Diversity, Equity and Cultural Competence in Classroom Instruction

Competency

Educators will develop and implement strategies to create a more culturally responsive, inclusive and equitable learning community for all students.

Key Method

Educators will reflect on teaching strategies and plans to enhance diversity, equity and cultural humility in their classrooms. They will envision what their classroom is like with these structures in place.

Method Components

What is DECC?

Diversity, Equity and Cultural Competence (DECC) are essential to a thriving learning community.

- **Diversity** is the presence of differences that include race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, physical appearance, and more. Diversity also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. Being specific about which diversity is lacking in an area is critical. Saying “X” was not a racially diverse space, or “Y” event had little gender diversity, which helps clarify what is meant when we say “diversity.”

- **Equity** refers to fairness and justice. It recognizes that advantages and barriers based on culture and identity exist. As a result, everyone does not start from the same place regarding having access to what they need to

thrive and be well. It is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and works to correct and address the imbalance. Creating equity is an ongoing process that strives to ensure that people who have been marginalized have continuing opportunities to grow and thrive.

- **Cultural Competence** is the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own.

  Part of being culturally competent includes having cultural humility, a dispositional trait, and allows us to be dynamic. “It takes the stance of being open to the “other” when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, cultural humility lacks the superiority complex, which is evident when an individual interprets their cultural values as more meaningful and worthwhile than the values of others. Rather than concentrating solely on knowledge of another person’s cultural background, cultural humility proposes openness and humility when engaging with individuals from a different cultural background.” *Source: Celebrating Cultural Humility in Education*

In this micro-credential you will demonstrate your ability to support students on various topics related to diversity, equity and cultural competence.

Diversity, Equity and Cultural Competence in Classroom Instruction

“The work of being a culturally responsive educator isn’t simply about diverse books or social justice curriculum topics. It’s about gaining insight into your students as learners and being able to craft cognitive hooks between their funds of knowledge and the standards-based content in authentic and meaningful ways that make learning sticky.” — Zaretta Hammond.

DECC is integral to being a skilled educator. In today’s global and interconnected society, educators must constantly grow in their ability to teach students and groups who are culturally different from them. Educators should:

- Understand culture and its predominant impact on individuals and groups of people.
- Understand how the dominant culture can privilege or oppress individuals and groups.
- Be prepared to take action to:
  - Expose and address inequity in the educational system
  - Collaborate purposefully with individuals and groups from cultures and identities that have experienced historical and present-day social injustices and inequalities (i.e., ableism, racism, transphobia, heterosexism, classism, etc.)
  - Work to create and support policies and practices that give rise to culturally inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Types of Diversity

It is important to note that there are many different types of diversity, and it is critically important that we are specific when discussing or describing them. Saying "X" was not a culturally diverse space, or "Y" event had little religious diversity helps clarify what we mean when we say, "diversity." There are many different ways that people and groups identify themselves. Here are a few examples of ways diversity may show up in your classroom:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Religion
- Age
- Sex
- Gender identity and expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability status (developmental disability and/or acquired disability)
- National origin

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is an evidence-based pedagogy that includes students' culture across all aspects of teaching and learning. CRT fosters a classroom climate that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural competence. These are the seven principles for CRT:

- Students are affirmed in their cultural connections
- Teachers are personally inviting
- Learning environments are physically and culturally inviting
- Students are reinforced for academic development
- Instructional changes are made to accommodate differences in learners
- Classrooms are managed with firm, consistent, loving control
- Interactions stress collectivity as well as individuality

Source: Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms, 1997, Shade, Kelly, and Oberg

Strategies that Support a Culturally Inclusive Learning Environment

The following strategies can be deployed to create a culturally inclusive learning environment:

- Spend time getting to know your students
- Plan activities that help students to get to know each other
- Be aware of your own biases
- Use active learning strategies such as group work, debates, student presentations.
- Use a variety of teaching strategies that support varied learning styles
- Use multiple assessment measures
- Listen to your students

- Teach students how to listen to each other
- Engage families and community members in classroom and school activities
- Incorporate student voice into your daily practices
- Build lessons and activities that allow for student choice
- Use a strengths-based approach to learning

Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is rooted in strong relationships between students, educators, and families. Sadly, research routinely shows dramatic disparities in discipline for students of color and students with disabilities when compared to white students. While educator bias and lack of use of other behavior intervention strategies (e.g., restorative practices, social worker,s and school counselors) are often cited as causes, the figures reveal a glaring trend across the U.S. Consider:

- In the 2015–16 school year, students with disabilities accounted for 12% of all students, but 28% of all referrals to law enforcement and arrests.
- In the same school year, studies show Black students and other students of color lost significantly more days of instruction due to discipline than white students. For example, Black students lost 103 days of instruction per 100 students enrolled, while white students lost 21 days per 100 students enrolled because of out-of-school suspensions.

Creating a culturally inclusive classroom depends on many factors. Classrooms that foster strong relationships, inclusion, safety, and support create affirming student environments. Structure and routine with fair and consistent rules and expectations can help to promote a safe and supportive classroom environment. When combined, these actions create conditions for effective classroom management where students are ready to engage in learning.

Tips for Inclusive Classroom Management

- Develop a list of classroom norms and values with students
- Include behavioral expectations and norms that are culturally-inclusive and appropriate or otherwise reflective of the diverse cultures and identities of students in the classroom
- Share your behavior plan with your administration, students, and families.
- If you have students whose behavior interferes with their learning and others trying to learn, seek support and/or advice from your school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) plan.
- Use restorative practice principles as a foundation for your classroom management.
- Analyze your discipline data to assess for disproportionalities based on race, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, and other social identities and make changes to support equitable disciplinary outcomes.
- Avoid exclusionary discipline (office referrals, expulsions, suspensions)

- Focus on building a community of learners and healthy relationships
- Help your students understand that equity is not the same as equality
- Invite students and families to participate in the development of your behavior management plan

Culturally Inclusive Curriculum

Not only is it essential to create a culturally inclusive environment, it is also essential to use a culturally inclusive curriculum. A culturally inclusive curriculum is non-negotiable when creating an equitable learning environment that celebrates diversity. Curriculum should be inclusive, rigorous, diverse, and student-centered. This curriculum promotes student engagement, academic achievement, empathy, critical thinking, and more. An inclusive curriculum has a positive impact on all students. By using an inclusive curriculum, you are helping all of your students to:

- Embrace and fully develop their sense of self
- Strengthen their self-esteem and value the humanity of others
- Build and maintain healthy relationships
- Develop empathy skills
- Gain comfort with people who are both similar to and different from them

Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Curriculum

To create an inclusive curriculum, educators must intentionally include various perspectives, sources, instructional tools, and more. The following strategies can help you get started:

Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors

In her 1990 essay, Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop coined the phrase "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors" to explain how children see themselves in books and how they can also learn about the lives of others through literature. Bishop says children of color and those from marginalized groups must view themselves in the books they read. When books don't serve as **mirrors** to children, Bishop says, "They learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in society." Books, she says, also serve as **windows** that give readers a glimpse into the lives and experiences of others.

In this context, educators have the critical task of ensuring their students have access to books that serve as windows and mirrors that reflect their own experiences and windows to help them learn about people and/or cultures that are different from their own. These are some benefits of this strategy:

- Students will relate and make connections to the content being taught
- This helps your students honor and value who they are
- Develops empathy in students
- Supports self-esteem development in students
- Supports the development of self-awareness in students
- Supports the development of healthy interpersonal relationships
- Gives students opportunity and exposure to life experiences different from their own

Universal Design Learning (UDL) Principles

This set of principles is based on the idea that all students are different and unique and have their way of learning. The three main UDL principles:

- Representation (the what of learning)
- Action and Expression (the how of learning)
- Engagement (the why of learning)

Mix it up

Mix It Up refers to the use of a variety of strategies to present and assess students. These are some examples:

- Include multiple choice and written response questions on assessments
- Provide options for formative assessment projects
- Present materials using visual and auditory information
- Provide students with manipulatives and live models for a hands-on experience

Provide Accommodations

You may have students on an IEP or 504 plan. You are legally responsible for knowing what is included in the plan and providing the prescribed accommodations for the student in your classroom.

Behavior Management Plan

Sometimes students present with behaviors that adults deem disruptive or challenging in the classroom. These behaviors can sometimes interfere with student learning. Educators must respond to student behaviors with curiosity, not judgment, about what unmet needs may be underlying the behavior, and avoid labeling the behavior or the student as "bad." In these situations, ask yourself, "What might the student be trying to communicate with this behavior?" and "How can I help the student meet their needs?" It can be helpful to engage the student in a similar line of questioning to support them in communicating their needs. It is also beneficial to provide feedback to the child on how they can speak the need in a way that is safe and aligned with classroom norms.

With children and adolescents, significant emotional distress or mental health conditions can be manifested in their behavioral expressions. When students consistently engage in behaviors that interfere with their social, emotional, and/or learning needs, referring them to mental health supports (e.g., a student support team) can be helpful.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Cornbleth, C. & Sleeter, C.E. (Eds.). (2011). *Teaching with Vision: Culturally Responsive Teaching in Standards-based Classrooms*. Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners*. Corwin.

Saifer, S., Edwards, K., Ellis, D., Ko, L., & Stuczynski, A. (2011). *Culturally Responsive Standards-Based Teaching: Classroom to community and back*. SAGE Publications.

Stembridge, A. (2019). *Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An equity framework for pedagogy*. Taylor & Francis.

Resources

DECC Background & Resources

Foundational Leadership Competencies: Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence

How to Use Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Classroom

What Is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies

The Cultural Proficiency Framework

What are the types of diversity? | Workable

Impact & Teaching Strategies

Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain Teaching Channel Editor's Note &

Zaretta Hammond "Culturally Responsive Teaching" at the San Francisco Publi...

Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain

Making Connections: Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain

5 Ways Culturally Responsive Teaching Benefits Learners

Hattie effect size list - 256 Influences Related To Achievement & Visible Learning plus 250+ Influences on Student Achievement

Reality Pedagogy: Christopher Emdin at TEDxTeachersCollege

DECC Curriculum & Classroom Environment

Cultivating Cultural Humility in Education

LibGuides: Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Curriculum Resources: What is Culturally Responsive Curriculum?

How to Use Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Classroom

But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Gloria Ladson-Billings Theory into Practice, Vol. 34, N

Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards

Previous Post You Can't Teach Who You Don't Know!

Teaching for Equity Framework: Leading Educators

21-Day Racial Equity Challenge — America & Moore

Resources: How to Tell the Difference: A Guide to Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian

Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources

LibGuides: Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Curriculum Resources: Home

What are "Cultural Resources"?

7 Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching

About Universal Design for Learning

How Restorative Practices Work for Students and Educators | NEA

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient in all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(300-600 words)
Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.
Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

- Describe your professional context. What is your current educational assignment? Who are your students? Briefly describe your school climate and culture.

- Why did you choose to learn about this micro-credential? How do you think your learning will impact your students?

- Describe your current classroom climate.

- How does this classroom environment promote and advance diversity, equity, and cultural competence?
- What does it look like/sound like/feel like as a learner?
- What does it look like/sound like/feel like as an educator?

Passing: The response provides reasonable, accurate information that justifies choosing this micro-credential to address the specific needs of both the teacher and the student. A learning goal that describes what educators hope to gain from earning this micro-credential needs to be clearly stated. Current classroom culture should be defined using specific details from the current professional context.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following six artifacts to prove your learning.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Teaching Strategies Infographic

- Choose three teaching strategies or classroom constructs from the resources provided. These strategies must embrace and leverage diversity, advance equity, and/or promote cultural competence and humility for all learners.
- Implement these strategies
- Create an infographic that describes these strategies. Your infographic should include:
  - Description of each strategy
  - Reasoning for implementing each strategy
  - Results of the implementation

Artifact 2: Share Infographic
(200-400 words)
Describe the plan to share your infographic. Your response needs to answer all of the questions below.

- Who is your audience?
- Why did you choose this audience?
- How many will be in your audience, and who will be in it?
- How will you share it? (print, in-person, virtually...)
- What follow-up will you do?

Artifact 3: Assessment Checklist

Create an original checklist to use as a self-assessment tool for your classroom or school environment.

- Use a rating scale of your choice (for example: Yes / Sometimes / Not Yet, or a 1–5 rating scale).
- Include the required areas listed below and add additional questions you believe are important for your context.
- Complete the checklist by assessing your own classroom or school practices.

Your checklist must include questions addressing the following areas:

- ***Curriculum Content:***
  - Does my curriculum represent diverse perspectives and experiences?
  - Do I actively challenge stereotypes and biases in my teaching materials?
- ***Classroom Climate:***
  - Do I create a safe and inclusive space for all students?
  - Do I address instances of bias or discrimination effectively?
- ***Teaching Practices:***
  - Do I use culturally responsive teaching strategies?
  - Do I differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners?
- ***Personal Reflection:***
  - Am I aware of my own biases?
  - Am I actively working to improve my cultural competence?

Artifact 4: Plan or Resource
Choose two topics from your checklist that you rated lowest (for example, "Not Yet" or a 1-2 on a numeric scale).

- If the topics are for your classroom, find or create a resource or lesson plan to share with your students.
- If the topics are for your school, find or create a resource or lesson plan to share with your school colleagues.

Artifact 5: Response to Questions
(150-300 words)
Answer the following questions
- What are the assessment piece(s) that need to be addressed?
- How did your plan address the topics you identified?
- What else can you do to address these topics?
- What feedback did you receive from your students/colleagues at school?

Artifact 6: Ideal Classroom Environment Vision
(400-600 words)
Now that you have learned about diversity, equity, and cultural competence, write a vision that describes your ideal classroom. Then compare and contrast it with the description of your current classroom environment that you wrote in Part 1 of this micro-credential.

Part 1 Vision

- How does your vision promote and advance diversity, equity, and cultural competence?
- What will it look like/sound like/feel like as a learner?
- What challenges or obstacles will you need to overcome to realize your vision?

Part 2: Compare and Contrast

- What is already part of your classroom environment?
- What will still need to be put in place?
- What steps will you take to bring your vision to fruition?
- What resources will you use to support your vision?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	**Basic**	**Developing**
Artifact 1: Teaching Strategies Infographic	Includes three strategies or constructs that embrace and leverage diversity, advance equity, and/or promote cultural competence for all learners. And Detailed descriptions And Reasoning And Results And Is laid out in a thoughtful and organized manner.	Includes three strategies, basic descriptions, and some experiential commentary Includes three strategies or constructs And Descriptions	Includes less than three strategies or constructs. And/or is missing descriptions.
Artifact 2: Share Infographic	Fully describes the plan to share the infographic. And	Responds to all questions but lacks details. or	Not all questions are addressed. And

	Answers all questions. And includes important details to support responses And Plan is simple with little to no costs and is simple enough to be quickly executed.	Not all questions are addressed. Or Plan will be difficult or expensive to implement.	Very little detail is included in responses. And Plan is not doable.
Artifact 3: Assessment Checklist	Assessment checklist is originally created by the candidate, includes a rating scale, addresses all required focus areas, and is fully completed to assess classroom or school practices.	Assessment checklist is created and includes most required focus areas but is missing a rating scale or is only partially completed.	Assessment checklist is incomplete, missing multiple required focus areas, lacks a rating scale, or is not completed as a self-assessment.
Artifact 4: Plan or Resource	Lesson or resource aligns to a need identified on the assessment. And Lesson plan includes: -Outcomes -Materials -Instruction -Student Practice -Closure -Formative assessment	Lessons or resources align loosely with a need identified during the assessment. And/or Lesson plan is missing some of the following: -Outcomes -Materials -Direct -Instruction -Student Practice	Lesson or resource aligns to a need identified on the assessment. And Lesson plan is missing most of the following: -Outcomes -Materials -Direct -Instruction -Student Practice -Closure

	Or Resource includes a description of how it will be used. It also includes all of the following: -Identified -Audience -Description for use -A timeline -A budget (if needed)	-Closure -Formative assessment Or Resource includes a description of how it will be used. It also consists of some of the following: -Identified -Audience -Description for use -A timeline -A budget (if needed)	-Formative assessment Or No Description included for resource.
Artifact 5: Response to Questions	All questions are answered thoughtfully and thoroughly. Important details that support the responses are included.	All questions are answered. Important details are missing.	Not all questions are answered. and/or Important details are missing.
Artifact 6: Ideal Classroom Environment Vision	All questions are answered thoughtfully and thoroughly. Important details are included to support the responses. Evidence of utilizing resources is included.	All questions are answered. Important details are missing. Brief references to resources.	Not all questions are answered. and/or Important details are missing. No references to resources used.

Part 3 Reflection

(300-600 words)
Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Did you learn what you expected? Why or why not?
2. How has working on this micro-credential impacted your students?
3. How will you continue to implement strategies and supplement your curriculum to advance the concepts of diversity, equity, and cultural competence?
4. How will you advocate for inclusive curriculum and culturally responsive teaching in your school and/or district?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has positively impacted both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.