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Week Five: Classroom Climate and Diversity

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Welcome, Bienvenido, مرحبا

Teaching Academy Part Five:
Classroom Climate and Diversity

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”?


2 Dr. Lorraine Gilpin, Georgia Southern University. Personal communication. Feb. 2012.
### Chickering's Identity Development

**Identity Development Vectors**

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

**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
  - assess 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

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Source: University of Colorado

http://www.colorado.edu/courses/resources/faculty/teaching-teachingresources.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

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.

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

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)