



Learning-through-Diversity (LtD): Developmental framework

The following framework has been developed as a touchstone for program developers/instructors/facilitators as they develop the learning goal and evaluation plans for their participants in their programs, as well as to guide their own practice.

| Guiding Questions | Conceptualization | Well developed understanding, systematic and ongoing action | Some understanding, moderate or irregular action | Cursory knowledge, minimal action |
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| <i>How do participants' different backgrounds influence how they learn?</i> | Participants have diverse backgrounds. This diversity has implications for participants' learning. | Practitioner understands diversity beyond preferred learning styles and understands the impact of this complexity on participants' learning. Practitioner takes action based on this, evaluates these actions and improves his/her approach based on these evaluative data. | Practitioner explores different understandings of "diverse backgrounds" and uses different methods for considering these understandings in her/his teaching/outreach practice. Practitioner implements some of these new understandings/practices. | Practitioner understands diversity in the context of preferred learning styles and makes basic changes based on this limited understanding. |
| <i>How will considering "diversity" influence how I practice my teaching, and what I decide to include as content?</i> | A variety of curricular considerations and pedagogical practices promote equitable learning for all participants. | Practitioner has knowledge and understanding of various pedagogical practices and content considerations, and has taken action based on it. Practitioner evaluates the actions and improves her/his approach based on evaluative data. | Practitioner has some knowledge and understanding of the variety of practices possible, but has not yet extended understanding to consider content. Practitioner deliberately incorporates some of the variety of practices into the learning activities and is conscious of impact. | Practitioner makes rudimentary changes to content, pedagogy, and assessment in the learning activities. |
| <i>How can the diversity of individual participants help other participants learn better?</i> | The diverse backgrounds of participants can enhance and enrich learning for all participants. | Practitioner has knowledge and understanding of the impact of participants' diverse backgrounds on others' learning and has taken action based on it. Practitioner has evaluated the actions and improved their approach based on evaluative data. | Practitioner has some knowledge and understanding of how each participant's background can influence other's learning. Practitioner incorporates this into different aspects of the learning activities, particularly with respect to content or pedagogy. | Practitioner provides limited opportunities for drawing on participants' diverse backgrounds in their learning activities with little understanding of why they're making the changes. |
| <i>How do I identify and address inequities that exist in my teaching environment?</i> | Inequities exist in educational settings. Removing these inequities has the potential to improve the collective learning experience. | Practitioner has knowledge of the complexity of diversity and understands the impact of this complexity on his/her content and pedagogy. Practitioner takes action based on these, evaluates the actions and improves his/her approach based on evaluative data. | Practitioner has some knowledge and understanding from external sources and begins to reflect on the implications for his/her own practice. Practitioner acts on this knowledge in the context of the learning activities. | Practitioner makes rudimentary changes to learning activities with a superficial understanding of inequities and their impact on participants' learning. |

Definitions of developmental stages

The descriptions below define each development stage in the framework. Two intermediate stages are included to illustrate the “gray” area that exists between each of the major developmental stages.

Developed understanding, committed action

Practitioner increases his/her knowledge and understanding of the impact of concept on participant’s learning. He/she takes action based on this increased understanding, evaluates the actions and improves his/her practice based on these evaluative data.

Developed understanding, moderate or irregular action

Practitioner has some knowledge and understanding of concept based on personal reflection and external sources of information. He/she understands this in the context of his/her own teaching/outreach situation and acts on this knowledge.

Cursory knowledge, minimal action

Practitioner makes elementary changes to teaching/outreach practices based on limited information and with little understanding of why he/she is making the changes.

Illustrative narrative

Participants have diverse backgrounds. This diversity has implications for their learning.

Developed understanding, systematic action

Practitioners at the advanced level understand that demographic characteristics (such as class, nationality, family background) often have profound influences over participants’ experience with and understanding of educational structures, the purposes of evaluation, and the value of certain types of information, inquiry method, or educational venue. Advanced understanding of this influence enables practitioners to develop a grounded approach to understanding his/her participants’ backgrounds and their impact on participants’ learning, and takes into consideration the impact on content and pedagogy when developing further learning opportunities. They evaluate, in sensitive ways, the impact of incorporating these new opportunities into their practice, and makes changes to them for “the next time around.”

Some understanding, moderate or irregular action

Practitioners at the medium level understand that considering “diversity” means more than just considering a variety of preferred learning styles in a classroom. They consider the impact a full range of demographic characteristics on participants’ learning situations, and not just whether participants prefer one format or another. Practitioners consider the variety of ways they prefer to learn, and note that it often varies between learning contexts and across their lifespan. Practitioners incorporate these new understandings in parts of their course where it doesn’t interfere greatly with the content.

Cursory knowledge, minimal action

Practitioners at the lowest level understand the buzzword “diversity” to mean that educators need to consider the variation of their participants’ preferred learning styles. Practitioners may notice, for example, the popularity of group-based projects in their colleagues’ courses. Practitioners therefore integrate some group-based projects into their teaching practice without considering the impact this implementation may have on the diversity of people in their class.

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