

Dialogue for Developing Intercultural Competence for Faculty

Introduction:

In a continuously globalizing world, education has become increasingly international, with universities welcoming more students from around the world. The diversity that these students bring provides many benefits and also potential challenges for institutions of higher education. The differences in values, norms and behaviors become apparent in various ways through communication styles, learning beliefs, work styles, etc. The classroom can be seen as a microcosm of these differences and similarities. Just as in the business world, for the benefits to truly manifest themselves, the differences and similarities arising from diversity must be managed well. Thus, it is important that not just the students gain intercultural competence, but also faculty members in order to provide the best education to a diverse population. Many points of discussion arise from this, including culture fair grading, learning beliefs and values, method of teaching, bias and prejudice, etc. Furthermore, looking at the issue from the viewpoint of a university administration, more questions arise concerning awareness, implementation, content and assessment.

Some questions that arise include the following:

- How can an institution raise faculty awareness that culture does play a role in their teaching and also in how their students learn and interact?
- How does an institution entice faculty to attend?
- What types of trainings or programs should be implemented and how?
- What content should be covered?
- What do faculty members need to know about teaching a diverse student body?
- How can the needs of faculty members as well as the success of such programs be assessed?
- Is it even necessary that faculty members gain intercultural competence?

These questions and more will be discussed at the upcoming workshop
“A Dialogue for Developing Intercultural Competence for Faculty”
at **Jacobs University Bremen**
on **March 19, 2010**.

The Workshop Organization and Topics:

The one-day workshop seeks to include the ideas and viewpoints of faculty members, intercultural trainers, university administration, pedagogical experts, students and university staff and service providers through discussion. If you have ever asked yourself any of the above questions or work closely with faculty members, international students or are involved in curriculum development or intercultural trainings, then we would be happy to welcome your input during the event.

The workshop will be arranged around the three subtopics of

- awareness,
- implementation and
- assessment,

with three parallel discussions, each covering the topic of content. There will be no separate presentations, but rather the point is to engage in a guided discussion that will output concrete suggestions and ideas on how to develop the intercultural competence of faculty. In the end, all participants will merge and each working group will present their points, which will then be further discussed by the entire group. The topics include the following:

- Overall topic: Content (=covered by all working groups)

Each working group will briefly discuss what the most important skills and knowledge are that faculty needs to know and learn in order to effectively and successfully teach a multicultural student body. Deciding what faculty should know provides a foundation from which each working group then focuses on one of the subtopics of awareness, implementation and assessment.

- Working Group 1: Awareness

Within this working group, issues related to raising the awareness and interest of faculty in how their own cultural background impacts their teaching, as well as how the cultural backgrounds of their students influences behavior, learning beliefs and approaches to learning, along with the best methods to achieve this awareness will be discussed.

- Working Group 2: Implementation

Here, the issues related to *how* faculty should learn the above content and achieve awareness will be discussed. Topics related to attendance, making programs mandatory vs. voluntary, accepted methods, how far the administration should be involved, how to integrate this into hiring, training, and other aspects of the overall university, etc. should be covered.

- Working Group 3: Assessment

Assessment is just as important as the program development itself, and not only after a program has been initiated but also beforehand and throughout the process in order to ensure the best and most relevant product. Therefore, issues related to assessments, i.e. when, where, how, what to look for, etc will be discussed in this working group.

Workshop Information and Registration:

The main goal of the workshop is the creation of concrete output through focused discussion, to have solid ideas which can be put into practice and help institutions move forward in providing high quality education for an increasingly diverse student body. We would like that there be a follow-up workshop on implementation of the generated ideas at a later point in time. To participate, please fill in the attached registration form.

Each participant is asked to **submit an abstract** about the best practices concerning multiculturalism and intercultural competence, especially for faculty, at their own institution. The abstract can also include programs that are in development as well as any solutions to common problems such as attendance and raising awareness that culture does play a role in the classroom.

Each participant will then receive a booklet with all of the best practice abstracts to encourage program development and communication between institutions. Rather than hearing presentations and then a short discussion, all participants will have an equal opportunity to join in the process and a moderator will be present to help guide the discussion while other facilitators take detailed notes. The results of the sessions, as well as the process, will be recorded and placed on the Jacobs University PROFIN website, so that participants involved in other working groups can still have access to all material.

In order to provide the most conducive environment for discussion, the working groups will be kept relatively small. Therefore, depending on the number of applicants, there may not be space for all applicants, even though we would like everyone to attend. The organizers retain the right to invite participants based on their abstract and what they can offer the discussion through their position, expertise and background. Thus, all applicants will have to submit to Alexis Rossi (a.rossi@jacobs-university.de) the following by **November 20, 2009**:

- An abstract discussing best practices as well as their ideas regarding intercultural competence for faculty, i.e. what they can bring to the discussion
- A CV that points out their current position and institution as well as background

Those applicants accepted into the workshop groups will be **notified in January 2010**. Although this application process is in place, we encourage everyone to apply! Please complete the attached registration form and send it to: a.rossi@jacobs-university.de

This workshop is **sponsored by Jacobs University and the DAAD PROFIN** program. Therefore, there is **no conference fee**, although participants must arrange their own transportation and lodging (ask for possibilities of accommodation on campus). Coffee breaks and lunch will be provided. An informal Welcome Drink on Thursday evening is optional, as is the dinner following the workshop on Friday.

Contact Person:

Alexis Rossi
a.rossi@jacobs-university.de

<http://teamwork.jacobs-university.de:8080/confluence/x/LwFZAq>

Diversity Manager and Interculturalist
Intercultural Affairs
Campus Activities and Intercultural Affairs
Jacobs University Bremen

Registration Form
Developing Intercultural Competence for Faculty
Friday March 19th, 2010
Registration Deadline: December 15th, 2009

Name:

University:

Position and Department:

Abstract: