

The Inclusive Villanova Community—with Matt Ouellett

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Teleconference

*Comments by Dr. Matt Ouellett, Executive Director, Center for Teaching Innovation
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Definition

Inclusive teaching refers to pedagogy that strives to serve the needs of all students, regardless of background or identity, and support their engagement with subject material.

- To make clear, any number of teaching approaches may address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning modalities, and abilities.
- Much of what we cover today I think applies across environments and roles in HE – I'll do my best to make those links and hope that the breakout room discussions will help do this as well.
- I also want to make clear that much of what we talk about must be contextualized in terms of the environment in which you teach: the *scale* and *type* of course you teach will determine which pedagogical strategies make sense for you and your students.

Three focus areas for thinking about teaching inclusively:

1. Take care of yourself (airline prompt: put your own mask on first before helping others) – the purpose of the time we just spent in small groups. We've lost our routines and go-to habits as well.
2. Students and Community (supporting students by focusing on community)
3. Groups as a pedagogy for making the most of the online environment for teaching inclusively.

Take Care of Yourself

It's a mindset –

- There's no way to prepare ahead of time for every contingency
- Instead, build in lots of opportunities to seek out feedback from students about their perceptions of the learning environment
- Give and get lots of formative feedback
- Model – talk about the need to build a new “routine”

Your students are still your students

“The goal is to figure out a way to “TEACH THROUGH THE SCREEN” - when you continue to be yourself and you reach to your students in your own genuine style

We teach *through* the screen and not *to* the screen”. (Sean Michael Morris, author of Critical Online Pedagogy) - <https://criticaldigitalpedagogy.pressbooks.com/chapter/chapter-1/>

Networks

- It's so important to keep a peer group close to you - now more than ever, we're going through this together and we're absolutely going to make mistakes.
- Stay engaged and be generous, be forgiving to yourself and your colleagues, and your students.

Students and Community

- Learning online can be a challenge for students – many report that it can be especially tough staying *motivated* and *focused*.
- Students face a whole host of barriers to remote learning — unreliable internet access, computer snafus, different time zones, a whole host of situational factors. Keep talking to your students and listening for what's their story - we just don't know what their situation is.

Structure and Cues

Help students focus on what's most important by providing even more structure than normal (first thing to go under stress is our ability to handle cognitive load):

- a skeletal outline,
- sharpen the structure of assignments,
- clarify directions even more,
- offer models or expert examples of what you're looking for

Offer more practice

- TTQ - typical text questions that students can work on in small groups
- Low stakes writing assignments with peer review
- Think-Pair-Share opportunities
- And, get comfortable with silence to give quiet students time to ante in (use a timer - 2 minutes can feel like a half hour)

Encouraging students to speak up / engage in class

- Use a discussion list (which can be asynchronous or synchronous)
- Hand raise symbol in Chat
- Conduct a live Q&A by asking students to use the thumbs up/down icon
- Consider adapting classroom assessment techniques. For example, you might end class asking students to share their "muddiest point" in the chat window before they leave, so you know what to go over again in the next class.
- Engaging students who are shy, introverted, reluctant to share unpopular viewpoints/minority opinions:
 - Set up the discussion board so comments of students are anonymous to each other, but not to you.
 - Offer students the option to respond to you privately and directly.
- Arrive early / stay after official class time to chat more informally with students

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Zoom

Ask students to edit the settings for how their name is displayed on Zoom to how they prefer to be identified, considering adding a preferred pronoun - use of a virtual backdrop

Establish expectations together and upfront about:

- Icons – do you expect to see actually see each other? Do students know how to apply a backdrop image so they are “live” but with privacy? Or, can students have their video display off?
- Keep audio muted? If so, how and when will they be able to ask questions?
- Your expectations about arriving late / leaving early
- Record each Zoom session. If your subscription allows, record to the cloud to create audio transcriptions. (Another option for transcription: Upload your class sessions to YouTube and then post the link in a secure place on your campus’s learning-management system to protect students’ privacy.)
- Post the audio files, too, since video can be difficult to view for some students.
- Polling - which aggregates answers and highlights distributions

Record a brief welcome video

- What do I love about my discipline (why I care)?
- What are we going to study together (“big” ideas and broad topics) and how may relate to your future success (why you care)?
- And, going forward, these are the ways we’re going to approach it.

Send note

Notes can be as brief as a post card – it really is the thought that counts. For example:

- Congratulate students on success early in the course (e.g., on the results of the first exam, paper, project) or who substantially improved.
- Reach out to students who may not have done as well with encouragement and perhaps a helpful suggestion or two.
- Check in with students who have missed a class or two.
- The same principle behind learning their names applies here: Just because your notes won’t reach every student doesn’t mean you should abandon sending any.

Groups

Students function in groups more inclusively with more structure:

- Building the feeling of being a group is a part of the learning. Prioritize time for them to get to know each other, catch up socially and connect (all the things they might have done coming and going from classes but now need elbow room created for)
- Give students a meta framework for how groups function. I like Tuckman’s model of stages of group development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and (added later) Assessing.
- Zoom itself will randomly assign students to small groups, but you can change the default timing settings of when they enter and exit the breakout rooms, as well as who is in which groups.

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- Consider assigning roles (e.g., timekeeper, reporter to report on each group's results once back in the main Zoom meeting, scribe, process person) rotate roles = not leaving it to chance that everyone gets an opportunity to contribute.
- Provide clear prompts (orally, worksheet, on screen)
- Expect groups to report back (accountability) by designating a place (such as a Google doc) to show each group's thoughts, progress, or work.
- Be clear about grading - is this formative practice or is it high stakes? How will the work of the individual and the work of the group be assessed?

This is a time to reassert the values of the Villanova community and recognize the systemic attributes that can interfere with our implementation and achievement of our aspirations.

Conclusion

Thank you so much for your kind attention this morning. I'm grateful for the opportunity to join you and I wish you well.

Resources

[Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Online](#): Principles & Practices During a Global Health Crisis
Baez, Johanna C.; Marquart, Matthea S.; Garay, Kristin; Chung, Rebecca Yae-Eun

This is a one-page overview of trauma-informed teaching and learning principles and practices to support educators during a global health crisis. This was created to help those educators who are managing the quick move to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adams, Bell, Goodman, and Joshi. (2016). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, 3rd edition.

In terms of helping students begin to understand the dynamics of privilege (in the classroom, in school, and in society), I return over and over again to a core concept offered in the text, the Cycle of Socialization (pp. 107). I have found this framework to be useful in helping students reflect on their lived experiences, values, and beliefs. This self-reflection lays the groundwork for further exploration of why their experiences, values, and world view may differ from others.

Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuckman%27s_stages_of_group_development