ADVANCING INCLUSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Nudges, Tools and Resources for Capacity Building

One of the great functions of... is to help us imagine what it is like to be not ourselves, what it is like to be someone or something else, what it is like to live in another skin, what it is like to live in another body, and in that sense to surpass ourselves, To go beyond ourselves.

--Adrienne Rich

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Title:
Advancing Inclusive Learning Communities: Nudges, Tools and Resources for Capacity Building

Description:
As faculty and instructors in a diverse academic community, individuals require critical knowledge, skills and relevant tools and resources to be able to effectively engage with students from diverse backgrounds across the many intersectional identities that they and we all bring to our learning, working and living environments. In this highly interactive workshop, we will be exploring multi-dimensional considerations of effective approaches inside the classroom and beyond.
What is your vision of INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE?
Session Objectives

• Understand the complex and shifting landscape of higher education and the expectations for teaching the 21st century learner.
• Define and operationalize the goal of inclusive excellence in higher education institutions today.
• Explore possible conceptual and practical considerations in creating inclusive learning communities.
• Reflect on effective strategies for addressing the needs of diverse learners and other stakeholders in a higher education environment.
What is at Stake?

“What is at Stake?”

“Achieving more diverse campuses remains a central objective for our universities. We know, from several compelling studies, that increasing campus diversity has profound educational advantages for all students, that achieving diversity and excellence are not mutually exclusive goals, and that the failure to reduce disparities of educational attainment among all of our citizens has profound consequences for national economic and civic development . . .

It is important that we understand the legally sustainable efforts our universities can undertake to achieve diversity; and it is important that we explore the means of succeeding in achieving diversity. What is legal and what works? . . .

Our commitment to diversity is not a product of an effort at rebalancing the scales of social justice, however long they may have been imbalanced. Rather it is because we believe our institutions will be better, our society enriched, our economy enhanced by educating better our richly diverse population. And it is inspired as well by the conviction that all students admitted to our institutions are capable of succeeding in a challenging curriculum and carrying that success with them to their world beyond the campus.”

Association of American Universities, Robert M. Berdahl, Written Statement, October 2009
Underrepresented Minority (URM) Degree Recipients

**FIGURE 2-5** Underrepresented minorities among S&E degree recipients, by degree level, 2006.

SOURCE: Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology.
NIH Diversity Data

- ~10% of all PhD earners, 2006-2012:

- ~780 AA/B (~4% of entire pool)
  - 1% of all NIH RPG awards, 5.3% of all K awards (2006-2015)

- ~950 Hispanic (~5.7% of entire pool)
  - 3.3% of all NIH RPG awards, 5.7% of all K awards (2006-2015)

- 30 AI/AN (0.2% of entire pool), 30 NH/PI (0.2% of entire pool)
University missions and practices need to align with the greater expectations of “supporting the intentional learner who is empowered through intellectual and practical skills; informed by knowledge and ways of knowing; and responsible for personal actions and civic values...Mastery of a range of abilities and capacities empowers intentional learners as they maneuver in and shape a world in flux...intentional learners possess a core of knowledge, both broad and deep, derived from many fields...Through discussion, critical analysis, and introspection, intentional learners come to understand their roles in society and accept active participation.”
Advancing Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

*America is woven of many strands; I would recognize them and let it so remain.*
--Ralph Ellison, 1952, from *Invisible Man*

*…for democracy to work, we must leverage the range of human actors who contribute to the overall well-being of our society.*
--Earl Lewis and Nancy Cantor, 2017, from *Our Compelling Interests*
Key Areas for Consideration:

- Personal narratives-- I am a.... (what identities and experiences influence/inspire your work)

- American perspectives -- historical arc of gender, race/racism, culture and demographic shifts

- Understanding the literature on diversity and inclusion -- unconscious bias, stereotypes, micro-aggressions, nudges and architecture of inclusion

- Nudges -- designing for more inclusive processes and academic environments.
Diversity and Inclusion: What are my own operational definitions and lived experiences?

“Diversity in an academic sense is the multiplicity of individual experiences which create unique interpretations of a shared reality.”

“Inclusion is that multitude of perspectives experiences, identities, etc. existing together in a welcoming and responsive environment and feeling seen and heard.”

--Brown History PhD Graduate Students
1. What prevents students from broadly and effectively participating in learning and other scholarly activities?

2. How can you personally address these barriers from your vantage point as a faculty member/instructor?
Communicating the Impact of Diversity and Inclusion Work: Unpacking Concepts and Ideas

- **Gender schemas and accumulation of advantage (Valian)**

- **Unconscious bias (Banaji and Greenwald)**

- **Stereotype threat (Steele)**

- **Micro-aggressions (Sue)**
Implicit Bias

• What?
  – An unconscious association between negative qualities or valences and a person’s race, gender, physical characteristic, or membership in a social group.

• So what?
  – Instructors may unconsciously favor certain students.

Slide is courtesy of Dr. Jessica Metezler, Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University


Stereotype Threat

• What?
  – When stereotypes regarding race, gender, or social group membership impede an individual’s progress or learning.
  – May occur when encountering external, often unconscious, bias, or when negative associations are internalized.

• So what?
  – Instructors may make unfounded assumptions about students or appear to affirm stereotypes.
  – Students may internalize stereotypes and underperform.

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The Capabilities Approach: A Framework for Diversity and Inclusion Work

The core focus of the capabilities approach is on what individuals are able to do. Assessment of outcomes must consider the following:

- The importance of real freedoms in the assessment of a person's advantage
- Individual differences in the ability to transform resources into valuable activities
- The multi-variate nature of activities giving rise to happiness
- A balance of materialistic and non-materialistic factors in evaluating human welfare
- Concern for the distribution of opportunities within society

(Sen, 1985; Nussbaum, 2011)
Effective Practices:
Nudges towards an Architecture of Inclusion

Nudge(s) - "...A nudge, as we will use the term, is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives. To count as a mere nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates.


Architecture of Inclusion –” It is about creating the conditions enabling people of all races and genders to realize their capabilities as they understand them. All institutional citizens should be able to realize their potential and participate fully in the life of the institution.“

Inclusive Practices

- **Self-Assessment**
  - Examine the potential effect of your values, assumptions, and beliefs on your role in the university.
- Consider including a diversity inclusion statement for your unit/class/working group.
- Consider inclusive approaches to achieving “work” objectives, teaching and learning methods, assessment, climate created in interactions with students, and institutional climate.

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“Diversity Issues for the Instructor: Identifying Your Own Attitudes.” *Teaching for Inclusion*. Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
Inclusive Spaces

Creating an inclusive environment

- Encourage multiple perspectives.
- Invite participation from all stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, etc.) and monitor unequal discussion dynamics.
- Use group and collaborative learning practices.
- Avoid allowing or asking a student to be a “spokesperson” for their race, ethnicity, or gender.
Principles for Designing Inclusive Learning Environments

Universal Design for Learning: 3 principles

Provide multiple means of Engagement
Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning in different ways.

Provide multiple means of Representation
Present information and content in different ways to support understanding.

Provide multiple means of Action & expression
Offer options and supports to all so everyone can create, learn and share.
Taking Action

• Consider a NUDGE to implement in your classroom or research group.
• Identify a necessary TOOL that can help you create a more inclusive learning environment.
• Make a list of RESOURCES and share them with colleagues.
What Institutions Can Do (Valian, 2005)

1. Know the data; know the theory. In colleges and universities, everyone—students, faculty, staff, administrators—should know how gender (and race/ethnicity and other identities) influences evaluations and rewards.

2. No one-size, one-time fix fits all. Equity requires consistent and constant effort.

3. Install accountability from top to bottom.

4. Take an experimental approach in which failure leads to redesign. Relatively little is known at present about how to fine-tune equity efforts.

5. Treat equity as a subject matter. Equity is not a matter of trying everything, but of trying strategies motivated by theory and past data.

6. Choose a strategy: meet the national average or be the best. The second is more likely to lead to a superior outcome.

7. Make as many procedures as possible a matter of routine. If a routine tells people what to do, their unwitting biases have less room to take over.
“To recognize diversity requires that time, energy and labor be given to diversity. Recognition is thus material as well as symbolic: how time, energy and labor are directed within institutions affects how they surface.”

(Ahmed, 2012)