. If teaching in person, inclusive instructors consider the physical space of their classroom (Hogan & Sathy, 2022). Because tableaux typically require movement, it's crucial that instructors are adaptable for students with limited mobility. In an introductory survey at the beginning of the semester, I tell students that I use a lot of activities that typically involve movement and I ask if there are any mobility concerns they would like to let me know about as I plan for the semester. That said, because tableaux are so flexible, there are few changes to the basic instructions that need to be made for students with limited mobility; because students choose how to participate in the tableaux, all are free to do so in ways that feel comfortable and accessible for their bodies. Likewise, instructors can make adaptations for students with visual impairments, such as ensuring that the description phase of the tableau is thorough enough to give someone who couldn't see it a clear sense of what is being portrayed.

Lesson

One of the most appealing characteristics about tableaux is that they are so simple to set up. Indeed, on a few occasions, I have even asked students to do an impromptu tableau when I am sensing that what I had been doing wasn't working well and I need to pivot to increase student interest or understanding. Once students understand the basic process of creating a tableau, there is very little an instructor needs to do beyond providing a premise and ensuring students are in groups. Below are what I see as the fundamental steps in leading students in a tableaux exercise, though each can be adapted to fit various contexts.

Step 1 Consider where in your curriculum tableaux might be useful (see reflection questions, below).

Step 2: Plan a particular prompt or premise for students to follow when they make their tableaux. Be sure to have it written in some format so that students can reference it while they are planning their tableaux. Having a visual as well as your oral instructions will support students as they continue the activity (Hogan & Sathy, 2022) and will allow them to focus their time on the creation of the tableaux rather than on remembering directions for the activity.

Step 3: Introduce the guidelines for tableaux, emphasizing that students should make a still, silent image and that everyone in a group needs to be involved. Depending on your topic/premise, you may want to draw some limitations or expand the possibilities for your students to consider. For instance, might it be useful for students to think metaphorically for this prompt, or would a more literal representation be better?

Step 4: Divide students into groups if you are not doing a whole-class tableaux. Determine whether you want students to pick their own groups or whether you will pick the groups. (Consider explaining why you made that decision.)

Step 5: Give students time to work. I find that 5-7 minutes is enough for most groups to come up with an image the first time around. With practice, students will need less time. Be careful not to give too much time! A lot of creativity comes with some time constraints.

Step 6: Students present their tableaux. I usually ask the rest of the class to close their eyes until the group is ready. Then, the class looks and comments on what they see. The instructor highlights multiple perspectives within the tableau and, if pertinent, multiple perspectives around the tableau; some students might not see the whole image from their vantagepoint. The presenting group does not say anything at this time.

Step 7: The presenting group explains their thinking. To do this, I like to interview the participants in role (I often start by asking the class which person/ aspect of the tableau they want to hear from). For instance, I might say, "Who/ what are you?" or "How are you feeling about the situation?" The instructor can ask if there is anything that the presenting group was thinking about that the class hasn't already brought up.

Step 8: (Optional) The instructor can ask the class or the presenting group for any adjustments to the image that they would like to make. The group makes

the adjustments, and the class discusses how the changes affect the ideas the group is highlighting.

Because tableaux are so adaptable, once instructors and students are familiar with the basic format, they can make adjustments to suit the interests and needs of the class.

One additional way that tableaux are incredibly versatile is that they require no materials whatsoever. To make a tableau, all that participants need are their bodies. As such, tableaux can work in virtually any space (including outside!) and come at no additional cost to the instructor or students. However, I mention that if students want to include props or rudimentary costumes, they are welcome to. For instance, students occasionally make simple signs from notebook paper that portray symbols signifying some aspect of their concept. Additionally, I encourage students to use furniture in the room if it helps their tableau. As with all theatre games in educational spaces, the objective is not a perfect performance, but rather an opportunity to learn more deeply.

Though I could conceive of a summative assessment in which I asked students to create tableaux, I use them only for formative assessment. I find that because most students are not familiar with dramatic strategies, they need as low-risk an environment as possible to try out new techniques like tableaux. In other words, to help them be willing to brave this new approach, I want it to feel as much like play as possible for them.

Reflection Questions

Educators who would like to try tableaux in their own classes can consider the following questions before, during, and after the activity.

Before

- What are some areas of your curriculum that could lend themselves to tableaux? Specifically, where are there:

  - Multiple perspectives around a single issue, topic, idea, or event?

  - Conflicting accounts or approaches?

  - Abstract ideas that need to be distilled to be understood?

  - Multiple scenes?

- Changes over time?

  - Issues, questions, or problems in your discipline that need fixing or changing?

- Does it make sense to split students into groups to do the tableaux, or is the idea or question complex enough that the whole class could be involved with each participant making meaningful contributions?

- Do you know of any students who might need particular accommodations? Are you aware of any mobility or sensory concerns that might affect a student's ability to participate, either in creating or perceiving the tableaux? How will you ensure that *everyone* in the class is able to participate in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them?

- When do you want to introduce the tableaux? Will you use them throughout your course or just once? How well do your students know each other and/or how comfortable are they with each other?

- How will you introduce the tableaux? What rules or guidelines do you want to establish?

During

- How are the groups doing? How much involvement do you need or want to have with them?

- Is everyone being included? If not, what can you do to bring people in without singling them out?

- What salient details from the tableaux do you want to highlight for the whole class to consider? What main ideas do you want students to walk away with and what additional points are groups bringing up that you might not have considered?

- How can you emphasize the different perspectives *within* and *around* a tableau? How can you emphasize the importance of considering multiple perspectives?

After

- What worked well? What do you want to continue to do in the future?

- What did not work as well? What changes would make the next time you used tableaux?

- How did this group of students respond to the technique?

- Though no one should be required to talk, take note of who did in the discussions and/or "interview" stage. Roughly what percentage of your students participated verbally? Were the ones who spoke the ones who typically speak in whole class settings or were there some additional voices?

- What did you learn about using tableaux with students?

- What did you learn about the topic being addressed? What hadn't you considered before?

Picture this: a class of students who go beyond a mere demonstration of their knowledge but to dig more deeply and synthesize important ideas and questions from your course. Working together, and allowing their bodies to participate in their learning, the students show you what they believe is most important. It provides you valuable information about their understanding, it increases their interest in the class, it fosters a sense of community among your students, and—just as important—it makes your classroom more joyful, playful, and inclusive.

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Chapter 20

Inclusive Language Activity

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Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of a classroom activity focused on inclusive language and explains underlying theoretical concepts that can be applied in a wide variety of classroom and group communication contexts. The author developed this activity for a required, general education course primarily taken by first- and second-year students. The activity was designed to meet the following learning objectives: 1) Discuss goals and challenges of using inclusive language, that is, "language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups" (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011, p. 13.2). 2) Develop critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992a) by attending to cultural meanings and social effects of language. 3) Practice communication ethics, that is, "the process of negotiating and reflecting on our actions and communication regarding what we believe to be right and wrong" (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2013, p. 1.3). 4) Research and report on perspectives on inclusive language around different identity categories. The activity models research practices students and educators can use to evaluate and construct inclusive language around identity.

Background

This chapter provides an overview and instructions for a classroom activity on inclusive language. Theoretically speaking, this activity is grounded in three key concepts in communication studies: 1) communication ethics, 2) superdiversity, and 3) critical language awareness. Each of these is explained briefly below.

In the speech classes in which the activity was developed, all of these phenomena were significant factors in students' communication apprehension, that is, "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 2001, p. 40). While communication apprehension is particularly pronounced in speech classes, this kind of anxiety is

ubiquitous in all classrooms and common among students and teachers alike, especially in conversations about diversity and inclusion. A 2020 survey by Heterodox Academy (Stiksma, 2021) found that 60% of college students sampled were reluctant to talk about at least one of five "controversial" topics including race, politics, religion, sexual orientation, and gender. Instructors also grapple with fears around saying the wrong thing, particularly when discussing dimensions of difference and perspectives that are different from their own (Auger-Dominguez, 2019). Understanding communication ethics in such situations, appreciating superdiversity, and developing critical language awareness can help to alleviate communication apprehension around DEI issues.

Communication Ethics

Communication ethics is a process by which speakers and writers figure out the right thing to say. Practicing communication ethics involves weighing competing concerns, because there is often more than one right thing. To find the one that's right for them, communicators must ask questions, consider possibilities, reflect on different consequences, and choose the best means to achieve their desired ends (Jovanovich et al., 2021). Thus, communication ethics is a key component of critical thinking and a core skill for all educators.

Anxiety about saying the wrong thing is common, especially in situations in which people are expected to talk about issues around diversity and inclusion (RightTrack, 2021). Many people feel uncomfortable and nervous in these situations and worry about inadvertently offending others, being called out or embarrassed, even losing their job or being threatened (Cooney, 2021).

In classrooms, fear of being judged negatively by other students and instructors is a significant barrier for many students (Downing et al., 2020). Thankfully, active learning strategies can help alleviate students' anxiety about saying the wrong thing. In a study examining active learning strategies in community college science classes, Downing et al., 2020 demonstrated how group activities and discussions can help lessen students' fear of negative judgment. Active participation also gives students practice engaging in communication ethics in relatively low stakes contexts.

Superdiversity

In our superdiverse world, communication ethics around diversity and inclusion is complicated. Given the heterogeneity of perspectives on these topics and the ways in which the language we use to talk about diversity and inclusion has evolved in recent years, it can be hard to know what the right thing to say is.

Superdiversity is a term that describes the "diversity within diversity" that exists within and between groups along social, cultural, and economic axes (Blommaert, 2013, p. 4). Major drivers of superdiversity include the following, among other factors: Populations have become more ethnically and racially diverse (Fry & Parker, 2018). Migration has increased (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022). The internet has connected people across borders and changed how we communicate and access information (Blommaert, 2013). Acceptance for gender and sexual diversity has increased globally overall (UCLA Williams Institute, 2021), in spite of mounting violent and oppressive anti-LGBTQIA+ backlash (Shaw, 2023). Similar xenophobic responses to superdiversity can be seen around the world, as intolerance and racism (United Nations, 2019), hate speech (United Nations, 2021), hate crimes (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023), and authoritarianism (Freedom House, 2022) have also increased.

In response to rising superdiversity and oppressive backlash, an inclusion industry has grown. DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion; e.g., Penn LPS Online, 2023), JEDI (justice and DEI; e.g., UNC School of Medicine Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2024), JEDI+B (JEDI + belonging; e.g., University of Michigan Center for Positive Organizations, 2023), and other initiatives–in some name and form–are now common across college campuses and in large companies in the U.S. In this superdiverse field, a growing community of people work to value diversity and support inclusion from a wide range of different perspectives, using very different approaches, and often aiming at very different goals. As DEI has gone mainstream, anti-inclusion activists and policymakers have continued to challenge the legitimacy of DEI work and fight against change. In the U.S., anti-DEI legislation like the 'Don't Say Gay' law in Florida (see Diaz, 2022) and the prohibition of DEI offices in Texas (see Yang, 2023) demonstrate anti-inclusion gains.

People working for and challenging diversity and inclusion make up broad and expanding speech communities in which media, activists, scholars, professionals, pundits, policymakers, and others develop ways of speaking and thinking. Speech communities–also called discourse communities and communities of practice–are groups of people who share ways of communicating and interpreting (Tracy & Robles, 2013). Ways of talking within speech communities are called speech codes. Speech codes are comprised of rules for speaking and writing as well as interpersonal ideologies, that is, shared beliefs about people and relationships (Tracy & Robles, 2013).

Speech codes around inclusion are explicitly aimed at valuing people's differences and leveling social hierarchies. For example, the hashtags #WeNeedDiverseBooks (We Need Diverse Books, 2023) and #CiteBlackWomen (Cite Black Women, n.d.) communicate speech codes aimed at appreciating and amplifying under-represented voices. In the OER textbook *Stand up, speak out: The practice and ethics of public speaking* (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011), the authors define inclusive language as "language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups" (p. 13.2). While people in DEI and other inclusion-oriented speech communities might share values for equitable language and making space for diverse voices, they often have very different ideas about how best to communicate and prioritize these values.

Thus, discourse communities around diversity and inclusion are often contentious, ever shifting, and rapidly changing linguistic landscapes. In them, community members create neologisms and new concepts, utilize different registers (e.g., academic, activist, corporate communication), and aim for many different goals. Figuring out the right thing to say in conversations about diversity and inclusion requires us to jump into this churning environment. Students and educators who are new to these conversations often find it understandably hard to find their footing. Even experienced DEI facilitators must continually learn, reflect, and change to keep up–a sentiment expressed by the cliche "DEI is a journey, not a destination."

Further complicating communication ethics in conversations about diversity and inclusion is the fact that difference is also deeply personal. We all inhabit a diverse array of identities and take on different roles in different contexts. Many of our identities are fluid, changing over the course of our lives and sometimes minute-by-minute. And different people have different ideas about how they identify – that is, how they want to be recognized and what they want to be called.

Given all of this superdiversity, anxiety around saying the wrong thing in conversations about diversity and inclusion is completely reasonable. Even when we intend to communicate inclusively, we can say the wrong thing and inadvertently exclude or other someone. The only way out of this fear is through–the more practice we have talking and thinking about diversity and inclusion, the better we become at being inclusive.

Critical Language Awareness

Critical language awareness (CLA) is a component of communication ethics that involves understanding the cultural meanings and social effects of words and grammar (Fairclough, 1992a). CLA is an orientation to language that recognizes the ways in which power and social control are enacted through communication (Fairclough, 1992a). Developing critical language awareness involves analyzing how communication encodes ways of thinking and interpreting the world.

Norman Fairclough (1992b) outlines five theoretical propositions of CLA, all of which can be extrapolated from the inclusive language activity below:

1. Language use–'discourse'--shapes and is shaped by society.

2. Discourse helps to constitute (and change) knowledge and its objects, social relations, and social identity.

3. Discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies.

4. The shaping of discourse is a stake in power struggles.

5. CLS [critical language studies] sets out to show how society and discourse shape each other. (pp. 8-9)

The notion of inclusive language in itself draws on these propositions. The idea that we can use language to create inclusive spaces in which everyone feels valued and affirmed presupposes that discourse matters in these ways. By developing critical language awareness of inclusive language, we can understand the interconnection between inclusion and communication and make informed decisions about what to say.

Classroom Context

The activity described below was originally developed for Fundamentals of Speech, a 100-level general education course required for all undergraduate students, typically taken in their first or second year. In this class aimed at helping students to practice principles of public speaking with particular emphasis on persuasion, the activity was presented as part of a module on effective and ethical uses of language. Class sections included 20-30 students.

Inclusive language helps speakers (and writers) connect with diverse audiences. In a chapter on the importance of language, the textbook for the class *Stand up,*

speak out: The practice and ethics of public speaking (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011) introduces the concept this way:

> Language can either inspire your listeners or turn them off very quickly. One of the fastest ways to alienate an audience is through the use of noninclusive language. Inclusive language is language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups while speaking. (p. 13.2)

From there, the book goes on to discuss inclusive language around four core identities: gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Students were asked to read this textbook chapter before class.

The subsequent group activity described below was designed to help students deepen their understanding of inclusive language and consider some challenges speakers and writers face when they're trying to be as inclusive as possible. While guidelines presented in the textbook are useful starting points, simply avoiding generic "he," heterosexist assumptions, unnecessary markers of ethnicity, and dispreferred disability terms is not sufficient. Again, avoiding this and other noninclusive language is important! But students also need to know how to construct inclusive language. The activity models research practices students and educators can use to evaluate and choose inclusive language around identity.

Activity Instructions

Learning Objectives

Students who complete this activity will:

- Discuss goals and challenges of using inclusive language, that is, "language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups" (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011, p. 13.2).

- Develop critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992a) by attending to cultural meanings and social effects of language.

- Practice communication ethics, that is, "the process of negotiating and reflecting on our actions and communication regarding what we believe to be right and wrong" (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2013, p. 1.3).

- Research and report on perspectives on inclusive language around different identity categories.

Materials

Reading assignment (due before class): "Using language effectively" in Stand up, speak out: The practice and ethics of public speaking (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011, p. 13.2).

In-class readings: During class, students are asked to engage with one perspective on inclusive language around one identity category of their choice. Instructors can make hard copies and/or reading options can be accessed online. Hard copies enable easier annotation by hand. An app like hypothes.is (n.d.) can facilitate online annotation.

In-class readings (digital texts and video transcripts) were selected to help students examine inclusive language around different identity categories. Criteria for selection included:

1. First-person perspectives - Texts center the needs and experiences of people in nondominant identity categories, that is, people in groups that tend to have less social and economic power than people in dominant groups (Allen, 2023). Most texts are created by people who inhabit nondominant identity categories and speak from lived experience.

2. Representative perspectives - While texts represent one perspective, their ideas align with others' in their community. Thus, they also represent shared ideas, what anti-racist communication scholar Teun van Dijk (1990) calls social cognition. Texts selected for the activity should also represent different ideas.

3. Salience - Texts are contemporary or foundational.

To get a sense for selection criteria 2-3, facilitators can conduct their own research prior to class. To select representative and salient texts, seek out current, first-person perspectives and look for shared and differing ideas.

The following lists include reading options I've used to help students examine and describe inclusive language around disability, gender, and race. Typically, three options for each identity category were offered in class. Groups selected an identity category to focus on and then chose a text that had not yet been chosen by another group, if possible, to hand-annotate in class. To help others implementing a similar project, a class of 25 split into groups of 3-4 students needed 4 hard copies of each text for in class hand-annotation.

- Disability

    - "Why I dislike 'person-first' language" (Sinclair, 1999)

    - "I am disabled: On identity-first versus people-first language" (Liebowitz, 2015)

    - "Disabled person OR person with a disability?" (Elainey, 2016)

    - "People first language" (Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, n.d.)

    - "Euphemisms for disability are infantilizing" (crippledscholar, 2017)

- Gender

    - "Pronouns: A how-to" (The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, n.d.)

    - "What do you do when someone doesn't use any pronouns?" (Strauss, 2022)

    - "2 reasons not to share your pronouns" (Brown, 2020)

- Race

    - "What does the acronym BIPOC mean?" (Cherry, 2020)

    - A critique of the term BIPOC by Feminista Jones (2022)

    - "6 reasons to not say 'Caucasian'" (Rinderle, 2014)

Digital Discussion

During the activity, students are asked to report key take-aways from their chosen reading in a digital discussion space. I have used the discussion board in a learning management system and shared docs for this purpose. Shared group notes enable students to distill and archive key ideas, synthesize different groups' take-aways, and review important perspectives outside of class. These notes also make the activity accessible to students who miss the discussion in class.

Student Instructions: Activity Introduction

The introduction below is provided in a content page in the learning management system and projected on the screen in class while I present it verbally:

Audiences assess speakers' ethos based on whether they think they are

- credible

- likable

- trustworthy

- caring

Speakers can show audience members that they care by

- using inclusive language

- raising social awareness

- promoting diversity

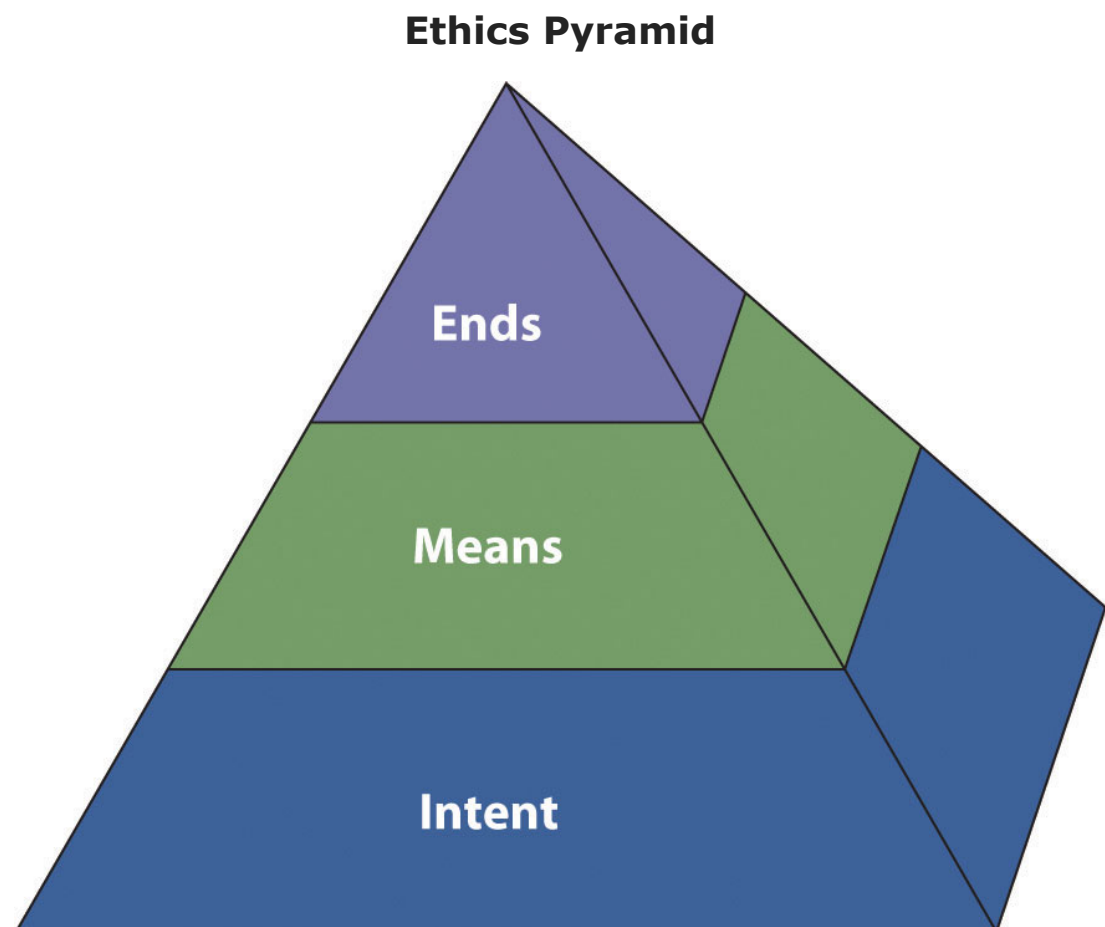- avoiding harmful language and hate speech

Ethics Pyramid

Image description: An illustration of Elspeth Tilley's (2005) ethics pyramid built from three basic concepts: intent (the base), means (the middle), and ends (the pinnacle) (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011, p. 2.1).

But figuring out how to do these things is not always easy or immediately clear. Even if we intend to come off as caring, we may say or do something that others interpret as not caring. And different people might interpret our communication in different ways and have different opinions about what caring looks like.

Communicating ethically requires that we make decisions about what to say and do in situations where we might not know what means to use and in which we might put unintended consequences into motion.

Student Reflection Instructions: What Is Inclusive Language?

The reflection instructions below are provided in a content page in the learning management system:

The following activity invites you to engage in communication ethics around inclusive language.

"Inclusive language is language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups while speaking" (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2011, p. 13.2). Inclusive language "acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities" (Linguistic Society of America, 2016).

Setting your intention to do these things is good, but it's not enough. You need to find the means to meet these inclusive ends.

Think-pair-share or class discussion:

- What kind of language can you use to avoid social hierarchies, acknowledge and accommodate differences, and promote equality?

- Have you ever inadvertently used noninclusive language because you were unaware of social meanings or connotations of words?

Student Activity Instructions: Learn About & Report on Inclusive Language

The activity introduction below is provided in a content page in the learning management system to support student group work:

In her video entitled "Disabled person OR person with a disability?", Annie Segarra (Elainey, 2016) offers these tips for inclusive language:

> every single individual person on this planet can identify differently and that's okay. We all should try and make efforts to ask individuals how they would like to be referred to, instead of assuming, and respecting that, and using the language that honors them. One's identity is not typically up for debate, so just be respectful of how someone wishes to be addressed.

That's all well and good when you're in a conversation with someone. How can you be respectful in a speech situation in which you can't ask about people's preferences?

Research!

The goal of this activity is for us to research different perspectives on common identity terms to consider different ways of ethically communicating about groups of people.

Instructions for Students

1. Join classmates to work in groups of 3-4.

2. Discuss which of the identity categories you'd each most and least like to research from the list below. Choose one identity category to focus on for this activity.

    A. Disability

    B. Gender

    C. Race

3. Pick up a text on your group's chosen identity category. Texts will be assigned based on group preferences and coverage needs. (Ideally, each group will use a different text.)

4. Read and annotate your group's chosen text.

5. As a group, summarize key take-aways from your text. Your group will be asked to share these with the class.

6. Have a note-taker write down all take-aways.

7. Post your group's take-aways on the Inclusive Language discussion* either during or after class.

8. In 1-3 minutes, present key take-aways to the class. You may elect one speaker to do this or deliver take-aways as a pair or group.

    A. Start by providing the author's name and text's title.

    B. Summarize the most important ideas and useful tips from the text.

    C. Discuss your take-aways alongside others shared in class.

9. Discuss the following questions as a class:

    A. What positions do authors write from?

    B. Which perspectives are you familiar with? Unfamiliar with?

    C. Are any texts at odds?

    D. In your view, which perspectives are most useful for analyzing and crafting inclusive language?

E. What perspectives are missing? Where might someone look for them?

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