

Curricular Transformation
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These are guiding principles and cautionary notes from the Curriculum Transformation cluster presented at the final plenary during the second annual Bildner Family Foundation Campus Diversity Summer Institute.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES/CAUTIONARY NOTES

- Developing curricular transformation through faculty development-particularly through arts and books

Example: Story telling with artifact – stories can be revealing and they can force the class to think about each other in new ways. This tool was used in a faculty development seminar for Bildner faculty staff at Bloomfield, which had 13 participants. During the seminar, art emerged as a catalyst for story telling and dialogue, which has been successful in classroom settings as a good group-building tool. *(Mark Jackson, Bloomfield)*

Example: Educative dialogue with a theatre group – This tool can help build trust by maintaining one’s individuality with whatever they are doing as part of a group as well as develop empathetic knowledge. A successful example is the “Mile Walkers Theater Group,” where one walks a mile in another’s shoes. *(Fleurette King, Princeton)*

Example: Mount Siani Theatre group – This group creates interpersonal issues to view and then discuss, so students can engage with those issues. *(Monica Devanas, Rutgers, New Brunswick)*

- Constructing and identifying stakeholders
Who is supporting?
Who is opposed?
Who is ambivalent?
How do we interface with different focus groups and work together to build something together with stakeholders – curriculum committees, master educators guild, students, faculty, staff, administrators. *(Robert Like, UMDNJ)*
- Understanding the environment is crucial step.
- Tying to existing programs particularly those supported by provosts.
- Using campus centers such as Faculty Centers for Teaching and Learning where there is expertise and a safe place try new things as well as resources for pedagogy, on-line resources, group building emphasis, and compilation of other campus resources. *(Princeton, Rowan, Rutgers NB, Bloomfield, County College of Morris)*
- Incorporating dialogue programs in the curriculum by training moderators and facilitators, who receive credit for their work. These programs engage students in the classroom and provide a structured way to approach group discussions. *(Fleurette King, Princeton)*

- Looking to the community as a resource curriculum transformation.
Example: County College of Morris formed a community group to examine issues that effect the community which included several members from college such as director of NOW, Islamic representation, and Hispanic representation. This community group has not been used for curriculum transformation yet, but it has the potential for asking questions that identify issues that the community believes the college should be dealing with (*Laura Parker, County College of Morris*)

Example: Rutgers Newark uses Newark City as a classroom. The Institute for Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience is trying to build partnerships between urban community and college community by enabling school children to do oral histories in their own communities that sponsored by non-profit groups. Faculty train school children to do oral histories and then use them to share their work in interpretive ways photographs, video, journaling, etc. (*Jamie Lew, Rutgers, Newark*)

Idea: Connecting with work force development programs, community based organizations that work with people to help improve their job skills

- Drawing on faculty connections who have a parent or know a person with disability who can co-teach with faculty about those courses. (*Robert Like, UMDNJ*)
- Demonstrating the success of the project to administrators – Bergen Community College is keeping the president excited about it (*Carole Miele, Bergen Community College*)
- Establishing common ground where many faculty could come together on content issues and creating dialogue. Centers and institutes can provide a forum and a space to come together and work on these issues together and build helpful connections between junior and senior faculty to form a natural mentorships.
- Promoting the value of research in curricular transformation such as how it can be useful in a curriculum vitae.
- Funding faculty to do transformational work such as developing modules that can be used across the campus (e.g., Intercultural Fellows program at Rutgers)

CHALLENGES

- The sanctity of academics it is hard for co-curricular to cross the academic boundaries – the academic side lacks awareness of the value of co-curricular activities.
- Transformation is rooted social justice principles.
- Modules of traditions can constrain institutional transformation.
- Connections (or lack thereof) between diversity work and tenure: Does this work facilitate the tenure process for junior faculty- tenure pressure.
- How can we teach what we are not? – The challenge of whites who teach African studies, but live in a tenure system that expects Africans to teach from an afro-centric point of view.
- The resistance to the transformation process.

- Allies and resisters-- Think strategically about who should be included in the transformation work – early adopters, mainstream, slow adopters.
- New personnel doing diversity work that is causing conflict with the established personnel, possibly a problem of lack institutional history.
- “Is this on the test?” resistance of students to the discussions, “just the facts, please.”
- The pedagogy has less importance than the content, issue of content coverage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS

- All Bildner Faculty Day- bring all Bildner participants in teaching roles and Bildner team members from all of the institutions together in one location. Start with a sharing of what each faculty is doing, share pedagogies, have a plenary with lunch, then afternoon for making cross-institutional collaborations. It could be followed-up with a virtual conference or continuous communication via WebCT or Blackboard.
- Resource sharing such as the modules that are formed through the Bildner project.
- Bildner exchange faculty across the Bildner campuses.
- Bildner reading list for the benefit of summer reading programs.
- Bildner Online Book Club.
- Viewing list for television and other multimedia sources.
- Multi-institutional Project on the affective part of the intellectual transformation.
- Bildner Publications- peer review, web journal, Diversity Digest, course collections, headline and leaders for the entire program.
- Bildner students from many campuses together to do co-curricular trips and/or events.
- New Jersey Bus Tour – maybe over a spring break.
- Bildner Student Summer Institute- dialogue training, projects that aren’t necessarily program specific, establish exchange program.