

Inclusive Pedagogy FLC Report

Robert Willey

2018-19

Dave Concepcion and John Anderson - Facilitators

I thoroughly enjoyed participating in the FLC this year. It is the 4th FLC I've participated in since joining the faculty and I always learn a lot from the facilitators and colleagues. Dave and John were great and brought lots of ideas for productive discussions.

CONTEXT

I concentrated the application of the fruits from this FLC on my Introduction to the Music Industry (MMP 100) class, but have also incorporated many of the ideas into the other classes I was teaching in the spring (MUST 121 – Introduction to Computer Music, MMP 495 – Senior Recital / Project) and will keep them in mind for the fall (MMP 301 – Songwriting).

Introduction to the Music Industry (MMP 100) is a survey class with 125 students, 95% of whom are non-majors. Since most students are not planning on having careers in the music and entertainment industry. I devote a fair amount of attention on developing transferable skills: communication and learning skills.

Even though most students relate to music to some degree, many have strong emotional and social ties. I can't assume, however, that everyone has a favorite band or artist or has had the money or opportunity to attend shows. When talking about shows preface with understanding some students are food and housing insecure. It's estimated that 3-5% of the population have music I'm aware of musical anhedonia, and for them music is boring or distracting.

We are using music preferences as a way to find common ground, and to learn new things about other people. My original proposal for this FLC was in part to encourage them to appreciate other types of music, and to talk to people who like different types of music, which questions such as "What do you like about it? What do you recommend?" This would be followed by checking out their recommendations. I changed my plan based on what I learned about Inclusive Pedagogy and the material we covered during our FLC meetings.

PROJECT

- Syllabus redesign
- Canvas redesign
- Conference presentation proposal
- Revised Sampling unit
- Had course material reviewed by Carlos Taylor for accessibility

COURSE DESIGN AND POSTURE

- Have been looking for ways to reduce unnecessarily exert authority.

- Attendance is now expected but students are not penalized for absences in addition to the impact it has on their work. I want to focus on making class interesting and productive for them, and if it's not worth it to them to come it's a sign I am not doing my part. I realized that my main motivation in the past penalizing students for missing was because I didn't want to look bad having only a few students show up. Students now vote with their feet. If they come it's a sign that I'm delivering something of value.
- I am dressing more casually and asking students to call me by my first name. I include phonetic spelling of my last name on the syllabus for those who prefer to call me "Dr. Willey".
- Took to heart Dave's suggestion that most students want to learn most of the time, and that if more than 25% of them are not engaged something is wrong with the assignment, not them. In all my classes now students pick the topic for last module, which is a final project of their choosing in which they can apply their skills and interests. I strive to assign work that is not too easy (they get bored) or hard (they give up), and continue to find ways to show how basic parts fit together and tie in what we have covered in past. I am willing to negotiate the parameters of some assignments to accommodate students who propose other ways to meet the objectives in order to not stifle their creativity.
- Using more just-in-time delivery where I try to talk about only what is necessary to do the next piece of work and then have them immediately apply it. I try to stop when I catch myself droning on and "man-splaining" and give students more class time to apply the concepts.

SYLLABUS

- Rewrote the syllabus to create a more welcoming tone, paying close attention to the language used, and encouraging students to visit during office hours or to make appointments if our schedules don't mesh.
- Asked students to call me "Robert", or "Dr. Willey" if they prefer.
- In the future I will add this statement and talk about the first day: "I am committed to being as inclusive as possible. If I do something wrong, I have the capacity to ask forgiveness and learn."

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Reduced cost of required materials. Put copy of textbook on reserve in library.
- Eliminated past requirement of Tophat subscription (\$36) in response to requests from past classes.

STUDY SKILLS

I don't want to assume that all my students have good study skills, and even those who are effective can learn new techniques. Some of the transferable skills developed in the class include techniques from Linda Nilson's *Specifications Grading* and James Lang's *Small Teaching*.

- Self-regulated learning
- Time estimates before, review after

- Pre-study quiz with confidence estimates
- Post-study review
- Study partners, discuss with neighbor in class
- Mindmap overviews in lecture and repeated on Canvas

SPECIFICATIONS GRADING

- Using Specifications Grading in class makes it clear to students what they need to do to get the desired grade they want, and provides flexibility to accommodate issues students may have outside of class. They don't have to do all the assignments, and get "tokens" to redo assignments they don't pass or to turn them in late.

POWERPOINTS

- My lecture on Sampling makes the heaviest use of videos and graphics. I met with Carlos to find out how it is for him and redid the Sampling unit based on his suggestions.
- I now describe pictures on slides and videos.
- Wander throughout lecture hall using remote control.
- At the end of class I take attendance by having them fill out a Google form, which includes an opportunity to ask any question they may have, which I answer later in the day.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

- Students present music on any band or artist of their choosing.
- All styles of music are welcome. I am resisting the temptation to comment disparagingly about piercing and tattoos.

EMAIL

- Encouraging students to contact me by email between classes. When replying I start off by thanking them and end by requesting they let me know if they have any other questions or need further assistance. Try to anticipate misunderstandings and provide added value when possible. Give students opportunities to save face. Give friendly feedback when I see an opportunity for them to communicate more clearly or politely.
- Added pronouns to my email signature. It is obvious to most people that I would use he/his pronouns, but this reminds other faculty of the opportunity and serves as a signal to students that I am sensitive to gender identity issues and welcome them to introduce themselves with their pronouns if they choose to do so, or correcting me when I make a mistake. If I make a mistake I apologize and move on. I have stopped adding "sir", and "maam" and referring to students as ladies and gentlemen. It bothers me more to use the wrong label than to blow a lecture, and I don't want to make that mistake again.

WEBSITE

- I explored the options on changing the font to something easier (i.e. Trebuchet) for dyslexic students to read but that is not supported.

- I include a Welcome message with other information covered at the start of the course in a Start Here module for anyone who joins class late or misses class.
- I provide paths to catch up on anything that it is assumed students already know. I'm going to create a Glossary of terms.

“WHAT DO EACH OF MY STUDENTS NEED FROM ME, TO DO WITH THEM, AND TO DO FOR THEM, SO THEY CAN LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TODAY?”

- I remind myself of approach suggested by Dave. Have become a little more empathetic as a result of being beaten down and re-educated in the tenure review process.
- As a result of the consciousness-raising of this FLC I have been reaching out more those who are falling behind and offer extra encouragement, and providing paths to catch up.

STUDY

- Read book that was purchased for me *Culturally Inclusive Instructional Design: a Framework and Guide for Building Online Wisdom Communities* by Charlotte Nirmalani Gunawardena, Casey Frechette, Ludmita Layne. It turned out that it wasn't very applicable to my situation other than the general goal of promoting transformation and learning through real-world problem solving.
- Read *American Sabor: Latinos y latinas en la música popular estadounidense* by Marisol Berrias-Miranda. In the future I plan on incorporating more information about latino music in the course and future editions of my textbook.

CONFERENCE PROPOSAL

I submitted a conference proposal to the College Music Society 2019 National Conference, October 24-26, 2019 in Louisville, KY:

Inclusive Pedagogy: Welcoming and Accommodating a Diverse Student Population

This presentation consists of suggestions for creating a more welcoming environment and accommodating a diverse student population. Enriching class materials benefits not only students with disabilities, non-native speakers, and those with weaker study skills, since these improvements will be useful for all students as they go forward in a variety of situations.

It is most important that the syllabus creates a welcoming tone in addition to communicating basic course information. Links to additional information help limit it to two pages plus a schedule. Pay close attention to the language used and include a picture of yourself. Encourage students to come to office hours and contact you at any time via email. Anticipate and avoid misunderstandings in email, and use video or audio feedback when possible.

It is better to anticipate special needs than to wait for students to self-identify, which causes them to be left behind while accommodations are made. Course management

software can be used to post lecture notes, links to an audio podcast of lectures, and transcripts of videos that are not closed-captioned. This material can help all students who need to study in silence or while on the go.

Reduce the cost of materials. Consider making your materials available to the public who are not able to attend and use course management software only for what needs to be private. Describe videos and images that are displayed, and have your materials reviewed for readability. Provide a path to catch up for those who do not have the background necessary to succeed.

PROVOST FACULTY SUMMIT

I represented the group and made a presentation at the Provost Faculty Summit on April 12th.