[CLIMATES FOR DIVERSITY]

Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum

■ **THOMAS F. NELSON LAIRD,** associate professor of higher education at Indiana University

As institutions seek to improve all students' success, the inclusion of people with diverse backgrounds, ideas, and methods of teaching and learning is an educational imperative. Such inclusion simultaneously (1) creates more equitable opportunities for students from marginalized groups to participate in higher education and (2) promotes the kinds of outcomes for all students that employers and society need, such as complex thinking skills, the ability to work across difference, increased civic participation, and decreased prejudice (see, for example, National Leadership Council 2007).

Faculty members often recognize that inclusion is a key to learning. Even among students who have access to an educational experience, those who feel excluded from the full experience struggle to learn as well as those who feel included (Hurtado et al. 1999). To create an inclusive learning environment throughout the curriculum and in all fields, all faculty members should consider how they are incorporating diversity into their courses and how they can be more inclusive in their teaching.

Incorporating diversity into one's teaching takes time and depends on the specifics of the situation (who is teaching which students, and in what context). Faculty members do not need simple solutions that may not work for their circumstances. Therefore, I offer the framework described below not as a prescription, but as a guide for faculty seeking their own ways of including diversity in their courses.

A Diversity Inclusivity Framework

Table 1 illustrates a framework for evaluating how the different elements of a course are more or less inclusive of diversity. On the left is a list of nine elements that are key to course design and delivery. To the right of each element is a continuum that illustrates how the element can vary from not inclusive to fully inclusive.

To create the framework, I reviewed models that describe aspects of multicultural education, phases of multicultural curricular change, or planning processes for multicultural course change. I referred to models primarily in multicultural and diversity education literature, but also in other areas. Several of these models suggested a continuum, but most focused at the level of an entire course or curriculum, allowing for overemphasis on goals/purposes and content. Focusing instead at the course element level (something done by only a few authors, such as Kitano [1997]) allows the continuum to vary in nature from element to element and places equal emphasis on each element.

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

Among the models I reviewed, courses at the noninclusive end of the spectrum demonstrate what is (or was) traditional practice: with regard to race, white people "neither study people of color nor notice that they have not" (McIntosh 1990, 6) and faculty teach in "standard" ways without considering whether their approaches work for particular subgroups of students. When a course includes diversity to some extent, content about "others" may be added to the course, but in a way that makes nonmainstream groups seem exceptional, deficient, or marginal. On this side of the continuum, the frame of reference remains mainstream-centric (Banks, 2010).

Toward the inclusive end of the continuum, "an enormous shift in consciousness occurs" (McIntosh 1990, 7). Here, mainstream norms, perspectives, and assumptions are brought to light and multiple alternative norms, perspectives, and assumptions are explored (Banks 2010; Green 1989; McIntosh 1990). Within the most inclusive courses, instructors factor in the complex relationships between learning and diversity (Banks 2006, 2010; Schoem et al. 1993).

The nine elements in table 1 come from a subset of models that identify aspects of multicultural education or diversity coursework. When organizing the elements, I referred to Lattuca and Stark's (2009) general model of curriculum planning, which encompasses most of the elements described in the models I consulted. Below, I define each element and explain how it varies along the inclusivity continuum.

Purpose/goals. A course's purposes or goals represent its intended outcomes. With inclusive goals, the aim is for students to gain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for participation in a diverse society. With less inclusive goals, the aim is for students to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes sanctioned by

the mainstream, with little inclusion of alternatives.

Content. Course content includes the subject matter covered, the way it is ordered, and the materials used to present it. In courses that include some diversity, the content includes subjects that are ignored in traditional courses or alternative perspectives on traditional subjects. In more inclusive courses, the content reflects the experiences of multiple cultural groups from their own as well as other perspectives.

Foundations/perspectives. The background characteristics of students and faculty affect their understandings of events (e.g., Columbus's voyages), issues (e.g., domestic violence), and concepts (e.g., justice). A course that includes diverse foundations or perspectives draws on theories that help explain how human differences influence our understanding of a course topic (Banks 2006). As a course's foundations become more inclusive, the number of perspectives and depth of understanding increases, and the foundations and perspectives themselves generally become a part of the course's content (Bell and Griffin 2007).

Learners. At the noninclusive end of the spectrum, student characteristics (e.g., race, gender, class, skill level, and developmental needs) are not taken into account. At the inclusive end, these characteristics are assessed and explored so that other course elements can be designed and adjusted to fit students' learning needs (Bell and Griffin 2007; Schoem et al. 1993).

Instructor(s). In more inclusive classrooms, the individuals charged with planning and facilitating a course investigate their own identities, biases, and values, and how these may influence the way they operate in the classroom. Inclusive instructors also learn about identities, biases, and values that are different from their own so that the course can rely on multiple perspectives.

Pedagogy. In addition to classroom processes and teaching methods, pedagogy includes the theories and scholarship (e.g., theories of student development and learning) that inform these processes and methods. More inclusive pedagogies account for the fact that not all students are the same, but rather have varied learning needs. At its most inclusive, pedagogy will demonstrate a focus on the learning of diverse students through the interplay of theory and instructional process at a highly developed level.

Classroom environment. The classroom environment is the space where a course takes place as well as the interactions that occur within that space. It consists of the values, norms, ethos, and experiences of a course. When highly inclusive, the environment should be empowering (Banks 2006), reflective of the diverse backgrounds of students and instructors (Schoem et al. 1993), and structured to support student learning (Bell and Griffin, 2007).

Assessment/evaluation. Instructors should use a variety of methods, both formal and informal, to assess student characteristics and learning and should also be aware of potential biases in their techniques (Banks 2006; Lattuca and Stark 2009). More inclusive evaluation methods are more sensitive to the various backgrounds of students and the diverse ways students can demonstrate understanding.

Adjustment. In any course, instructors may need to change their plans as assessments reveal new information about students, as student desires or frustrations assert themselves, as incidents occur in class, or as activities require more time than allotted. An instructor who capitalizes on new information can adjust other elements of a course to enhance student learning (Bell and Griffin 2007; Lattuca and Stark 2009). Inclusive adjustments are sensitive to students' diverse learning needs and

matched to course goals. Adjustments made despite student needs (e.g., to cover a predetermined amount of material) are noninclusive.

This framework can be applied in a variety of areas, including course design and assessment. In the area of course design, for example, the framework encourages instructors to question and make decisions about the inclusivity of each element when designing or making adjustments to a course. The framework allows for flexibility in which elements a faculty member chooses to address, and in which order (as decisions about one element will affect decisions about the others).

Lessons Learned from Assessing Diversity Inclusivity

In 2007 and 2010, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement administered survey items focused on diversity inclusivity to US faculty at over one hundred institutions (for detailed findings from the 2007 administration, see Nelson Laird [2011] and Nelson Laird and Engberg [2011]). The results suggested four lessons about including diversity in college courses.

First, while differences by academic field were apparent, many faculty members from all fields reported including diversity in a variety of ways. For example, 57 percent of all faculty respondents indicated that students in their courses gain "quite a bit" or "very much" understanding of how to connect their learning to societal problems or issues. Three-quarters (75 percent) of faculty respondents indicated that they varied their teaching methods "quite a bit" or "very much" to encourage the active participation of all students, and most faculty members (87 percent) indicated that they try "quite a bit" or "very much" to empower students through class participation. These findings suggest that many faculty members are already invested in creating inclusive courses.

Therefore, instead of trying to convince faculty members to be inclusive, colleges and universities should spend time and resources helping faculty members find ways to be inclusive in their own particular manner.

Second, including diversity in a course is strongly connected to other indicators of effective educational practices. Faculty members who include diversity in their courses are much more likely to encourage peer interactions across difference, emphasize deep approaches to learning, use active classroom practices, interact with their students, and promote learning outcomes like intellectual and practical skills or personal and social responsibility.

Third, faculty members' perceptions of the curriculum matter. The more faculty members perceive the undergraduate curriculum as inclusive of diversity, the more likely they are to include diversity in their own courses. Combined with the second lesson, this suggests that faculty members and institutional leaders invested in promoting student success should do more to share all that is happening in the curriculum related to the inclusion of diversity.

Fourth, while all kinds of faculty members include diversity into their courses, women and faculty members of color are much more likely than their male and white colleagues to do so. Combined with the other lessons, this suggests that those invested in improving the quality of undergraduate education should encourage faculty search committees to look seriously at female applicants and applicants of color, while also identifying ways to help male and white faculty members find elements of their courses where inclusivity can be improved.

By marshaling faculty creativity as well as higher education research and scholarship, colleges and universities can foster greater inclusivity in the classroom. ◙

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