

Spring 2015

## Week Five: Classroom Climate and Diversity

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Welcome, Bienvenido, مرحبا



**Teaching Academy**  
**Part Five:**  
**Classroom Climate and Diversity**

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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

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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<sup>2</sup>.”
- 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



<sup>1</sup> Ambrose, S.A. et al(2010). *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bast., pp.160-170

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Lorraine Gilpin, Georgia Southern University. Personal communication. Feb. 2012.


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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”?**

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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
- perceptual & attitudinal change
- experimentation in relationships, purpose & integrity
- knows 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



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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




Source: University of Colorado  
[http://www.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship\\_teaching/perrystheory.html](http://www.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship_teaching/perrystheory.html)


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To Challenge Dualists



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




Source: University of Colorado  
[http://www.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship\\_teaching/perrystheory.html](http://www.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship_teaching/perrystheory.html)


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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.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship\\_teaching/perrystheory.html](http://www.csutb.edu/tc/options/resources/handouts/scholarship_teaching/perrystheory.html)

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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>


Ambrose, S.A. et al(2010). *How Learning Works: Seven Research- Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 170

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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



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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.

Source: University of Michigan <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsmdt.php>

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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)



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