Incorporating Mindfulness into Pedagogy for the Benefit of Diverse Classrooms

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What do we mean by “mindfulness” in the context of pedagogy?

• Purposeful Pedagogy
  – Make choices that reflect your goals.

• Positionality
  – Consider your background and biases and those of your students.

• Modelling
  – Set examples and empower your students to follow them.
Mindfulness in Practice

Interaction and Feedback
Classroom Interaction Framework

Create Environment

• Use interaction among students from diverse backgrounds as a course objective, link to assessment tasks, and explain its benefits.
• Poll class about their past experiences and co-create communication norms early.

Support Interaction

• Build confidence and trust by moving from low-risk (not output-based) to high-risk discussion models in a formative way.
• Create opportunities for peer learning in diverse groups through activities that depend on perspective taking.

Develop Reflexive Processes

• Debrief after interaction to discuss the learning process and reflect on outcomes.
• Use peer assessment activities in order for students to see diverse approaches.

Communication in Feedback Model

Situate comments within a context

“At Queen’s…”
“Literature reviews in Psychology typically….”
“In my class, I expect…”

Take a first-person perspective

“In my English…”
“When I read this, I understand your main idea to be…”
“I understand this to mean…”

Be explicit in suggestions

“Shorten your sentences to separate ideas…”
“Use the terminology provided in the textbook…”
“Strengthen your transitions…”
Final Thoughts

• Classroom interaction and feedback practices are often sites of stress for all students, but for students from diverse backgrounds in particular.

• These approaches can be adapted into existing practices.

• Principles of mindfulness set up effective classrooms without changing standards.

• Interaction and feedback offer opportunities to highlight the strengths that diversity brings to the classroom.
Thank you! Questions?

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