"The WHOLE Experience" to Framework

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OBJECTIVES:

01

Discuss

- Discuss considerations for inclusive learning environments

02

Explain

- Explain the "W.H.O.L.E." Experience Framework

03

Identify

- Identify practices and/or principles that assist learners holistically

Leveraging the W.H.O.L.E. Experience Framework to Elevate Inclusive Learning

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Reflective Practice

According to Ganly (2018), reflective practice is an opportunity for practitioners to **pause**, **reflect**, and **take notice** of instructional practices that may benefit from further assessment, revision, and adaptation.

Positionality & Identity in the Learning Environment

- 21 Years in Higher Education (Academic & Student Affairs)
- Training in Group Interventions, MBTI, Gallup Strengths Coach, PMP, DEI in the Workplace, Instructional Technology, Quality Matters
- Alum of HBCUs, HSI, PWIs, Religious, Public, & Private institutions
- Attended, taught, and held administrative roles at various higher education institutions
- Experiencing higher education/life as a member of several marginalized and underrepresented groups
- Experiencing higher education/life as a member of several privileged groups
- Temperament, Personality, Disposition
- What else is going on (personally & professionally)
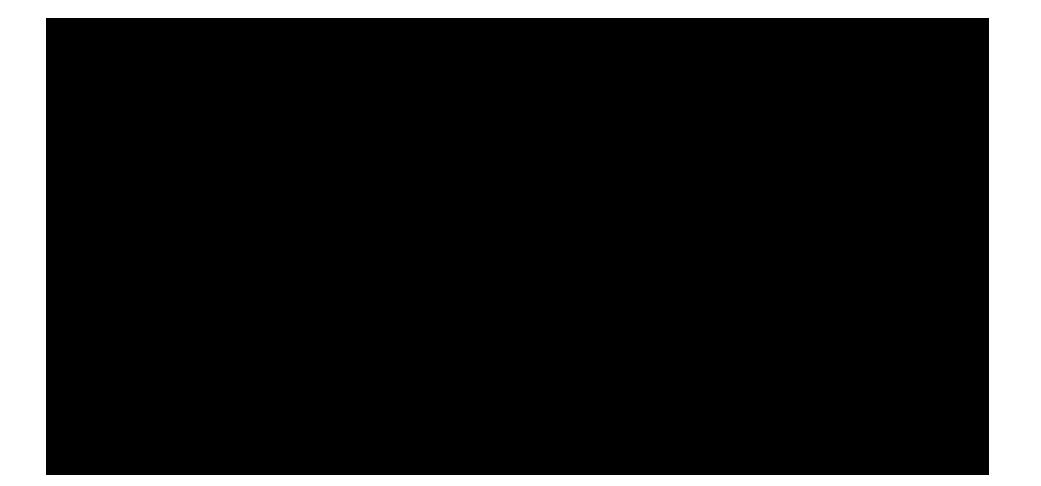
Considerations for an Evolving Learner Population

THE "W.H.O.L.E." EXPERIENCE

Dr. Morris Thomas

"The W.H.O.L.E. Experience"

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THE "WHOLE" Experience: Emotions and Cognition

WELCOMING

Hospitality: The friendly and generous reception and engagement of guests, visitors, or strangers.
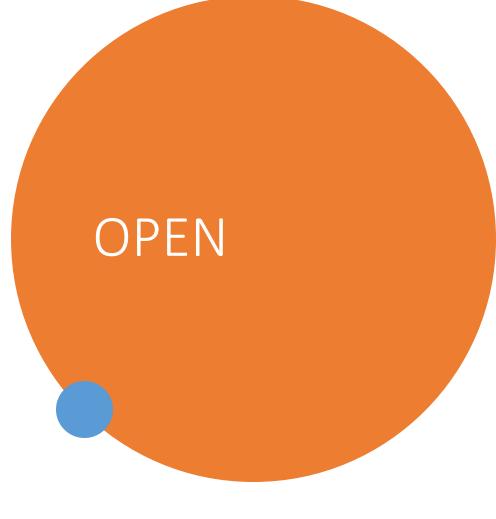
HOLISTIC

Number of participants in an experience

Experience location/modality

Room/Seat Arrangement

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)/Institutional Characteristics

World Events

Any special challenges (instructional or other)

(Dee Fink and Associates, 2018)

OPEN

- Feedback & reflection assists the participants (and facilitators) in improving their knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviors relevant to programmatic objectives and goals

LIBERATING

HOW FLEXIBLE AND OR ADAPTIVE ARE YOUR ENVIRONMENTS?

LIBERATING

-REPRESENTATION
-EXPRESSION
-ENGAGEMENT

EMPOWERING

- What would you like **learners** to be able to do at the end of the experience?

- How would you like **learners** to feel/think about themselves because of their interaction with the learning experience?

- How does what take place in your experiences empower **learners**?

- Has the experience provided personal agency for the **learners**?

Empowerment

"Increasing the capacity of individuals or groups

to make choices   [about what they want]

and to transform those choices into desired actions & outcomes"

World Bank, 2002   bit.ly/worldbankempowerment1

EMPOWERING

The W.H.O.L.E. Experience Recap

Welcoming "Hospitality"	Considers how participants are engaged in an environment and experience not only at the beginning of the experience but throughout its duration
Holistic "Situational Factors"	Considers how the "whole" person is engaged throughout the experience
Open "Feedback"	Considers how feedback and self-reflection is leveraged throughout the experience
Liberating "Flexibility"	Considers if the experience includes opportunities for flexibility and adaptability
Empowering "Reflect the Learners"	Considers if the experience provides opportunities that are connected and relevant to the desired outcomes for the participants

The Study

The case study methodology was used to analyze instructional strategies and learning facilitation to discuss and refine diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices in two psychology courses at a community college in California's Bay Area.

A mentor and mentee professional development experience, referred to as the DEI studio, used four sessions over 5 weeks to explore reflective practice using the W.H.O.L.E. Experience framework as a guide to review current DEI practices and implement additional strategies intended to improve the engagement, experience, and success for learners.

Student feedback and data were collected via a student evaluation questionnaire for these courses.

Welcoming

Student Feedback:

- "I feel very welcomed, comfortable, and confident in class. I have since day one."

- "Professor S. Thomas was very reassuring that we could all make it through the course. She was very kind and open to any questions and concerns and stayed after class answering all my questions."

- "My experience of being welcomed into the course was great. I came into the class feeling scared because of the amount of work I would have to do, but the instructor assured me … that everything was going to be fine and doable."

Welcoming

Faculty & Student Feedback:

Extending a warm and authentic welcome to students on the first day and at the beginning of each class session can set the tone for the whole term. Students recognize and appreciate assignments completed early in a term that connect them to others: "I had a really positive experience being welcomed into the course. The professor was able to connect us students really well via the discussion platform, and it's nice being able to easily communicate with each other."

Welcoming can be especially important in an asynchronous online course where students never meet or see one another face to face. As an example, the addition of a welcome video and an online discussion for students to introduce themselves to others functioned to create a sense of belonging and welcome for students, as explained by one student: "I felt pretty welcomed into the [asynchronous] course where we were given an introduction assignment … . I was able to share about myself and also learn about my classmates a little bit. Responding to them also let me feel like it was a real class." Using instructional time to develop a welcoming environment connects students to a course, engages students, is conducive to learning, and activates a student's sense of belonging.

Holistic

Student Feedback:

• "I feel very humanized by this course. I feel like I am working to within an inch of my studious life, in the absolute best possible way. I am being held to a standard that is both challenging and within my reach."

• "I feel like I am a whole human being as well as being recognized as a student in the classroom from the check-ins."

• "I liked that we were given a rundown of the assignments and their due dates from the start, that way we were aware of how much time we'd have to dedicate to the class."

Holistic

Faculty & Student Feedback:

Considering each student as a "whole human being" with competing commitments, demands, and desires that may affect an individual student's performance is also important. A simple note added to the syllabus inviting students to share any barriers experienced during the term or a shift in language on the part of the instructor to indicate an understanding that students have concerns beyond classroom walls can help students feel recognized. As one student explained: "as a human with needs … there are issues I deal with on a daily basis. I have commitments and life experiences that don't pause for school but that doesn't mean school isn't important to me.

Advocating for and supporting students in and out of the classroom inspired a student to notice: "I actually feel like this learning format allows me to better exercise my own autonomy and feel like I can still show up to other areas of my life." Additionally, a holistic approach on the part of the instructor conveys authentic caring to students: "I also see the weekly and constant announcements that tried to remind us that assignments are due, and it is a way that shows the instructor cares about the students." Students tend to work harder in courses where instructors see and acknowledge their humanity.

Open

Student Feedback:

• "I really liked how honest the professor was from the start in regards to the work load. I also appreciate how caring and genuine she is, specifically how willing she is to always answer questions and give feedback."

• "The professor … thoroughly explained all of the expectations and assignments."

• "Going over the syllabus and constantly checking in with us definitely makes us feel like we aren't alone in this course."

• "An example of open communication is especially shown in her edits on our homework assignments, allowing students to know where to improve."

Open

Faculty & Student Feedback:

Developing positive student-instructor relationships in the classroom is imperative for learning. Teaching best practices always include the essential nature of clear, open, and effective communication between students and the instructor. Inviting student feedback shows trust, respect, and an authentic desire for the exchange of ideas, indicating that learning is a two-way street: "I think Professor Thomas has been open with students, letting them know that if her students have any issue, or any question they can contact her with confidence that they're not alone in the class, and together they can find any solution." In addition, good communication builds trust.

Liberating

Student Feedback:

• "I like the idea of doing the survey before class to put us in groups. It lets us choose our own topic to work on and find classmates that have similar interests or thoughts."

• "The teacher was very flexible when it came to unavoidable obstacles coming up."

• "She explains what she wants very clearly and will further elaborate when needed."

• "I have really appreciated that the professor allows us to create revisions from our drafts and eventually submit a final product that is cohesive with her edits."

Liberating

Students are grateful for an instructor who is not rigid, adjusts to student needs, and allows for student errors. This student evaluator said it best: "This flexibility also allows me to be less focused on losing points and more focused on learning and applying what I've learned to my life." Including second attempts at assignments can be motivating for students: "We have the option to explain our understanding of our course material and learn from others.

In addition, predictability can be liberating for students. It can be freeing for students to find that a course is organized and easily understood, as expressed here: "This course was very organized and concrete, and it was easy to understand the … syllabus." Furthermore, assessments can be quite stressful for students. Instructors who can offer multiple attempts at testing for students allow for greater retention of information, and this can also lead to stress reduction for students.

Empowering

Student Feedback:

• "[The course] seems designed to support students in learning and applying practical knowledge."

• "I felt like I was reassured by the professor and by my peers that I can ask for help when needed."

• "I can see the ramping up of higher point assignments where we can apply all we learned on smaller assignments."

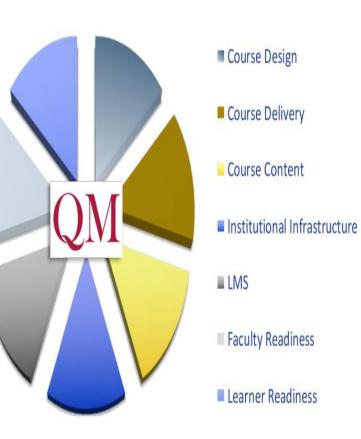# Empowering

Faculty & Student Feedback:

Students recognize when they are learning concepts, theories, and terminology that are relevant to their everyday lives. Deliberately interjecting curriculum and assignments that are pertinent to their experience functions to engage, enthuse, and motivate students (Chu, 2016; Strayhorn, 2018; Zimmerman, 2000). This can promote further study, maximize student effort, and increase attention to course-related content.

Many aspects of the framework work together. For example, holistic and liberating principles are both evident in this student comment: "I remember in the first discussion where students were introducing themselves, 'flexibility' was a key theme in people's comments. They appreciated having the flexibility to learn on their own terms/time while still maintaining their lives outside of class." Another student wrote: "The course also offers room for error and ways to make up errors and lost points." This student expressed appreciation for the ability to make up for human mistakes and found freedom in recognizing the mistake and not being penalized for it.

Strengths of the W.H.O.L.E. Experience framework:

- Professional development opportunities involving an iterative structure, which can be applied to support continuous improvement

- DEI principles become more accessible and applicable

- An instructional preparation aide to evaluate syllabi and teaching strategies

- A group and individual assessment tool for evaluation of DEI approaches in learning environments and continuing improvement
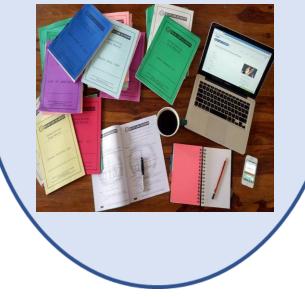
Course Design

Course Delivery

Course Content

Institutional Infrastructure

LMS

Faculty Readiness

Learner Readiness

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Content & Subject Matter Expertise

Digital Tools

Learning Environments

"The WHOLE Experience"
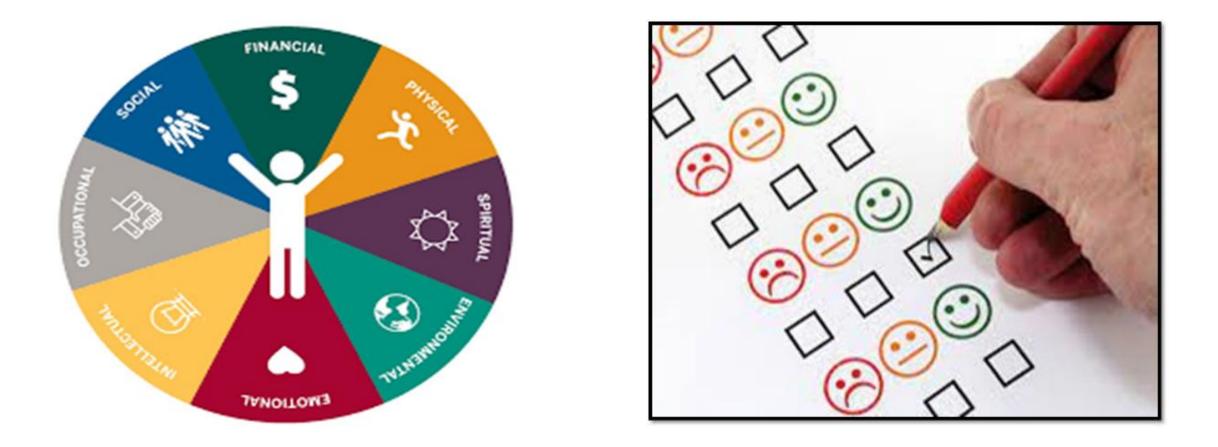
Welcoming

Holistic

Empowering

W.H.O.L.E.

Open

Liberating

Learning Science/Strategies

Learner Engagement

You're at the Core of "The WHOLE Experience"

"I've learned that people will forget what you said,

people will forget what you did,

but people will never forget how you made them feel"

-Maya Angelou

Thank you

Questions?