Diversity in the Classroom

Preston McKever-Floyd, Department Chair/Associate Professor, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Diversity, as I have come to understand it, is constituted of two inextricably linked external and internal components. The external component, the one generally understood in conversations on diversity, consists of race/ethnicity, gender, social status or abilities. This was my understanding of diversity when I began teaching at Coastal Carolina College in the 1980s. The student population was fairly homogenous with very little racial or ethnic diversity. Even so, I was sensitive to the significance of diversity’s impact on the small number of racial/ethnic minorities.

I have since grown into a realization of internal diversity, which is even greater than the external. Numerous individuals may share an external marker of diversity, e.g., gender; however, each of these individuals may, and probably do, experience this very differently. Every person is a network of interrelated and conditioned responses that I call one’s “glasses.” We all come to the present moment wearing our “glasses,” and, like actual glasses, they work so well that we don’t notice their presence.

My understanding of diversity was greatly globalized when I served as assistant director for Fulbright to India in the summer of 1988. This grant sponsored fourteen university faculty from across the state studying the religion and culture of India. View ing diversity as a global phenomenon dramatically altered my approach to teaching. This experience and subsequent years of reflection yielded my internal/external paradigm of diversity.

Having come to this understanding, I recognize that there is always diversity present. My task is to remove and examine the glasses that inform my understanding of the world and to help my students do the same by exposing them to new ways of thinking about or looking at the world and their place in it. I lead them into discussions by posing questions that require stretching beyond where they are in order to answer. This is often as painful for some students as walking from darkness into bright sunlight.

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Focus on Student Diversity

Preston McKeever-Floyd says it best: “If we are not seeking to engender in our students a sensitivity to diversity, we are doing them a disservice....”

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners in the Classroom

Contributor: Jamia Thomas-Richmond, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations, Spadoni College of Education

As the number of students increases on campus, so does the diversity of the student population. According to the mission of Coastal Carolina, the University “seeks to develop students who are both knowledgeable in their chosen fields and prepared to be productive, responsible, healthy citizens with a global perspective.” To fulfill this commitment, faculty must work to create a learning environment that is student-centered and culturally responsive to all students. This means that faculty should consider their own knowledge, perceptions and understandings of diverse cultures. It also involves using the cultural backgrounds of the students in your course as strengths and supports to the curriculum. Here are some tips for creating a culturally responsive, student-centered classroom:

- **Know your students**
  As you learn more about the students in your courses, you begin to know more about their diverse backgrounds, learning preferences/inters and their academic strengths/needs. Using this information, you can effectively plan instruction and course activities to create a classroom that places the students at the center. Making connections with the students on this level also increases the probability of retention of students.

- **Understand the role of culture in the process of learning**
  Culture, learning and intelligence are intertwined and cannot be separated. Different cultures teach in different ways. Over time, students have developed certain “cultural tools” with which they learn, access and express knowledge. Allow students to use all of their “cultural tools” in your classroom.

- **Support multiple learning preferences**
  We all have preferred methods of learning. We each receive and process information through different modalities. Use various modalities in the learning environment to present course content. Preferred modes of learning should also be used to develop course activities and assignments through which students respond to the content.

- **Include multiple perspectives**
  When presenting course content and supplemental materials, include information that presents multiple viewpoints of the content. Allow students to see/hear multiple perspectives, realities and complexities to develop a broader view of the topic.

- **Use culturally relevant resources**
  In planning course curriculum, use a variety of resources (e.g., literature, art, music and websites) that reflect the learners in your course. Students need to see others like themselves in textbooks, videos and historical events. Students make meaningful connections to the content and achieve at higher levels when this occurs.

Creating Safer Classrooms for LGBTQQ Students

Contributor: Angela Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director/Lecturer of Women’s and Gender Studies, University College; Committee Member and Trainer, Safe Zone Committee

Coastal’s recent climate survey of more than 1,000 students revealed that approximately ten percent of our students identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, transgender or gender non-conforming. For those of you not familiar with these last two terms, gender non-conforming refers to individuals whose gender identity and expression does not conform to the dominant social standards associated with the gender assigned to them at birth. Some of these individuals might be masculine women or feminine men, while other folks might decide not to identify with any gender at all. Transgender refers to individuals who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. In recent years, this term has been used to refer specifically to individuals who identify as the “opposite” sex, such as esteemed activist and actress LaVerne Cox. Keep in mind that the terms we use in our conversations about gender identity and expression are still shifting as our knowledge about transgender and gender non-conforming people continues to grow.

In the last year, Coastal has made great strides in creating a more inclusive community for LGBTQQ students, illustrated by the appearance of gender-neutral bathrooms across campus and more programming related to issues of gender identity and sexuality. These efforts are the first steps necessary to ensuring safety for our LGBTQQ students. It’s also important that we, as educators, make sure that LGBTQQ students feel a sense of belonging and safety in our classrooms. Here are a few ideas for how you can make that happen:

- **Choose readings and class activities that reflect the lives of LGBTQQ students, so that they see themselves reflected in the classroom and the larger community.**

- **Use gender-neutral pronouns such as they and them to avoid mis-gendering a student. In some cases, gender non-conforming or transgender students will let you know privately which pronouns they use. It is especially important to respect that individual’s choice of pronoun and validate their gender identity.**

- **Encourage diverse voices in your class, but avoid asking students to speak on behalf of their community. When students from marginalized communities do contribute to class discussions, avoid using their experience to generalize about their community.**

- **Recognize the diversity within marginalized communities. Race, class and ability shape the lives of LGBTQQ students in multiple ways, creating diverse experiences and perspectives.**

- **Educate yourself on the historical and contemporary experiences of LGBTQQ people by attending activities throughout the year such as Coming Out Day, Trans Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Visibility. The Safe Zone training program at Coastal is another excellent way for you to learn more about how to serve LGBTQQ students. For more information visit coastal.edu/safezone.**

Although it is difficult to create a completely safe classroom, we can do our best as educators to make sure that our classes are safer spaces and are welcoming to diverse students.
Focus on Student Diversity

Connecting with a Classroom of Diverse Student Identities

Contributor: Robert Jenkot, Associate Professor/Department Chair of Sociology, College of Science

Classes at a university should be challenging. Most academic areas do more than challenge a student’s scholarly ability, challenging their existing political interests, religious identities and their understanding of the world around them. The challenge to educators is to connect with a classroom of students who represent a variety of social, political and economic identities. How do you connect such disparate people to a single body of material? One method is to include a variety of texts, visual cues and examples that demonstrate how the course material is connected to the variety of identities of your students. This is how you create an inclusive classroom.

For example, when I teach a course on race and ethnic relations, there are students who have never felt the brunt of racism or discrimination, while others have. Alternatively, when I teach a class on gender, there are students who have never felt at risk walking to their cars at night or have never had to worry about avoiding date-rape drugs. In addition, when teaching about crime, there are students who have never experienced gangs in their schools, while others have. I have to demonstrate how the class materials affect each student, regardless of their experiences.

Creating an inclusive class begins with preparation. What texts do you choose to use? If you are teaching British literature, do you include the voices of gay authors? Do you use this part of the author’s identity to help the students understand her/his point of view? Alternately, in sociology, the bulk of early theorists were white males. Do you make that point relevant to your students? Granted, some classes lend themselves more easily to such inclusion. I would expect that a course in general chemistry might lack such variety in texts/examples. In any event, taking some time to consider the authors (and contributors) to the texts we use is important.

When you construct your syllabus, have you considered any statements to let students know that their various identities and experiences are welcome? Lynn Weber from USC-Columbia constructed a set of “Ground Rules” for class. In part, Weber’s rules include statements about racism, sexism and homophobia. I include her rules in my syllabus when I teach courses on race, ethnicity and gender, and then I take a bit of time on the first day of class to see if the entire class is okay with the rules. On day one, the discussion begins, and students with varying identities are welcomed. I am sure there are many existing sets of rules that can be tailored to your specialty. Such clear statements tell students that their experiences matter, and their identities are welcomed in the class.

The final major component in an inclusive class is the day-to-day management of the class. Reflect on your assignments. Do they encourage exploration of one’s own experiences as they relate to the class material? Do you guide discussion toward inclusiveness when a student utters an offensive word? These are but some aspects of creating an inclusive class.

Advising International Students

Contributor: Melissa Paschuck, International Student Services Coordinator, International Programs

Advising students regarding academic choices goes beyond mentoring and can be quite complex. Being an effective academic adviser requires the faculty or staff person to be: knowledgeable of all the annual updates to the academic policies outlined in the University Catalog; familiar with all of the forms and processes required to take action or make a request for special circumstances and exemptions; in possession of (at least) a basic understanding of all degree programs. To make the best use of this knowledge, the adviser must be able to synthesize all of the information in order to recommend the best course of action and assist students in problem resolution.

When advising an international student, however, the academic adviser must also be aware of a critical set of U.S. government regulations governing the academic choices available to the student: the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) concerning non-immigrant students. The CFR applies laws, enacted by Congress, to daily implementation. CFR regulations are lengthy, complex and updated annually.

The Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) is here to help navigate the CFR by providing support to staff and faculty advising international students and by providing international students with relevant information and training on the regulations. Each international student is encouraged, or in some cases required, to consult with the OIPS prior to making any academic decision that could impact his or her legal status.

Coastal Carolina University hosts both international degree-seeking students (F-1 visa) and exchange students (J-1 visa). While many of these regulations apply to both F-1 and J-1 students, the statements below pertain only to F-1 students. J-1 students have an academic adviser as well as an OIPS academic adviser. This is not a full list with comprehensive explanations, but information on the most frequently asked questions.

Please advise students to direct questions to the OIPS.

- Changes to majors and minors must be reported to the OIPS by the student in a timely fashion.
- International students may not drop below a full-time course load (i.e., at least 12 undergraduate credits) during the fall and spring semester, except in his or her final semester. With a few exceptions, students may enroll part-time during May and summer sessions. Students experiencing academic difficulty are advised to seek assistance from their academic advisors and the OIPS early.
- F-1 students may not take more than 3 credits of online classes as part of their full-time enrollment (e.g., undergraduate students must enroll in 9 credits of traditional lecture classes before enrolling in any online courses).
- Students must make regular progress toward completing their degrees by the program end date noted on the immigration document (I-20) held by every international student. Any change in graduation date—whether earlier or later—must be reported to the OIPS immediately.
- Any international student placed on probation or suspension is required to notify the OIPS immediately.
- All internships must be directly related to the student’s degree program, and students are required to enroll in an internship course through their major departments or the Career Services Center.

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• Prior to engaging in any required or voluntary, paid or unpaid, internships and/or on- or off-campus employment, international students must apply for and receive authorization from either or both the OIPS and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

If you have any questions or need assistance with an international student concern, please contact Geoffrey Parsons (ext. 2054) or Melissa Paschuck (ext. 2053). We are here to help!

Reference: Title 8 of Code of Federal Regulations (8 CFR)

Multicultural Student Services Facilitates Access to Diversity Programs for Students
Contributor: Bertha Fladger, Program Assistant, Multicultural Student Services

The Office of Multicultural Student Services (MSS) has been active on campus since the middle 1980s and has had a few name changes. The office was part time until 2012 with the appointment of the current Vice President for Student Affairs. Presently, the office is staffed with three (3) employees and has recently moved to the new Lib Jackson Student Union. The office is a place where students feel comfortable, and they come in between classes to meet and mingle. The office staff is involved in the ongoing retention of students.

The University supports the office by encouraging diversity and access through several programs designed to enhance the academic, social and cultural development of diverse student populations. The office administers several initiatives to support the retention and graduation of these students and also focuses on programs designed to involve all students in multicultural education. These programs and initiatives include Leadership Challenge, which exposes students to leadership skills and requires the students to maintain a certain GPA as they learn how to present workshops and plan and implement programs that are open to the entire campus.

The Students Navigating and Advising Peers (SNAP) mentoring program is another retention initiative implemented by the office. It pairs upperclassmen with incoming freshmen. The upperclassmen serve as mentors assisting the incoming students with the transition from high school to college. The mentors make weekly contact with the freshmen via meals together, phone calls, text messages, etc. The African American Initiative for Males and the Women of Color initiatives are designed to assess the needs of these two groups and to plan accordingly.

Providing inclusive services for queer-identified individuals is another area to which the office is committed. One of our goals is to increase the visibility of the LGBTQQ community by serving on committees such as Safe Zone and Trans Awareness. Educational workshops on gender and sexuality are provided for faculty members to share with their classes or groups with their members. In addition, the office serves as an adviser for the student organization People Respecting Individual Diversity and Equality (PRIDE), which is Coastal Carolina University’s gay-straight alliance.

In addition, ethnic celebrations (Hispanic, African American, Native American and Asian) are implemented and diversity workshops presented to First Year Experience (FYE) classes. The office also advises and mentors several campus student organizations such as the African American Association, the Gospel Choir and the collegiate chapter of the NAACP.

The True Value of a College Education
Contributor: Tracy Gaskin, Training Coordinator, CeTEAL

My father often says “the true value of a college education is the opportunity it provides for young people to meet others from diverse backgrounds.” Being from a small town, my father recognized the value of this opportunity to anyone who grew up with limited exposure to the rest of the world.

As a child, I spent my earliest years near a university campus with a rainbow of childhood friends with different religious, racial and international backgrounds. At the time, I had no understanding of how fortunate I was, but looking back, I can see how much those early experiences affected my view of the world. The value for me then, as now, in experiencing the diversity of a university setting is that my mind and my heart are open to the differences and possibilities diversity represents.

I have worked at Coastal Carolina University for almost twelve years, and in that time, I have seen amazing changes in our recognition of diversity on this campus. As you have seen on the preceding pages, the University offers offices and organizations to help support diverse students, our faculty thinks about ways to build inclusive classrooms, and people all over campus embrace diversity. It makes me proud to see CCU offering our students one of the most valuable opportunities they will have in life.

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As I understand it, education is meant to draw out, not fill up, so I see my function as a well-informed guide.

Finally, I strongly feel that if we are not seeking to engender in our students a sensitivity to diversity, we are doing them a disservice, philosophically and practically, because those who will do well in the 21st century marketplace will be those who are conversant and comfortable with varying world cultures.
Resources & Tips for the College of Humanities and Fine Arts

For the 2014-2015 academic year, CeTEAL is including a college-specific Resources & Tips page in each newsletter. If you have teaching tips, technologies or ideas you would like to share, please email them to cetealnews@coastal.edu.

Community & Connection
The sites listed below contain resources and information contributed by communities of users with shared interests.

HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory)
HASTAC promotes engaged learning through collaboration and sharing of information and resources.
http://www.hastac.org

Merlot II (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching)
Merlot is a curated collection of free resources for teaching and learning contributed by an international community of members.
http://www.merlot.org

Goodreads
Goodreads is a site for readers to share book recommendations. On the Goodreads site, you can track the books you have read and the books you want to read, access community reviews of books and view recommendations based on your literary tastes.
http://www.goodreads.com

Media Resources
Many online resources are available for viewing or developing rich content related to your classes.

Google Cultural Institute
This site has collections of images relating to history, art and culture from around the world.

- Art Project
  https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project

- Historic Moments
  https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/historic-moments

- World Wonders
  https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/world-wonders

Timeline (from ReadWriteThink.org)
Timeline allows you or your students to create a simple timeline diagram that can be downloaded and saved on your computer. Timeline is a great tool for student assignments. No login or personal information is required to use this site:
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/

Digital Research Tools

DiRT Directory
The DiRT Directory is a registry of digital research tools for scholarly use.
http://dirtdirectory.org

The Getty Research Institute
The Getty Research Institute has collections of digital scholarly resources designed to further knowledge and understanding of the visual arts.
http://www.getty.edu/research/institute

Zotero
Zotero is a free tool to help you collect and organize research sources. Zotero collects your research in a searchable format with automatic indexing.
http://www.zotero.org

Kimbel Library Resource

Points of View (POV) Reference Center
The POV Reference Center is a collection of articles on oft-debated topics in categories such as foreign policy, race and culture, human rights, arts and culture, and many more. Most topics on the site include point and counterpoint arguments, a guide to critical analyses and links to related library resources. The information provided can provide a starting point for engaging and educational class discussions.

To find the POV Reference Center, go to the Kimbel Library Web page and click the “Database Finder” link below the main search box in the middle of the page. Use the alphabetical index to locate the resource by title.

Cool Apps for Humanities and Fine Arts

Musee du Louvre
Musee du Louvre is an app containing images and information for 100 Louvre masterpieces. In addition, the app includes information and an introductory video about the Louvre museum.
(Currently iPad/iPhone only)

Tayasui Sketches
Sketches is an onscreen canvas with a set of tools (pencil, watercolor brush, felt pen and editable colors) that allow you to sketch, draw or paint on your iPad, iPhone or iPod touch.
(Currently iOS only)

Google Maps
Google Maps is a great way to see the world from your mobile device. Take a look at destinations around the world through bird’s eye images and then zoom in for close-up views of sites of interest.
(iOS and Android versions)

MindNode
MindNode is a mind-mapping tool that allows you to organize your thoughts and ideas for writing projects, create visual representations of complex relationships, and brainstorm new ideas.
(Currently iOS only)
Tips for Using the Moodle Gradebook

Does grading in Moodle cause you to pull out your hair in frustration? Are your students completely confused about their grades? Are you tired of trying to explain grades to your students?

Imagine a world where your students complete assignments and quizzes, you enter their grades in the gradebook, and both you and your students can access the students’ current course total grade at any time in the semester without any additional work on your part. Imagine midterm grading time arrives, and your grades, even the letter grades, are already calculated and ready to report. Does this seem too good to be true? It can happen for you if you follow the tips below:

Work with Moodle, not against it
Moodle has a few built-in grading calculation schemes that require very little work on your part. By using a grading scheme that meshes with Moodle built-in calculations, you can save yourself time and headaches. For example, the default grading scheme (aggregation) in Moodle is “Simple weighted mean.” By default, the “Simple weighted mean” aggregation provides a course total grade on the 100-point scale with which students are familiar. No matter how many points your grade items are worth, Moodle will calculate the percentage earned by the student, weight the items appropriately based on their maximum value and generate a final grade that makes sense to students. Easy! If you give weighted grades, Moodle can accommodate you by allowing you to set weights for categories of items through the “Weighted mean of grades” aggregation. Learn what Moodle does best and consider setting up a grading scheme to match. Why not make your life easier?

Build your grading scheme early
Decide on your grading scheme and build it in Moodle before you add the grading information to your syllabus. It is much easier to start with a grading scheme that you know will work in Moodle and then add that grading scheme to your syllabus. This saves you time by eliminating the need to update your syllabus later in the semester or to explain to students why the grade in Moodle does not match the syllabus.

Build in flexibility
Sometimes circumstances may cause you to change the number of assignments or quizzes students will complete during the semester. For instance, you may feel the need to add additional extra credit opportunities. When these changes occur, they can change the way your course grades are calculated. Plan ahead for these possibilities and avoid the need to update the grading scheme during the semester. For example, if you are using “Weighted mean of grades” to calculate your course total, you can set the assignment category to be worth a percentage of the course total grade, and the category will contribute the same value to the course no matter how many assignment grade items you add to the category. You can easily add or delete a grade item (column) without reconfiguring your calculation.

Simplify
Sometimes when you have been teaching a course for many years, you may begin to develop “frankengrades.” Your grading scheme may have been simple in the beginning, but over time, you found great new assignments to add, rearranged your course into units with separate grades, or tweaked grade values up and down relative to their importance. In some cases, your grading schemes can begin to look like a patchwork of parts, some of which may not fit together easily. As you add and rearrange grade items, you may struggle with how to value each new course component relative to the existing components, and the result can be assignments worth 32.25 points as part of a category worth 25% while other assignments are worth 11 points as part of a category worth 50%. Only a math whiz can work out the value. This kind of grading adds more work for you. Find a way to simplify.

Understand the gradebook settings you choose
Best practice for most instructors is to use the default settings in Moodle. Generally, the default settings were chosen because they cause the fewest problems and work the best for the most common grading schemes. If you change the default settings, be sure you understand what the settings do. For example, if you choose to exclude hidden grade items from the course total grade in Moodle, you should understand that the students will see a different course total grade than you see. The students will see a course total that does not include hidden grade items in the calculation, but you will see the course total grades including hidden grade items in the calculation. Be aware.

For more information on using the Moodle gradebook, visit the CeTEAL website (coastal.edu/ceteal) to sign up for a Moodle Gradebook training session or a Moodle Gradebook Workshop Drop-in session. Additional Moodle resources can be found in the Moodle Guide for Faculty (libguides.coastal.edu/moodlefaculty).
To see our complete faculty development schedule, visit coastal.edu/ceteal.
From the Director

Dodi Hodges, Ph.D., Director of CeTEAL

In this issue of the CeTEAL newsletter, faculty and staff share information and strategies for recognizing and respecting the diversity of our student population. You will read about strategies for making classrooms inclusive, advising international students and supporting diversity on campus. Identifying and thinking about diversity in the classroom, and then talking about and accepting differences and how they impact the classroom, enables instructors and students to see the classroom as an inclusive place. We know that classrooms must be a place of respect, trust and openness to new ideas to improve student learning.

Our campus is growing in numbers and diversity. We need to think about how we can reach all of our students to help them learn. Yes, I agree that college is a privilege and that not ALL students belong here. Yes, I also agree that the students who come to Coastal Carolina University are here to learn. Otherwise, why bother?

Some students come better prepared for a particular curriculum than others, and some come prepared for all the learning opportunities the University offers. That is life... humanity. We are all unique and different and come to the same experience with a variety of knowledge. We come with different gifts. The wider the variety of gifts, the more we all learn. I hope you enjoy the many perspectives presented in this issue of the CeTEAL News.

Have a great summer!

Interested in Sharing Your Research with the Campus Community?

In our final newsletter for 2014, we published articles from faculty describing their current research. The "research" issue was well-received, and we would like to make research an annual topic.

If you are interested in sharing information on your current research with your fellow faculty members, please contact Tracy Gaskin at cetealnews@coastal.edu.

Are you interested in teaching a session for CeTEAL?

We are always looking for faculty and staff to share their expertise. If you are interested in sharing a new technology, successful teaching strategy, quality online course design, or other topic of faculty interest, please contact Tracy Gaskin at tgaskin@coastal.edu or Jenn Shinaberger at jshinabe@coastal.edu.

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CeTEAL Online Resources

- coastal.edu/ceteal
- libguides.coastal.edu/moodlefaculty
- libguides.coastal.edu/afo
- libguides.coastal.edu/contingency

CeTEAL Advisory Board

The CeTEAL Advisory Board meets quarterly to review CeTEAL activities, plans and policies. The members are active participants in assisting the center with teaching, scholarship and leadership sessions, seminars and other events, such as New Faculty Orientation and the New Faculty Seminar Series.

Louis Keiner - College of Science
Margaret Fain - Kimbel Library
Malvin Porter - College of Education
Elizabeth Howie - College of Humanities and Fine Arts
Marvin Keene - College of Business
Denise Davis - Academic Adviser

To contribute to the CeTEAL newsletter, email: cetealnews@coastal.edu