Breaking Down Silos: Teaching for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Across Disciplines

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The purpose of this paper is to present specific teaching strategies, classroom activities, and service learning assignments that can be adapted across disciplines to meet equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) focused learning objectives. In order to identify promising practices for teaching EDI, this collaboratively authored paper follows the thread of our common strategies, activities, and approaches through our different disciplines and across the different contexts in which we teach. As we wrote together about our common commitment to EDI, the specifics of our disciplines fell into the background as we focused on four core objectives for teaching EDI: awareness, knowledge, skills, and action. We present promising practices for raising self-awareness, increasing knowledge, developing skills, and inspiring students to action. We hope that our collaborative process can be used as an example for other scholars and educators looking to transcend disciplines and effectively integrate EDI into their classroom.

Keywords: equity, diversity, inclusion, pedagogy, social justice

Across disciplines, instructors in higher education incorporate issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into their courses. Although excellent resources exist to support this type of teaching (see, for example, Adams et al. 2016), there is less literature that provides concrete examples of teaching strategies and assessments that can be used across disciplines. The purpose of this paper is to present specific teaching strategies, classroom activities, and service learning assignments that can be adapted across disciplines to meet EDI-focused learning objectives.

We began our collaboration in the summer of 2016 while participating in a faculty development seminar titled, *The Role of Faculty in Promoting Meaningful Consideration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Across Multiple Disciplines.* The seminar was offered as part of the Faculty Resource Network of New York University and led by experts from the American Council on Education, the National Center for Institutional Diversity, and the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good. Each of us was attracted to the opportunity to collaborate with faculty across disciplines to advance our capacity to work for EDI. During the seminar, we were drawn together to discuss promising practices for curriculum and pedagogy that foster EDI.

While we all share a deep commitment to EDI, our work in higher education spans a range of disciplines and settings. Two of us are in teacher preparation, one in early childhood and one in secondary education. The other four are in business, philosophy, psychology, and marriage

and family therapy. Two of us are on the tenure-track and employed at the assistant level while three are tenured at the associate level and one is tenured at the professor level. All the authors of this article are cisgender women. Half of us identify as African American and half of us identify as white or European American. Our institutions range in size from rather small (under 1,500) to relatively large (over 25,000) and include two-year community colleges, four-year private liberal arts colleges, and universities with undergraduate and graduate programs. All our institutions are co-educational but range in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, from predominantly white institutions to a historically black college. While most of us work in urban areas, two are in a suburban location. As the reader can see, we represent a wide array of backgrounds and contexts. One of several goals in writing this piece together was to provide a model for working collaboratively across disciplines and across institutions.

From the outset, the interdisciplinary nature of our project was an asset and a challenge. To identify promising practices for teaching EDI, we had to follow the thread of our common strategies, activities, and approaches through our different disciplines and across the different contexts in which we teach. We found that our collective thinking aligned with research described by Johnson and DiStasi in their 2014 book about the future role of higher education, especially liberal arts education, in offering students a rich, broad education that fosters values such as responsibility, integrity, and cooperation (as cited in Reis 2016). As we wrote together about our common commitment to EDI, the specifics of our disciplines fell into the background, and core objectives for teaching EDI came to the fore.

Common learning objectives for EDI education stem from the counseling and education literature and are typically organized into three dimensions: (1) awareness, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills (Fuentes, Chanthongthi, and Rios 2010; Mayhew and DeLuca Fernández 2007; Sue 2001; Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis 1992). More recently, scholars and educators have stressed the importance of a fourth objective — action (Burrell Storms 2012; Iverson 2012). The first dimension, awareness, refers to a student's awareness of his or her own biases and assumptions about others, an effort to correct those biases, and an openness to learning about others. This type of learning often occurs in an affective, or feeling, domain. The second dimension, knowledge, refers to a student's understanding of his or her own culture, the cultures of others, and how this type of learning typically occurs in a cognitive, or thinking, domain. The third dimension, skills, refers to the ability to interact justly and effectively with people from various cultures and backgrounds. This type of learning is largely behavioral. The final dimension, action, refers to a student's preparedness and commitment to creating change and ending social injustice. This learning objective is an extension and a culmination of the previous three objectives. These learning outcomes apply to all students, regardless of how their identities intersect to produce experiences of privilege and oppression. Often, social justice education is perceived as more important for students with multiple privileged identities (e.g., white, male, heterosexual, middle class, etc.). However, we feel there is a unique benefit to students who may become empowered agents of change as it pertains to their own marginalized identities.

Given the widespread acceptance of these learning objectives as central to social justice education (Adams 2016; Fuentes, Chanthongthi, and Rios 2010; Mayhew and DeLuca Fernández 2007; Sue et al. 1992), we organized our discussion and this paper using them as a framework. First, we created prompts to guide us in thinking about the ways in which we work towards these learning objectives with our students. The prompts were as follows:

1.   Describe an assignment or activity that asks students to increase their self-awareness about equity, diversity, and inclusion.
2.   Discuss two or three "ways of knowing" that you provide as tools to help students think about equity, diversity, and inclusion.
3.   Discuss a concrete way in which you teach students skills and behaviors needed to engage with equity, diversity, and inclusion.
4.   Describe how you prepare students to be change agents for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Everyone then wrote responses to each of the four prompts. As a group, we read our responses looking for common themes. Within each learning objective, we found common pedagogical strategies, learning goals, and activities and assignments. Through bi-monthly phone conferences and the use of synchronous document sharing (Google Docs), we further developed and refined these themes. These promising practices are described in this paper, according to their learning objectives, with examples from various disciplines. We hope that our collaborative process can be used as an example for other scholars and educators looking to transcend disciplines and those looking to effectively integrate EDI into their classrooms.

Awareness

In this section, we identify pedagogical strategies, activities, and assignments for increasing students' awareness of self and others. To acquire knowledge, develop skills, and engage in action regarding EDI, students must first develop awareness of their own social and cultural identities, values, and biases. This type of learning occurs best in the affective domain, through the sharing of personal stories among the instructor, classmates, and community members. Because the sharing of personal stories in a classroom environment may be an unorthodox or even intimidating experience for students, it is important to carefully plan and situate these activities in a safe learning space. Therefore, we have identified three promising practices for teaching about awareness: (1) start building awareness early in the course, (2) emphasize the importance of developing an awareness of self before learning about others, and (3) debrief exercises to help students make connections. We will discuss each of these pedagogical strategies and include specific assignments that highlight how to use these strategies across disciplines.

Start Building Awareness Early

Classroom activities and assignments that open students to their own understandings of self as they relate to EDI are most effective if they are introduced early in the course. Regardless of discipline, the significance of building community early on cannot be under-emphasized. Research indicates that the greater the sense of being part of a learning community, the easier it is to delve into more difficult concepts and to develop respect for differing perspectives (Cross 1998).

Early introduction of activities with the objective of developing self-awareness serves a dual purpose of providing an opportunity for setting some ground rules or establishing norms (Griffin 2007a) for acceptable interaction student-to-student and teacher-to-student, along with affording an opportunity for the instructor to more quickly develop insights into students' preferred learning styles. Although there are many ways to accomplish this, we share two examples from different disciplines that have been effective for the authors – a cultural chest activity and a personal mission statement.

Cultural Chest Activity

Introducing a cultural chest activity (Williams 2010) on the first day of class sets the expectation that students will engage in self-discovery in that

course. For this activity, students are asked to select three objects that describe an aspect of their social identity and place these objects in a bag or box. With this activity and many others, the instructor first shares her own cultural chest, modeling self-awareness and an openness to self-reflection. Students then decorate the outside of the box or bag with images that demonstrate how they believe others see them. In three to five minute presentations, students share the inside and outside of the box with the class. Members of the class are encouraged to take notes for the debriefing session that takes place at the end of all presentations. It is often necessary to space out these presentations over several classes, depending on the size of the class, and to thoroughly debrief the assignment once all presentations are finished. The process of debriefing this activity will be discussed below.

Personal Mission Statement

Writing a personal mission statement provides a way for students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to their life goals. As one part of this assignment, students are led through a values clarification exercise which helps them to see what and who matters most to them (Hartman and DesJardins 2008). Students rank their preferences according to statements of implied given goals (ends desired by the person), norms (acts approved by the person), and beliefs (ideas accepted by the person). Using these findings, students can begin to develop a life plan that clearly aligns with those values. For example, if students rank family values higher than a high-paying position, they may more readily understand their life choices in the present and what choices may be necessary for the future. Sharing these findings with classmates gives students some insight into their own behavior as well as that of others.

Know Yourself Before Knowing Others

Students and instructors of EDI courses often make the mistake of prioritizing cultural competence, the accumulation of knowledge about cultures other than their own, over cultural humility, a self-reflexive process of examining biases and seeking to understand each person's context (Rincón 2009; Tervalon and Murray-Garcia 1998). Students belonging to social groups that have historically been privileged often believe that culture belongs to others and do not see the value in learning more about their own identities. To avoid this mistake, EDI instructors should emphasize and model for their students the importance of developing self-awareness before attempting to learn about others.

Autobiography

A reflective writing assignment like an autobiography offers an impactful way for students to examine their own experiences. Students can connect the readings and other course content to their own life experiences, using theory and scholarship as a lens through which they can interpret their own lives. In one education course, the instructor utilizes a three-step review process for an autobiographical paper on students' educational experiences. First, students bring a draft of their paper in for peer review. This allows the students to learn about and with each other and to support one another in writing their autobiographies. When the paper is due, students undertake a self-review process in which they grade their own papers per the instructor's rubric and provide written reflections on the process of writing the paper. Finally, the instructor then reviews the papers and the students' self-critiques and responds to each with written, personalized feedback. Whether to assign a grade, and to assign the grade the students gave themselves, is a pedagogical choice, but regardless, the real learning and

evaluation is derived from the entire process of writing and reflection.

Cultural Genogram

A cultural genogram (Hardy and Lazsloffy 1995) is a visual history of a family's cultural background, including gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, sexual orientation, and ability. The primary goal of having students complete a cultural genogram is to increase their awareness of their own cultural identities while also increasing sensitivity towards differences in the culture of others. In one marriage and family therapy course, the instructor has students create a three-generation cultural genogram and write a paper reflecting on how their family background might impact their clinical work. Afterward, students share their genograms in small groups of three to four classmates, although some instructors have students present to the entire class. Students are often surprised to see how many experiences they share with their classmates, despite differences in family

background. In addition, students can see the diversity and complexity of life experiences and social identities within their classroom community, even when the classroom appears to be homogeneous. When students can make connections among their common lived experiences, issues of EDI become real (Burrell Storms 2012).

The cultural genogram can be adapted to fit social justice learning goals for a variety of courses. This assignment has been used in a variety of disciplines besides marriage and family therapy, including family studies (Allen and Crosbie-Burnett 1992; Sollie and Kaetz 1992), social work (Warde 2012), counseling (Lim 2008), nursing (Hutnik and Gregory 2008), and medicine (Shellenberger et al. 2007). Further, instructors can make the focus of a cultural genogram a specific social identity or factor, such as gender (Keiley et al. 2002), spirituality (Frame 2001), or the impact of institutional systems (Kosutic et al. 2009).

Debrief to Make Connections

The third major strategy relates to making the personal public. All the activities and assignments in this paper include some form of debriefing, typically as a whole class. Public conversations can lead to further processing and connections that can deepen students' understanding of issues of EDI. Debriefing is especially important after activities that challenge students' personal beliefs, cultural values, or current worldview. This gives students a chance to articulate what challenged them, what they are struggling with, and what more they need to know. The instructor can ask students to take notes in preparation for a debriefing conversation, particularly if the activity involves watching and listening to

presentations, films, or guest speakers. The instructor can prepare questions for the debriefing discussions, to ensure that students achieved the learning goals for that activity.

For example, following the cultural chest activity, one instructor asks questions such as, "Why did we do this activity? What were some of the commonalities and/or differences you heard from the stories your classmates shared? Whose voices are missing? How might you use this activity in your own classrooms?" If students can identify patterns that emerge during an activity like this, they can often relate these patterns to the rest of society. For example, in this activity, white students tend to share an object that signifies their ethnicity, but not their race. Students of color are more likely to share an object that signifies their race, but not their social class. These patterns can be used to further discussions about equity, diversity, and inclusion within our fields and disciplines as well as within society.

A Single Story

Many of the authors use a TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) in their EDI courses. In this talk, titled *The Danger of a Single Story,* Adichie recalls times when others have made assumptions about her experience based on limited knowledge—for example, when her American college roommate expressed surprise that she spoke English so well. With great humility and empathy, Adiche continues her talk by acknowledging the times that she herself has viewed others through the lens of her own ignorance. Adichie names these acts of ignorance and bias as the process of seeing another as a "single story." By providing examples of times that she has been both a victim and a perpetrator of bias, Adichie offers students the opportunity to join her in the vulnerable and empathetic process of identifying and acknowledging similar incidents in their own lives. After viewing the 18-minute video, instructors debrief by asking students to respond to the following prompts in small groups: "Share a time that you felt that others viewed you through the lens of a 'single story' and/or a time that you recognize that you 'single-storied' another person." By sharing these experiences, students become more aware of the fact that bias exists in all of us and become more adept at identifying instances of bias in themselves and others. Further, by debriefing the video with students, the instructor can guide the students toward beginning to confront and dismantle their own biases.

In this section, we highlighted three pedagogical strategies for increasing awareness of self and others. We also shared specific assignments and activities that instructors can use to connect this awareness to broader learning goals. According to education theorists such as Vygotsky (1962) and Freire (1970), students can achieve deeper learning and synthesize abstract concepts when they can build on their own life experiences and connect them to learned concepts. To accomplish this, instructors must take a more active, collaborative role in student learning than is typical of traditional lecture courses. Establishing this type of learning environment can engage students in ways that increase awareness, open their minds, and create a disposition to want to learn more about others. This openness sets the stage for knowledge- and skill-building, and, eventually, action.

Knowledge

In this section, we identify specific strategies and exemplar assignments to assist students in gaining knowledge related to EDI. While professors of EDI must provide their students with content knowledge specific to their discipline, they also must provide students with content, tools, and opportunities to learn about equity, diversity, and inclusion. Therefore, we have identified three essential strategies for increasing student knowledge regarding EDI: (1) activate prior knowledge (Irvine 2003), (2) connect learning to the discipline, and (3) provide tools for continued learning. We will

discuss each of these strategies in turn and provide samples of activities, assignments, and learning tools that can be used across disciplines.

Activate Prior Knowledge

We find that activating students' prior discipline-specific knowledge provides a meaningful entry point for learning more about EDI within that discipline. For example, students taking courses in a variety of disciplines, from teacher education to psychology to business, might engage in a range of experiential learning activities that express and deepen their understanding of identity and privilege—two important concepts in EDI. Experiential learning, as described by Dewey (1938), provides students with direct and active learning experiences. This pedagogical strategy represents an intentional shift away from what Freire (1970) critiqued as the traditional practice of an instructor dispensing knowledge to be received by students passively. It is critical that students understand their own identity and privilege in order to be successful in their future careers in a variety of fields. For example, future PK-12 teachers must recognize the interplay between identity and privilege in order to provide equitable access to resources that have been denied to historically marginalized students.

One way to begin to draw out the students' prior knowledge of their own identities is by framing the conversation through the lens of Peggy McIntosh's (1988) writing on white privilege. McIntosh's work provides a foundation for the class to participate in activities grounded in their own lived experience. One such activity, developed by a teacher education professor, is the creation of an Identity Wheel (Griffin 2007b). The goal of this activity is for students to identify their social group identities and their social statuses (privileged or non-dominant). Afterward, students discuss questions such as, "Which identities do you think about most often and least often? Which identities were difficult for you to identify and why?" Having laid the necessary groundwork for students to

engage deeply with these concepts, the professor builds on these understandings with an activity called Common Ground (Bell, Joshi, and Zuníga 2007).

In this learning experience, students stand in a circle in silence. The professor calls out a list of different privileges and students step inside the circle if the example applies to their life experience. This pair of activities helps to make invisible advantages visible and provides students with concrete examples of privilege. It is important to note that all of these hands-on, experiential learning activities can feel risky and need to be debriefed. To address the need for space to process these experiences, students are given the opportunity to write for three to five minutes after the activity, followed by a class discussion about what they experienced. This allows students to reflect longer before having to share in small or large groups. These learning experiences can provide the foundation for future assignments that connect the students' lived experiences to their growing knowledge of their discipline.

Another strategy for building upon students' prior knowledge involves the sharing of personal recollections (Streib et al. 2011) on an issue or topic salient to the field of study. For example, in a course on early childhood curriculum, one professor begins the semester by having the students reflect on the importance of play in supporting young children's growth and learning. Rather than offering a lecture on the topic, the professor provides students with writing prompts that guide them in developing a detailed and descriptive recollection of their own childhood experiences of play. The professor and students then share their recollections of play orally with the whole class. Reflecting on the collection of stories, the students complete an in-class writing project where they use the data gathered collectively to define what play is and to identify how play supports young children's development across developmental domains (i.e. physical, social/emotional, language/literacy, cognitive). Through this activity, students

develop the language to defend the importance of play in early childhood education. The sharing of personal recollections is a deliberate choice and an alternative to the traditional in-class lecture. Students seem to more deeply internalize this concept when their understanding comes through a process of collective knowledge making (Nyikos and Hashimoto 1997).

Connecting Learning to Discipline

Students sometimes have difficulty seeing how EDI issues connect back to their field of study, discipline, or intended profession. Therefore, it is important for instructors to demonstrate how EDI applies to the rest of their academic and professional lives. For example, in a research methods course, the instructor may challenge students to identify instances of biased or unethical studies. Another way to bring EDI concepts to life for students is through interdisciplinary courses, service learning, and community based-partnerships. These types of learning experiences allow students to make multiple connections to the course content. For disciplines known for abstraction, like philosophy, interdisciplinary and community-based learning can challenge a view of them as disconnected from the real world (Lisman and Harvey 2000; Seider and Taylor 2011).

For example, a philosophy course which introduces traditional ethical theories—including utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics, natural rights, and ethical relativism—can be enlivened by using these theories as a lens to illuminate contemporary social issues such as education, economic justice, sexism, and racism. To begin, students learn the vocabulary and frameworks of Western moral theory. They learn that traditional utilitarian theory (Mill 2001) promotes an outcomes-based moral theory that focuses on maximizing the happiness of a group. In contrast, Immanuel Kant's (1983) moral theory focuses more on motives and duty, and less on outcomes. Once students have a familiarity with theory, they can then apply those

theories to real-world problems and projects in an interdisciplinary course, such as one that combines philosophy and documentary film-making. In this course, students and instructors weave together philosophical discussions of utilitarian group happiness and individual obligation with information and theories about immigration, education, and film-making. Students work with members of a local transnational organization to film digital postcards to be sent home to family members in Mexico.

Drawing on the knowledge base and methodology of other disciplines and the community-based project, students gain a unique perspective on philosophical questions like: "Do we have an obligation to people that we do not know? (What would the theories say? What does it mean to recognize other people?);" "How does your relationship with other people influence your own self-perception and identity? (Does theory hold up in the face of real life?);" "How does your ability to communicate affect how you treat other people?;" and, "What are the moral dimensions of listening to and telling someone else's story?"

A community-based learning project further enhances interdisciplinary learning because theories are even more interesting to students when they have a common social context in which to explore them. In one interdisciplinary project that combines philosophy and Spanish language and culture, students learn about the dimensions of moral obligation and duty to individuals while they tutor the bilingual children of non-English-speaking immigrants. This is a vibrant and complex context in which students see and explore how language ability and immigration status affect where one can live, work, and learn. It raises larger philosophical questions about what society owes to all of its members—regardless of whether we follow the demands of overall happiness or individual obligation. A community-based project encourages students to reflect on what philosophical theory means to them as people

living in a multicultural society, as future practitioners in a field, or as engaged citizens (Dugan and Komives 2010). Further, students are also academically recognized for their creativity and connections rather than rote memorization.

Finally, using an interdisciplinary frame, in which professors actively indicate that there is more than one way of knowing, emphasizes to students that a community-based experience is not about going into a "foreign" environment with the goal of understanding the "other" according to one set framework (Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law 2012). Instead, the experience is about understanding ourselves within contexts of otherness and, in particular, how we often try to make sense of a new experience through our own linguistic and cultural lenses. Focusing on this as the guiding framework of the learning community helps to focus students on EDI topics.

In another example, our educational psychology professor engages students in a community-based project where they gain knowledge from readings and trainings in order to serve as volunteers for the Carolinas Association for Community Health Equity (CACHE) Symposium. CACHE is the leading collaborative partnership organization in the Carolinas dedicated to achieving health equity by eliminating health disparities that affect racial, ethnic, and other at-risk populations. In addition to providing support to participants and session speakers, students participate in a breakout session focused on HIV/AIDS in young adults. In this session, students are able to apply their knowledge about child and youth development to a specific equity issue. Further, they are able to see how their discipline-specific knowledge can be used in a community setting.

Provide Tools for Continued Learning

When learning about systematic inequities, oppression, and privilege, students can often feel overwhelmed and paralyzed. They feel that there is too much to learn and they do not know where

to begin to change things. In order to simplify the process and help students begin unpacking the biases and oppressive narratives they will encounter every day, students can benefit from simple, manageable tools or devices.

One professor of marriage and family therapy uses a three-step consciousness-raising model to help students deconstruct oppressive behaviors, structures, or institutions: (1) What is the bias, assumption, or type of oppression present? (2) What context, history, or narrative can help you understand this bias? (3) What can you or others do instead? For example, if a student comments that gender roles for young girls have been expanding (e.g., they can wear pants, play sports, be "tomboys", etc.) while young boys who are into "girl" things continue to be teased and ridiculed, the class can be guided through unpacking this inequity using the three-step model. The class begins by identifying the assumptions underlying this double standard—being a boy is a good thing and being a girl is a bad thing. Next, the societal structure that reinforces these assumptions is named—in this case, patriarchy. Finally, the class decides what each of us could do differently. Students might suggest starting by acknowledging that girl things and boy things are equally good. They may also point out that girl and boy things are all socially constructed, and suggest ways of changing the meaning we give to different colors, toys, clothing, etc. They also may commit to confronting others when they police the gender expression of boys and girls.

This three-step, consciousness model can be introduced early in the course, when the professor explains that we all have biases and assumptions. Students often feel upset that they have potentially harmful or oppressive biases because they think it may mean they are bad people. The role of the professor is to remind them that feeling bad for their own biases will leave them with only that—-bad feelings. Instead, they can unpack their biases to understand where they came from. This step relieves students of some of the responsibility for

their prejudiced beliefs, which is important because learning rarely can take place from a defensive position. However, students (or anyone) should not be completely relieved of responsibility for oppression and inequity. That is why the third step is important. Now that they understand where their bias came from, they are compelled to consider what they are going to do about them.

Skills

In addition to awareness and knowledge, students need to develop skills to engage with equity, diversity, and inclusion. In this section, we identify some of these skills and suggest ways that instructors can foster and evaluate their students' learning in this area. Skills are defined as those behaviors necessary to translate awareness and knowledge into practice. EDI skills center on the ability to communicate and engage effectively, respectfully, and ethically with culturally similar and different others (D'Andrea, Daniels, and Noonan 2003).

Given that these skills center on behavior, communication, and engagement, it is essential for the instructor to continually model these skills for students. It is very difficult (maybe impossible) to teach behaviors didactically; therefore, students need to witness these skills in action and then be given an opportunity to practice these skills themselves. Therefore, the two primary modes of teaching emphasized in this section are instructor-modeling and student activities. These two strategies can be used to teach two types of skills: (1) communication skills and (2) interpersonal skills.

Communication Skills

Communication skills include: (1) using effective and appropriate language and (2) engaged, active listening. Instructors must model for students effective and appropriate language given current social norms, one's own identity, and one's professional role. Students are encouraged to ask questions when proper terms are unknown, and to learn to challenge unexamined normative frameworks. An effective way to encourage this is through carefully planned assignments that ask students to engage with and examine unconscious biases so that they become more receptive to challenging them.

One effective sample assignment is from an education course in which students critique instructional materials (Council on Interracial Books for Children 2007; McCormick and Allen-Sommerville 2000). Primary and secondary school curriculum may portray certain social groups in either a positive or negative manner or exclude them altogether. Detecting this type of bias in instructional materials is therefore a critical skill for current and future teachers to develop. When teachers develop this skill they can analyze their materials effectively and decide whether they will use the material as is, supplement it, or use it to teach about how some groups are misrepresented or excluded. Furthermore, when teachers develop this skill they can teach their students, parents, administrators, and other teachers to detect bias in a variety of forms.

For this assignment, students select current instructional materials (e.g., literature, textbook,

software, etc.) in their teaching area. Students then write a paper describing the material, analyzing it for examples of bias or inclusivity, and suggesting ways they could supplement or use it in their own classrooms. They then give a brief presentation of their findings. While this assignment is particular to the education classroom, similar assignments could be developed in various disciplines with the same goals.

An important and related communication skill is engaged, active listening. One way for a professor to model this skill is to reflect back to the students what has been heard—this both verifies the instructor's understanding and demonstrates that she or he is actively listening. Another way to demonstrate listening is to create a collaborative classroom environment, where the hierarchy of professor and student is flattened to a degree. While professors can choose to explicitly discuss the concept of a flattened hierarchy, there are multiple ways in which to introduce the practice to students. For example, throughout in-class discussions, invite students to challenge the professorial viewpoint or to help the professor identify their own bias. This is an opportunity to demonstrate how one remains open to feedback and processes it appropriately.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills necessary for EDI work include: (1) being able to collaborate within and across difference, (2) demonstrating empathy, and (3) managing discomfort. Classroom environments present many opportunities for collaborating within and across differences, but the professor must set the tone for and model this type of interaction. The professor can begin to create such an environment from the first day of class by asking students to co-create discussion guidelines. Related to the awareness building processes described above, this activity offers a concrete model of skills that can be developed to enact EDI in any discussion based course. Students often offer ideas like, "keep an open

mind," "be respectful," and "don't be biased." This allows the professor to introduce questions like: "What is bias? Where does bias come from? Is it possible to be unbiased?" Students can then explore the nuances of their suggested guidelines until they come up with something everyone can agree on, such as: "Be aware of your biases and work to overcome them." The final list can be written on chart paper, signed by the students, and displayed in the classroom for the duration of the semester. This activity sets the tone for learning about EDI and allows the students to practice collaborative skills.

Throughout the course of the semester, the professor can provide structured assignments that challenge students to collaborate within and across differences. In one marriage and family therapy (MFT) course, the professor collaborated with the university's summer writing institute to create an intergroup dialogue. An intergroup dialogue brings together people from different social identity groups so that they can build non-hierarchical relationships, engage in cross-cultural communication, and discover similarities and differences across their experiences (Nagda and Gurin 2007). Often, intergroup dialogues are explicitly centered around the topics of EDI. In this instance, MFT students were grouped with adult students from a class on teaching writing, youth students from a novel writing class, and youth students from an immigrant and refugee English Language Learner class. Each group was provided with a dialogue booklet (Probst 2007)—a booklet where each page had a different prompt, varying from silly (e.g., *make a funny face*) to casual (e.g., *share your favorite foods*) to deeper (e.g., *describe a time you were brave*). The goal was for students to engage in a dialogue with their group members, learn about each other, and share about themselves. Instructions were intentionally left open-ended so that each student could have their own organic and unique experience. Afterward, the professor processed the experience as a large group so that students could share their experiences of connecting with—or

not connecting with—other members of the group. Overall, students reported that it was a meaningful learning experience and helped them practice skills of communicating across cultures, recognizing power imbalances, and pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. Activities such as an intergroup dialogue can be used in any discipline to foster intercultural communication and empathy.

The flip side of communication and empathy is the discomfort that arises when we ask students to challenge concepts and biases, even those which are often unconscious. Managing discomfort is an interpersonal skill central to both processing and dismantling bias. Professors need to take care not to impose their agendas in a way that silences students. Failing to provide a safe space for students to wrestle with new perspectives decreases the likelihood for growth. When discussing a controversial topic, showing a difficult film, or presenting sensitive material, instructors can provide students with a chance to process their discomfort first through informal, in-class writing prior to discussion.

More often, the opportunity to teach students to manage discomfort arrives spontaneously, and leads to the modeling of empathy. In one education course, when the professor read *In Our Mothers' House* by Patricia Polacco (2009), a children's book that centers on a family with two mothers, two students reflected to each other that, given their religious beliefs, the story seemed "a little weird" to them. The professor acknowledged their discomfort and asked if they might find other language to use to describe their feelings so as to be respectful of members of the classroom community who may be sexual or gender minorities. The whole class agreed on the phrase, "I realize this is pushing me out of my comfort zone" as a way to respectfully make space for everyone. Professors can use these organic classroom moments to encourage students to identify and appropriately express their discomfort as a way of moving them closer to empathy.

A similar example is from an in-class discussion about people who have been convicted of felonies. Some students resisted empathizing with the struggles of being incarcerated, on probation, or on parole. The professor empathized with the students who felt disconnected from people who have been convicted of felonies while asking them to explore where that disconnect comes from. The professor empathized with how students might struggle, given the messages they had received about people who have been imprisoned, but then moved the class discussion to other messages and stories about the criminal justice system. In this way, the professor does not shame students for a lack of empathy, but begins to contextualize it and demonstrates empathy herself.

Communication and interpersonal skills center on applying awareness and knowledge. While the examples here are from specific disciplines, the core lessons about language, listening, empathy, and problem-solving, to name a few, are universally important skills in an EDI classroom.

Action

Awareness, knowledge, and skills are all essential, but have more meaning for students when they are also translated into concrete projects that allow them to apply what they have learned about EDI in order to effect change (Burrell Storms 2012; Iverson 2012). As students become more comfortable with their own ability to think critically, recognize constraints, and their own predispositions, it becomes reasonable for them to consider diverse viewpoints as a way of gaining deeper insights into problems or ethical dilemmas. With this increased comfort level, students may be more willing to accept accountability for their own actions and seek ways to commit themselves to action.

Four themes emerged when we explored the projects we designed to prepare students in becoming change agents for EDI: (1) identifying EDI issues in the real world, (2) developing

solutions or recommendations to promote EDI, (3) collaborating with others to address EDI, and (4) educating others about EDI. In what follows, we describe off-campus projects and on-campus activities that present students with opportunities for action. While these are presented from within specific disciplines, we underscore the core pedagogical mechanisms of each project so that they can be adapted to other disciplines.

Identifying EDI in the Real World

Before students can engage in social action they must be able to recognize what injustice looks like in the real world. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination are abstract concepts so it may be difficult for students to identify them in their daily lives. Our professors in education developed distinct projects for identifying EDI problems in the real world with an eye towards action.

In the first example, teacher education students are assigned to develop an advocacy project. They spend the first half of the semester learning about the history and current social contexts of early child care and education. Students spend the rest of the semester researching a topic they believe requires social action. Most of the students pursue projects that are either grounded in their lived experiences or about teaching. When students conduct their research and learn about the inequality surrounding their topic, many are surprised, angered, or sad. At these moments, it is essential for students to have the opportunity to turn their anger and sadness toward the recognition of their power to effect change.

In the second example, teacher education students conduct research to assess social institutions' support of multicultural education. Teams of three to four students conduct interviews, observations, and document analysis to understand what schools (or other social institutions) do or do not do to prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse society. Through this assignment students see firsthand how policies and practices enacted in schools can privilege some students and marginalize others.

In a third example, business students, working in small groups, use critical thinking skills and a knowledge of business concepts to identify various socio-economic differences and cultural norms that have been created by the manufacturing economy in an inner city. As they note the current suburban location of most entry-level manufacturing jobs now, students quickly begin to recognize and understand inherent problems with equity and access to services and opportunity. These discoveries are shared in a large group debriefing session.

Developing Solutions or Recommendations to Promote EDI

Students who can recognize acts of social injustice in their communities or relationships can find it challenging to decide on the best course of action. They are often motivated to be agents of change but are not sure where to start and often assume that the only meaningful change occurs on a grand scale, such as marching on Washington or starting an advocacy group. To help them understand how they can take action within their professional sphere, a marriage and family therapy professor uses an activity called an "Access and Inclusion Photo Hunt". For this assignment, the entire class takes a field trip to the department's on-campus marriage and family therapy clinic. In groups, students examine the clinic for issues of access and inclusion using four prompts:

- What is the mission or purpose of this institution? Who is it intended to serve?
- To whom is this institution most accessible? Think about…race/ethnicity, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, other social identities.
- To whom is this institution least accessible? Think about…race/ethnicity, class, language, gender, sexual

orientation, religion, ability, other social identities.

● Brainstorm ways this institution could be more inclusive based on the issues of access and inclusion identified above.

As the groups document the strengths and weaknesses with photos, the professor and a staff member from the disability services office act as consultants, answering student questions about things like session fees and door width requirements for wheelchair access. Students share what they learn while displaying their photos using wireless projection technology. The opportunity to brainstorm solutions and ways to increase inclusion within their own professional practice settings puts students in a better position to be change agents and advocates in their future professions.

In a second example, a business professor uses case studies to help students identify effective action strategies in a business ethics course. Many situations that lend themselves to business ethics scrutiny exist in the current business world, including sexual harassment or other instances of discrimination. Students are asked to analyze issues presented in the case study and suggest possible solutions. Then, role plays and simulations engage students and offer a low-risk method of examining these situations and brainstorming viable recommendations.

Collaborating with Others to Address EDI

Collaboration is a key factor in on- and off-campus activities that promote response to EDI issues. In one interdisciplinary learning community that combined philosophy and Spanish, collaboration allows students, professors, administrators, community members and community-based organizations to not only achieve immediate goals in an afterschool tutoring program for youth in an underserved community, but also ensure that the project continues with momentum when the semester is over.

During the semester in which the students enroll in the learning community, the professors, students, community members and a local non-profit collaborate to develop an afterschool program at a local immigrant center. When the semester ends, college students are given the option to receive credit, within the context of different courses, for continuing the work. The institution supports this work with a free van service for students to the facility where they tutor, and the non-profit provides the space for the tutoring.

While it would be challenging for any one professor to initiate and sustain this project alone, it is made possible through collaboration. With many different people, offices, and organizations aligned towards the common goal of a successful community-based project, it is possible for action around EDI to be sustainable and palpable. We believe sustained action leads to sustained change. The elementary students are doing better in school as a result of the after-school support, and the college students have a better understanding of how community-based organizations, and community members, are tremendous resources, sources of strength, and proponents of change within disinvested communities.

Educating Others about EDI

One of the most common ways to promote social justice is through educating others. Students also need examples, guidance, and practice to learn how to teach others about social injustice. One example of this comes from a previously described education class in which students evaluate a social institution (e.g., schools, community site, radio station, etc.) to gauge its level of support for multicultural education. After students collect and analyze data regarding EDI in their chosen social institution, they come up with recommendations about how their selected institution can improve or increase their level of support for multicultural education. Students are encouraged to share their

recommendations with the staff at their institutions, if asked to do so. All teams then present their findings and recommendations to the class during the last two weeks of the semester.

Students learn from their research and from educating others how much we need multicultural education. Many find out about (and are surprised by) the lack of multicultural education implemented in our schools and other social institutions. Teams that select a shelter, for example, can actually cook food for the residents and sit down to speak with them to understand the experiences of children who are homeless or highly mobile (Adams 2007). This assignment crystallizes what students have learned over the course of the semester and provides them with the opportunity to take action and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the real world.

Conclusion

In working to document how each of us teaches to foster students' awareness, knowledge, skills, and capacity for action, we noted several commonalities in approaches to curriculum and pedagogy that ran across the four learning objectives. Irrespective of discipline, we each work toward these objectives by providing opportunities in our classrooms for the following: (1) experiential learning, (2) activation of students' prior knowledge, (3) repositioning the role of the instructor, (4) community-based learning, and (5) reflection. First, we place a great value in giving our students many opportunities for experiential learning (Dewey 1938). Service learning, community partnerships, field trips, and other hands-on experiences provide our students a direct experience of the content of our courses. Additionally, we seek to emphasize that our students often come into our courses with valuable prior knowledge and personal experiences within the field of study. Creating curriculum and classroom activities that

foreground our students' expertise and understandings serves to explicitly flatten the hierarchy of the learning community (Freire 1970) and allows us to draw on knowledge beyond the reach of even the most informed professor's expertise on the subject. Foregrounding students' knowledge is one of the many ways we all work to reposition the role of the instructor. Moving away from the unidirectional "scholar on the stage" approach to pedagogy, we reposition ourselves as guides, mentors, collaborators, and co-learners, working alongside of our students in the process of collectively constructing knowledge and understanding (Lave and Wenger 1991). Shifting away from the traditional "banking model" (Freire 1970) requires a different kind of labor on the part of the instructor, and also requires our students to rethink their own positions as active rather than passive learners. However, doing this work to shift the power dynamics of the classroom seems to be an integral component of teaching and learning for EDI.

Community-based learning or connecting with the community outside of the course (e.g., field work) is a powerful way to integrate EDI

principles and to connect these principles to real world issues and challenges. Accomplishing this in a setting that is community-based fosters discussion and learning about abstract topics such as obligation, how we ought to live, and what it means to respect another person. This

level of awareness is an integral part of academic rigor in course content, while engaging students and encouraging them to be change agents in their thinking and problem-solving within their spheres of influence.

Finally, these curricular choices and pedagogical strategies are all maximized when we build in ample opportunities for individual reflection and a space for these reflections to be shared. Particularly when we ask our students to engage in learning experiences that are unfamiliar or which require some vulnerability or risk taking, it is essential that we provide opportunities to process these experiences. Reflective assignments also allow students to draw connections between singular learning experiences and the broader context of the course content as a whole. Additionally, EDI values are modeled when the instructor joins with the learners by sharing their own reflection on a shared learning experience.

Throughout this article we have highlighted a variety of curricula and a range of pedagogical strategies which foster equity and inclusion in diverse classroom settings. These approaches to teaching and learning are being offered intentionally to fulfill multiple goals for ourselves and our students. First, as educators working in a variety of settings, we find that this way of working maximizes the kind of teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Additionally, this more democratic approach to knowledge making purposefully mirrors the values of equity and inclusion embedded in the content of our courses, particularly in courses where the subject matter explicitly addresses issues of social justice. Perhaps most importantly, however, we employ these pedagogical strategies to model the kind of collective action we hope our students will bring to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in whatever fields they participate in their lives and careers.

In closing, throughout this article we have sought to provide several concrete curricular and pedagogical strategies that will serve to support our colleagues working across disciplines who seek to foster EDI in their classrooms. It is important to note, however, that these strategies must be grounded in a fundamental belief in our students' capacity for learning and an appreciation of the strengths and knowledge they bring to our work together. These teaching and learning strategies may not be fully realized without this belief. Our students have each had different experiences of marginalization, oppression, power, and privilege but all of them can work to dismantle the structures which reproduce inequality and exclusion. It is our goal to strengthen all students' capacities be change agents who work for social justice in their personal and professional lives. We are reminded of the investment we need to make in our students' growth and learning by bell hooks (1994), who writes,

> To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (P. 13)

Finally, it is essential to note that our work to teach and learn for EDI has been greatly enriched by this opportunity to work with each other across disciplines and across institutions. By breaking down the silos that have traditionally constrained us, we have seen new possibilities for EDI in our own work. It is our sincere hope that this article provides readers with the inspiration and the tools to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in classrooms, and the encouragement to reach out to colleagues across disciplines in order to maximize opportunities.

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