

Course Development: Pedagogies of Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, & Equity (DIJE)



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Project Aim

Our project seeks to build the capacity of both faculty and graduate student instructors to engage in teaching and learning around issues of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity (DIJE). Through collaborative curriculum development, we hope to increase the depth and expand the breadth of DIJE knowledge of our instructional staff. In alignment with our strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion, we continue to seek opportunities to establish learning spaces that empower all students, welcome and honor diversity of perspective, and encourage brave discourse.

Course Pilot Design

Course Overview

This mini-seminar (four 3-hour sessions) is for instructors interested in moving the concepts of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity (DIJE) from the theoretical to the practical in their university courses. Participants will establish an essential question to drive an inquiry into their own teaching and/or facilitation practice. Readings, discussions, and self-exploration will push us to consider how our own pedagogies can more fundamentally account for DIJE. We will examine both scholarly and empirical texts, as well as applied strategies and practices. We will also consider our own identities and how human interaction plays a crucial role in pedagogy.

Course Goals

- Participants will be able to define the DIJE concepts and articulate them to others, particularly students whom they instruct or supervise
- Participants will be able to understand how their own identity impacts their pedagogy, and in turn impacts their students' experience in their classroom
- Participants will make progress on a critical inquiry into their own pedagogy that either deepens or interrogates their practical incorporation of DIJE concepts

Session	Topic	Activities
1	Introduction & Group norming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms discussion, whole group • Paseo Circles of Identity • DIJE definitions chart activity
2	What is inquiry? & Examining privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIJE definitions small group discussion and whole group share-out • Norms discussion, small group
3*	What is engaged pedagogy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry project planning and support groups • Big Paper/Silent Conversation (Freire & hooks)
4	Sharing inquiry and receiving feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group inquiry project consultancies • Final reflection

** Session topic and activities were revised at the beginning of the 3rd session to honor students' requests to discuss current campus events. We ended up having a whole group discussion for the majority of the class; although we did do a modified version of the Big Paper/Silent Conversation activity merging current events topics with reading discussion*

Emerging Questions

- How do we transition this course from 1 credit to 3 credits?
- How might we make this course a requirement for graduate student instructors?
- How might we also connect with diverse audiences across campus?
- How do we encourage collective ownership of the course?

Next steps

- Presentation to faculty on pilot session and argument to grow the course
- Lunch feedback session with students from pilot
- Convening of interested faculty to begin development on 3-credit version

Feedback from Students

Plusses

- Reading list (especially Freire & hooks)
- Activities
 - Paseo Circles of Identity
 - Defining "DIJE"
- Classroom climate / open space for discussion
 - Modeling strategies
 - Space for resistance, flexibility, and adaptation
 - Increased connection to peers
- Inquiry Project

Deltas

- Incorporate opportunities for student practice with pedagogical strategies
- More focus on project in class
- Course should be longer
- More time to debrief activities and strategies
- More debate between/among students

Project History

When we first envisioned this FCIT project, we imagined spending several months working collaboratively with a few of our faculty colleagues to develop a course geared towards graduate student instructors. The aim of the curriculum would be to empower instructors to take on challenging matters related to diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity in their classrooms; both proactively and in support of emerging contexts.

Unexpectedly, an opportunity arose to teach a pilot 1-credit version of this class, named Pedagogies of DIJE. The original vision included a more theoretical lens, but ultimately, Maren Oberman, a clinical assistant professor, was asked to teach it with a practical focus.

As such, we decided to use the opportunity to pilot some of our emerging ideas from the FCIT project with students. As a result, we now have data from actual members of the course and evidence to support our claim that the course should be a full 3-credit experience.

Quotations from Students

"I really appreciate having the time and space to wrestle with ways to approach my next teaching experiences."

"I feel more genuinely connected to my peers in this class than any other."

"I appreciate the willingness to engage, the productive silence, and the shared commitment to humanizing ourselves and others."

"I saw - even with all the tears and occasional tensions - a group of people who were almost pathologically supportive of one another."

"I didn't often find spaces to enter the whole group conversations...I think I learned the most from my classmates in these smaller discussions where we could ask follow-up questions and have more space to sit with a thought or feeling before the next person spoke."

"This work requires more time and the engagement of individuals outside of the people who see this work as salient."