

A Mathematics Learning Community on Inclusive Teaching (LCIT)

Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2018 Nina White, Gavin LaRose

Project Overview

- **Structure:** Faculty, post-docs, and grad students met 5x times in W18 to discuss readings on inclusive teaching in math, with a 6th, wrap-up meeting in May.
- **Goals:** (1) Increase awareness of barriers to inclusive teaching and strategies for teaching more inclusively, (2) build and support a community within Department committed to inclusive teaching, and (3) support instructor training programs in including more material on inclusive teaching.

Participants

In total, **37** people participated in the Math LCIT, with **15** participating in at least 3 of the 6 meetings. Participants in the Math LCIT included representatives of all groups of instructors in the department:

instructor type	#
tenure/tenure track	7
lecturers	10
post doctoral faculty	8
graduate students	6

In addition, we had 4 participants from the School of Education, and 4 who are external to the University.

Key Insights / New Questions

Individual Actions

- Avoid a Deficit Perspective: Look for and emphasize students' understanding, not errors (see [3]).
- Assign competence: recognize students' success and contributions publicly (see [3]).
- Manage groupwork: Take active role during groupwork to support inclusive group dynamics.
- Create classroom community: Focus on increasing students' sense of belonging in our classrooms (and in math generally). **New Q: How do we do this?**
- Self-Reflection: Recognize our own implicit biases. **New Q: How do we overcome them?**

Programmatic Actions

- Think critically about assessment structures in our large, coordinated intro courses. **New Q: How do we balance uniformity and resistance to academic dishonesty with promotion of growth mindset and sense of belonging?**
- In coursework, highlight contributions of mathematicians from underrepresented groups. **New Q: How do we do this meaningfully and authentically?**

Departmental Actions

- More thoughtfully and thoroughly imbue our instructor training programs with messages and strategies about inclusive teaching. In particular: (i) Make the message clear that our teaching is not *de facto* inclusive, (ii) provide new instructors with strategies for teaching more inclusively and reflecting deeply on their own practice.

Artifacts / Outcomes

- Forthcoming: blog post in [1] outlining (i) what we learned about inclusive teaching and (ii) what we learned about running a learning community on inclusive teaching.
- Increased focus on inclusive teaching in all teacher training.

Questions: (privileged)

- How do you make students aware of inclusiveness?
- What to do when you see discrimination?
- Immediate strategies for daily teaching. - in the context of instructor identity
- Case studies and examples
- Inclusiveness = Time - How to manage (inside and outside class)

- How to acknowledge and learn from failure.
- What role do instructors have of acknowledging discrimination/racism outside of classroom (eg racist posters on campus) - last year

- 1) - How to cultivate good communities & attitudes in my math classes (Jo Boaler, Readings)
 - Diversity in assigning groups (not singling out female/Minority students)
 - More awareness about inclusion issues in the classroom.
 - Good to hear about others' experiences (teaching)
 - Good to hear difficulties in IBL-ish Teaching. (be aware)
- 2) - Assigning groups
 - More active in giving students active learning opportunities (speaking out in class)
 - Being more flexible & aware
 - Accommodate more personality types
- 3) - (All of the above)
 - A lot of desire to talk about teaching (this was a space where it occurred)
 - We are in a system that is not inherently inclusive (ie, competitiveness) but trying to make small changes in our classrooms.

Some participant thoughts on "unresolved questions"

Next Steps

- Two meetings in Fall 2018.
- Whitaker grant to examine exam tasks in intro courses for better inclusivity
- Sustain current LCIT and create GSI-run LCIT focused on grad student instructors.

Selected Resources

- [1] AMS blog on diversity: blogs.ams.org/inclusionexclusion/
- [2] Our schedule and readings: www.math.lsa.umich.edu/~gla/rose/dept/teaching/lcit.html
- [3] Boaler, J. (2006). How a detracked mathematics approach promoted respect, responsibility, and high achievement. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 40-46.

Some participant thoughts on "what we learned"