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Week Five: Classroom Climate and Diversity

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Teaching Academy Part Five: Classroom Climate and Diversity

Welcome, Bienvenido، مرحبا

The Big Idea

The Hazardous Classroom

Smart teachers organize class activities, the environment, their teaching style, etc. in order to maximize learning outcomes.

because . . .

Talking without learning is just talking. — Patricia Cross

Teaching Diverse Students

Because “students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door” . . .

- Work to develop a “mindset that values, respects and affirms all students [which] informs your teaching.”
- Ask: How does my background influence how I learn? How I teach?
- Talk with students—take the time to get to know how they learn
- Attend seminars & workshops on diversity
- Give surveys or informal inventories

Inclusive Teaching Strategies

- Include multiple perspectives on a topic
- Encourage all students to participate
- Use examples & illustrations from different cultures, genders, ethnic groups etc. in roles that are not stereotypical—white female engineer
- Call on different groups equally and equitably—don’t call only on males for mathematical or higher level responses
- Provide scaffolding (prompts, cues, rephrase) to assist learners in

Which of these strategies would work best with your “student”?
Chickering’s Identity Development

Identity Development Vectors

1st & 2nd Years
- Developing Competence
  - intellectual, physical, social
- Managing Emotions
  - awareness & integration of one’s feelings
- Developing Autonomy
  - recognition of one’s interdependence, emotional & instrumental autonomy

2nd & 3rd Years
- Establishing Identity
  - growth along first 3 vectors prerequisite
  - integrate facets of one’s experience
  - negotiate self-image
  - experiential change
  - experimentation in relationships, purpose & integrity
  - access kinds of experiences preferred

3rd & 4th Years
- Freeing Interpersonal Relationships
  - tolerance for differences
- Developing Purpose
  - assessment & clarification of interests, options, lifestyle
- Developing Integrity
  - humanizing & personalizing values, beliefs & behavior congruency

Perry’s Theory of Development

Dualism—either/or thinking
- Knowledge is “received truth” from professors
- Learning is taking notes, memorizing facts, regurgitating facts on exams—one right answer

Multiplicity—subjective knowledge
- Knowledge is just an opinion—students & faculty equally entitled to their opinions
- May rebel at faculty criticism of their work—faculty whim

Relativism—constructed knowledge
- Knowledge is “constructed” thru experience & reflection—based on values & knowledge
- Can argue their perspective & consider merits of alternative arguments

To Challenge Dualists
- Use assignments that require students to consider multiple solutions & alternative perspectives
- Role model accepting multiple points of view & challenging authority
- Show students how to analyze, compare, contrast & justify ideas
- Ask students to explain & defend statements

To Challenge Multiplists
- Provide experiences that help students distinguish between well-supported & weakly-supported ideas
- Help students learn to develop, evaluate & defend opinions
- Encourage students to rethink positions based on changing evidence
- Connect students to alternative views through a “community of learners” who explore & discover together

Source: University of Colorado
http://www.csub.edu/tlc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship_teaching/perrystheory.html
Classroom Climate

Climate is the “intellectual, social, emotional & physical environment in which students learn.” It is determined by:

- Faculty-student interaction
- Tone instructors set
- Courses demographics
- Student-student interaction
- Range of perspectives represented in the course content & materials
- Instances of stereotyping or tokenism

Classroom Climate Inventory
http://www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/teaching/instructional/tools/documents/ClassroomClimateInventory.doc


Strategies that Work

- Examine your assumptions about students
- Set up a process to get feedback on the climate
- Make sure course content does not marginalize students
- Model inclusive language, behavior & attitudes
- Use multiple & diverse examples
- Resist a single right answer
- Use syllabus & first day of class to establish the course climate

Key Teaching Strategies

Strategies that engage students from diverse academic & social backgrounds

- Interactive lecturing
- Active learning
- Cases studies
- Sustained small group work & team research
- Building rapport from the first day of class

Research shows there is no single instructional strategy that will work at all times with all students.

For Next Time

DUE: An activity to address ONE misconception or learning bottleneck in your target course
Read: Chapter 7, “Students as Self-Directed Learners”
Reminder: Lesson plan that address ONE misconception or learning bottleneck due Week 7, Feb. 24 or 25
Extension:
- Creating Inclusive College Classrooms - webpage with tips on choosing content & dealing with problematic assumptions instructors make about students from Michigan
- Diversity & Inclusive Teaching - webpage with information and useful links from Vanderbilt
- “The Psychology of Learning Environments,” Ch. 6, Learning Spaces, D.G. Oblinger (Ed)