

## Intercultural Pedagogy and Course Design: Strategies

We have identified strategies from a selection of readings that can be incorporated into our teaching practice:

### I. Maximize and Facilitate Purposeful Interaction

- **Establish and Reinforce Ground Rules for Interaction** (Ambrose *et al.*, 2010.)  
Develop ground rules for interaction with students' input, and explicitly incorporate them into group work, peer review activities, and routine exercises. Consider sharing assessment rubrics as ground rules for feedback, and have students practice by evaluating their own or others' work based on the stated criteria (183-184).
- **Explicitly Identify Relevant Intercultural Skills, Behaviors, and Attitudes in the Course Syllabus** (Lee *et al.*, 2012.)  
Emphasize the role of perspective-taking and reflection on positionality in course outcomes. Describe the intended course climate and qualities of participation. Use language that clearly "establishes how the course will invite students to play an active role in the conversation and learning process" (78-79).
- **Model and Promote Active Listening Techniques** (Lee *et al.*, 2012.)  
Design interactive activities in a way that allows students to practice active listening and interpretive skills, work to facilitate without presiding over group or class discussion, and incorporate periods of silence or written reflection before large- and small- group discussions so as to accommodate diverse styles of participation (98-100).
- **Reduce Anonymity by Building Familiarity** (Ambrose *et al.*, 2010.)  
In large classes, make an effort to learn students' names, provide opportunities for students to learn each other's names, invite students to office hours, go to a student's theater production or sports event, etc (182-183).
- **Incorporate Small-Group Work with Diverse Participation** (Lee *et al.* 2012.)  
Organize class sessions to promote purposeful interaction: try initiating with small-group work instead of lecture, incorporating individual reflective writing and active listening exercises prior to collaborative activities, etc. Finally, work to disrupt students' self-grouping habits in assembling groups, to make explicit the benefits and outcomes of collaborative learning in explanations of group activities, and to repeatedly assess how groups are functioning (70-73, 89-94).

## II. Value Assets Students Bring into the Classroom

- **Use Multiple and Diverse Examples** (Ambrose *et al.*, 2010.)  
“Plan examples that speak to both sexes, work across cultures, and relate to people from various socioeconomic statuses, traditional age as well as adult returning students. This...can help students feel connected to the content, that they belong in the course or field, and reinforce their developing sense of competence and purpose” (183).
- **Use Narrative Reflection to Incorporate Experiential Knowledge** (Lee *et al.*, 2012.)  
Design activities that allow students to draw on their diverse backgrounds and experiences in engaging a course concept, object, or goal. More than “stories for stories’ sake,” narrative reflection can connect “affective experiences and cognitive frames in a way that propels intercultural competence” in the service of course objectives (73-78).
- **Question Students and Use Group Debriefing** (Johnson-Bailey and Lee, 2005.)  
Planned debriefing after moments in which class dynamics are exposed allows “students to reflect on, attend to, and make sense of their here-and-now behaviors.” This allows instructor and students to unpack taken-for-granted power structures in the class, to ask who is invited to talk and whose talk is valued, and to further reflect on and discuss the behaviors and values that constitute a productive course climate (118-119).

## III. Balance Support and Dissonance

- **Turn Discord and Tension into Learning Opportunities** (Ambrose *et al.*, 2010.)  
“Students need to learn that debate, tension, discord, and cognitive dissonance are all opportunities to expand one's perspective, delve deeper into a topic, better understand opposing views...do not foreclose a discussion just because tensions are running high; rather, funnel those emotions into useful dialogue” (186). As moments of discomfort or tension arise, be sure give adequate time and space to naming and discussing the anxiety in the room.
- **Facilitate the Process of Understanding New and Contradictory Knowledge** (Johnson-Bailey and Lee, 2005.)  
Actively acknowledge students’ difficulty in processing new and contradictory knowledge, and be transparent about its value. Personally describe and/or model the process of coming to new understandings so students become familiar with the productive aspects of the process (120).

- **Model the Balance Between Suspending Judgment and Constructive Critique** (Lee *et al.*, 2012.)  
 “Suspending judgment is in fact a prerequisite for critical thinking, since effective critique depends on a comprehensive understanding of a problem or issue within a context.”  
 Work to model this process by verifying comprehension before providing a critique of claims or perspectives heard in class, and by making efforts to validate the individual when making evaluations about particular statements, behaviors, or beliefs (94-98).
- **Make Uncertainty Safe** (Ambrose *et al.*, 2010.)  
 Interactions with students in class should “validate different viewpoints, even unpopular ones. Explicitly let students know that part of critical thinking is to embrace complexity rather than oversimplify matters” (181). In service of this goal, resist asking questions with a single right answer so multiple voices can be heard without fear of being wrong. Create a course structure that makes apparent how “knowledge is generated and contested over time,” by highlighting authors’ and/or researchers’ labor, revealing the processual thinking in well-established claims, and acknowledging historical debates surrounding knowledge-making.

### Works Cited

Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). “Why Do Student Development and Course Climate Matter for Student Learning?.” In *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1-22.

Johnson-Bailey, J., & Lee, M. (2005). “Women of Color in the Academy: Where's Our Authority in the Classroom?” *Feminist Teacher*, 15(2), 111–22.

Lee, A., Poch, R., Shaw, M., & Williams, R. D. (2012). “Developing a Pedagogy That Supports Intercultural Competence.” *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 38(2), 45–63.