

Inclusive Elements for Curriculum Design

UNDERSTAND THE LENS OF YOUR IDENTITY

Understanding your own values, norms and beliefs and how they impact your approach to curriculum design takes time. The lens of identity includes aspects like: your race, life experiences, where you grew up, your age, your gender, your class, where your parents are from, who you are attracted to, what you do for work, etc., and are tangled together in a web that informs who you are and how other people perceive you.

Working towards inclusion means that you will consider the ways you have access to power through the ways aspects of your identity are privileged in society. Then intentionally taking steps to ensure your design breaks down barriers and ways people are excluded.

THE LEARNERS CONTEXTS

Understanding who the students are and the various influences they might have on their learning contexts helps create a more inclusive learning experience. One way to better understand your students is to send an informal needs assessment out to the class asking about learning preferences, accommodation requirements, and /or if there is anything they wish to share.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a metaphor for the ways that multiple forms of inequality sometimes compound and create obstacles that are not understood through a singular lens of identity or analysis. For example a Black woman is more likely to experience discrimination in the form of racism and sexism, where as a Black man will experience racism. When designing curriculum elements it can be tempting to consider singular social categories, and treat race, ability, gender, class and so on as stand alone issues. However, as Audre Lorde once said "there is no such thing as a single issue struggle, because we do not live single issue lives."

INCLUSIVE DESIGN TAKES TIME

Given the need to work on understanding bias, understanding the learners context and working with a committee, team or community this means you want to budget in extra time for your design project. Also, consider the curriculum as living, be willing to always receive and integrate feedback. This way it can be ok to pilot less than perfect iterations if you are taking the position that your work is always in progress.

References:

Crenshaw, K. (2018). What is Intersectionality? National Association of Independent Schools. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc>

Lorde, A. (1982). *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Berkeley: Crossing Press

