Alternative Forms of Measuring Diversity Monitoring at Higher Education Institutions.

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This is one of Norway's largest educational institutions, with a student body of approximately 16,000.

Institute of Nursing

Three main strategies for monitoring diversity in a specialist Higher Education Institution.

The central thesis of this presentation is that learning in a participatory learning environment is conducive to all students equally, regardless of their gender, social, ethnic or linguistic background.

The first strategy is one-to-one conversation/dialogue with each student twice their first year.

For many years we have experienced that students drop out of college in their first year of studying.

Research shows that many students experience difficulty in an environment that differs from their previous educational experiences. In these new surroundings it is important to establish an enabling environment that supports the students' needs regarding their topics and their learning strategies. For many years I have had these one to one conversations with the nursing students. This approach enables getting to know the students special needs as soon as possible.

A questionnaire/survey is used to collect statistics. The topics are; their goals, abilities, their verbal communication skills, how much time and work they will spend studying, special challenges, how they fit in with their fellow students socially in the group and learning strategies.

One student told me he had to work part-time to support his family and therefore his ambition wasn't too high.

There is a score given for each topic on a scale from 0 – 10. It is a qualitative research project based on the students' own opinions.

The main effect of these one-to-one conversation is that the students learn to express their learning outcome, explain their special needs, experience that they are met as an individuals and experience themselves as unique.
(The important outcome is that the student experience that the teacher focuses on him or her, his or her learning strategies and that the student feels supported.)

For the teacher it is important to get to know each student in order to discover special needs. Many nursing students (are grownups and haven't studied for years and many) with Norwegian as their second language have difficulties in writing norwegian. When this or other needs are discovered early, the student will be asked to join different courses (series of lessons) the University College offers, for example; learning strategies both reading and writing, examination training, stress managing and Norwegian language LANGUAGE SUPPORT? They are also offered fellow students as mentors. These mentors, often 2nd or 3rd year students, help them with different subjects like finding relevant literature, how to write papers and how to connect/mingle with fellow students.

The project so far demonstrates that students gain equally when participating in programs using one to one conversation and second language students in particular. They don’t drop out so easily.

The teachers are also satisfied. “Now I feel I get to know them as individuals“. It’s so satisfactory to support them”. The only problem is lack of time.

**The second strategy is cooperative learning; improving communication and language skills.**

In my paper for this conference I described a developmental project for the students with Norwegian as their second language exclusively.

While writing this paper I found it essential to expand the focus towards all students regardless of their gender, social, ethnic or other background.

Therefore I will focus on another ongoing developmental project; Cooperating learning as method for including everyone and research show that some student (Norwegian as their second language) are excluded from their fellow students when they have to make thesis /paper together. So this is a relevant strategy.

Cooperative learning is also a method to improve Norwegian communication and language proficiency. So do not worry. You will be a winner, no matter!

In a diverse student body equity and success of all students are the ambition.

**This requires:**

- a learning environment without standardized and cultural homogeneous premises
- a wide range of ways to teach, learn and evaluate
In my opinion Cooperate learning includes all this.

Cooperative learning is an explicit use of small groups of students (8-10 students per group) to promote their learning outcomes. Research shows that students learn more together in groups and from each other, than for instance when working alone.

Cooperative learning differs from working in ordinary group/units. In those groups participation is based on delegation: Who does what?

Cooperative learning: is different.

To succeed the following principles must be applied.

1. **Dependence of each other** The teacher must use methods adjusted to the specific paper/thesis/essay the students are studying. Making smaller groups and letting them only work with a piece of the subject is one example. Together they will get the whole picture. In this way they are dependent of each other. Everybody’s work is important to the whole group. When they get together in the larger group, everyone must talk and teach the others their piece of the subject. In this way they practice language pronunciation.

2. **Individual work** Every student must study the subjects before they meet their study-group. And every student must perform and read out loud their part of the actual subject.

3. **Face – to- face activity.** It is important to make a group effective. The students must experience cooperative learning as significant. Then learning strategies and dynamics of the group may increase. Data show that this principle face – to – face quickly leads to interest and helpfulness developing between the students. They do help each other. Their abilities are appreciated. Everyone has something to share with the group. Data show that all students are included in the group and they all experience themselves as important members who contribute in different ways and all are appreciated.

   And this create multicultural understanding and crosscultural communication

4. **Equal activity and simultaneous interaction** is vital for making cooperative learning effective.

5. **Use of social skills** is fundamental to the method. To make a group effective and efficient they need to know how to behave socially and they need to
practice the different roles / functions they need in a well-organized study group. The distinctive roles they take on teach them several skills. Some positions include analysis other helping to come to consensus. The leader’s position is essential. He or she must make sure that everyone shares his or her contribution. In this way everyone has to talk and stimulate ideas within the group. A well functioning group contains of member who easily can succeed in all the different positions.

“We know how to work together. We appreciate each other” the students say.

WHAT TO GAIN AT COOPERATIVE LEARNING. Cooperative learning stimulates and promotes the students professional results, their social skills, intercultural communication, including communication and language skills and improves their health - their wellbeing.

HOW: The assistant professor has to make the groups functioning and make an environment that supports the face-to-face activity. The teacher must encourage, supervise, support the students and make a diverse learning environment for the benefit of all.

A questionnaire/survey is used to collect statistics each time. This is a relevant strategy to monitor the students’ cooperation and their difficulties.

The methods must be suitable for the topic/thesis they are to study.
For instance the teacher sometimes divide the groups according to various criteria such as age, gender, experience and those having difficulties in the complexity of interaction language proficiency, Norwegian as their second language.

WHY: TO LEARN MORE AND LEARN MORE EFFICIENT.

The students say: “We learn more.”” We teach each other”. “No one can avoid/escape working”

BUT: Someone does less than others, said members of one group.

Other benefits from the students’ point of view:
“We know each other.”

“We learn social skills relevant to study group. I talk more than usually because the roles/the positions in the group that everyone must join.”

“The skills are essential, especially the leader position.”

“We are having fun.” “We do care for each other.”

The third strategy is staff involvement.

My opinion is that this is the toughest job.

- to improve the pedagogical approaches to include the diverse student body.

The OAUC seeks diversity, but does not know how or do not want to face the consequences of this plurality.

Every academic staff member does the one-to-one conversation/dialog with their students.

When the teachers discover special needs, most of them ask the students to join the programs that might help them.

******* BUT*****

Some teachers believe they can manage and asking someone else for help is similar to admit their incompetence.

Others do not offer an individual approach to these students’ needs. They do know that the students have difficulties, but they don’t ask how they are managing.

Others “send” their students to those who know what to do. They claim they don’t have the time to support them.

Others respond to the students’ paper mostly about Norwegian spelling and grammar instead of directing to the substance of the paper.

All these strategies will reinforce the problems and the main weakness the student may have.

What is done?

The programs available for students with special needs are mailed to the staff members.
Different pedagogical methods are handed to them- and I will credit some of my colleges- they use some and the students love it. 

I tell the principal, head of the staff and other leaders we need time to focus on diversity/heterogeneity as valuable and they are slowly starting to get there. 

I teach the methods to my colleges whenever there is an opportunity.

Thank you!

Please, be free to ask questions.

Grete Hedemann

Dette skal ikke oversettes. Kun for meg…..

Individuell studiesamtale.

Hensikt er å hjelpe studenten med å planlegge og gjennomføre studiet, samt bidra til refleksjon rundt egen studiesituasjon og egne ressurser.

STUDENTEN SKAL BLI HØRT, SETT, MØTT og RESPEKTERT.

Hvordan trives du som student i høgskolen?

(Hva må til/ skje for at du skal trives bedre?)

(Økonomi, bolig. Ernæring, kjærlighet bør være ok)

Hvordan trives du i studiet?
(Hva kan du gjøre for å trives bedre?)
Hvordan har du det sosialt?

(Hva kan du gjøre for å ha det bedre sosialt?)
Hvordan mestrer du studiet?

(Hva kan du gjøre for å bedre dette?)
Hvordan har du det

(Hva må skje for at du skal ha det bedre?)
I tillegg /ved behov
Studentens mål for dette semesteret er:
  Kortsiktige:
  Langsiktige:
Studentens viktigste utfordringer i dette semesteret er:
Studentens ressurser er:

Studiesituasjonen, samarbeidsforhold, miljø:
Spesielle forhold i studiesituasjon som studenten vil nevne

Studiegruppen

Samarbeid lærer/student

Ønsker/beov/forventninger om støtte og veiledning.
Hva kan du gjøre selv?
Hva evt. hinder deg i arbeidet med studiet?
Hvem ønsker du støtte av?
Trenger du ny samtale?

OPPSUMMERING:
++ gi positiv feedback- rose.