

# A Framework for Intercultural Course/Curriculum (re)Design

## Title V Grant Planning Intercultural, Student-Centered (Technological) Course Revisions

(Created by Dr. Peter Frederick, Spring 2005, for project use)

*“Despite the contemporary focus on multiculturalism in our society, particularly in education, there is not nearly enough practical discussion of ways classroom settings can be transformed so that the learning experience is inclusive.” ---bell hooks*

### **(1) LEARNERS:** *“Go to the place where the learner is.” –Kierkegaard (Maria Harris)*

Who are our students? What do we know about their hopes, fears, struggles, and aspirations? What do we know about how they learn, their learning styles, their “ways of knowing”? What helps them learn best? What hinders their learning? What do they already know about the substance and skills of our course? How do we acknowledge and affirm their prior knowledge, experience and beliefs? What is the ethnic, class, religious, racial, and generational mix of the students in our class? How might we both honor that diversity and build one learning community (*E Pluribus Unum*)?

- **Describe the profile of learners at your institution. Visualize the likely learners in the course you are working on to change.**

### **(2) TEACHERS:** *“I write as a woman who loves to teach...” --M. E. M. Moore*

When and how was I called to be a teacher? What do I know about myself as a teacher? What are my assumptions about learning and teaching? What are my cultural contexts and social identities, and how does that affect my teaching? What are my gifts? How do I teach best? In what ways do I want to stretch myself, to expand my strategies and style and grow as a teacher?

- **Identify your teaching/learning gifts and issues.**
- **How do your various social identities affect your teaching?**

### **(3) COMMUNITY CONTEXTS:** *“Multiculturalism is not about one race, plus gender, and maybe class or sexual orientation. It is about people. This work is truly community work. ---Lee Knefelkamp*

**A. Discipline:** What contexts affect my course/unit: subject matter? Where does my course “fit” in the curriculum? Do subsequent courses depend sequentially on what students learn in my course?

**B. Practical:** When is the course taught? Where? What room? For how long? For how many students?

**C. Community:** How does my course serve the institutional mission? What kinds of persons do we want our graduates to be? What connection with the kind of person/professional I want to be? Is there a service learning component?

- **Defend your choice of course to work on. Why this course? Why you? Why change it? How? The whole course, or a substantial unit in it? Are you focusing primarily on student-centered learning or intercultural learning, or technology as a tool for learning, or, ideally, a combination of at least two of these?**

- **“Flip-it”**

#### **4) GOALS/LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

*“... to name the possibilities for transformation” –Rebecca Chopp*

- A. Goals:** What are my teaching/learning goals? What do I want my students to know? to think? to do? to feel? to be? What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do I want them to have?
- B. Essentials:** What must be taught/learned? What are the essential questions and epistemological assumptions of my discipline? What are the irreducibly most significant basic facts, ideas, concepts, themes and skills my students must know? **[3x5 card]**
- C. Inclusion:** How is my discipline changing to be more inclusive? How does that change, even transform the way I think about my course? What are the essential "voices" my course/unit will incorporate? How will the integration of diverse voices into my course change and even transform the epistemological and methodological questions and approach of the course (or unit)?
- **Dream List imaginative fantasy: end of course/unit group course assessment**
  - **First, immediate comments (global, essential); then specific categories**
  - **Debrief in pairs**
  
  - **Organize “dream list” into categories. Asterisk \*\*7-8 most essential\*\*.**

#### **(5) LEARNING/TEACHING PRACTICES:** *“to teach is to create a space.” --Parker Palmer*

How will my students fulfill these goals? What specific assignments and learning experiences will I use? What am I going to do the first day of class to set an interactive, inclusive multicultural tone? How will I connect my diverse students with the best learning and wisdom in my discipline?

- **Group brainstorm teaching activity ideas for each other: “If I were a learner in that class, given those goals and outcomes, I would like to \_\_\_\_\_.”**

#### **(6) ASSESSMENT** (*“to sit down beside”*):

*“Deeper teaching is based on a deep understanding of who our students are and how they learn, on respect for their individuality and their difference. . .” –Lee Knefelkamp*

How will I assess (get feedback on) student learning? How will I know my goals and outcomes have been fulfilled? How will I authentically assess our students? What performances will students be able to do, and with what levels of competency? How will I/we provide feedback? How will I assess student learning about intercultural awareness and competencies? What criteria have I established? How will I find out what works to enhance learning for my diverse students? How will I develop reflective practice in my students ---and in myself?

- **Group generate list of authentic assessments: which ones are most pertinent to my course?**

## Moving from Goals/Learning Outcomes “Dream List”

.....to.....

### Diagramming/Visualizing an Overview of the Course/Unit/Curriculum

THREE POSSIBILITIES (or combine them):

(1) **“FLIP-IT”**

- Fairly early in the process of multicultural course redesign, ask people to draw a circle: put in it what is in the “center” of your course – your core goal and purpose (or perhaps at most two) – Then ask to rethink who the students are and your intentions to make multi-inter-cultural revisions, and ask people to “flip it”: how would the center look differently if you put learning about, say, African American Women writers, or Latinas and health care, or Yakama Native cultural values at the center of the course – no matter the content! How would the shape and flow of the course be different? How would the learning outcomes and approach to the course/unit change?

(2) **OVERVIEW DIAGRAM of the COURSE/UNIT/CURRICULUM**

- What are the essential 4-8 core goals/learning outcomes of your course/unit/curriculum/class?
- Which one goal (or perhaps two) is so core and central to your course that without it (or them) none of the others would have coherence or integrity?
- Now draw a diagram, a picture of your course/unit. Be creative, but here are three possibilities:
  1. a flowchart (boxes and arrows sequentially)
  2. a matrix (spread sheet of vertical and horizontal cells: themes and units?)
  3. a flower, or web (starting from circle in the center and branching out)

(3) **THE COURSE AS REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE OR METAPHOR**

**If your course were a metaphor or representational image, what would it be?**

**If your course were a metaphor or image appropriate to the multicultural populations you serve, what would it be?**