Building a Classroom Community: An ITALI Project

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THE
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Purposeful inclusive practice interventions may help to build a sense of belonging.

PURPOSEFUL INCLUSIVE PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS MAY HELP TO BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING

Background

BACKGROUND

- PHP203G is an undergraduate course centering on cancer, its treatment, disparities in care, and ethical considerations

- Many will be affected by cancer in our lifetimes; some students will be more acutely affected than others and this may impact classroom performance

- *Hypothesis:* allowing for students to share their personal stories (This I believe, pre-class survey), providing opportunities for varied active engagement throughout the course, and including purposeful group work will improve classroom sense of belonging

ATL Book Club: Race, Equity, & the Learning Environment

Tuitt F, Haynes C, Stewart S. Race, Equity, and the Learning Environment. Virginia: Stylus Publishing, 2016
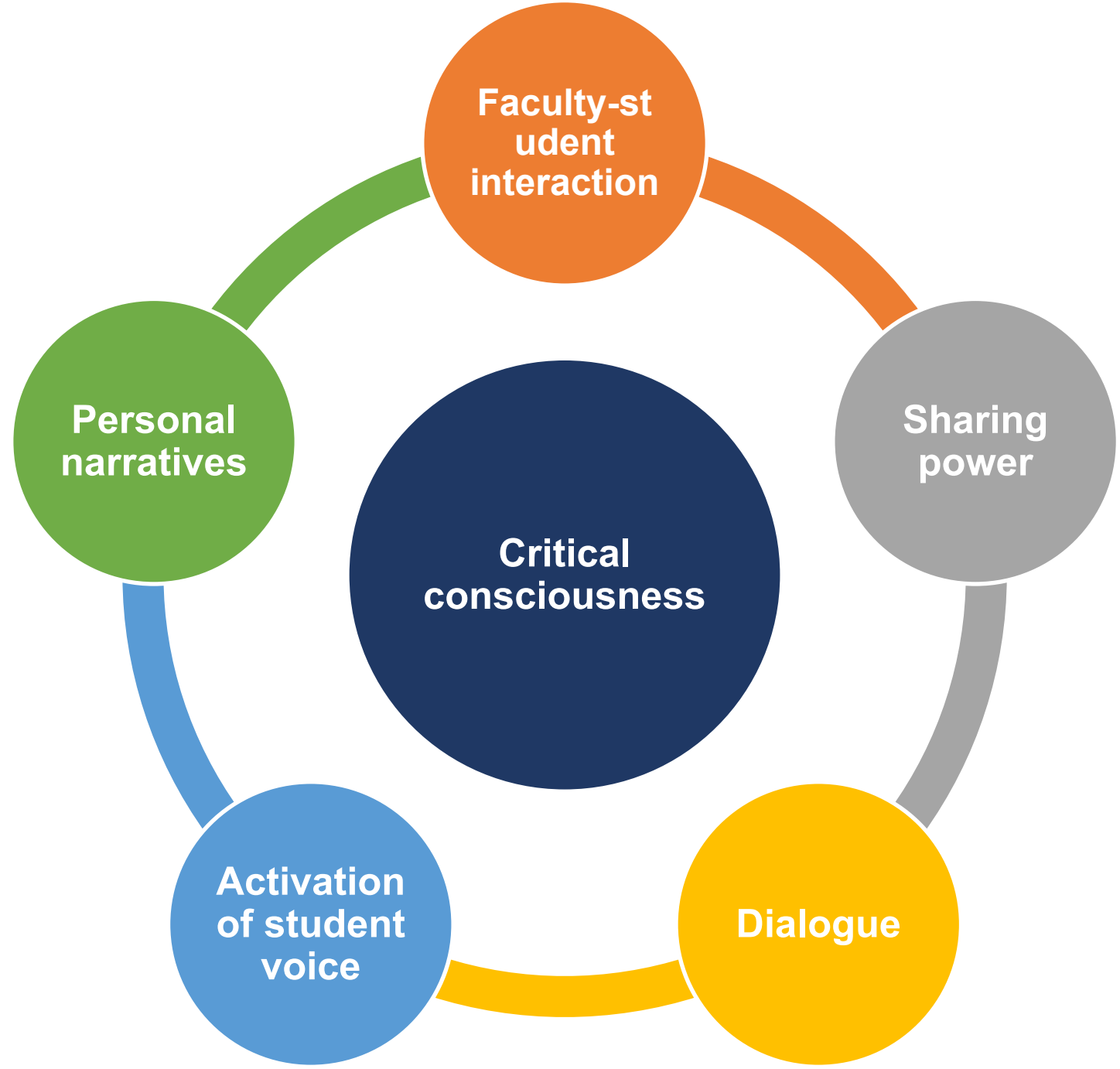
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Summary of Interventions

INTERVENTIONS

This I Believe

Pre-class survey

Student voice activation

- This I Believe reflection assignment
  - Individualized learning plan
  - Connect students to course material.
- Pre-class survey:
  - Identify barriers to success
  - Formulate student groups based on self-identified strengths/weakness
- Ice breaker activities
- Student voice activation assignments: twitter reflections, debates, action plan

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Methods

Methods

ITALI Project

Validated survey

Approved by IRB

- Developed as a part of the Inclusive Teaching and Learning Institute (ITALI) Project at URI

- A validated survey for classroom sense of belonging was performed in the beginning and end of the 2019 Fall semester
  - First survey: 28 of a possible 29 respondents
  - Second survey: 20 of a possible 28 respondents

- Approved by the University of Rhode Island Institutional Review Board

Rovai AP. *Development of an instrument to measure classroom sense of community.* Internet and Higher Education 2002;197-211.

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Survey Details

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

VALIDATED SURVEY

Qualtrics Program (Pre- and Post)

Data analysis

- A validated survey for classroom sense of belonging was performed in the beginning and end of the 2019 Fall semester
  - First survey: 28 of a possible 29 respondents
  - Second survey: 20 of a possible 28 respondents

- Approved by the University of Rhode Island Institutional Review Board

- Developed as a part of the Inclusive Teaching and Learning Institute (ITALI) Project at URI

- Likert scale of 1-5 (1=strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree)

Rovai AP. *Development of an instrument to measure classroom sense of community.* Internet and Higher Education 2002;197-211.

PURPOSEFUL INCLUSIVE PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS MAY HELP TO BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING
Results – Significant Changes to Positively Framed Questions

	October *All respondents, (n=28)*	December *All respondents, (n=20)*	Change	October *Diverse students only (n=11)*	December *Diverse students only (n=12)*	Change *Diverse students only*	
I feel students in this class care about each other	2.5	2.0	0.5	2.8	2.2	0.6	**1 = strongly agree**
I feel connected to others in this course	2.8	2.2	0.6	3.1	2.4	0.7	**2 = somewhat agree**
I feel that I receive timely feedback	1.9	1.8	0.1	2.1	1.6	0.5	**3 = neither agree nor disagree**
I feel that this course is like a family	3.5	3.2	0.3	3.6	3.1	0.5	**4 = somewhat disagree**
I feel that I can rely on others in this course	2.7	2.3	0.4	2.8	2.5	0.3	**5 = strongly disagree**

PURPOSEFUL INCLUSIVE PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS MAY HELP TO BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING

Results – Significant Changes to Negatively Framed Questions

	October All respondents, (n=28)	December All respondents, (n=20)	Change	October Diverse students only (n=11)	December Diverse students only (n=12)	Change Diverse students only	
I feel that it is hard to get help when I have a question	4	4.4	0.4	4.2	4.2	0	1 = strongly agree
I feel isolated in this course	3.7	4.1	0.4	3.6	3.8	0.2	2 = somewhat agree
I feel reluctant to speak openly	3.7	4.3	0.6	3.3	3.7	0.4	3 = neither agree nor disagree
I feel this course only results in modest learning	2.9	3.1	0.2	2.7	3.1	0.4	4 = somewhat disagree
							5 = strongly disagree

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Results – Significant Changes

All/diverse respondents: greatest impact

- Students in this class care about each other
- I feel connected to others in this course
- I feel reluctant to speak openly

All respondents only

- I feel that I can rely on others in this course
- I feel that it is hard to get help when I have a question
- I feel isolated in this course

Diverse respondents only

- I feel that I receive timely feedback
- I feel that this course is like a family
- I feel like this course only results in modest learning

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Discussion

DISCUSSION

It appeared that interventions were effective.

Several changes to the course design were made at once, so it is challenging to identify which were most impactful.

The course will continue to utilize strategies presented. Some changes were made to grading of Twitter reflection assignments based on student feedback.

All students demonstrated an overall positive change regardless of identifying as diverse or not.

A significant negative change was not identified for either group.

Diverse-identifying students had lower baseline and end-of-semester survey scores.

Some students still seemed to self-isolate or disengage from others.

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THANK YOU!