

H-14: Classroom inclusion-learning needs

Classroom Inclusion and Learning Needs

This activity requires 25-45 minutes.

Purpose:

Participants share their own experiences as students, exploring different ways people are made to feel "included" in the learning process. The existence of different learning needs and the necessity for a wide range of teaching styles emerges.

Preparation:

Divide participants into pairs, preferably with someone they do not know well.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to share two stories with their partner: (1) Recall a time from your own schooling when you felt especially included in the learning process in a particular class; and (2) Recall a situation when you felt especially excluded from the learning process in a particular class. Allow 8-10 minutes.
2. Bring students back to the big group and ask pairs to share each other's stories.
3. Request a volunteer to record brief notes about both categories of stories. (What makes students feel included? What makes them feel excluded?)
4. Facilitate a discussion about the notes, examining consistencies and differences in individuals' stories and learning needs. Questions to guide the conversation can include the following:
 - o What similarities do you see among the situations in which people felt especially included in a learning process?
 - o What consistencies do you notice in the situations in which people felt excluded?
 - o What differences among the stories do you find interesting?
 - o What can you do as a teacher to ensure that the needs of all students with similar varying learning needs are sufficiently met?

Facilitator Notes:

It is always important when activities call for participants to share their own stories and make themselves vulnerable to remind the group about active listening. Consider starting the activity by sharing your own set of stories to ease the tension.

This activity provides a perfect opportunity to challenge teachers to reexamine their own teaching practices. Challenge them to think about their own teaching as they engage in this activity and hear each other's stories.

Note: This activity was adapted from [*Awareness Activities*](#), part of the [*Multicultural Pavilion Internet Project*](#). Special thanks is extended to Bob Covert and the Multicultural Education team at the University of Virginia.