

ACES Flex Day Sessions August 15 Discussion Notes

Theme

- Making classroom culture accessible and communicating procedures clearly to students

Some learning goals of participants

- Use data to improve equity in closing equity gaps
- Identify equity in biology class context
- Student centered approach
- Enhancing student success & retention
- Transitioning students
- Broaden way of thinking - early college credit has impacted students (data)
- Improve student success program (dismissal & probation)- early alert system

Some Funds of knowledge examples:

"Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing it is stupid."

~Albert Einstein

- Strong people skills
- Strong group work skills
- Leadership skills
- Resilience
- Life experience that can be related to texts
- Work experiences, knowledge and skills
- Many more cultural and cognitive resources

Hidden Curriculum examples. Faculty often assume that students:

- will ask for help when they need it
- understand the need to “build social capital with professors” for references etc.
- will follow through on what they say “yes” to we assume commitments even though sometimes the “yes” mean interest and then is not always feasible for the student

Take aways:

Some Key Ideas

- Syllabi are just one of many ways of making classroom culture apparent.
- It is not just what you write in the syllabus, but how you present, what activities you do to help students process all the information, and how you carry it out. Do you really carry

out your office hours and make yourself accessible in the way you speak and act? Do you follow the rules you state in your syllabus?

- It is confusing to students when every professor is different and then some professors don't follow what they say in their syllabi.
- The syllabus is like a contract and need to be communicated as such
- We need to create a syllabus template in which student support services can insert up to date blurbs

Ways to make syllabi accessible and classroom culture clear

- Externalize intent behind policies
- Make a statement about relevance of content to students
- State expectations for students, for example, about time needed for homework (e.g. two hours for every class session)
- **Office hours:**
 - Tell students why to go to office hours and what kinds of topics are expected in them, as well as how you will conduct your office hours (letting students direct with their questions, listening to students and collaboratively problems solving etc)
 - Rename "office hours" to "review sessions" -changes perceptions and can get more students coming
 - Students may not go to office hours not because they are unmotivated but because they may not know what they are for
- Cultural/ethnic response: make a better bridge to their community (i.e. with medical terminology, what conversations are we having, value systems)
 - Bring in diverse roles models either by highlighting diverse people/authors of the curriculum or having diverse virtual (via webcam or zoom projected on a screen) or real visiting experts
 - Have students capitalize on their multilingual skills to learn discipline terminology. Point out experience learning languages or jargon (such as with sports, music, work related terms, and more) and how students can use that to be strategy about learning terminology in your class.
- Reflect on identity as a STEM Major, past experience of learning