

Faculty Discussion: DEI for the SI Core Syllabi

Introduction

What do we mean by '**diversifying the syllabus**'?

- It could mean that you break out of your usual course- or lesson plan and include learning activities, resources and projects that address a diverse group of learners.
- For example, try re-thinking the goals/purpose of the course. Is it truly preparing students to actively engage in a diverse society?
- You can diversify the course by making the content more multicultural.
- You can diversify your assignments, in-class or out-of-class activities, and your assessments to include methods that are suited to more diverse students.

What do we mean by '**making the syllabus more equitable**'?

- It could mean that you think about all types of learners who are present in your classroom; and that you include all students (different learning styles, cultural differences, ESL learners, etc.) into your considerations.
- One way to make your syllabus more equitable is to re-think your assignment structures, due dates, and allow for more flexibility for learning modalities and academic structures.
- For example, how are you utilizing cultural or background information about your students in your course design?
- Can you capitalize new information about the students in order to make adjustments to the course?

What do we mean by '**making the syllabus more inclusive**'?

- It could mean adding resources that represent diverse perspectives (age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious or political diversity, etc.)
- For example, you can invite guest speakers or you can create/contribute to a collection of course resources that are more inclusive.
- Then consider: are you prepared to lead discussions around inclusive perspectives as they come up during your class? Are you continuously exploring your own biases and habits that might affect you teaching with more inclusive resources?
- And by doing that, are you re-thinking your pedagogy as a whole? Or are you still just trying to 'fill the students up' with information? A more inclusive pedagogy is more critical in nature and draws on the latest theories of learning, development, cognitive science and utilizes strategies to re-imagine more inclusive learning spaces.

Activity

In various spots of the room, there are copies of core curriculum syllabi:

- INFO 601 Foundations of Information
- INFO 640 Data Analysis
- INFO 643 Information Architecture & Interaction Design
- INFO 644 Usability Theory & Practice
- INFO 652 Reference and Instruction
- INFO 653 Knowledge Organization
- INFO 654 Information Technologies
- INFO 658 Information Visualization
- INFO 664 Programming for Cultural Heritage
- INFO 679 Museums & Digital Culture: Theory & Practice
- INFO 683 Museum Digital Strategy: Planning and Management
- INFO 685 Digital Analytics: Web, Mobile & Social Media
- INFO 684 Museum Information Management: Collection Cataloging & Digital Technologies
- INFO 696 Advanced Projects in Visualization

Step 1.

Find a partner and in teams of 2, grab a copy of one core syllabus. Note that not all courses will be discussed in this activity, and that's ok.

Step 2.

In pairs, review your selected course syllabus and using the 'Diversity Inclusivity Framework' table, discuss opportunities within the course for diversity, equity and inclusion. Use the Course Elements from the table, such as goals, content, environment, etc. as your guiding categories for discussion. Think about what concrete and specific changes you could suggest to move along the Inclusivity Continuum.

Take about 20 minutes to discuss this and write down your suggestions.

Step 3.

We will report out to the whole group 1-2 specific ideas that you recommended for your selected course.

TABLE 1. Diversity Inclusivity Framework

Element		Inclusivity Continuum	
Purpose/ goals	Prepare students	→ Prepare students for diverse experiences	→ Prepare students to actively engage in a diverse society
Content	Monocultural	→ Additive	→ Multicultural
Foundations/ perspectives	Unexplored	→ Exposed	→ Multiple foundations/perspectives examined
Learners	Passive acceptors	→ Participants with some learning needs	→ Collaborators with diverse learning needs
Instructor(s)	Unexplored views, biases, values	→ Exploring own views, biases, values	→ Understands own views, biases, values
Pedagogy	Filling students with knowledge	→ Transitional—using varied techniques	→ Critical/equity oriented
Environment	Ignored	→ Inclusive	→ Empowering
Assessment/ evaluation	“Standard”	→ Mixed methods	→ Methods suited to student diversity
Adjustment	Adjustment to cover material	→ Adjustment to some needs of students	→ Adjustment to diverse needs of students

Table 1 from: *Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum* by Thomas F. Nelson Laird; link to the article and this document in a digital format is available at the CTL site.