HOW CAN WE PREPARE TEACHERS FOR INCREASINGLY (CULTURALLY) DIVERSE CLASSROOMS?

Becky Bergman, Lena Peterson

Communication and Learning in Science / Computer Science and Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology

OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP

A goal at many engineering institutes is to attract more diverse students. An important aspect of increased diversity is inclusion and integration into the classroom and university. However, teachers are seldom prepared for the changing student group that this implies and yet they are crucial actors in the successful integration of these students into both the formal and informal curriculum. The first stage of the workshop will set the stage by comparing diversity goals in the participants' institutional settings and sharing examples of how they are being achieved. In the second stage, the workshop will assist participants to formulate their own activities for the diverse classroom, using activities partly taken from a faculty course in Diversity and inclusion in learning in higher education being taught at Chalmers University of Technology. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a toolkit of ideas to facilitate the diverse classroom, with a particular focus on cultural diversity and the international environments that our institutes have become.

KEYWORDS

(Culturally) diverse, inclusion, teachers, Standards: 9, 10

DURATION

120 minutes

ACTIVITIES

Part 1: Setting the scene (approx. 30 mins)

1) Share diversity goals at department and institution level
2) Share examples of how these goals are being achieved

In this first part, participants are invited to share the diversity and inclusion goals at their own institutions and bring examples of how these goals are being realised. Diversity is defined in a broader context as including people with different and multiple characteristics. The examples might be in a variety of forms, from faculty focused initiatives such as professional training to student focused initiatives such as program/ course goals and activities in and outside the classroom. The workshop facilitators will share their own examples of a faculty training course in diversity and program / course interventions for students. Examples will be collected and shared with the participants afterwards.

Part 2: Teaching in the (culturally) diverse classroom (approx. 90 mins)

1) A brief presentation of existing activities teachers have employed at Chalmers university in the course "Diversity and inclusion for learning in higher education"
2) Exploring different activities together for inclusion in the culturally diverse classroom
3) Final reflection regarding the relevance to your own context / institution

Part 2 will start with a brief presentation of the results of a survey sent out to teachers participating in a faculty course in diversity. In this survey, teachers were asked to describe the activities that they have used to facilitate the diversity in their classrooms, a follow-up to the final assignment in the course where they were asked to plan these activities. The workshop will then continue by working with some activities together which the facilitators have used in the culturally diverse or international classroom. Three examples of such activities are the cultural star, the fishbowl and the 360 model. The first activity functions as an icebreaker / getting-to-know-you activity. The second encourages empathy and the third is used to reflect on group dynamics at the start of a project.

Finally, participants will put together their own reflections for activities that they might use in their own contexts.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Anyone involved in engineering education including teachers, administration, management and interested in issues of diversity, inclusion and equity.
Background knowledge: No prior knowledge of diversity work required

OUTCOMES

By the end of the workshop, participants will have a toolkit of ideas to facilitate the (culturally) diverse classroom which is applicable to their own institutional setting. This toolkit will include finding out about student diversity at the start of the course (both for the teacher and for the student); working with constructive alignment and diversity; group forming and the motivation behind that.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Becky Bergman is a senior lecturer at Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Communication and Learning in Science, Gothenburg, Sweden, where she works with intercultural communication and diversity with both students and staff. She is also a PhD candidate at the same university where her main research interests are intercultural communication, internationalisation at home and intercultural group work. She is examiner for a faculty course "Diversity and Inclusion for Learning in Higher Education".

Lena Peterson is a senior lecturer in electronic circuit design at Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Computer Science and Engineering. She has held various management positions related to education and teaches three courses in the master's programme "Embedded Electronic System Design" among which is a half-term project course. She has cooperated with Becky Bergman in the course "Diversity and Inclusion for Learning in Higher Education".

Corresponding author

Becky Bergman
Chalmers University of Technology
Department of Communication and
Learning in Science
Hörsalsvägen 2, 412 96 Göteborg, Sweden
becky@chalmers.se