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Fallon, Moira, & Brown, Susan (Eds.) (2010) *Teaching Inclusively in Higher Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

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Editors Moira Fallon and Susan Brown expand a much needed conversation from the K-12 realm into the area of colleges and universities in their book *Teaching Inclusively in Higher Education* (2010). Throughout the text, the featured authors highlight the necessity of inclusive education as a means of tending to the increasing diversity on college campuses. Student populations are increasingly heterogeneous, which is why Fallon and Brown (2010) facilitate a collection of chapters that call for “building the learning environment to meet the varying backgrounds and needs of all students” (p. 15). At the outset, the editors define inclusive education as “a core belief and a set of teaching practices that supports the belief that all students should be full members of the

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community” (Fallon & Brown, 2010, p. 10). The text identifies teaching as the main vehicle of inclusivity on college campuses and each chapter provides examples and practical guides that instructors can implement in their own classrooms. In each chapter, the authors clearly demonstrate that students need more than what they are now receiving on campuses across the country. Under the surface, this text calls into question a greater societal and educational concern: are college students coming to campus less prepared, and if so, how does diversity impact the academic preparedness and educational needs of students?

Following the introduction, the editors organize the text into three parts. Part I – “Students as Diverse Individuals and Members of Inclusive Groups” establishes an understanding of today’s college student population and details areas of diversity, which merit consideration when attempting to teach and educate campus communities today. From a practical perspective, this section outlines the cultural contexts that teachers who hope to create an inclusive community and learning style within their classrooms must consider. Part II – “Inclusive Instructors as Strategic Leaders and Co-Leaders” shifts to the role that instructional staff members can and should play in making college a more inclusive learning environment. The final section, Part III – “Technological Classroom Climates as Inclusive Learning Communities,” outlines utilizing technology as a vehicle in creating more inclusive classroom environments and educative opportunities.

The main theme of teaching inclusively weaves its way through each chapter and section of the book. Throughout, each author connects the dilemmas that colleges and universities face in reaching out to their student populations to where these students exist prior to college.

In doing so, *Teaching Inclusively in Higher Education* draws on ideas similar to those articulated by Lisa Delpit (1995) in her examination of the impact that external cultural concerns and conflicts influence K-12 learning environments. Whether attending elementary school, high school, or college, students who are informed of and educated on the cultural codes that the dominant society deems essential have an “easier” time negotiating their way through school and work. Conversely, students who

grow up on the margins with limited exposure to dominant cultural codes have a very difficult time succeeding in institutions, which helps to shape the parameters that dictate either their success or ultimate failure. In Chapter Three, Alexander Casareno illustrates this application by moving this conversation regarding cultural codes from K-12 classrooms and into college classrooms via learning theory and consideration of prior knowledge. Much like students attending compulsory grade levels,

College and university students enter the classroom with a variety of prior knowledge that can either hinder or allow for success in learning. Prior knowledge in how to do college, how to study, how to ask questions, how to speak to instructors, how to write essays, and, of course, how to read are all knowledge bases that can help one learn (Casareno, p. 44)

Setting the scene for the two sections that follow, Casareno reminds readers of the ever-present influence of students' previous academic experiences. Indeed, the underlying question of how students' prior knowledge affects college success looms large throughout this book. Seeking to directly confront this issue, the book also tackles the greater question of how college professors can meet student needs and help them succeed if students come to college with differing codes based on their diverse backgrounds. Building on the introduction and initial points made by Casareno (2010), each subsequent chapter offers examples and guides of how to use inclusive teaching methods to tackle this issue, while building upon an understanding of what students need in today's college classroom.

Opening Part II of the text, Moira Fallon (2010) advances her concern for inclusive education through the roles teachers play in creating supportive learning environments in Chapter Four. She asks, "how can the teaching and learning process at the college level be balanced to take into consideration the needs of learners" (Fallon, 2010, p. 61)? Fallon then goes on to answer this question in great detail through vivid examples supported by tables of templates and strategic guides. In the next chapter, Parkinson evokes Paulo Freire (1970) in his call for university teachers to create "classrooms, courses, and

instructional experiences that invite students to reflect upon and engage with the desired learning” which is dependent upon “creating connections and relationships” (p. 78). Admirably, all of the chapters in Part II manage to compile methods and strategies that have their roots in K-12 classrooms and express the connection of learning and teaching styles that span the boundaries of educational institutions in America. In a practical, solutions oriented format, Part II provides educational tips, exercises, and examples that help make it easier for instructors to create and maintain inclusive classrooms by becoming co-learners and co-teachers along with their students helping bridge all categories of difference in order to establish a comfortable space for academic learning and personal development.

The final section of the book encourages the reader to recognize the role of technology in society as reflected in the university community and classroom. In the book, *The Death of Why: The Decline of Questioning and the Future of Democracy*, Schlesinger (2009) comments on the role of technology and the impact it has on “how we think about information, how we learn about the world around us, even how we define our notions of truth” (p. 57-8). Likewise, Anya Kamenetz (2010) also states that, “social media can help students and teachers form learning communities” (p. 83). As such, the chapters in Part III build on the foundation established earlier in the book by showing how technology can transform college learning into an inclusive process that has no physical boundaries. For their part, Chapters Seven and Eight specifically outline several ways to utilize technology in the college classroom including the use of cell phones as search engines, electronic games, electronic groups, and virtual learning communities. Understanding how technology affects the college classroom and campus creates opportunities for exploring how higher education institutions can be more inclusive in all areas.

Teaching Inclusively in Higher Education (2010) is a book that surpasses expectations in terms of practicality and applicability. More a guide than a loose set of examples, each chapter provides readers with a hands-on approach to inclusive teaching practices. Based on the need to shift teaching and learning methods to reflect the diversity in student population, this text creates a space, which

characterizes and utilizes difference as a learning tool instead of a learning detractor. Although it is unfortunate that much of the research on classroom pedagogy focuses on K-12 institutions, Fallon and Brown (2010) powerfully connect the issues that occur in primary and secondary education to the issues that commonly plague colleges and universities. While subtly, this text demonstrates the ways that K-12 schools and higher education institutions continue to affect the nature, the structure, and the learning found in each environment.

Moreover, the contributors' collective call for the adoption of inclusive instructional methods in American higher education classrooms and communities cannot come at more of an important time. Students come to college after surviving a system of education that narrows difference into assimilated categories and often requires little in the area of critical thinking. Unable to change these conditions, the editors suggest that, "the key to success for instructors is to become inclusive, welcoming and supporting all students and the richness of their diversity" (Fallon & Brown, 2010, p. 15). It is this point that *Teaching Inclusively in Higher Education* draws upon and asks of its readers in the hopes of creating and sustaining more inclusive and empowering learning environments.

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About the Reviewers

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