Cultural Competency in the Workplace:
Strategies & Suggestions

Mary Graham-Fisher
Shaunna Payne Gold, EdD
Timea Webster

Office of Diversity & Inclusion
Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education
University of Maryland,
College Park

TW
We work in offices that focus on diversity education, inclusion, and support for xxxx day in and day out. Our mission is to xxxx.

We are thrilled to be invited here today to engage with you about cultural competency in the workplace and offer strategies on how to navigate difficult conversations and create a more inclusive work environment.

Our goal is to keep this presentation interesting, interactive and to provide a little time on the end for questions, if you have any.

Intro...
Overview of day
MARY & SHAUNNA

We do think you should set a tone in your courses to allow for questioning & critique and this slide is our attempt at setting that tone. Normally, if we had more time, we would come up with guidelines with you, but given the limited time we have today, we are going to offer some that we have seen be effective in classroom settings as well.

• MGF – Do what you need to do to take care of your body. Adjust seating, stand if you need to, bio breaks, etc.

• MGF - WE ARE ALL IN PROCESS – Issues of diversity, inclusion and social justice are fluid. We are always learning and there is always more to learn. Someone once said “the moment you think you have arrived, that is the moment you know you haven’t”

• SPG - OWN YOUR ROLE IN DYNAMICS—OWN YOUR BEHAVIORS AND BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK (SOMEONE MADE ME FEEL LIKE THIS), understand that identity affects how we “show up”

• SPG - PART OF LEARNING IS DISCOMFORT, SO PROBABLY WE WILL MAKE YOU
UNCOMFORTABLE—GET YOU OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

• **SPG** - MAKE ROOM FOR OTHERS—IF YOU SPEAK A LOT, SPEAK LESS

• **MGF** – We want to you to enter this conversation and be open to being in a BRAVE SPACE. We will talk more about what that means in a minute.

• **MGF** - TAKE CALCULATED RISKS IF YOU ARE ABLE TO—CERTAIN CONTEXT. Both Brave Space and taking calculated risks means moving into the space where the potential for magic resides. Where transformation, learning, and discovery co-exist. This is moving out of your comfort zone.
TW

NOT JUST RACE

Marginalized, minority, privileged populations

INCLUSION: OPENESS, Proactive and Responsive, HEALTHY DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

Ethnicity, race, gender (expression & identity), age, class, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, language, religion, etc.

Cultural competence means skill at inclusion & comfort with difference.
“impolite” dinner convo. It’s like the saying people offer: don’t talk about religion, race or politics at the dinner table. People are, of course, nervous about conflict. But conflict is inherent in the very nature of diversity and it isn’t always bad. How we react and engage (or disengage) is what is sometimes problematic. So how do we enter into this uneasy space. The tendency I to make is a “safe space” – we don’t want any conflict. In order to be more culturally competent and inclusive, we must enter into the challenge

Problems with safe space: Safe for Whom – usually the “status quo/ majority/ privileged/ those with power

DIVERSITY + INCLUSION not enough for culturally competent workplace. NEED BRAVE SPACE.

Think about how you make your workplace safe ENOUGH for faculty, staff, and postdocs to engage in conversations about difference but not so safe they are sitting around their labs, offices, break room talking to their best friends.

This is what culturally competent spaces strive to do—allow for effective, ethical, accountable conversations across difference.

As we attempt to foster safe enough and challenging.
Workspaces are steep in certain cultures and every campus is in a different place in their multicultural/organization development. And Shaunna will speak more about that.
So before we get into common diversity themes in crucial conversations, we wanted to talk about context and how context impacts crucial convos.

Continuum:
- Aligned/not aligned
- Mono/multi cultural
- Distinct characteristics
- 6 stations
So before we get into common diversity themes in crucial conversations, we wanted to talk about context and how context impacts crucial convos.

**STRENGTHS & STRUGGLES:**
- Areas where you have privileged or marginalized identities colors the lens through which you view the world.
- Everyone has biases and many are internalized: meaning...

**YOU END & OFFICE BEGINS:**
I suggest that everyone take the Implicit Bias Test: **LINK (intent well meaning, impact hard hitting)**

- It’s important to recognize the interplay and places of where these issues intersect
• Often our intentions are good. We don’t usually intend to hurt or harm someone with our words or actions. But it is the impact that that other person feels and carries based on our words and actions or inactions. It is the lasting effect that we may never know. This is interpersonal and structural –

**HISTORY:**

• Like a stream of water and jump in mid stream. Notice where the stream begins and the stream ends... You are jumping in in the middles.

• The culture existed before you arrived, is affected while you are there and will have memories of your presence after are gone
MGF
One is an incident
Twice is more information
Three times is a pattern of exclusion

Scenario: Mary greets Shaunna with a big hello and coffee on Monday, and again Wednesday, and even ups her game Friday with bagels – for Shaunna. At each pass, Mary never speaks to Timea.
So what does this look like in the workplace? -------→ next slide
Scenario: Mary greets Shaunna with a big hello and coffee on Monday, and again Wednesday, and even ups her game Friday with bagels – for Shaunna. At each pass, Mary never speaks to Timea.

1st Time:
TW talks to SPG about it: What is up with Mary, she never speaks to me even when I greet her...
SPG: Offers an excuse for Mary and suggests that she didn’t hear her. Says that there is probably a logical explanations for it.

2nd Time:
TW talks to SPG about it: Is it
SPG says yeah, but

3rd Time:
TW speaks directly to Mary and tells her that when Timea speaks and isn’t acknowledged, she feels slighted, targeted. Mary responds that that isn’t her INTENT. – and we know, the impact remains the same.

This is a list of just a few of the ways that we maintain the status quo – consciously or unconsciously.
TW

What do you observe?

What does EQUITY look like in the workplace—how do your practices, policies & procedures allow for/facilitate/nurture equity?

Picture on the left: Everyone has a box! Same size, it’s equal...

Picture on the right: Everyone has what they need to see the game
Path to a more inclusive workplace

“Everybody gets shoes”

“Everybody get shoes that fit”

How does this fit into the construct of the workplace?
Support, supplies, systems, tools, training, professional development, etc. – that they need to do their work...
If everyone has to be, act, look the same – we can’t bring our authentic selves, our whole selves
SPG

Given these patterns/ - focusing on the intent rather than the impact

So what are common ways of engaging with diversity issues? We have 3 main examples.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

OUR INTEREST IS INCLUSION!

MAINTAIN A PATTERN, RITUAL, ROUTINE

ERADICATE ANY EVIDENCE OF DIFFERENCE

POWER NOT ALWAYS STRUCTURAL – formal and informal

Examples: Baby showers, Christmas decorations, going out to lunch together
SPG

Geneva Gay info and WHY this is important.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN CONTENT & PEDAGOGY
We have a scenario with you and want you to think about how you make your workplace safe ENOUGH for students to engage in conversations about difference but not so safe they are sitting around their dorm room talking to their best friends.

W/ Status Quo wkhplaces talking about comfort zones that we discussed earlier –

• Comfort zone
• Static

• Ways to interrupt
• Helps move along the continuum of org dev
• Start here –
• Ecosystem to address at every level
MGF

Lunch (going out to lunch, lunch times (1/2 hour vs 2 hour),

INTRODUCE THE FORM!!!

REVIEW FORM TOGETHER, give examples
Intervention tips

- Naming what you have observed
- Thinking vs. Feeling
- Time out
- Specific Questions: Who is “we”? Who is “them”? Who are we talking about? What is their race/class/gender/ability, etc.?
- Synopsis (“this is what I hear you saying, is that correct?”)
Thank you.

What are one or two take-aways that you want to guide you?

EVALUATION!

Office of Diversity & Inclusion
http://diversity.umd.edu

Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education
http://omse.umd.edu/

TW

Handout!!

We have a one-pager for you as you leave us today.

DON’T FORGET!
So what does cultural competency look like in the workplace?

Skill in creating a educational environment where difficult dialogues can occur (Goodman, 1995) is the definition of cultural competent teaching in a higher education classroom. — We suggest that the same idea applies to the workplace

Examined—including you examining your own and being aware of your own. What are your blind spots? When are you not able to hear a student’s critique? When are you not able to ask for critique?

Humility:

Self-Awareness—repeated. It bares repeating. Academia shapes us as academics to be
experts in our area. It is not a culturally comfortable place for us to be in process or to own a lack of expertise. Cultural Competence requires you NOT be the expert.

ADAPTATION: ALWAYS IN PROCESS. When you think you have arrived is when you haven’t.
So what does cultural competency look like in the workplace?

Skill in creating an educational environment where difficult dialogues can occur (Goodman, 1995) is the definition of cultural competent teaching in a higher education classroom. – We suggest that the same idea applies to the workplace

Examined—including you examining your own and being aware of your own. What are your blind spots? When are you not able to hear a student’s critique? When are you not able to ask for critique?

Humility:

Self-Awareness—repeated. It bares repeating. Academia shapes us as academics to be
experts in our area. It is not a culturally comfortable place for us to be in process or to own a lack of expertise. Cultural Competence requires you NOT be the expert.

ADAPTATION: ALWAYS IN PROCESS. When you think you have arrived is when you haven’t.
So what does cultural competency look like in the workplace?

Skill in creating a educational environment where difficult dialogues can occur (Goodman, 1995) is the definition of cultural competent teaching in a higher education classroom. –

We suggest that the same idea applies to the workplace

Examined—including you examining your own and being aware of your own. What are your blind spots? When are you not able to hear a student’s critique? When are you not able to ask for critique?

Humility:

Self-Awareness—repeated. It bares repeating. Academia shapes us as academics to be

experts in our area. It is not a culturally comfortable place for us to be in process or to own a lack of expertise. Cultural Competence requires you NOT be the expert.

ADAPTATION: ALWAYS IN PROCESS. When you think you have arrived is when you haven’t.
Intervention Tips

- Is the correction:
- "This is what I hear you saying,"
- Synopses.
- What is their name/age/grade/size/weight/ethnicity, etc.?
- "Who am I talking about?"
- Specific questions: "Who is "we" referring to?"
- Time out.
- Thinking vs. Feeling.
- Naming what you have observed.


---

SPG 21