

Bryan Dewsbury & Cynthia J. Brame

INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST – INCLUSIVE TEACHING

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS

Knowing one's own professional and social identity is the key first step in developing a classroom built on inclusive relationships. The process of knowing oneself may force a reckoning with our previously unexamined relationships with power structures and can be emotionally uncomfortable. This is not an easy step and will require time and space to engage in the mindset shifts it may engender. For this reason, it is recommended that these steps occur outside of the teaching semester, so the instructor has an opportunity to reflect on the ways the ideas impact their classroom. To help develop self-awareness, consider the following steps:

- Take the Implicit Association Test (<http://implicit.harvard.edu>). The website contains a number of tests based on different identities around which biases exist.
- Read literature on the history of the social context of higher education., such as
 - bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*
 - Sylvia Hurtado's "The campus racial climate: Contexts of conflict," in *The Journal of Higher Education*, volume 63, pp. 539-569
 - John Thelin's *A History of American Higher Education*.
- Write a positionality statement. Sherry Hamby's blogpost, "Know Thyself: How to Write a Reflexivity Statement," in *Psychology Today* provides a useful guide for how to get started (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-web-violence/201805/know-thyself-how-write-reflexivity-statement>).

DEVELOPING EMPATHY

Pedagogy built on dialogue requires a more concrete understanding of how diverse personalities function in collaborative environments.

- Carefully understand the student within their sociocultural and institutional contexts.
- Provide opportunities for students to share their personal narratives (student voice) and use that to build relationships and pedagogies reflecting the inclusion of those voices.
- Read literature on the sociology and psychology of the student higher education experience.
- Create opportunities for dialogue beyond individual meetings. Casual conversations before class begins or in the hallway can be extraordinarily impactful.
- Provide students an opportunity for agency, both in terms of articulation of the material and sharing their story with you/others. Their unique voices should form the framework around which the pedagogy is built.
- Provide feedback in a timely fashion, and use that as an opportunity for ongoing dialogue.

John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provide a strong base from which to start this work. In addition, Dana Mitra provides an example of how to incorporate student voice in a high school setting in "The Significance of Students: Can Increasing 'Student Voice' in Schools Lead to Gains in Youth Development?" in *Teachers College Record*, volume 106, pp. 651-688.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE

A supportive classroom climate can help students develop a sense of belonging in a class, which is associated with greater motivation and academic achievement. Both instructor-student interactions and student-student interactions contribute to the classroom climate.

- ❑ Consider how you demonstrate warmth, organization, and respect for students as part of developing a positive classroom climate. This can start with the syllabus and extend to face-to-face and online interactions with students.
- ❑ Encourage respectful and supportive peer interactions, providing students' opportunities to collaborate in building understanding, identify shared interests in course content, and develop a supportive classroom network.

PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES

Students' feelings and emotional responses are important for their persistence and success. A sense of belonging and feelings of competence produce positive affective experiences and can help the formation of a science identity. The mechanisms that particular instructors use will vary depending on their own characteristics and those of their students. The following suggestions offer some ways to foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement, and help students build feelings of competence.

- ❑ Signal an identify-safe environment with inclusive language or by highlighting successes of individuals from stereotyped groups. This can lessen stereotype threat and improve student performance and participation.
- ❑ Feature counterstereotypical examples of scientists in homework assignments to introduce course content. Doing so can increase students' sense of relating to scientists, shift them away from stereotypes about scientists, and improve course grades.
- ❑ Know and use student names. Name tents are one way to achieve facilitate this practice in high enrollment courses.
- ❑ Use wait time, small groups, think-pair-share, and writing time as well as other strategies that enhance students' opportunities to contribute and benefit from the intellectual community of the classroom.
- ❑ Increase course structure through graded out-of-class assignments and in-class active learning, including the strategies listed above.
- ❑ Enhance cooperation and reduce competition among students to help promote student feelings of success.
- ❑ Emphasize the relevance of coursework to real life in order to enhance student interest and engagement.
- ❑ Support students' sense of autonomy to increase interest and enjoyment and possibly decrease anxiety measures.
- ❑ Read about and consider using social-psychological interventions that are a suited to your students and your context. These interventions may focus on helping students endorse a growth mindset; helping students understand adversity as shared, transient experiences to increase social belonging; or helping combat stereotype threat through values affirmation.

LEVERAGING NETWORKS

- Explicitly connect other aspects of campus life designed for student success to classroom content. Living learning communities and curricular communities are existing models that exemplify how to connect these services.
- Invite staff members from offices like career services to spend a few minutes in your classroom explaining to students how the classroom curriculum connect with their services.
- Sync freshman year experience courses with your syllabus to maximize the synergistic effects of the learning outcomes of the two courses.

Instructors can find support for these suggestions as well as additional information relevant to inclusive teaching in the LSE feature Evidence-Based Teaching Guide to Inclusive Teaching.