

Final Report for Inclusive Pedagogy Workshops, AY 2018-2019
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Purpose: The aim of these workshops was to invite faculty, staff, and administration across disciplines to discuss the philosophies and practices of inclusive pedagogy, as well as to provide concrete and actionable strategies participants can implement in their classrooms and units. We received support from the Dean of CAH, which narrowed our participation list to faculty in the College. This space thus fostered a smaller, but very productive, collaboration among faculty as well as provided as space to “to promote a variety of pedagogical strategies that actively engage students in learning and that will result in improved student learning as part of the new strategic plan Building on Excellence.” We also decided to opt for this route in order to develop a core group who would then be able to facilitate and share best practices with the larger WCU community.

Methodology: We held five workshops this academic year. In the Fall 2018 semester, specialists in inclusive pedagogy from Beloit College provided readings and reflections for our first workshop and traveled to WCU to lead our November workshops. We spent the two days moving through how we might decenter whiteness and decolonize knowledge, as well as why these are necessary goals in academia. We discussed how long-term change requires coalition and considered how institutional change would be possible at WCU specifically. For our Spring 2019 meetings, we reflected and reported back what strategies the participants have tried in their departments and units and share their successes and outcomes. The meetings also served as a platform to build community and accountability among participants to continue to have conversations and to think critically about inclusivity and diversity.

Results: The workshops created as space for coming together to have meaningful discussions about the impact of teaching, programming, and learning on real lives and we believe that it is already impacting the success of our students. These meetings have helped each of us to think critically about how to implement diversity – and in particular how to decenter whiteness – throughout our institution and in our classrooms. The readings we discussed in our workshops also gave us the tools to identify issues related to diversity at WCU. One impactful result of the workshops was simply having time as faculty to sit, talk, and collaborate about our work. We were able to share not only best practices regarding pedagogy, we were also able to share with one another and learn about institutional histories of diversity on this campus. With this in mind, we believe these workshops and the community we formed during our time together has prepared us to better act in the interest of social justice for ourselves and our students.

Implications: One specific application of lessons learned is for a course on Cuban Rumba taught by my maria urrutia. Since taking these workshops, she has re-envisioned her focus and approach to this course and is using the content of our workshop to implement changes for the next iteration of the course. Another participant, Rònké Òké, created an entirely new course that she is piloting in the fall semester as a Philosophy special topics course entitled *Racing the Student Body*. Other participants shared more affective ‘best practices.’ One participant shared that he learned that he is, “not alone. I have colleagues that are emerging as comrades and reaffirming my hope that the university can be a place of beautiful struggle. I learned that the more I network with folks in departments beyond my own, the more I'm made aware of the good work that is going on and the

resources that are available to help us help students and hold the university to task.” Another shared that “In reflection of what this group of humans, thinkers and doers gave to me as an educator is in many ways immeasurable.” And finally, another participant offered that “Relationships and community building are central to successful programs and work in critical pedagogies... Decolonizing curriculum is a time-consuming task which benefits from dedicated time for processing and conversations... The work of critical approaches cannot happen when it is not central to one's job description or pedagogical orientation. The capacity to be involved in current struggles and work toward justice is inhibited by the business of our teaching loads and services.”

Conclusion: As organizers of the workshops and as tenure-track faculty, we had the opportunity to meet with a diverse set of faculty. We appreciated the dynamics of the participants. It was a mix of junior faculty and faculty who had been at the institution for many years. This mix of folks and experiences gave newer faculty a chance to learn the histories of the institution and work that has been done regarding implementing diversity initiatives, but also gave the senior faculty and opportunity to not only pass on their knowledge and experience but to feel reinvigorated by the energy that new faculty often bring to spaces like these. Moving forward, we do plan to organize an ongoing group of individual to plan diversity initiatives around one or two specific issues. Based on our conversation from our spring meetings, we decided as a group to expand our invitations to some faculty across colleges who were not originally able to attend this year's workshops. These opportunities will not only help us to support each other and collaborate in this work, to advance diversity initiatives on campus, but also to have more permanent support system in place for one another.