

10 Steps for Designing and Facilitating Inclusive Presentations at Conventions/Conferences

A Working Document Developed by Members of the ACPA Professional Development Equity and Inclusion Work Group, December 17, 2013

The recommendations are intended as a starting point for designing and facilitating inclusive workshops, programs and convention/conference sessions. Creating inclusive sessions includes:

- Sharing information that supports the needs, issues and academic success of students across the full range of social identity groups that colleges and universities serve
- Providing resources and tools to help session participants to create inclusive campus programs, services, and practices that meet the needs of all students, staff and faculty across multiple, intersecting social identity groups
- Meeting the learning needs of the full range of participants in the session across multiple social identity groups
- Doing no harm in the session: Avoiding stereotypic representations, comments or images
- Interrupting any comments or behaviors from participants that are biased, exclusionary, or uninclusive

Considerations in Designing an Inclusive Session

1. Know Your Audience – It is important to know your audience as much as possible. This can help in designing both content and delivery methods for your session. The more information you have, the more intentional you can be in developing your session. It is important to note that understanding an audience is different than making assumptions about an audience. Details to know about your audience, include:

- Potential demographics by age; years of experience in the field; types of positions/roles; disability; sex; gender identity; race; culture; current nation of residence; English proficiency; institutional types; socio-economic status; sexuality; religion, spirituality and ways of knowing; educational background; etc.
- What types of knowledge and training they have had about the topic?
- What types of accommodations may be requested, useful to participants?

2. Know Your Content/Know Yourself - Although you do not need to be an expert, you should be familiar with the content you are delivering. It is important to think through how your content might be applied across a full breadth of constituents.

- Review the conference/convention theme and the intentions about equity and inclusion
- Review relevant research and articles related to your topic and higher education

- Review your references and sources to ensure they represent a wide range of social identity groups across privileged and marginalized status
- Scan the current national/international context to gather any issues or content that may be relevant to the session and might be raised in participant comments and questions
- Understand how your topic applies to the experiences and needs of a wide range of different social identity groups
- Prepare examples and graphics that reflect a wide variety of identity groups

3. Be Mindful of Activities - Pay attention to the types of activities and whose participation they might limit. In addition, be mindful of your own biases and assumptions when developing your curriculum.

- Review your graphics, images, and quotes to ensure that they represent a wide range of social identity groups across privileged and marginalized status; and do not perpetuate traditional roles or stereotypes
- Review your design with several colleagues whose social group identities are different from yours; seek their reactions, input, and ideas to help broaden your content and activities to meet the needs of the full range of social identity groups

4. Consider Multiple Learning Styles - Develop a session that considers the multiple ways in which people learn. Consider incorporating a combination of individual, small group, and large group activities.

- Use experiential, interactive activities to help participants use and apply information from presentations
- Share information in multiple, overlapping ways: auditory, written, visual, stories/examples, kinesthetic/experiential
- Balance theoretical concepts with practical applications and examples of promising practices on campuses

5. Consider Depth and Breadth - Consider the amount of time your session has and attempt to create a balance of both depth of knowledge and breadth of knowledge.

- Provide additional resources for participants through handouts or references to deepen knowledge, share promising practices, apply concepts and skills to their campus, etc.

6. Know (and Own) the Limitations of Your Session - Trying to be all things for all participants may hinder your ability to develop a meaningful session for participants. Focus the development of your session and own that the content may not be fully inclusive.

- Use the learning outcomes to clearly state what you intend to cover and what may be outside of the scope of this session

- For example: The recommendations may be based on research conducted at three urban community colleges in the U.S.; the findings may not be apply to rural colleges or tertiary institutions in countries outside the U.S.

7. Ensure Content is Delivered on Stated Goals/Outcomes - As the session is being developed, be sure to continue to “audit” the activities and the content to ensure that it is delivering on the stated goals and outcomes of the session.

8. Choose Appropriate Content Delivery Methods - Once the content is solidified, choose appropriate delivery methods that take into consideration the participants, the length of the session, the venue, and the available technology.

9. Be Mindful of Universal Design Principles - Review Universal Design principles to ensure that your session is as inclusive as possible.

- Review the related document, “**Universal Design Principles for Presentations and Meetings**” <http://convention.myacpa.org/indy2014/program/program-information/>

10. Incorporate Feedback Loop(s) - Be sure to incorporate opportunities for session participants to give feedback either through a formal assessment document or by incorporating verbal feedback at the close of the session. It is possible to incorporate feedback related to intended outcomes throughout the session also.

Considerations in Facilitating an Inclusive Session

1. Engage Your Audience - When possible, use participant comments, questions, and issues to drive the content of the session. It will help make the content relevant to the variety of learners.

- Consider ways to gather participant questions and issues
 - Charts on wall as they enter
 - 3 X 5 cards on chairs – collect early in session
 - Share pair: What do you hope to gain from this session?

2. Set Ground Rules/Expectations for Participation - Setting either ground rules to guide dialogue enables presenters to create parameters that can define the direction of the session. It is important to be mindful of who benefits from the ground rules/expectations. Oftentimes, traditional ground rules benefit privileged/dominant identities. Consider the following ground rules:

- Engage in respectful dialogue
- Participate fully
- Listen respectfully
- Explore intent and impact of comments
- Step up, Step back: Share airtime

- Ask questions to deepen understanding

3. Have Copies of Materials Available - Consider ways to make the materials available to participants:

- Review the related document, “**Universal Design Principles for Presentations and Meetings.**” <http://convention.myacpa.org/indy2014/program/program-information/>
- There may be participants in attendance who learn best with physical copies of the Power Point. Be sure to keep Universal Design principles in mind when printing copies.
- Have Power Point on a thumb drive or a link to Dropbox so participants can download to an accessible device.
- Have any handouts on a thumb drive or a link to Dropbox so participants can download to an accessible device.
- Bring a copy of the handouts in 18-point font.

4. Think, Pair, Share - Use multiple ways of engaging participants in attendance.

- To form various share pairs, encourage participants to find partners who they do not know and may have different group identities from theirs
- Use a variety of reflective and active learning methods: small groups, case studies, video clips (captioned), journaling, role plays, demonstrations, statistics, visioning activities, etc.
- Actively facilitate dialogue and engage participants in conversations. Avoid reading from the screen with your back to the audience.

5. PAN - Pay Attention Now. It is important to pay attention to group and individual dynamics and make adjustments/respond to create greater inclusion. Some examples include:

- Who is verbally participating, who is quieter?
- What topics of diversity are discussed, which are not?
- Do share pairs and small groups seem to be diverse by perceived race, sex, gender identity, age, etc.
- Who gets interrupted, who interrupts?
- Do some participants speak often and for longer periods of time?
- What biased or stereotypic assumptions are embedded in participant comments?

6. Be Ready to Pause - There may be times where it will be important to address an issue or question that has arisen.

- Track group interactions for any microaggressions or uninclusive behaviors
- Be prepared to respond in ways that address the situation and create greater inclusion
- Notice participant reactions and respond in ways to create greater engagement

7. Use Examples that are Inclusive of a Wide Range of Identities – Use a diversity of examples that allow participants to connect with the content from multiple identities and perspectives.

- Use examples, stories, case studies, graphics, etc., that reflect a wide range of group identities
- Be prepared to add more examples to increase the diversity of those shared by participants
- Ask the group to reflect and notice the range of examples that have been discussed, and to broaden the conversation by sharing ones related to additional groups

8. Be Open to Feedback - There may be times when a participant is having a reaction to your presentation style, your choice of language, the content, etc. Be open to it. Consider inviting feedback from participants at different points by asking:

- What has been the impact of the session so far? Anything else you are needing?
- Here is where I am intending to go next, does this meet your needs?

9. Know and Own Your Limitations - Becoming an inclusive presenter is a lifelong process. If you notice or get feedback that your comments or content are not inclusive, acknowledge it and explore the impact with participants. Use any missteps or oversights as teachable moments.

10. Solicit Feedback - As mentioned previously, developing and implementing inclusive sessions is an ongoing process. Solicit feedback that will help you and co-presenters be more inclusive in the future.