

GEO REU Workshop 2016

Working group: Creating an inclusive REU and a welcoming workplace climate

2:00-3:00 pm - Thursday, Sept. 22, 2016

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This is from a small working group of workshop participants who discussed the topic and made notes on their discussion.

Norms of Collaboration

1. Pausing

Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion, and decision-making.

2. Paraphrasing

Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you – “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” – and following the starter with an efficient paraphrase assists members of the group in hearing and understanding one another as they converse and make decisions.

3. Posing Questions

Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and to specify thinking. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations, and to invite others to inquire into their thinking. For example, “What might be some conjectures you are exploring?” Use focusing questions such as, “Which students, specifically?” or “What might be an example of that?” to increase the clarity and precision of group members’ thinking. Inquire into others’ ideas before advocating one’s own.

4. Putting Ideas on the Table

Ideas are the heart of meaningful dialogue and discussion. Label the intention of your comments. For example: “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...” or “Another consideration might be...”.

5. Providing Data

Providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing, and interpreting data.

6. Paying Attention to Self and Others

Meaningful dialogue and discussion are facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of what (s)he is saying and how it is said as well as how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning styles when planning, facilitating, and participating in group meetings and conversations.

7. Presuming Positive Intentions

Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and discussion, and prevents unintentional put-downs. Using positive intentions in speech is one manifestation of this norm.

- Please try to keep comments to 30 seconds

Resources

See the page on the GEO REU webpage on Writing an Inclusive Application:
<http://scied.ucar.edu/soars/reu/running-an-reu/applications>

Resources for learning about inclusivity

- Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? (Racial identity development in students and ways to talk about race; book): <https://www.amazon.com/Black-Kids-Sitting-Together-Cafeteria/dp/0465083617>
- Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (Book) <https://www.amazon.com/Whistling-Vivaldi-Stereotypes-Affect-Issues/dp/0393339726>
- The Culturally Inclusive Educator (how we can make our learning environments more inclusive; book): https://www.amazon.com/Culturally-Inclusive-Educator-Preparing-Multicultural-ebook/dp/B00PBAIQ14/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1474579704&sr=1-1&keywords=the+culturally+inclusive+educator
- LGBTQ Safe Zone training materials: <http://thesafezoneproject.com/>
- UCAR/NCAR Equity and Inclusion (UNEION) training materials: resources for learning about privilege, gender, race, and bystander intervention (how to intervene in problematic situations): <https://ncar.ucar.edu/diversity-education-outreach/schedule-and-materials>
- Talking about leaving: Why undergraduate students leave the sciences: <https://www.amazon.com/Talking-About-Leaving-Undergraduates-Sciences/dp/0813366429>
- Creating more inclusive departments: Recommendations from the Inclusive Astronomy 2015 Meeting: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JipEb7xz7kAh8SH4wsG59CHEaAJSJTAWRfVA1MfYGM8/edit>
- Microaggressions: <http://world-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/7-Racial-Microaggressions-in-Everyday-Life.pdf>
- "My white boss talked about race in America and this is what happened": <https://medium.com/@MandelaSH/my-white-boss-talked-about-race-in-america-and-this-is-what-happened-fe10f1a00726#.f3cj6huoh>
- Resources for supporting students with disabilities: <http://www.theiagd.org/>

Identities

- Gender Identity (including non-binary and transgender identities)
- Age
- Race
- Nationality
- Socio-economic status
- Regional
- Image (tattoos, piercings, hairstyle, clothing - conformity)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Dietary requirements
- Family situation
- Disability status - physical and mental

- Veteran status
- Body shape and size
- Rural/urban
- Political affiliation
- University/institution type
- Confidence
- Hobbies - sports? Music? Other?
- Preparation (e.g. quant skills, computing skills, etc)
- Extroversion/introversion
- Learning style
- Expectations: for career, for self, for REU program

Stages of REU

- Your own preparation
 - LGBTQ Safe Zone training
 - Reading around race and gender (see UCAR/NCAR Equity and Inclusion site for our primer readings on privilege, gender, and race, and see Resources section above for more: <https://ncar.ucar.edu/diversity-education-outreach/schedule-and-materials>)
- Recruitment/Application/Interviews/Selection
 - Don't presume your students have access to certain programs/software/official transcript
 - Recruitment materials should allow all students to "see themselves"
 - Gender identity-inclusive language
 - Are your forms accessible to students with disabilities? Is your website accessible to screen readers?
- Project development/Mentor selection
 - Awareness of accessibility requirements for project (inverse: importance of providing accessible projects for students with disabilities)
 - Mentor attitudes towards non-traditional students
- Info delivery
 - Be cognizant of pronoun use
 - Provide resources/information for students who are disabled
 - Provide contacts for religious institutions and cultural groups
- Pre-surveys
 - Accessibility - are your surveys online and are they screen-reader accessible?
- Mentor training
 - Training/discussions around cultural communication styles
 - Some students may come from a culture where they are taught not to question their elders. This will be in contradiction to the scientific method of communication, which revolves around debate and questioning. Mentors should use alternative methods for checking for student understanding e.g. ask student to repeat instructions rather than asking "do you understand"
 - Making explicit the expectations for behavior, reporting misconduct, inclusivity etc.
 - Provide Title IX reporting mechanisms
 - If student participants are of Muslim faith, draw mentors' awareness to a possible lack of concentration in the late afternoon during fasting
- Onboarding/Travel/transportation/housing

- Train your admin assistants to understand transgender-friendly travel policies
 - When assigning housing: “Are you comfortable living in a space with people whose gender identity may not match your own?”
 - Ask the transgender/non-binary student how they would like to be housed
 - Provide alternative accommodation options for students with specific circumstances e.g. if they have children or another dependent that needs to travel with them
- Student orientation/training/seminars
 - Training/discussions around cultural communication styles
 - Having an explicit conversation about communication style and the culture of your workplace will help students realize that communication style or other interactions may not be a personal slight, but are as a result of “how things are done around here”
 - Making explicit the expectations for behavior, reporting misconduct, inclusivity etc.
 - Provide Title IX reporting mechanisms
 - Make your expectations of student-student interactions clear *while continuing to treat them as adults!*
 - Provide safe spaces for difficult discussions (see training materials above). Remember, it’s ok to be scared of a difficult discussion but that is not an excuse not to have it. <https://medium.com/@MandelaSH/my-white-boss-talked-about-race-in-america-and-this-is-what-happened-fe10f1a00726#.f3cj6huoh>
 - Do not tolerate inappropriate, degrading, or derogatory language
 - Help the students find a sense of ownership over their workplace. This will help increase their sense of belonging. E.g. invite another REU group to your workplace for a tour, but have the students conduct the tour. Give them some time to do some research first
- Start work/Student integration into lab
 - Are all of your spaces accessible, physically and for people with invisible disabilities?
 - Be sure to train mentors and other students about the effects of disabilities on students
 - Where possible, provide access to gender neutral restrooms
 - Provide a quiet space for students to pray during the day they need to
 - Be conscious of dietary requirements of students, or timing of meal times
- Seminars, workshops, other professional development
 - Provide training on unconscious bias awareness (maybe as a part of an ethics course?)
 - Be cognizant of pronoun use
- Extracurricular activities, field trips
 - Awareness of religion and catering for all dietary restrictions. Awareness of activities revolving around food, especially during Ramadan
 - Invite the students to meet the chefs so they can talk
 - Are your field trips accessible for people with disabilities?
 - NSF GOLD project called “FIELD” (link coming soon) dedicated to field work accessibility
- Ongoing evaluation
 - Gender identity-inclusive language
 - Are your forms accessible to students with disabilities? Is your website accessible to screen readers?
- Final presentations/papers/abstracts/End of summer gathering

- Invite students' families
 - Empower students to “own” their research. Give them opportunities to practice so they are confident in their delivery.
 - Have students review each other's presentations/posters to increase readability etc. but also give students ideas in good practices in creating their own presentations.
- Final surveys
 - Gender identity-inclusive language
 - Are your forms accessible to students with disabilities? Is your website accessible to screen readers?
- Students go home
 - Train your admin assistants to understand transgender-friendly travel policies
- Follow up interactions / attending a conference
 - Don't assume a student will be able to pay for travel in advance and be reimbursed.
 - Taking time off work to attend a conference or continue their research may be a challenge