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Reflections on a Teaching Commons Regarding Diversity and Inclusive Pedagogy

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Abstract

Recently, twenty-one instructors at a Midwestern university participated in a faculty development seminar entitled, “Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence and Diversity.” They designed a pedagogical change for the following academic year based on the workshop. During the following year, we collected data on the workshop participants through surveys and interviews to discover if they had implemented the proposed changes and what they discovered in the process. Thirteen of the twenty-one participants responded to our request for information and nine implemented their proposed changes during our data collection. Reviewing the data, we found three areas where participants made changes: application of pedagogical innovations, equal access to learning and inclusive pedagogy, and assessment of power and position as teacher. Many continued to reflect on how to make these changes more effective and indicated a desire for collegiality to sustain them in their efforts to improve their teaching practices.

Keywords

Faculty development, Transfer of learning, Diversity, Inclusive pedagogy, Evaluation

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Abstract

Recently, twenty-one instructors at a Midwestern university participated in a faculty development seminar entitled, "Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence and Diversity." They designed a pedagogical change for the following academic year based on the workshop. During the following year, we collected data on the workshop participants through surveys and interviews to discover if they had implemented the proposed changes and what they discovered in the process. Thirteen of the twenty-one participants responded to our request for information and nine implemented their proposed changes during our data collection. Reviewing the data, we found three areas where participants made changes: application of pedagogical innovations, equal access to learning and inclusive pedagogy, and assessment of power and position as teacher. Many continued to reflect on how to make these changes more effective and indicated a desire for collegiality to sustain them in their efforts to improve their teaching practices.

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Introduction

Recently, eighteen faculty and three graduate students at a Midwestern university participated in a faculty development seminar entitled, "Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence and Diversity." The seminar met on four occasions over three weeks. The seminar served to provide an opportunity for faculty to develop the scholarship of teaching and learning as they studied the impact diversity and privilege can have in the classroom and explored ways to (i) make the content they deliver more diverse and (ii) revise their pedagogy to be more inclusive and learner-centered. This seminar increased awareness of faculty from all seven colleges within this large university. Each faculty participant designed at least one pedagogical innovation during the seminar to be implemented in a course during the following year.

As researchers and evaluators of this program, Glowacki-Dudka and Murray contacted participants after the conclusion of the seminar to discover how their innovations were further developed and implemented. We sought reflections regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their first implementation of the innovation. In order to understand the changes the instructors made, it is first necessary to understand the design and content

of the seminar, which inspired these course development changes.

The Structure and Goals of the Seminar: Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence and Diversity

Philosophy professor and faculty developer David W. Concepción designed the seminar with two key ideas undergirding the content. As Concepción explained it, "The first is Aristotle's Principle of Justice, which is often presented as: treat like cases alike and unlike cases unlike to the degree they are unlike" (Bartlett & Collins, 2011, pp. 1131a22-1131a25). Applying this principle to teaching, no two students arrive with the same background, talents, and abilities, and as such no two students should not be treated the same. Rather, each student should be treated justly. The second idea was inspired by a study by Treisman (1992), entitled, *Studying Students Studying Calculus: A Look at the Lives of Minority Students in College*. In this study, African-American calculus students vastly improved their learning when the instructor made pedagogical changes that acknowledged and considered cultural differences in study habits and learning styles.

Concepción explained that in this seminar: "we tried to (i) improve our vision, (ii) think together about which pedagogical strategies are on the path to fairness, and (iii) begin developing justice-enhancing pedagogies." The method was multifaceted. First, we examined key concepts in diversity theory that are particularly germane to teaching choices. Second, participants introspected to generate lists of "do's" and "don'ts" regarding inclusive teaching and learning. Third, Concepción provided an introduction to some key best teaching practices wrought from learning theory. Fourth, and most importantly, we began developing pedagogical innovations to implement in the subsequent academic year. In short, participants should have learned how to think about diversity and themselves in light of best teaching practices to create pedagogical innovations that should broaden the range of students who excel in their courses while enhancing the learning of every student.

During the seminar, participants reflected on biases within society and within themselves. They were encouraged to define diversity broadly and consider approaches to course design that empower faculty to create more inclusive pedagogies that support excellent student achievement. The facilitator modeled many of these learner-centered, diversity-inspired practices to help participants see how these ideas could be integrated in the classroom. For example, to expose participants to the range of diversity axes that are thought important in contemporary U. S. culture, instead of presenting a list via Powerpoint, Concepción had participants construct a list through conversation. While some "teaching tips" were provided and modeled, the aim was not to hand out concrete recommendations, but to provide conceptual tools and develop course design skills. As Mezirow (1990) puts it: "Critical reflection is not concerned with the how or the how-to of action but with the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do" (p. 13). Facilitating intentional choice making regarding pedagogy in light of learning objectives engenders longer lasting innovation ability than does the provision of quick tips.

Since seminar participants came from a wide variety of colleges, disciplines, and experience levels and no two participants shared the same course content or teaching context, the approach to teaching strategies was trans-disciplinary. Participants considered their own context and expectations, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, as they sought practical applications to abstract and value-laden questions. They grappled with and

reflected on these questions in order to discover individuated answers for use in their own classrooms. Among the questions that Concepción asked were the following:

How does the new pedagogy I am considering implementing enhance students' ability to achieve the transformation I hope for them? Are my learning objectives appropriately inclusive?

Do my pedagogy, content, and communication activities make learning equally accessible to as many people with different bodies and stories as possible? How universal is my design? How many axes of diversity and privilege have I considered?

What are my and my students' vulnerabilities? Have I appreciated as many of them as I should? Are my pedagogies, content, and communication activities sensitive to these vulnerabilities? Am I constructing activities such that vulnerabilities enhance student learning?

How is cognitive authority distributed in my class? How should it be? How does it vary from one individual (with a particular body or story) to another? Given the distance between my students' assumptions about how it should be distributed and the distribution that is best for their learning, what pedagogies, content, and communication activities should I construct?

How much "best practice" learning theory am I using? Am I showing students how to perform relevant tasks (rather than merely describing successful end-products)? Are there multiple occasions for students to practice increasingly complex versions of these tasks and receive feedback regarding their performance? Am I helping students chunk information to make it easier for them to learn and retrieve new knowledge? Am I letting them practice retrieval (in multiple contexts)? Am I anticipating and mitigating "advanced beginner" problems when the student thinks he or she already has the answers? Do students experience intrinsic rewards when they do the right things?

By answering these questions, seminar participants began choosing among changes they could make. Concepción noted, "Collectively, we transformed our answers into a list of pedagogical possibilities that are likely to increase academic excellence from students who might not otherwise effectively engage course material."

Research Methods

This evaluative study of the seminar sought to discover (i) if this seminar was a transformative experience for the participants and (ii) the degree of success participants had in initial implementation of the pedagogical changes they had proposed. During the following academic year, we collected three forms of data to evaluate the outcomes of this seminar. First, we reviewed the "final reports" participants submitted at the end of the summer seminar, reports that detailed the changes the participant intended to make. Second, at the end of the Fall semester, we sent an open-ended survey to the twenty-one (21) seminar participants. In these surveys we asked participants about their implementation experiences and their impressions of students' reactions to the changes. Eleven of the 21 participants (52%) responded to the survey. Third, over twelve months following the seminar, we conducted formal, semi-structured interviews with five

participants (one of whom had not completed the survey) and informal discussions with two other participants. During the subsequent spring, we also received comments via email from an additional participant who had not filled out the original survey. Therefore, a total of thirteen (13) of the original 21 seminar participants (61%) were part of our study. We inductively coded responses and analyzed for themes using a constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We also compared the proposed course changes to the actual changes and outcomes reported by the faculty in the surveys and interviews.

Findings

According to Cranton (2006) "When people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view, transformative learning occurs" (p. 19). In this workshop, participants were asked to critically examine their habitual methods and practices of teaching, to revise them when they saw that they could be improved and/or made more inclusive. Mezirow (1990) reminds us, "Because we are all trapped by our own meaning perspectives, we can never really make interpretations of our experience free of bias. Consequently, our greatest assurance of objectivity comes from exposing an expressed idea to rational and reflective discourse" (p. 10). Through discussion and reflection, seminar participants began to critically reflect on pre-existing assumptions regarding diversity and inclusive pedagogy, which enabled them to articulate and critically reflect upon reasons for making certain changes and not others.

Report Review: Overview

When reviewing the reports of participants' proposed innovations, we found that wide variety in the changes that were targeted. Part of this variation stems from the range of disciplines, student experience level, and teaching contexts found among the participants. The level of support from the participant's department and college also impacted the scope and direction of the proposed changes. The changes ranged from adding gender and race modules, addressing the biases within textbooks, and discussing biases in the practices of the discipline. Others proposed including more opportunities for student evaluation through various forms of formal and informal responses. Another common theme was to use deliberate methods to include more students by discovering whom their students are and what their interests are. Finally, more variety regarding the mode of idea transmission was added; beyond traditional texts, faculty integrated film and web sources, and required students to attend cultural events to gain understanding of ways of life other than their own.

Surveys Results: Overview

We asked the eleven participants surveyed about whether, and if so how, their participation in the workshop led to a change in their thinking or teaching practices. We focused attention on questions regarding the pedagogical change they had proposed. For those who had implemented an innovation, we asked how students reacted to the change. Then we asked whether the instructor could perceive a difference in the course. Finally, we asked for input regarding how to improve the workshop and whether other support after the workshop would be valuable.

Of the eleven who responded to the survey, four felt the seminar added to what they already knew, and five felt it was congruent with their current practices. Two mentioned that they wished the seminar would have "gone further". Eight of the eleven survey respondents had implemented the changes they proposed in the seminar and they viewed

the changes positively. They also indicated an interest in reworking their ideas to make them even more effective. Many participants conveyed a need for more collegiality, such as voluntary mentorship, meetings within their department, and continuing support from others involved in the pedagogical innovation process.

Interview Results: Overview

We interviewed five participants, four of whom completed the survey. All five felt the workshop fit their previous perceptions about diversity and inclusiveness while two felt that it broadened their awareness of diversity issues and inclusive pedagogy. One interview subject wished that the workshop were longer, so that more ideas of how to implement inclusive pedagogy could be discussed. All interviewees indicated that they were dedicated to creating a learner-centered classroom prior to attending the workshop. Yet, three instructors indicated the workshop expanded their views or gave them more ideas regarding how to accomplish this. Indeed, all five interviewees included projects or methods that helped to strengthen the learner-centeredness of their classes. They used techniques such as negotiating expectations and due dates, setting up the room in a non-traditional manner, or working with the students to help them develop metacognitive skills. All five participants showed a great deal of self-reflection during the interviews.

Throughout the interviews, examples of course changes and instructional practices were shared. Three instructors specifically mentioned ways that they evaluated the changes they made in the classroom through assessments. They suggested examples including: the Critical Incident Questionnaire, testing students on concepts rather than facts, and mid-term student evaluations of teaching and learning. Also, one participant had implemented several projects as a result of the workshop and found that she had to adjust the due dates throughout the course to meet student needs.

Four of the interviewees purposefully made themselves vulnerable before their students or sought to share cognitive authority. One purposefully allowed himself to draw imperfectly at the chalkboard for the students to observe. Two were careful when grading assignments to not expect the student to answer in the same way the instructor would. They consciously acknowledged that the student could disagree with them, but still get full credit, if the student supported his/her answer.

Three of the interviewees explicitly expressed an awareness of student differences and the importance of knowing the students well in order to facilitate a better learning environment. All five participants changed their course syllabi and teaching praxis as a result of the workshop. However, one of the participants had not implemented the changes that she proposed at the time of our data collection. She was waiting for a particular course offered in a later semester. Yet, she still made some changes in her approach to classes she was teaching when we collected the data. Overall, those who volunteered to be interviewed were already committed to the idea of diversity and inclusivity and were motivated to make changes as a result of their participation in the workshop.

Survey and Interview Results: A Closer Look

As we reviewed the data and sought out recurring ideas from the workshop itself, the proposed projects, surveys, and interviews, we found three themes: application of pedagogical innovations, equal access to learning and inclusive pedagogy, and assessment of power and position as teacher. The final category had sub-themes: the importance of (i)

distribution of cognitive authority (i.e. who is taken to be an insight deliverer and/or knowledge constructor), (ii) listening and adapting, and (iii) faculty vulnerability.

Application of Pedagogical Innovations

Borne out in this seminar was Cranton's (2006) claim that "[t]ransformation must come from within. Feeling coerced into following someone else's advice may lead to short-lived changes, but not to deep and abiding shifts in perspective" (p. 192). The participants had volunteered to participate in this continuing professional education and were highly engaged and interested in the topic. The intention to implement change was strong. Nine of the thirteen research subjects made a direct change within the time of our data collection.

One instructor encouraged her students to critique films in her class (e.g. *Slum Dog Millionaire* and *Precious*), using the power of narrative to expose students to how people in underrepresented cultures live. Students presented group projects summarizing what they learned. This instructor also added a textbook that addresses issues of fairness and equity to help the students see how privilege is distributed. However, the instructor admitted,

I didn't hit on [white privilege] too directly because, honestly, I was a little cowardly, probably in the way that I dealt with it. Not quite knowing how to deal with it. I also had a guest speaker come ... to talk about race and privilege and historical wounds and those kinds of ideas. So I had him come in ... thinking it would be interesting. I didn't think it was as hard-hitting [as I expected] because he was not as comfortable as I thought he would be.

While some of the participants felt the changes held mixed results, others believed they saw a notable effect on the students. One participant remarked that her students seemed to develop a closer relationship with each other. She attributed this change to the new icebreaker activities she had the students do at the beginning of the semester to get to know each other. She sensed a genuine 'caring' among her students that had not been present previously. Another instructor found that by leaving the parameters of a project open, the students displayed much more creativity than she had expected.

Equal Access to Learning and Inclusive Pedagogy

Throughout the seminar, Concepción emphasized that each student has a right to equal access to learning, yet a person's identity, which is socially constructed and variable, can influence what and how someone learns. Concepción explained that,

Insofar as students learn constructively, they integrate information gathered in new experiences with pre-existing understandings. Crucial pre-existing understandings include how each student understands her or his identity. Insofar as these identities come with social expectations, students will feel confident in certain learning contexts and unsure in others... Our pedagogical structures should be equally accessible to people of all bodies and histories.

Concepción's framing is consonant with Cranton (2006) who sees a connection between constructivism and transformative learning.

Transformative learning theory is based on constructivist assumptions. In other words, meaning is seen to exist within ourselves, not in external forms. We develop or construct personal meaning from our experience and validate it through interaction and communication with others. (p. 23)

For instructors who embrace this constructivist approach, there is no one model of ideal learner and learning patterns. All students can contribute to the meaning-making that occurs in the classroom. These instructors seek to help all students find success through encouraging strengths and minimizing the negative impact of weaknesses.

Teaching inclusively challenges both the teacher and the students to be aware of diversity within the classroom and larger population. For example, Ginsberg and Schulte (2008) found that faculty who “believe in the social constructivist view of students with disabilities espoused very inclusive ideas about how to educate the entire class, including those with special needs (p. 89).” The range of diversity axes that the seminar participants attended to was broad. Consider a few that go beyond race, class, and gender.

An instructor from architecture found that his students were diverse along the rural and urban axis. In his program the

bigger definer [of diversity in our department] is probably around suburban and urban. We have a lot of non-urban students that are here... The difference in values between urban, suburban, and rural kids is huge. Most of them, if they are from rural areas, haven't traveled at all. So they don't have a sense about who lives in the world. Unless they've seen it on television and then it's been the distortion that you get from television. The urban students are far more worldly to begin with. They are just savvy kids who have been in urban environments ... So they have seen a lot ... It doesn't necessarily differentiate between who has talent but it is a major differentiator about what sort of knowledge base you begin from when it comes to knowing what's out there in the world.

Another faculty member noted that her course preparing early childhood teachers was composed of all young women, but they were from different regions of this Midwestern state, and “about half of them are first generation college students”. She sought to build on their diversity by having them write personal narrative statements and share them with the group. She also asked them to analyze their assumptions about geographic differences, class differences, and issues of poverty. The instructor noted, “there really is that underlying background of poverty in a lot of these families where they think, ‘well, we made it and so why can't other people make it?’” This attitude provided a challenge to the instructor when she introduced the historical and current struggles of other groups of people.

In addition to attending to axes of division beyond race, class, and gender, inclusive pedagogy emphasizes individuated student contact. As one instructor put it,

[The instructor] becomes increasingly resilient, increasingly tolerant, increasingly accepting, and increasingly able to guide [students] in individual paths. Since we are trying to foster what we call divergent thinking ... you really have to be able to sort of change hats from student to student and understand which ones needs carrots and which ones need sticks because those are the motivators that work best for them.

Other instructors became more aware of the individual differences in learning styles. For instance, one instructor noticed that some of her students had difficulty answering quickly. She slowed things down by having students write their responses to a question, giving students more time to process their thoughts.

Assessing Power and Position As Teacher

As teachers become more learner-centered, aware of diversity, and conscious of inclusive teaching methods, they become more critically reflective about their own practice and assumptions. They also acknowledge that in order to relate with the students, they need to project a level of sensitivity to learners' vulnerabilities and needs. We found three themes in participants' awareness and practice: the importance of (i) distribution of cognitive authority (i.e. who is taken to be an insight deliverer and/or knowledge constructor), (ii) listening and adapting, and (iii) faculty vulnerability.

Distribution of Cognitive Authority

Concepción challenged participants to step back from their role as "content deliverer" and include students in the construction of knowledge and assignments. Yet, students holding traditional expectations of instructors as knowledge dispensers may be resistant to inclusive techniques. Cardenas and Garza (2007) found some students resistant when instructors required students to create the grading criteria of some of their assignments. Concepción provided an example from Schroer (2007) where the intense self-reflection demanded in her critical thinking courses led students, especially the predominantly poor and first generation college students in her classes, to cling to what they know. In order to move beyond this resistance, which Schroer calls intellectual imperviousness, the teacher should provide reassurance that a temporary loss of confidence is part of growth and not a lack of integrity. Cardenas and Garza (2007) found resistance is reduced when students build confidence as leaders, by helping less experienced students in collaborative projects.

The instructors in our study employed a variety of techniques to share cognitive authority with their students. The instructor of the early childhood course encouraged her students to explore their own assumptions about poverty, race, privilege, and the meaning of success. The students began to critically reflect on their assumptions, deconstruct established meanings, and revise their understandings in order to empathize with others different from themselves. Another instructor explained,

One of my struggles as an instructor is to try to remain ... radically open in the classroom, so that when students are grappling with the material that I don't shut down discourse. Even though sometimes my first reaction in the classroom is 'no, that's ridiculous or didn't you read? Or aren't you listening to what I'm saying?' That's been more of a struggle than I was prepared for ... I am constantly working on positionality, my kind of subject position as knower ... I don't want that to be the only relationship that I have with my students. I want it to be more reciprocal. I want it to be more circular.

Building on the notion that sharing cognitive authority means that the instructor's perspective is not the correct perspective, another participant explained that when it came to grading, she tried to be objective. She explained that even if the students "would write about something that for some reason I don't agree with", she would be careful to look at their arguments or perspectives for quality. She stated, "if they are providing different perspectives but still reaching a conclusion that maybe I wouldn't have, they could still get full grade...I tried to be aware that they don't have to agree with me. I just want them to think."

One participant found a simple way to bring the learners to the center was to rearrange classroom furniture. She moved the chairs so that the instructor was with the students in a circle rather than in front of the class. Other participants chose to share decisions regarding

due dates and projects topics with students. One instructor was excited about the outcomes of a group presentation:

I left some of the parameters open for the group presentation, like I didn't tell them exactly what I thought a theoretical presentation was and... it was amazing what they did. They put together a Prezi presentation with lots of animation and lots of really cool music and clips. They came back with something above and beyond what I ever could have thought of... They excelled. I think they felt really empowered. They had a lot of agency in this situation.

None of these approaches should suggest that necessary disciplinary, academic standards are being abandoned. Rather, it is the humble recognition that there are paths other than the instructor's preferred path to meeting the standards.

Listening and Adapting: Critical Reflection

Concepción stressed that our "students frequently tell us what they need. But they tell us in unspoken ways. If we can cultivate a capacity to hear these unspoken messages and act upon what we're told we can become great teachers." Learning to hear and respond appropriately to students' preparedness to move to a new subject is central to inclusive pedagogy. Among the ways to solicit student input is the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) developed by Brookfield (1995). These are the five questions from the CIQ:

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?
4. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you). (p. 115)

These questions take a time stamp of the dynamics of the classroom or course experience over a given time (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007). Three of the study participants used CIQs in their courses to assess the perspectives and understanding of their students. One used CIQs in a large geography class along with an audience response tool and quiz. She reacted to trends in student responses, which resulted in increased engagement and participation. Another participant created her own mid-term evaluation and made mid-course corrections in light of the responses. Other participants evaluated the need for change by reflecting on student responses in tests and projects. Happily, one participant noted her students were more caring of each other, sooner in the semester than normal as a result of more intensive and intentional student-student interaction at the beginning of the semester.

Faculty Vulnerability

Quinnell, Russell, Thompson, Marshall, and Cowley (2010) state, "Critical reflection on one's own practices can be viewed as an opportunity to identify personal stumbling blocks, difficult transitions or major transformative moments in scholarly progress" (p. 27). More specifically, fostering diversity requires instructors to critically self-reflect to understand their own vulnerabilities and prejudices as well as those of their students. According to

Mezirow (1990), "Meaning perspectives are, for the most part, uncritically acquired in childhood...often in the context of an emotionally charged relationship with parents, teachers, or other mentors. The more intense the emotional context of learning and the more it is reinforced, the more deeply embedded and intractable to change are the habits of expectation that constitute our meaning perspectives" (pp. 3-4). The seminar helped guide participants to think critically about their beliefs and roles as instructors and provided them with a safe environment in which they could challenge those beliefs and make decisions about how to make any necessary changes.

As one instructor found, uncovering her own stumbling blocks in the seminar "helped me make my thoughts more concrete and could serve as an important reminder at times to be sensitive and sensible towards these and other variables when they crop up in teaching and life." Another explained the seminar "made me think that it is my responsibility to remove any characteristics that are part of me that interfere with engaging all of the students...." One instructor intentionally made mistakes and drew some of his imperfections on the board, in order to appear vulnerable to his students. He hoped this would make his students feel more comfortable taking risks and increase their comfort in approaching him for help.

Discussion

Brookfield (2006) recognizes that in a student body today "variations in academic readiness, learning style and personality orientations are only the beginning of diversity. Newly arrived immigrant groups, communities of color ... Indigenous peoples ... students for whom English is a second or third foreign language all are now present in college classrooms in even greater numbers" (p. 154). As such, inclusive pedagogy is increasingly important in higher education since it is tied to student success.

Cooke and Sorcinelli (2005) suggest that we define

diversity and multiculturalism broadly to include any difference that makes one teacher or learner unlike another. A broad definition typically encompasses gender, race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, geographical region, religion, and other characteristics that might affect teaching and learning (p. 79).

This seminar encouraged participants to view diversity broadly. Each person has a unique body and history, and our culture picks out certain traits and circumstances as especially pertinent to particular privileges. By incorporating an expansive view of diversity, instructors can seek the strengths, weaknesses, needs, and gifts of each of their students, and use what they discover to create a more inclusive classroom with deep and flexible learning as the main objective.

However, creating an inclusive classroom does not occur in a vacuum. While faculty and institutions benefit from faculty learning and teaching communities, educational reformers should not rely on these communities to sustain themselves. If the teachers are learning together, they may still benefit from a facilitator who has experience and more knowledge in the reform area.

[I]t takes a much more intensive, ongoing coaching component to help teachers achieve the level of change ... Most teachers need regular feedback and help in order to become expert practitioners of new pedagogical strategies ... Second, teachers need to feel part of the larger teaching community in their schools as they pursue changes in their teaching ... Third, teachers need support over the long term in their pursuit of change toward investigative, student-centered teaching (Culter & Ruopp, 1999, pp. 159-160).

In other words, successful educational change requires more planning than just offering a seminar or two. It is important for instructors to come together periodically to discuss and reflect on their practices and make concrete changes in their courses to better reflect the need to reach all students, to embrace the experiences and knowledge of the students, and to take risks in order to transform. Cranton (2006) reminds us: "We know the value of dialogue in our work with learners; we need to recognize the necessity of dialogue about teaching as a means of fostering our own development" (p. 191). Cranton (2006) continues,

I still wonder whether we think enough about the importance of our own learning and especially our transformative learning as practitioners. Through learning and development, we move away from a mechanistic kind of approach to selecting teaching techniques, we question our practice rather than repeating what we have done in previous sessions, and we become models for our learners. (p. 198)

It is as a learner that the instructor can continue to challenge his or her own assumptions, to become more open to the diversity within the classroom, to seek and find and refine new models that will work with these students in this classroom in this moment, and to keep searching for better ways to teach using sound research from journals, colleagues and critically-reflected experiences. Mezirow (1997) recognizes the pivotal role of dialogue in learning. "Discourse is necessary to validate what and how one understands, or to arrive at a best judgment regarding a belief. In this sense, learning is a social process, and discourse becomes central to making meaning" (p. 10). A stand alone workshop does not allow the instructors the opportunity to fully engage with one another as they seek to integrate newly accepted theories into practice and as they continue to need a sounding board to help them critically reflect on assumptions of teaching.

The faculty learning started in the workshop we studied could be valuably supported by opportunities for participants to continue meeting throughout subsequent semesters to help each other celebrate successes and strategize regarding temporary setbacks. As Mezirow and Cranton both express, dialogue is central to transformation. Participants need to talk through their ideas, especially when they are questioning long-held assumptions. "To question the validity of a long-taken-for-granted meaning perspective predicated on a presupposition about oneself can involve the negation of values that have been very close to the center of one's self-concept...Challenges and negations of our conventional criteria of self-assessment are always fraught with threat and strong emotion" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 12). The workshop participants would benefit from allies whom they could trust with their hopes, fears, frustrations, and celebrations. Many of the participants felt the innovations they tried needed more work. Importantly, they were willing and even excited about the prospect of making further changes. Many participants identified allies across campus, developing a newfound sense of community, acknowledging the value of connection with like-minded peers who want to work together to improve the learning that takes place in their classes. Another important change derived from the seminar then is that participants adopted the

habit of continual evaluation of their teaching practices with a more critical eye for the learning they wanted the students to experience.

Finally, the seminar itself seemed to be a transformative experience for some of the instructors. They increased their willingness to take chances and spend more time reflecting on their own beliefs and practices. This change is especially important because of the role it has in self-assessment. As Huba and Freed (2000) describe it: "Reflection is a powerful activity for helping professors and students understand the present learning environment and think of ways to improve it" (pp. 48-49). This is critical for the process of learning to continue beyond the seminar. After all, professional development in education should lead to on-going learning for the instructors well beyond the four days of seminar training.

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