Teaching about Difference and Power: A Guide for Instructors

# Teaching about Difference and Power: A Guide for Instructors

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Part III.  DIA Courses and Inclusive Teaching at
UO

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Drawing on the insights by the Working Group on Intercultural and Inclusive Teaching, the Difference, Inequality, and Agency faculty learning and leadership community, and especially Alison Gash, Julie Heffernan, Michelle McKinley, and Avinnash Tiwari, who have led aspects of faculty teaching development related to US: DIA at the University of Oregon.

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I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.... Your silence will not protect you.... What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?... The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken.

   – Audre Lorde (1984, 40, 41, 44)

I have been working to change the way I speak and write, to incorporate in the manner of telling a sense of place, of not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from, the multiple voices within me. I have confronted silence, inarticulateness. When I say, then, that these words emerge from suffering, I refer to that personal struggle to name that location from which I come to voice – that space of my theorizing... Language is also a place of struggle.

   – bell hooks (1990, 146)

I needed these words in my quest for wholeness, not only as a dark person but as a human being wrestling with a world that prides itself on being unrecognizable to humanity.... I needed a way to pull my thoughts and feelings together to say something that explained to myself the world in which I lived.

   – Bettina Love (2019, 124)

In a world constantly teetering on the brink of disaster, even annihilation, I find myself on the front lines doing battle, a battle often fought with the very serious tool of humour, for a future truly worthy of human beings.... My commitment is to truth. And the *seemingly* ugly, the *seemingly* distasteful, the *seemingly* common, when developed in artistic truth, becomes beautiful.

   – Sarah E. Wright (1993, viii)

And even if they had been able to read, in the history books they would have found themselves only in the blank spaces between the lines, in the dashes, the pauses between commas, semicolons, colons, in the microcosmic shadow world between full stops. Between the interstices of every date on which a deed was done, they haunted the pages, imprisoned in mute anonymity, the done-tos who had made possible the deed.

– Sylvia Wynter (1962/2010, 54)


first, the sound. you hear it even if no one else does. even if you wake and already don't remember. second, the seconds. you feel the up-tick in your heart bringing you back into time. third, the rise. as if you are pulled vertical across the floor and before you know it you have taken several steps. it is a minute or so before you are you as you know you. in the rising you could be any of us.

– Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2020, 11)

LEE RUMBARGER

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In fall 2015, The UO Black Student Task Force released a list of demands meant to achieve greater faculty and student diversity and equity as a matter of urgency and improve the social and intellectual climate on campus for students and faculty of color. The group's demands included making Ethnic Studies 101 a graduation requirement. Task Force members wrote that the course would ensure all students "learn about the importance of United States history in the context of social inequality and injustice, while emphasizing the often overlooked histories of African-American as well as the histories of other underrepresented sub-groups in the United States" and offer students "skills to navigate the diversifying world."

This demand set in motion a re-examination of UO's Multicultural Requirement, which had been in place since 1994 and required students take two courses select from any two of three categories— American Cultures; Identity, Pluralism, & Tolerance; and International Cultures. A Joint Committee of the University of Oregon Committee on Courses and Undergraduate Council recommended in 2016 that these categories be revised to reflect "current scholarship in the field of critical multicultural education" and address an "imbalance in the categories" that means most UO students do not take American Cultures (AC) courses and, thus, "are not exposed to the critical conversations occurring in AC courses addressing a critical analysis of students' cultural context and assumptions." Similarly, a faculty, student, and administrative working group formed to consider the demand for Ethnic Studies 101 and recommended UO require a U.S. focused course on "difference, power, discrimination, and resistance" with teaching shared across the university's schools and colleges.

Ultimately two faculty working groups—the Working Group on Intercultural and Inclusive Teaching and the Difference, Inequality, and Agency faculty learning and leadership community, both organized through the Teaching Engagement Program—recommended a simplified cultural and equity literacy requirement including one United States: Difference, Inequality and Agency course and one Global Perspectives course, and articulated clear goals for student learning, including about listening, self-reflection, and ethical participation in cross-perspective dialogue. The faculty groups strongly endorsed ongoing faculty teaching development and leadership across disciplines. The University Senate passed this legislation in Spring 2019 and the US: DIA requirement has been in place for undergraduate since Fall 2019.

Faculty have continued to come together around this important teaching and learning, including through three UO Summer Teaching Institutes and other workshops and conversations. This guide and TEP's ongoing work and support in this area are inspired by and dedicated to these faculty colleagues.

PART I

# THE US: DIFFERENCE, INEQUALITY & AGENCY REQUIREMENT

# I.

Students at the University of Oregon must complete one course in the US: DIA category (hereafter DIA), along with one course in the Global Perspectives category, in order to fulfill UO's Cultural Literacy requirement for Core Education. The stated purpose of the DIA category requirement is to "*develop students' analytical and reflective capacities to help them understand and ethically engage with the ongoing (cultural, economic, political, social, etc.) power imbalances that have shaped and continue to shape the United States.*" The DIA category requirement is thus meant to ensure that all students who graduate from the University of Oregon have completed at least one course that helps them understand power dynamics shaping inequalities in the United States and begin to learn skills of critical analysis, reflection, and ethical interaction for engaging these dynamics.

### Curriculum Criteria

The DIA category requires DIA courses to meet the following criteria:

1. Incorporation of "scholarship, cultural production, perspectives, and voices from members of communities historically marginalized by...legacies of inequality."
2. Engagement that addresses each of the following:

   - Intersecting aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, indigeneity, national origin, religion, or ability.
   - The uses of power to classify, rank, and marginalize on the basis of these aspects of identity, as well as considerations of agency on the part of marginalized groups.
   - Historical structures, contemporary structures, forms of knowledge, cultural practices, or ideologies that

perpetuate or change the distribution of power in society.

3. Occasion to undertake one or more of the following:

   ◦ Teach respectful listening and tools for ethical dialogue in order to expand students' abilities to practice civil conversation and engage with deeply felt or controversial issues.

Facilitate student reflection on their own multiple identifications and on how those identifications are formed and located in relation to power.[1]

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1. The specific language of the DIA category is found in Section 2.2 of the UO Senate legislation that established the requirement: https://senate.uoregon.edu/senate-motions/us1718-18-repeal-multicultural-requirement-and-introduction-us-difference-inequality

# 2.

As instructors interpret and apply the DIA criteria in language, concepts, and methods appropriate in their disciplines and fields of study, it may be helpful to know more about the ideas that informed the creation of the DIA requirement and criteria, which are briefly summarized below.

> Inclusion of some content that features "scholarship, cultural production, perspectives, and voices from members of communities historically marginalized by...legacies of inequality."

The above criterion is intended to foreground those who have experienced marginalization as a result of power imbalances and inequality so that students can *learn from* them and not merely "about" them. In addition, the intent is to have DIA courses include a range of different types of knowledge as valid sources of evidence and insight for the study of society.

> Engagement that addresses each of the following:
>
> - "Intersecting aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status,

indigeneity, national origin, religion, or ability.
- The uses of power to classify, rank, and marginalize on the basis of these aspects of identity, as well as considerations of agency on the part of marginalized groups.
- Historical structures, contemporary structures, forms of knowledge, cultural practices, or ideologies that perpetuate or change the distribution of power in society."

The intent of the above set of three criteria is to help students learn how power operates to shape society in unequal ways, including consideration of how those marginalized by inequality exert agency. Specifically, the criterion on "intersecting aspects of identity" is intended to help students learn that social identity is multiple, constituted by a variety of aspects, and not reducible to a single, "essential" characteristic. Moreover, the intention is for students to learn that power shapes people's lives unevenly across these different aspects, such that some aspects of identity confer privileges and benefits, whereas others bring oppression and harms. The idea is that consideration of the intersecting forces of power across multiple identities ("intersectionality") is necessary in order to understand a person's or group's social position and experiences of privilege and inequality, and this position and experience is in dynamic relation with the positions and experiences of others.

The criterion on "uses of power" helps students learn the specific ways that power actually works across multiple social identities, as noted. The focus is on how certain people or groups use (or even construct) different aspects of identity ("difference") to establish hierarchies of value that privilege some identities and experiences over others, which in turn is used to "justify" inequalities. This

criterion is also intended to provide students with opportunity to learn how those whose identities or experiences are marginalized resist dominating power or initiate movements for change.

The criterion on "structures" helps students learn about how the specific uses of power are organized and instituted as social forces – and not merely as individual prejudices or attitudes – that operate in various ways (as "structures," "forms of knowledge," "practices," etc.) to reproduce or alter how power is distributed unevenly across society. A related intent is to help students learn that power and its effects – such as inequality – are not "natural" or "fixed" but socially produced, dynamic, and changeable.

Occasion to undertake one or more of the following:

- "Teach respectful listening and tools for ethical dialogues in order to expand students' abilities to practice civil conversation and engage with deeply felt or controversial issues.
- Facilitate student reflection on their own multiple social identifications and on how these identifications are formed and located in relation to power."

The final two criteria above – instructors must include **at least one** in their DIA course – are intended to provide students with an opportunity to learn and practice specific, important skills of cultural and equity literacy. The first criterion on "listening" and "dialogue" is intended to help students develop their capacity for interacting with diverse others on important social issues. This entails learning and practicing how to enter into discussion with others about salient, often charged issues, and how to participate

ethically across social differences.  An ability to listen to others' ideas and views charitably, and to articulate one's own ideas productively – with care, self-awareness, and evidence – are intended outcomes of developing this capacity.

The criterion on "student reflection" is intended to help students develop their capacity for critical examination of their own social identities in relation to power, and how power mediates their relationships with others. Empathy for others and an ability to identify strategic points of intervention to make change happen to promote equity, are intended outcomes of developing this capacity.

# 3.

Faculty wanting to propose a course for the US: DIA requirement should [review the Core Education Course Approval Process page](#). Use the templates provided for the course approval process, which are found at the link just provided. The templates provide a format for indicating how a course meets the DIA criteria. Please note that the template form for the US: DIA requirement does not include a specific area where an instructor indicates content from members of historically marginalized communities. However, specific references to this content can be made in the descriptions for how the course meets the other criteria indicated. The annotated CourseLeaf form at the above link is also very useful to review and have on hand when completing the submission process. TEP is happy to assist instructors and departments and programs with the course proposal and submission process.

# 4.

Instructors of DIA courses can use the following statement on their course syllabus to articulate the purpose and learning goals of a DIA course:

> This course fulfills the *United States: Difference, Inequality, and* Agency category of the Cultural Literacy Core Education requirement, a requirement informed by UO student activism. It is meant to develop students' analytical and reflective capacities to help them understand and ethically engage with the ongoing (cultural, economic, political, social, etc.) power imbalances that have shaped and continue to shape the United States. In addition to considering the scholarship, cultural production, perspectives, and voices from members of historically marginalized communities, students in DIA courses:
>
> 1. **Inquire** into intersecting aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, indigeneity, national origin, religion, or ability.
> 2. **Analyze** uses of power to marginalize on the basis of identity, as well as responses and agency on the part of marginalized groups.
> 3. **Examine** historical and contemporary structures, forms of knowledge, cultural practices, or ideologies that perpetuate or change the distribution of power in society.

and undertake one or more of the following:

1. **Reflect** on one's own individual identifications and how these are connected to systems of power.
2. **Practice respectful listening and ethical dialogue** around deeply felt or controversial issues.

# DESIGNING A DIA COURSE

# 5.

L. Dee Fink (2013) reminds us that the initial phase of course design starts with consideration of important "situational factors" that can impact how well the class works. That is, designing a course that aims to provide students with significant learning experiences involves more than simply assembling a list of topics or a list of activities. In addition to content and teaching methods, other important factors include who students are and what kinds of experiences, interests, knowledges, skills, and aspirations they bring to the course. Similarly, instructors must consider who we are and what we are bringing into relationship with our students, the course content, and the methods we use. Plus, teaching and learning is part of larger contexts, including our academic departments and the university, our scholarly fields of study, our local communities and the wider social systems in which we are nested, and the historical legacies shaping these.

## Important Situational Factors to Consider

One way to explore the important factors noted above is to engage in reflection and consider how they work together as the necessary conditions for critically informed, inclusive teaching. The following graphic, adapted from Bailey Jackson (see Marchesani and Adams, 1992), articulates these factors and their interrelationships:
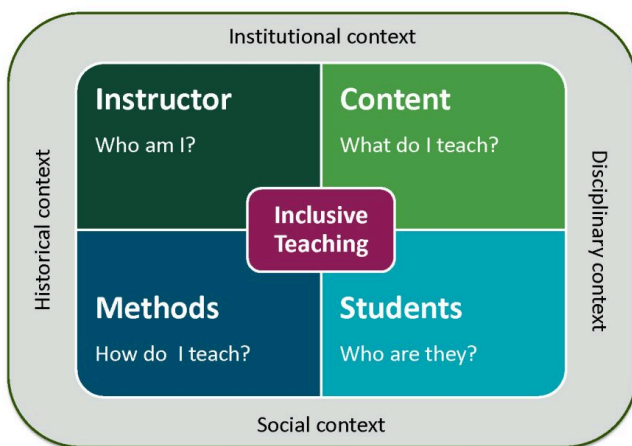
Adapted from Marchesani, Linda S. and Maurianne Adams. "Dynamics of Diversity in the Teaching-Learning Process: A Faculty Development Model for Analysis and Action." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 52 (Winter 1992): 9-20. The authors cite an unpublished paper by B. W. Jackson as the source of this model.

Specific questions to reflect on include the following:

*Who am I?* What assumptions do I bring to my teaching; what assumptions do I make about students? How has my own background shaped or enabled my intellectual journey? Do I find ways for my students to know me as a person with hopes, curiosities, even failures? Do they understand how to, and feel *invited* to, address and talk with me? How do my social identities position me in relation to my students, my institution, my field of study, etc.?

*Who are my students? How will I find out?* Do I know

at least some of my students' names? What strengths, anxieties, experiences, and identities do they bring to our work together? Can I make a place for those strengths, experiences, and identities to be clear assets in my classroom? Can I help relieve students' anxieties or fears? What are my students' own goals for their learning? How do they learn well? Do they feel anonymous? Like they don't belong in my classroom? How can I counteract those feelings and build their sense of connection and agency?

*What content and information will I convey?* Does my course material reflect the diversity of the field, including the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of its scholars and practitioners? More broadly, do I present knowledge as evolving and developed through heterogeneous conversation? Or are "non-traditional" topics and voices marginalized? Do I build a bridge between my content and my students' lives—underscoring its possible urgency or beauty or value for *them*? Do I explicitly break down the process of expert thinking to invite them in?

*What teaching methods will I employ?* Am I using a range of strategies and modes of student engagement? What values do my methods signal to students? Do I draw on different kinds of talents and experiences my students bring to the class? Am I giving students low-stakes chances to practice, receive feedback, and reflect, and do I adjust my approach to respond to trends in their understanding? Do I engage with the scholarship of teaching and learning in my field? Am I

aware of, and draw upon, anti-oppressive pedagogies pertinent to my teaching and learning context?

*How are relevant contexts shaping my course?* How has the history of my field or this particular course shaped what is included in its content, how it is taught, and which kinds of learners are centered in it, and which might be marginalized or excluded? How has this course evolved over time, and in what ways – and for what reasons – has it been altered or adapted to its current form? Which trends in my discipline, field of study, or other pertinent scholarly contexts should I be considering for how I organize and teach my course? Are there any departmental or institutional expectations or initiatives that might be influencing the aims, structure, or curricular elements of the course? What is happening socially, politically, economically, culturally, etc. in my community, region or nation that is related to the content of my course or might be affecting me or my students' sense of wellbeing? How should I bring such contexts into the class?

Reflecting critically and honestly on the above questions can help identify gaps in our teaching or content knowledge and thus highlight areas for enhancing our own learning and skills; generate a list of priorities for emphasis in our course aims or organization and thus center certain questions or goals more strategically; and clear the ground for more informed, inclusive decision-making. For DIA courses in particular, mindful engagement with these situational factors can help make power dynamics more visible and navigable; it can also help uncover assumptions, ideas, structures, or practices that may seem "natural" or "obvious" but, upon further

consideration, might be directing our teaching in certain ways that work against our intentions or interests, and those of our students (Brookfield 2017, 9-19). As Stephen Brookfield notes, "critically reflective teachers try to understand the power dynamics of their classrooms and what counts as a justifiable exercise of teacher power" (1997, 19). That is, DIA instructors can productively use virtually the same criteria their courses seek to enact for student learning – identities, power, structures, agency, reflection – as critical lenses for initiating the DIA course design process. Such critically reflective work can help instructors enhance their cultural and equity literacy and instructional fluency with DIA learning goals. This in turn bolsters instructors' capacities to engage students in DIA learning.[1]

1. For more background on equity literacy, see Gorski and Swalwell (2015). They identify four important abilities that underpin equity literacy: "Recognize even subtle forms of bias, discrimination, and inequity; Respond to bias, discrimination, and inequity in a thoughtful and equitable manner; Redress bias, discrimination, and inequity, not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also by studying the ways in which bigger social change happens; Cultivate and sustain bias-free and discrimination-free communities, which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone in a civil society" (37).

# 6.

Fink (2013) also suggests that instructors need to ask what the special pedagogical challenge of a course might be, that is, what situation might challenge students and the instructor in their desire to make a course a meaningful learning experience? In some cases, such a challenge might be the most important situational factor to consider when designing a course. Although any of the situational factors noted above might present challenges for a particular course, one special pedagogical challenge that is relevant for virtually every DIA course, regardless of its specific content or methods, or the particular students or instructor for a given term, concerns the *complex emotional experiences that accompany the rigorous inquiry* students undertake, and instructors facilitate, when engaging issues of difference, inequality, and agency. Preparing for the emotional work of DIA teaching and learning, therefore, is an essential aspect of DIA course design. This includes anticipating student experiences and our own experiences as instructors.[1]

To recall, the primary purpose of DIA courses is to engage students in illuminating the unequal distribution of power across different social groups, how this happens, and why it matters. Such inquiry often brings into focus who wins in terms of privileges and benefits, who loses in terms of oppression and harms, and which interests might be vested in perpetuating such inequality whereas others resist it and work for social change. As the different social identities, positions, histories, and experiences – and the role of power in shaping them – come into the spotlight for scrutiny, students will inevitably find themselves "located" in the map of

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1. A separate instructional guide on instructor wellbeing in DIA teaching is forthcoming.

power imbalances, patterns of inequality, and forces of perpetuation or change that emerge. Indeed, in many DIA courses, students will be asked to reflect explicitly on their own "multiple social identifications and on how those identifications are formed and located in relation to power," as stipulated by the DIA requirement. Even in courses that do not require such reflective inquiry, it is almost certain that students are engaging in it in some fashion – and this includes their relation to the content and to the instructor's power as teacher, positioned in the university, community, and society at large, with multiple social identities at play. In and through such reflection students make sense of things and develop meaning and understanding.

Yet as James D. Anderson notes about race, for example, "we tend to acquire meanings about race not out of conscious reflection based on scholarship, but through conventional wisdom that is deeply entrenched in our culture…. We arrive at nothing short of confusion, however, when we are pressed to define race" (Anderson 1994, 87). At a predominantly white institution such as the University of Oregon, many students may come from more or less racially homogenous backgrounds and have little experience interacting with racialized others or considering themselves in racial terms. Indeed, many have learned the "conventional wisdom" of a color-blind perspective in which they believe themselves to be nonracist, inclusive, and well-intentioned in their thoughts and actions. Most have not had to enter situations where they have to think about or discuss racism seriously, let alone "define" race, nor have they had to confront their own racial assumptions and biases. It is also easy enough at a mostly white campus, in a mostly white community and state, for them to avoid encounters that might risk their being "called out" for being wrong, making a mistake, or being exposed for racist behaviors. As a consequence, many white students' tolerance for racial stress can be quite low, a state of being that Robin DiAngelo calls "white fragility," in which "even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" that "function to reinstate white racial

equilibrium" (DiAngelo 2011, 54). Similar presuppositions and tendencies also often inform many students' experiences and thinking regarding other salient social identity categories.

When entering into a DIA classroom, however, students are called to engage in "conscious reflection based on scholarship" and based on the different experiences of diverse others, "pressed" to define social categories in new or unfamiliar ways, and encouraged to develop capacities for navigating a social reality that is more complex than previously thought. This process of learning can result in a state of "confusion," as Anderson puts it, because students may find that their predominant assumptions, beliefs, and understandings about social reality, and their tacit knowledge of how to behave socially, are suddenly called into question.[2] The confusion can be amplified as students encounter powerful critiques of power and inequality that implicate the very structures, practices or forms of knowledge that they take for "common sense" or the "way things are." The confusion is often mixed with surprise or upsetting feelings, especially among those from more privileged social groups and backgrounds, who typically have not had to think much, if at all, about inequality or how others experience it; rarely if ever considered how power has shaped their experiences and senses of social identity; and not had privileges and benefits they take for granted suddenly highlighted as inequities. As Megan Boler and Michalinos Zembylas note, engaging students in learning about difference, power, and inequality "often means asking students to

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2. Boler and Zembylas (2003), Goldsmith (2006), and Kernahan (2019) discuss a number of dominant cultural myths and ideologies that many students, especially white students, commonly bring to DIA-related courses. These include: colorblind racism, simple moral dichotomies, cognitive simplification of complex issues, equal opportunity, meritocracy, celebrate/tolerate all differences equally, everyone is really the same underneath, and biological differences explain social inequalities.

radically reevaluate their worldviews," which "requires not only cognitive but emotional labor" (Boler and Zembylas 2003, 111). Not just what students think, but also what they feel, can be challenged seriously in and through the process of DIA learning, resulting in emotional discomfort. To experience learning in this way can thus generate a range of feelings and responses, from confusion and anxiety to upset and anger to empowerment and action (Kumashiro 2002, 74).

DIA instructors face another aspect of this challenge, which concerns the learning process and emotional experiences of students in their courses whose social identities and life experiences are marginalized socially, including in educational settings. These students also experience some of the same emotional challenges noted above, although they can also experience certain impacts unique to their social situation, which makes a DIA course potentially extra validating or extra marginalizing. On the one hand, DIA learning might marginalize these students further if care is not taken to engage them as members of the learning community rather than as exemplars of certain social identity categories or representatives of entire social groups. This can happen if other students or instructors turn the spotlight of scrutiny onto these individual students, objectifying them as if they are "embedded experts" and expecting them to share unique insights that "teach" others in the class. This "spotlight effect" (Crosby, King, and Savitsky, 2014) is heightened in classrooms where a particular student might be the only person with a particular social identity – an experience of "onlyness," as Shaun Harper (2013) puts it. Such moves can be the result of well-meaning intentions or a desire to learn directly from someone who has potentially experienced the underside of inequality, but it reduces students to be tokens of types, not full participating members of the learning community who get to choose how and when they'll contribute. Students can be marginalized in other ways, too, for example by being ignored as if they weren't there or having their contributions go unacknowledged or any strong emotions they

exhibit being dismissed as "whining" or unfounded. This can happen when other students are fearful of causing upset or engaging in ways that might result in being "called out" for a mistake, as noted above; it is better, they might surmise, to avoid interaction with an "other" who might issue a challenge, thus they reduce the other to invisibility. Some students marginalized in this fashion may experience a heightened sense of powerlessness or choose to withdrawal (Kernahan 2019, 57-58). Or students may be targeted and subjected to veiled or explicit threats, as other students' temperatures rise and possibly get directed their way in aggressive fashion. These are only a few examples of situations or behaviors that can provoke strong emotions in students whose presence is being objectified, made invisible, or threatened. In effect, they are being reduced to very specific aspects of their identity, as if these are their essential characteristics. Such possibilities are not unique to DIA courses – they also occur in a variety of learning contexts across the university. Still, the nature of the content and modes of inquiry in DIA courses can increase the potential to undermine the learning process of students whose social identities and experiences are regularly marginalized in society.

On the other hand, DIA learning has a heightened potential to empower students as learners by valorizing their otherwise marginalized experiences as valuable sources of knowledge worth developing. Indeed, the DIA course may center and affirm marginalized identities and align the course to provide a structure of assignments – or opportunity to propose alternative assignments or different content to study – through which such knowledge can ground the pursuit of rigorous intellectual work, which the instructor in turn can support and guide. This can allow these students to engage issues of significant concern for them at a deeper level. In some circumstances, they may be able to establish lasting connections with the instructor or discipline, with the work done in the DIA course being a significant touchstone that animates their aspirations for future study or professional practice. In another vein, these students can contribute critical insights as part

of lively class discussions, challenging their peers to consider other perspectives and new ideas, and perhaps even changing how their peers think. To participate as part of a critical discourse community as an agent of knowledge production and transformation can be quite affirming.

In short, for many students, a DIA course can be challenging because it involves a mix of cognitive and emotional work of a complex kind that students may not have experienced previously in their learning. Moreover, at issue in this work is their understanding of who they are, their place in the world, and their uneven relationships with others, which raises the stakes. For some students, notably those who regularly experience marginality, DIA courses can present additional cognitive and emotional labor that can undermine their learning. But this labor can be validating if it valorizes their social identities and experiences as valuable sources of knowledge that they can use to ground inquiry and important intellectual projects, or if such labor has them electing to make significant class contributions that enhance everyone's learning.

For instructors, then, it is crucial to invite all students into the work of the course in a way that is transparent and honest about the cognitive and emotional rigors involved in DIA learning; about the likely inevitability of discomfort that comes with examination and reflection on difference, inequality, and agency; and about the potential promises and pitfalls of learning and practicing cultural and equity literacy skills. In so doing, instructors can reiterate the purpose of the DIA course requirement, noting that challenges, discomfort, stumbling blocks, etc. encountered along the way of learning are not signs that an instructor is out to chastise students' prevailing notions or evidence of an agenda to "convert" students to a particular perspective. Rather, such moments are indicators that the class has arrived in the thick of things, in the fraught territory through which they can engage in the hard work of developing their capacities for critical analysis and reflection, for ethical engagement, and thus for engaging with power in more skilled ways. Such forthright invitation can signal clearly to students that they

will not be let off the hook of DIA learning, but neither will they be left to flounder while doing so.  Being up front can begin to establish and cultivate trust, especially if it is coupled with a preview of how the learning opportunities in the course interconnect and inform each other, and of how they are grounded in a structure of support and care.

# 7.

In addition to careful consideration of situational factors that might impact a class, TEP encourages all faculty across the university to consider using the tool of aligned course design – sometimes called "backward design" – when designing and preparing to teach a course. This means the course has clear learning objectives that align with the course assessments, and these in turn align with specific activities and content that allow students to practice the various ways they will be assessed. A typical alignment sequence, then, might progress as follows:

- introduction of content or skill (e.g., a lecture, demonstration, reading, film, etc.);
- time inside or outside of class for students to engage with the content or practice the skill (e.g., discussion, experiment, annotation, application exercise, etc.);
- an assessment of students' learning (e.g., exam, quiz, paper, presentation, etc.), which allows an instructor to determine the extent to which students demonstrate achievement of a particular learning objective.

Not all assessment has to be evaluative for a grade – it can also be formative such as oral summary of a discussion, experiment debrief, in-class writing, office support hour meeting, etc. Many instructors will also include one or more reflective components along the way, which can also serve as formative assessment. Thinking about each of the criteria of the DIA requirement in a "backward design" way can also be helpful when submitting descriptions for course approval, as discussed above. TEP is available to assist with backward design and also regularly offers an "Aligned Course Design" workshop that provides an overview of the process.

There are a variety of good reasons for aligning the various components of a course in an explicit fashion. Indeed, instructors

can be more transparent with students about the aims of the course and the purposes for the various activities and requirements, which helps students understand why they are being asked to do things and why they matter. Having clear alignment also means instructors can progressively increase the rigor of the course in a structured, supportive way, effectively providing students with a map and viable trajectory for success in the class. This can help students prioritize their focus, time and energy, as well as maintain motivation and find balance as they navigate into more challenging, often unfamiliar content or analytical territory and the various emotions that arise as their anxiety increases. That is, pedagogy that structures and supports student learning can help turn the inevitable moments of cognitive confusion or emotional discomfort into anticipated threshold moments for significant learning, rather than surprising roadblocks that stop inquiry and reflection or deflect them into less productive or even harmful pathways, some of which were described above.

To reiterate, the key insight here is *to invite students into a clearly structured and supported process* for engaging with culturally different experiences, the rigors of DIA scholarship, and the hard cognitive and emotional work of developing effective cultural and equity literacy skills. Careful planning and clear organization – hallmarks of using the backward design process to align course components – can make a significant difference in helping instructors address the challenges of DIA teaching with more aplomb, thereby helping students learn DIA content, methods, and skills with more motivation and success.

Recall the DIA learning goals from Chapter 4 as you brainstorm ideas for how to align student engagement with each goal:

1. **Inquire** into intersecting aspects of identity

such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, indigeneity, national origin, religion, or ability.

2.  **Analyze** uses of power to marginalize on the basis of identity, as well as responses and agency on the part of marginalized groups.

3.  **Examine** historical and contemporary structures, forms of knowledge, cultural practices, or ideologies that perpetuate or change the distribution of power in society.

4.  **Reflect** on one's own individual identifications and how these are connected to systems of power.

5.  **Practice respectful listening and ethical dialogue** around deeply felt or controversial issues.

# 8.

Aligning the major components of a course can be an important step towards preparing a meaningful learning experience for students. Another helpful step is to adopt a pedagogical strategy for structuring learning engagement in the class. Following the insights of Brookfield and associates (2019) concerning race-based teaching, the following three approaches – grounded in principles of inclusion and belonging, transparency, rigor, and collaboration – are one possible way of doing this:
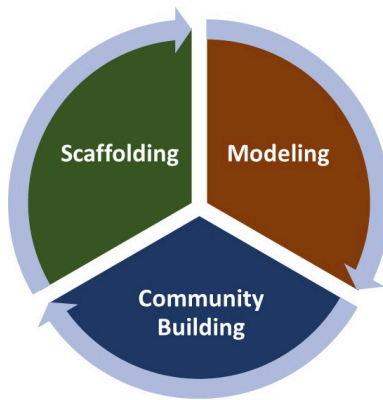


**Scaffolding**: This entails an organized and often sequential process of onboarding students onto a rigorous path of inquiry. For example, rather than throwing students into the thicket of intersectionality theory before they reflect on how it might apply to themselves or a specific case study, an instructor might first have students reflect on their own social positions using an activity such as "I Am From…" (Klein

2019). This could be followed by engagement with case study of a first-hand account of someone who has been marginalized by an experience of intersectional power. Then students might be called to grapple critically with intersectional theory, for example the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) or Patricia Hill Collins (2019), or perhaps with a more accessible introduction such as the African American Policy Forum's "A Primer on Intersectionality." This in turn could inform a paper assignment in which students need to analyze and explain a particular case study through an intersectional framework, or they design their own primer on intersectionality for other students, or they prepare a group presentation. Finally, students could return again to self-reflection in a more critical way, examining their own experiences and identifications in more depth and articulating how their understanding of their relationships to power has changed as a result of their work. As this example illustrates, the idea of scaffolding is to begin where students are at, invite them into a structured process, and then support them in moving to more complex understanding (Brookfield 2019, 8). Adding a scaffolded process of emotional inquiry can amplify critical analysis, helping keep it productive. Instructors could, for example, have students early in a course reflect on their hopes and fears about engaging with difference and inequality, sharing their thoughts in small groups and generating combined class lists of hopes and fears that can be revisited throughout the term to see what has actually transpired or changed about their initial feelings. Or, an instructor could present a handout of common responses students experience when learning DIA material, such as those identified by Sue and Sue (1990, 112-117), and have students discuss strategies for how to work through such reactions. Students could then keep personal journals that chronicle their emotional reactions and intervention strategies, tracking what works

and what doesn't, as the class moves forward. Additional emotional support activities and strategies could be used (see Young and Davis-Russell 2014), but even the basic scaffolding described here can be quite helpful.

**Modeling**: Nearly all approaches to anti-oppressive pedagogy emphasize the importance of instructor modeling. As bell hooks (1994) notes, "empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks" (1994, 21; see also Kishimoto 2018, 543). This is particularly the case for more vulnerable forms of inquiry such as self-reflection or emotional inquiry. In the example on intersectionality just described, an instructor would first demonstrate the "I Am From…" activity before having students do it, for instance. Modeling is also a powerful way to teach careful reading of texts or critical analysis of ideas, provided instructors clearly and explicitly indicate the moves they are making, for example demonstrating how to annotate a text "like an expert" or doing a "think aloud" to demonstrate basic questions they ask when thinking critically about an issue. In addition, modeling can include being explicit about how to engage in classroom discussion effectively, demonstrating the kinds of protocols and interactive moves that are effective indicators of ethically-motivated behavior; this can also include calling attention to and acknowledging when students make such moves, as examples for others to emulate. Of special significance in a DIA course, though, is instructor modeling of how we ourselves have come to awareness of power dynamics and the relationships between power and our own social positions and identities; how we navigate difference and inequality; and how this continues to be an ongoing process of learning, which includes making mistakes and learning from them, etc. along the way. This can include short explanations by instructors about our choices of texts or

activities, or sharing appropriate anecdotes of particular situations we have experienced and how we responded. For white instructors, it can include explanation of how we have come to racial awareness of whiteness, our participation as beneficiaries of racist systems, and our strategies for intervening in them; for male-identified instructors, our awareness of and strategies for engaging gender dynamics or sexism; and so forth. In such cases, the point is to normalize DIA learning as a process, one involving vulnerability, courage, and growth, with each of us on a continuum, not at some final place of "arrival" (Yancy 2019, 19).[1] Modeling is a powerful and transparent way to demonstrate the core skills of DIA learning, and it helps establish and build trust with students.

**Community Building**: Students are more apt to engage in learning and collaborate with each other and instructors if they feel they belong to a learning community and have meaningful contributions to make. There are a variety of strategies for building community, including basics such as learning names, sharing goals and interests, and so forth. One approach that some UO instructors use involves "base groups" – having groups of two or three students meet at the beginning of class to check in with each other, share an interesting tidbit about their lives (based on a prompt provided by the instructor), discuss how prepared they feel for the day's work, and so forth. Such low stakes interactions help build social connections and trust. The use of modeling

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1. For examples of white instructors and scholars describing how they model racial awareness, see the essays in Yancy (2015a). Kendi (2019) provides an example of a Black male modeling awareness, and in his well-known letter, "Dear White America," Yancy (2015b) models an approach to describing his sexism.

also helps build community by opening a space for vulnerability, authentic sharing, and honest articulation of perspectives, ideas, feelings, etc., which will become important as the class progresses to more difficult material and issues. Instructors and students can also collaborate to construct a learning space that operates according to agreed norms, such as ground rules or guidelines for participation, plus specific protocols or strategies to take in certain situations. This can involve a brainstorming session in response to questions such as "How do we establish a class culture of participation that is welcoming to everyone, invites a wide range of appropriate contributions, allows for disagreement, and fosters respect for different perspectives?" "What are some reasons for why some students feel comfortable to participate, while others feel reluctant to do so?" "How can we respond to others respectfully when we disagree with them?" "How do we speak up if we notice a problematic dynamic of participation, such as certain students dominating the discussion?" "What should we do when our interactions get heated?" In some cases, instructors may want to stipulate important norms or protocols, have students practice using them, then debrief how it felt and what kinds of strategies may be needed to keep enacting the norms or practicing the protocols moving forward.[2] In any case, mutual collaboration in being

2. For example, one UO instructor introduces the following community norms for students to practice and keep practicing: 1. Stay engaged. (Listen deeply and ask with curiosity); 2. Speak what is true for you. (Beginning with I statements can be helpful); 3. Experience discomfort. (Reflections on your own discomfort are rich with new information); 4. Have an appreciative inquiry stance. (Assume good intent and be attentive to negative impacts); 5.

vulnerable and in generating norms or protocols enables instructors and students to establish a "working alliance" together as a learning community (Cavalieri, French, and Renninger 2019). Similar community building exercises can be used to create a climate for critical inquiry and analysis. For instance, instructors can ask students questions such as "What is the goal of inquiry – to discover answers or fashion different questions or both?" "What kind of questions do you ask when you are truly interested in something?" "When do you truly know that some idea or perspective is right or wrong?" "What kinds of knowledge help us understand the experiences of others?" "If you didn't have to worry about being right or appearing smart, what questions would you ask about this topic?" (Young and Davis-Russell 2014, 41-42). Exploring these questions can help introduce students to different ideas about what inquiry means and involves, and they can work together to craft a more complex approach to the work of critical analysis they will be undertaking in the class. Instructors can also assess the level of experience or facility that students have for inquiry and provide appropriate supportive materials. Such questions also provide students with initial practice in collective inquiry before they engage with more charged content.

Scaffolding, modeling, and community building can be used often, informing how instructors organize their daily class sessions or introduce students to activities and assignments. These approaches constitute a structure of support that can facilitate rich learning experiences.

Expect and accept non-closure. (Be open to unexcused outcomes as well as to ambiguity)

# 9.

DIA learning engages students in five primary modes of inquiry or ways of learning. *These modes of inquiry constitute the core skills of DIA learning.* The modes of inquiry include the following:
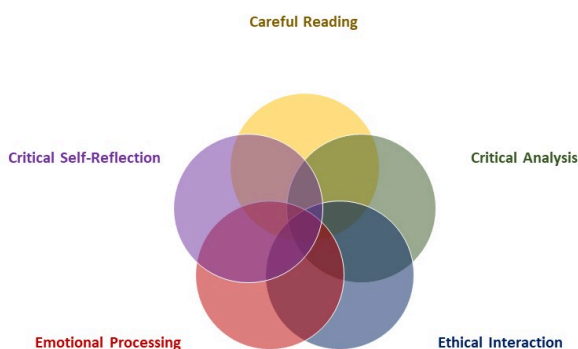


The DIA requirement criteria articulate these modes. To reiterate, students in DIA courses are supposed to learn careful reading (i.e., engagement with texts from members of historically marginalized communities), critical analysis (i.e., scrutiny of intersecting aspects of identity, uses of power, and structures that perpetuate power) and either ethical interaction (i.e., listening and dialogue) or critical self-reflection (i.e., reflection on social identifications in relation to power). Because emotional labor is inherent to DIA learning, as discussed above, it is also included here because *students will be engaged in emotional processing* and because such processing,

left unchecked or without constructive direction, can manifest in problematic ways that undermine learning.

Not every instructor may want to include all modes explicitly in their DIA course as something to facilitate or assess formally, and how these modes get used or which get more emphasis will depend on the aims of the course. Yet students are likely to be engaged in all these types of inquiry because of their considerable overlap. The question is, to what extent will they be guided to do so in an effective way that allows them to learn and practice the essential skills of cultural and equity literacy that these modes of inquiry enable?

We suggest that the most effective DIA courses will include at least some moments of focused student engagement in and through all five modes. However, including these modes in an explicit way in a course does not require an elaborate set of approaches for each. In fact, as suggested, they often overlap, such as critical self-reflection often involving emotional processing or careful reading entailing a form of ethical interaction with others. Moreover, they can be structured in rather simple ways, ideas for which are indicated below. Ideally, each mode can be scaffolded, modeled, and made part of a community building process. What we emphasize are the various options they provide instructors for developing activities, exercises, and assessments in and through which *students can engage in practicing and demonstrating their DIA learning.*

A few examples of ideas for how one could include these modes are indicated briefly here:

> **Careful Reading**: Similar to "close reading," careful reading emphasizes paying close attention to particular details and nuances of a text (this includes multiple forms of media and cultural expression), including interpretation of the social context of its production. In addition, it emphasizes charity and empathy, akin to what the DIA requirement calls "respectful listening," which presumes an ability to notice

one's reactions and still suspend judgement until basic understanding of an other's perspective or situation is reached. These emphases are crucial for respectful engagement with diverse others and their experiences, yet in a way that still allows for critical interpretation. Scaffolding and modeling play significant roles in helping students learn how to engage in this mode of inquiry, as does collaborative work as part of a discourse community. Instructors can, for example, provide a list of basic guiding questions that help orient students to various texts and their contexts, allow time in class for small group reading and discussion of key passages (or discussion of a video, photo, etc.), or have students turn in short reading or video viewing responses, such as having them identify three significant key issues, two confusing parts, and one question they wish had been addressed. Numerous resources and activities can enliven how students engage in the inquiry of careful reading.

**Critical Analysis**: Critical examination of power and how it shapes society is at the heart of DIA learning. Instructors will have students engage in such inquiry using a variety of specific methods and approaches, depending on the field of study emphasized in the class or the nature of the content at hand. That is, there is no special DIA method for the particular form that critical analytical work will take. However, whatever form it does take, such work will focus on the study of power and how it shapes inequalities – this focus is common to all DIA courses and crucial for development of cultural and equity literacy. The dynamics of scaffolding, modeling, and collective discourse can heighten the effectiveness of whatever forms critical analysis takes in a class. Modeling can make a complex process more transparent to students, while scaffolding can break this process into smaller chunks that students can practice and

develop over time. And collaboration with peers as part of a critical discourse community can yield a plethora of insights and perspectives. Concretely, instructors can provide "critical questions" checklists, such as the "Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking,"[1] prepare handouts that outline specific inquiry steps to take and indicate key areas to consider, facilitate short "believing and doubting" or "pro and con" exercises, organize a class debate or "article on trial" presentation, among numerous other possibilities.[2] These ideas emphasize modeling and structuring of the process of analytical skill building and providing basic tools to practice with, thus making explicit what to do and how to do it. Moreover, they make visible that critical inquiry is a collaborative endeavor among participants in a discourse community, one that students are being invited into during a DIA class. Providing specific tools and resources that students are to use and practice, also "presses" them to think and work and define reality in different ways, rather than simply relying on prior conceptions or ingrained habits

**Ethical Interaction**: Ethical interaction can take a variety of forms, but at a basic level in a DIA class, it entails respectful listening and civil discussion. Learning to listen is an important skill that one must learn and, more importantly, practice. This requires structured exercises, which can be quite simple. For example, instructors can have students get in pairs, with one student sharing a short commentary that the other student then paraphrases; then they can switch. A variation is to have one student share an insight (summary,

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1. Numerous sources online offer this resource as a downloadable PDF – one need only Google it.
2. See Barkley (2010) for a plethora of student engagement exercises, each with detailed instructions and variations.

opinion, explanation, etc.) while the other student listens and identifies three terms the other student has used, which they feel best represent the key points or indicate what is most significant about what was shared. In a whole group discussion, students can first summarize what a previous student has said about an issue, then extend this insight or offer their own take on it. Of course, instructors can model respectful listening by mirroring back what they hear from students, paraphrasing, asking gentle question to seek clarification or draw more out from a student, and so on. Again, a variety of resources exist to provide ideas. Regarding civil discussion, the class can generate clear ground rules, as discussed above, and students and the instructor can hold each other accountable to them and regularly revisit them and revise as necessary. Structuring a variety of discussions on important topics and issues can also help, creating multiple types of occasion for practice.[3] Some instructors might introduce a formal model for ethical engagement and have students practice interacting in this way. Ethical interaction also includes how students engage in their careful reading, as suggested above, and in their research practices, for example use of decolonizing research methodology (Smith 2012). Once again, scaffolding, modeling and community building can play crucial roles in helping students learn through this mode of inquiry.

**Emotional Processing**: The presence of emotions is inevitable in a DIA class, as discussed above. Although the DIA requirement does not articulate emotional work as a learning outcome, instructors will need some plan of action

3. TEP offers many discussion resources at
   https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/classroom-discussion-resources

for addressing student emotions. Here the suggestion is to treat emotional processing as an essential mode of inquiry for DIA learning. Discussion of feelings and opportunities to reflect on them are thus important to build into the class. Instructor modeling can be as simple as regularly expressing how one feels about issues at focus in the class, or a more elaborate disclosure of one's evolving feelings in the process of coming to awareness about power and one's relationship to it. A structured process for students can be as simple as a journal that students keep, which can be combined with more focused self-reflection on identity and power, as discussed in the next mode of inquiry. Journal entries could respond to questions such as "What is going on for me in class?" "Why am I feeling this way?" "What am I really angry/sad/anxious/etc. about?" "What am I afraid of?" "Why do I get upset when this issue comes up?" And so forth. Journals can be shared with instructors or remain exclusively for students to use and read themselves. Emotional processing can also overlap with critical analysis, for example having students identify a particular emotion arising for them and doing research that examines it more closely, including possible tools for transforming it in a productive way. Such work could take the form of student papers or, better yet, presentations or a gallery walk exercise that provides students opportunities to learn from their peers and realize that emotions are not merely personal but social. Such research and assignments could be collaborative in nature, including group projects or group study circles, out of which students write individual papers or other forms of assessment. These same ideas can be used for critical analysis work, too, but the point is to indicate that emotional processing can be structured and even assessed, and thereby inform student learning in a significant way. Scholars such as Young and Davis-Russell (2014), Froyum (2014), and Matias (2016) outline a variety of ways for engaging students in

emotional labor in productive ways that include community building considerations and complement other DIA modes of inquiry. TEP also has available a resource handout on "[Strategies for Engaging with Difficult Topics, Strong Emotions, and Challenging Moments in the Classroom](#)," which includes activities and exercises for engaging emotions and discomfort. Additional strategies can be found at TEP's [Teaching in Turbulent Times Toolkit](#).

**Critical Self-Reflection**: One significant challenge of self-reflection in a DIA class is that it involves having students turn the methods of critical analysis back on themselves so that they can scrutinize their own relationship to power. This makes self-reflection *critical*, insofar as students are challenged to identify and acknowledge their positionality in a network of power that shapes unequal relationships; such awareness forms a basis for how one will interact with others and with the systems of power that produce unequal outcomes. Such knowledge is crucial for engaging others ethically and with care and empathy. As discussed above, instructor modeling of such critical reflection – for instance, disclosing how one has come to awareness of one's own relationship to power or sharing ways that one uses such knowledge to promote change – is vital for opening the space of vulnerability and trust required to do this work and share it in some form (hooks 1994, 21). Creating a scaffolded structure of regular self check-in and reflection is also helpful. This can take the form of journal entries in which students respond to guided prompts that can be designed to elicit their unfolding experience of learning about their own social identifications and relationship to power, including how they are feeling. Such entries could form the basis for a term-long creative project or presentation in which students share a narrative of change over time in their awareness and understanding. Another option is to have students complete

short in-class writing exercises on a periodic basis, in which they respond to questions about their experiences engaging with content, lectures, class discussions, or other class activities, and how these might be influencing their evolving understanding. Students could also complete a series of [critical incident questionnaires](), an anonymous survey about their learning experiences, which thus generate a collective picture of classroom community dynamics, revealing invaluable insights for the instructor. Many format options for critical self-reflection exist and can be adapted for the particular aims of critical self-reflection indicated in the DIA requirement. Of course, instructors can supplement and support such reflection with more general reflective approaches, such as basic [metacognitive teaching and learning activities]().

Because it is a mirror of the social reality of the United States, the content of DIA courses can be very challenging cognitively and emotionally for students to learn, especially given the context of a society (including higher education spaces) that does not often engage in discussing or addressing such content openly or with explicit attention to the power dynamics involved. By calling up the kinds of inquiry that allow students to engage DIA content with a more open mind and caring heart, in collaboration with others, and with more understanding of power dynamics, including one's own positionality and potential routes for action, instructors can signal clearly the promise and value of DIA learning. In turn, by organizing specific opportunities for students to practice these modes of inquiry, learn how they interconnect, and understand the standards of rigor indicative of success, instructors can make more visible what kind and quality of work is needed for students to develop cultural and equity literacy skills moving forward in their lives.

# 10.

There is no magic recipe or formula for success in teaching *any* course, let alone a DIA course, and there are bound to be moments when one's carefully crafted plans go awry, when no matter what one tries it doesn't seem right, when the best of intentions do not lead to optimal outcomes (Brookfield 2019, 14-16). Every teaching practice, after all, has pluses and minuses, and what works in one situation may not work in the next. Even so, there are proven instructional "moves that matter" that have emerged over decades of teaching experience in a variety of DIA-related and learning contexts. The important instructional approaches of scaffolding, modeling and building community noted above are good examples of moves that matter. In addition, the following list includes some additional instructional moves and specific examples found in the scholarship on anti-oppressive pedagogies, and also from approaches of UO faculty who regularly teach DIA-focused courses.[1] They can function as guiding lights for facilitating significant learning experiences for students to engage in DIA learning with more confidence, fortitude, and care. That is, these instructional moves can contribute to more pluses for students and instructors alike.

   **Normalize Gaps in Our DIA Knowledge**: Many students' trepidation in entering a DIA course will stem from a lack of knowledge of DIA issues or lack of experience interacting with culturally diverse others. This may manifest, for instance, as a fear of being "called out" by other students or the instructor for this apparent lack. Instructors, too, can enter a class with concern for

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1. This list of "moves that matter" will be continuously updated in subsequent editions of this guide.

their own lack of knowledge or experience with certain issues or cultural groups that will be examined in the course. We can anticipate such anxiety and address it explicitly by *normalizing knowledge gaps*, that is, noting explicitly that we all have gaps in our knowledge when it comes to engaging in DIA issues. Understanding why this is will often be, of course, a key part of learning in a DIA class. After all, we do not arrive to DIA work as an expert but as a learner. One way to normalize gaps is for instructors to model up front our own knowledge gaps. For example, when introducing specific issue domains related to social identities and power, one UO instructor presents a "Knowledge Continuum" slide with four important areas of knowledge indicated: lived experience, academic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and personal ethical/moral knowledge. For each of these, there is a two-way pointing arrow creating a continuum with no knowledge/experience on one end, and much knowledge/experience ("expertise") at the other. Next, this instructor will indicate a particular knowledge domain, such as "transgender, non-binary gender, gender non-conforming" or "immigrant undocumented family experience" and so on. For each domain, the instructor indicates where they are located for each knowledge area ("lived experience," etc.). In some domains, they might have little lived experience knowledge, some cultural knowledge, and lots of academic knowledge, whereas in other domains their mix of knowledges is different. In this way, the instructor can signal what they bring to the learning context for a particular topic or issue, and also model for students that gaps in different kinds of knowledge are quite normal. They can then have students do a preliminary mapping of their own mix of knowledges, then follow-up with an activity designed to help students learn basic vocabulary and fluency in a given domain (e.g. "Racial Justice Dominoes" or "Gender Dominos").[2] Later, after such an activity and

2. Please contact TEP to obtain a copy of the "Gender Dominos" activity.

more engagement with content, students can revisit their initial map and determine what has changed, in other words, reflect on what and how they have learned. In this way, by normalizing gaps in knowledge, instructors can also indicate that such gaps can be filled by engaging in the work of DIA learning.

**Define Key Terms**: To ground and guide inquiry that is productive, it is important to define key terms, providing students with clear explanations of what they mean and when and how to use them conceptually. As Ibram X. Kendi suggests, it is in the act of defining terms that we can "begin to describe the world and our place in it. Definitions anchor us in principles…If we don't do the basic work of defining the kind of people we want to be in language that is stable and consistent, we can't work toward stable, consistent goals" (2019, 17). Consider the term "racist," for example, which Kendi notes is not pejorative, not the "worst term in the English language," and "not the equivalent of a slur." Rather, it is "descriptive, and the only way to undo racism is to is to consistently identify and describe it – and then dismantle it" (2019, 17). To not engage in the work of defining more rigorously the terms we use to conceptualize and describe reality is to risk the kind of "confusion" that results when people rely uncritically on deeply entrenched beliefs (Anderson 1994, 87). Instructors can therefore identify and define key terms and have students practice applying them conceptually in their analysis or, more likely in some cases, introduce varying definitions of key terms (varying among scholars or between scholarly accounts and more conventional understandings), then have students assess which definition seems best and why or even offer alternate definitions with accompanying rationales. Instructors can also ask students to generate working definitions first, then compare them to scholarly versions and consider what is different and why. Yet another method is to engage students in a small group activity in which they must match key terms with definitions, for example the use of "Racial Justice

Dominoes" or "Gender Dominos."[3] Such activities can generate animated discussions and help definitions "stick" better than taking notes in  traditional lecture. However key terms get highlighted and defined, it is also helpful to use concrete examples to illustrate meaning – rich and varying examples can also help students learn nuance and levels of complexity, particularly for "big" concepts like race, gender, indigeneity, and so forth, the meaning of which often requires a host of significant terms.  In any event, when working with terms and ideas that frequently generate confusion or controversy, it is important for students to know what important terms mean in the context of a DIA course, why they matter, how they work as guiding threads for analysis, and *to practice* using them rigorously to understand social reality, that is, to "consistently identify and describe," as Kendi puts it.

**Bring Misconceptions, Myths, and Stereotypes to Light**: It is normal for most students to bring misconceptions to bear when engaging with DIA content. Instructors can anticipate these misconceptions and use them productively. For example, Alex-Assensoh (2000) has students complete a non-graded quiz about the racial and ethnic characteristics of various issues, about which conventional wisdom is often inaccurate – such as most students assuming whites have the highest median family income in the U.S. or that blacks are the primary recipients of welfare benefits (Alex-Assensoh 2000, 202). Although no one likes to be "exposed" as wrong, which a quiz of this kind will often do, such exposure of misconceptions can prompt student confusion and a related curiosity to learn what is correct or accurate. Alex-Assensoh directs such feelings to relevant exercises of self-reflection and then subsequent engagement with informative accounts to fill in knowledge gaps, classroom discussion and activities, and research assignments.  In another example, a UO instructor introduces and

3. See previous note.

explains key concepts, such as settler colonialism, then shows a slide that has "But, [instructor's name]…" at the top, and below this is a list of common misconceptions and stereotypes. The instructor then introduces scholarly explanations or data to counter these or might first invite students to offer reasons why they are misconceptions or stereotypes before introducing the explanations of scholarship. Yet another approach is the way another UO instructor will put before their class the common myths associated with challenging content, such as rape, for instance, explicitly identifying them as misconceptions (not up for debate…) that support a larger social narrative. The instructor then asks students to reflect on and discuss where this narrative comes from, why it is still used, what purpose it serves, and what it reproduces. This discussion is then followed by a clear presentation of facts, supported by scholarly research, which the instructor then has students use to question the narrative under scrutiny. Common to these different approaches is the move to bring misconceptions, myths, and stereotypes explicitly to light at the beginning of a course, unit or class session, then address them up front using scholarly research and also engage students in critical examination, reflection, and discussion.

**Be Ready for Hot Moments**: Challenging or heated moments can occur at any time, in any class, for a variety of reasons. As discussed above, DIA classes elevate the potential for heated moments and raise the stakes for those involved. Having a set of norms or ground rules in place, along with specific protocols for action, can be helpful for guiding the class through such moments. Suggestions for establishing norms and protocols are indicated above (see "Community Building"). Here we want to emphasize the significance of establishing a clear protocol or set of protocols for working collectively in and through a heated moment. It is worth the investment of time early in a class (perhaps the second or third session) to engage students in developing a process for heated moments. There are numerous strategies that can be agreed to,

including pausing to inquire and reflect, taking a short break to cool down or even deferring things to the next class, allowing conflicting sides an opportunity to clarify or even take back their views, and so forth. The strategy of pausing to inquire and reflect can be especially helpful, and if this is something students have already discussed (in the abstract, as a possibility that might occur) and established a protocol around, it will much less awkward for an instructor to say something like "This is one of those heated moments we discussed might happen, and as we agreed to do, it is now time to pause and inquire into what is happening, and reflect on it." Protocol questions for inquiry and reflection can include: "What do I think just happened?" "Why did it happen?" "What does it mean?" What are the consequences for everyone in this room? "What alternative behaviors do we have available to us?" (Pasque, et al. 2013, 9). Another possible strategy, particularly in situations where a student's sharing of a personal experience is met with strong reactions by others, is to pause the discussion and have all students write their thoughts about what they heard a the first student say and what they understood them to be thinking and feeling, then do the same thing for the student(s) who reacted strongly, and finally reflect on what they think the first student wanted as a response to sharing their experience (Wood 2009, 144). Protocols of this kind can be very helpful in turning heated moments into important learning opportunities for how to listen respectfully, process emotions, and engage ethically and civilly. They can highlight the powerful role that emotions play in DIA learning, along with the efficacy of using critical reflection as a tool for navigating situations of unequal power, which many hot moments involve. For more strategies and resources for engaging hot moments, visit TEP's Teaching in Turbulent Times Toolkit.

# PART III
# DIA COURSES AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING AT UO

# II.

The University of Oregon values "diversity and seek[s] to foster equity and inclusion in a welcoming, safe, and respectful community," and it is in such a campus climate that students can learn to become "informed participants in the global community," which is a stated core purpose of the University.[1] Clearly, the Cultural Literacy Core Education requirement is central to this aim, and this places US: DIA courses at the center of the University's mission. Yet because DIA courses emphasize power imbalances that shape our society and ethical engagement with legacies of inequality, informed by the agency of those who are marginalized by such legacies, DIA courses infuse "cultural literacy" and "equity and inclusion" with a transformative edge. That is, implicit to the US: DIA requirement is an imperative for transformation, indeed, the development of "analytical and reflective capacities" to enable a shift in how we "understand and ethically engage with the ongoing (cultural, economic, political, social, etc.) power imbalances that have shaped and continue to shape the United States." It is therefore appropriate to characterize DIA courses as cultivating *cultural and equity literacy*, as noted throughout this guide. By implication, this also entails a shift in how we understand and engage in the work of inclusion, namely as transforming legacies of exclusion and the power imbalances that reproduce them.

One way to frame the relationship between inclusive teaching and DIA teaching is to think of DIA teaching as a deepening of inclusive teaching to include explicit engagement with power imbalances and the systems that reproduce inequities and exclusion. Such consideration in turn points toward anti-oppressive interventions,

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1. See the UO Mission Statement, including Purpose, Vision, and Values, at: https://www.uoregon.edu/our-mission.

resulting in [an inclusive to anti-oppressive teaching continuum of learning goals and instructional fluency](#):



**Inclusive to Anti-Oppressive Teaching Continuum**
An approach
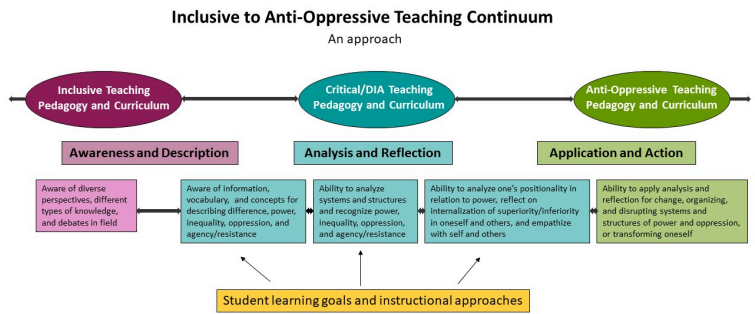
Adapted from St. Clair, D. and Kishomoto, K. (2010). "Decolonizing Teaching: A Cross-Curricular and Collaborative Model for Teaching about Race in the University," *Multicultural Education*, 18:1, 18-24. For inclusive teaching, see https://hr.uoregon.edu/ua-mou-course-evaluations-article-20.pdf. For DIA teaching, see https://provost.uoregon.edu/changes-core-education-group-and-multicultural-requirements.

# 12.

Research indicates that courses designed to be inclusive in terms of content and pedagogy help students achieve important outcomes such as heightened critical thinking, multiple perspective-taking, enhanced academic performance, and complex problem-solving, among others (Quaye and Harper 2007, 34). Research also indicates that students feel more satisfied participating in courses where they learn methods of inquiry that engage and respect cultural differences, provide occasions for them to interact with different cultural perspectives, and challenge them to examine issues of diversity and equity in a critical way (Villalpando 2002). Stephen John Quaye and Shaun Harper suggest that faculty should take such findings seriously and hold themselves accountable by "intentionally incorporate[ing] cultural inclusion into their pedagogy and their courses" (2007, 34). Quaye and Harper take it a step further – and echo the suggestion above regarding critical reflection on situational factors – by challenging faculty to "examine their own assumptions, biases, and knowledge insufficiencies and assume responsibility for learning how to infuse diversity throughout the curriculum" (2007, 38; see also Kishimoto 2018, 542-544).

Implicit to the ideas of teaching more "intentionally," doing self-reflection work to "examine" oneself, and pursuing institutional change to "infuse" curriculum in a more diverse way, is a call for faculty to develop cultural and equity literacy, so that they are prepared to offer and facilitate opportunities for students to do the same. Inclusive excellence therefore involves not just exposure to difference and designing for participation by all in existing frameworks and course structures;[1] more poignantly, it requires

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1. Tanner (2013) outlines a variety of useful strategies to structure inclusion and equity. Although her article focuses on STEM

development of skills for engaging various forms of difference with understanding and respect, for examining critically the conditions and forces that maintain power imbalances and perpetuate unequal participation among different groups, and for transforming frameworks, contexts, conditions, and forces – changing the distribution of power – in order to achieve equity and genuine inclusion.

Such work is within reach of all instructors at the University of Oregon. UO now recognizes inclusive teaching – meaning that instructors elicit and value all students' participation and include more varied content as part of their teaching – as a formal standard of quality teaching that guides faculty review.[2] An emphasis on cultural and equity literacy is also emerging, reflected in the new US: DIA and Global Perspectives (GP) requirements, as well as work to promote anti-oppressive and anti-racist pedagogies.[3] However, the US: DIA and GP requirements are student-facing and limited to those courses submitted by instructors or units willing to offer and teach them; similarly, the turn to anti-oppressive and anti-racist

teaching in particular, the strategies included are applicable in most course settings.

2. See the Memorandum of Understanding at: https://hr.uoregon.edu/ua-mou-course-evaluations-article-20.pdf. For more details about the teaching evaluation process, see: https://provost.uoregon.edu/revising-uos-teaching-evaluations.

3. For example, numerous faculty participated in anti-oppressive reading circles in 2020 (https://blogs.uoregon.edu/uoteachingcommunity/about/anti-oppressive-pedagogy-study-circle/), as well as the UO TeachIN in 2021 (https://teachin.uoregon.edu/registration/). Other examples include the L.A.C.E. framework (https://inclusion.uoregon.edu/lace) and the UO Senate's "Senate Antiracist Academy Program," currently in development.

pedagogies is mostly happening at the individual level. If Quaye and Harper are correct, that cultural and equity literacy *at a deeper level across the curriculum* is necessary for inclusive teaching more generally, can DIA courses and DIA instructors play a role in helping others take the next steps of examining their teaching practices more critically and infusing the curriculum with more culturally inclusive content and pedagogy aimed at equity? In the pursuit of inclusive excellent at the University of Oregon, what is the role of DIA education?

DIA education plays an essential and unique role as a *transformative edge* to promote inclusive teaching and excellence across the board in two significant ways. First, DIA courses demonstrate that exposure to various forms of difference must be combined with development of cultural and equity literacy skills for engaging in such interactions in a more reflective, critical, ethical way that is attentive to the power imbalances involved. Such work entails students to scrutinize their "assumptions, biases, and knowledge insufficiencies" and learn ways to "assume responsibility" for equity and thus interacting with diverse others in more productive, ethical ways – precisely the step Quaye and Harper call faculty to take. The step to cultural and equity literacy is essential for genuine inclusion because, again, as James D. Anderson reminds us about race – and what he says about race applies as well to other important social categories of difference – "we tend to acquire meanings about race not out of conscious reflection based on scholarship, but through conventional wisdom that is deeply entrenched in our culture. We believe that we know race when we see it…We arrive at nothing short of confusion, however, when we are pressed to define race" (Anderson 1994, 87). Indeed, as Light (2001) demonstrated in a study of Harvard students, "meaningful learning" across differences involves student interaction with diverse peers through which they "interrogate and rethink their assumptions" (Quaye and Harper 2007, 35-36). In the context of DIA courses, students are often "pressed" to examine and question their understandings and to define social categories in *structured,*

*supportive ways, through rigorous scholarship*, that helps them work through their "confusion" and develop more nuanced understanding and facility for navigating difference. But if introduced to cultural difference for the sake of exposure or in the absence of adequate structure, support or scholarship to help them be critically reflective, students can simply reproduce the very conventional wisdom – prevailing notions, feelings, behaviors, etc. – that inclusive teaching is attempting to address, with the result being that power imbalances and unequal participation get perpetuated. Again, exposure to diversity needs to be combined with development of cultural and equity literacy skills for engaging such encounters in a more reflective, critical, ethical way – which is what DIA education is about.

This is not to say that all DIA courses succeed in helping students achieve such literacy, nor that all instructors in non-DIA courses fail to provide adequate structure, support or scholarship; the point is that the learning process inherent to the US: DIA requirement is an exemplar of culturally inclusive pedagogy with a goal of equity. And this is the second way DIA education is essential for the pursuit of inclusive excellence: DIA-focused courses serve as models for other instructors and courses that seek to include more culturally inclusive content and pedagogy. More specifically, as outline in this guide, DIA pedagogy uses modes of inquiry and instructional approaches and moves that other instructors can learn from and take up in their own teaching – something they may not learn or attempt to implement on their own. The claim is not that all courses should be DIA courses; rather, the suggestion is that any instructor can learn from DIA education some of the tools needed to help them take the next step of critical self-reflection, curricular change, and inclusive teaching practices that Quaye and Harper call for. For example, in any course that includes culturally diverse content, instructors can take a cue from effective DIA teaching practice and include a moment to disclose and model their own work of developing literacy in relation to that content, and then create moments to encourage and support student reflection on

their evolving relationships to such content. Many other examples could be cited. What such possibilities illustrate is how DIA education is a *critical* inclusive excellence incubator, serving as a cutting-edge research space for experimentation with and refinement of approaches for fostering the development of cultural and equity literacy skills. DIA classes are a goldmine archive of strategies, methods, practices, and templates that can be adapted and portable to other class contexts across the university.

To summarize, DIA education is essential for promoting inclusive excellence. Specifically, DIA courses demonstrate the significance of providing opportunities for students to learn important analytical, reflective, and ethical engagement skills for navigating various forms of difference in critical, ethical, and thus productive ways – cultural and equity literacy. They also innovate teaching and learning models that other instructors can use to help students learn cultural and equity literacy skills in a variety of classes across campus – not just DIA courses but any course. In this way, DIA education can help all instructors "assume responsibility" and "infuse the curriculum" with more culturally diverse content and pedagogy, and with more opportunities for students to develop and practice robust literacy skills. This step is necessary to keep cultural and equity literacy and the *experiences of underrepresented students* from being marginalized as "add-on" components of courses or relegated to a single course that students take, which undermines the aims of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts (Quaye and Harper 2007, 37). In short, DIA education brings a necessary transformative edge to *deepen the meaning*, *expand the impact*, and *sustain the momentum* of inclusive teaching and inclusive excellence campus wide.

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