DISCs

DISCIPLINES INQUIRING INTO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

DISCs PROJECT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Introduction to the Self-Assessment Tool

The DISCs Self-Assessment Tool is intended to help users gauge their own levels of competence and comfort in the themes of gender-consciousness, interculturalism, and community both in their individual pedagogical practices and wider academic engagements. It should take about 15 minutes to complete the tool, but this may vary depending on how much time you need to think about the statements posed. Based on your assessment, you will be provided with useful readings and resources to help you further explore these issues.

Please note that this is a limited tool, and, given that everyone's teaching context is different, a level of personal interpretation of the self-assessment statements is needed. For example, it is worthwhile focusing on just one class that you teach when responding to the statements in sections 3-5, rather than focusing on all of your classes at once. The statements in sections 1-2 will provoke you to reflect on your stance on a limited range of ethical and political issues regarding social justice and higher education. Reflection on these issues is important as part of a life-long process of developing and maintaining a strong social justice orientation in our teaching and wider academic engagements. We appreciate that the self-assessment statements raise complex and sensitive issues. The texts and other resources recommended for use are chosen from the project team's review of the literature and own experience in engaging these issues and are not exhaustive. As such, we encourage you to view the recommendations at the end of the self-assessment as offering signposts at a certain point in time, and not definitive and final declarations, on your pedagogical practices, worldview and stance on higher education. We encourage you to share and reflect on the tool and feedback with other colleagues.

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENTS (THEMES 1 – 2)

THEME 1: WORLDVIEW AND POLITICS
1. The west (Western Europe and North America) has led the rest of the world, historically, in advancing women's rights.
2. The right to freely air any and all opinions, viewpoints and perspectives should be universally defended on college campuses, regardless of the impact on different social groups.
3. The majority of students are apathetic to social injustices locally and across the globe.
4. Being an active member of university-level committees, boards, etc., is the most effective means of bringing about positive institutional change.
5. My social identity (e.g. in terms of class, gender, race-ethnicity, sexuality) both consciously and unconsciously influences how I relate to and understand others.

THEME 2: VIEWS ON HIGHER EDUCATION
1. Individual admission to third-level education is primarily determined by one's own talent and hard work.
2. The key to addressing inequalities among students is the implementation of equal opportunity policies and practices.
3. I am comfortable discussing patterns of educational inequality and bias affecting students from minority and marginalised backgrounds (e.g. along socio-economic, racial-ethnic, religious, ability or sexuality lines) with my colleagues.
4. My primary role as a teacher and/or supervisor is to give students skills which enhance their employability.
5. It is important to raise issues and criticisms in my department/the wider university regarding problematic issues arising for students and staff.
6. It is part of my role to openly demonstrate solidarity with teaching staff who are on hourly paid and fixed-term contracts.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENTS (THEMES 3 – 5)

THEME 3: ENGAGING STUDENTS
1. I am careful to ensure that students' names are pronounced and spelled correctly.
2. I make a conscious effort to ensure that the work of scholars/figures from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds features prominently in my courses/modules.
3. I make a conscious effort to ensure that the work of female-identified scholars features prominently in my modules.
4. I make a conscious effort to ensure that students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) feel supported in my classroom.
5. I use digital tools, e.g. surveys and online translators to understand and support the linguistic profile of my students.
6. I support students to share their learning priorities in the classroom and take time to discuss how their priorities align with or challenge the module syllabus and learning outcomes.
7. I draw on a range of teaching methods besides lecturing to allow for different learning styles – e.g. small group work, video or image response, debate, setting a problem to solve.

THEME 4: TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE
1. I make a conscious effort to further specific social justice goals through my teaching, e.g. through activities that encourage students to take appropriate action on problems outside the immediate classroom.
2. I make a conscious effort to ensure that students' diverse gender identities are affirmed, and that all students have equal opportunities to participate in class activities.
3. I actively promote locally/globally indigenous and/or non-Western perspectives in my teaching.
4. I pay attention to students' achievement outcomes and raise issues regarding unequal patterns of academic engagement and performance at assessment moderation or examination boards.
5. I strive to ensure that students are given multiple opportunities (in assessments etc.) to show their different strengths.
6. I use a range of study resources (reading, equipment etc.) to ensure that materials, readings, etc. are affordable and accessible for all of my students.
7. I am confident in my ability to engage uncomfortable issues in the online and/or on-campus classroom setting in a way that supports and protects all students.

THEME 5: TEACHING AND COMMUNITY
1. I welcome students' feedback on the course content and the ways that assessment is conducted.
2. I welcome alternative, evidence-based student perspectives and arguments in the classroom.
3. I reflect on how inclusive my own teaching is with other colleagues, either in my department or externally.
4. I actively challenge prejudicial, discriminatory and harassing behaviour in my classroom and department, with students and staff.
5. I engage my students with external community groups as part of my teaching in a systematic, planned way.
6. Any engagement with external community groups/representatives is designed to have meaningful benefit for both the external group (e.g. compensation, building a longer-term relationship) and for the students' learning.