

Inclusive Teaching Strategies for Dietetic Educators in Higher Education

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Introduction of Speakers

ALESSANDRA SARCONA, EDD, RDN

- Former DI Director/Clinical Coordinator and Instructor for 26 years, Long Island University
- Associate Professor of Nutrition, West Chester University of PA
- Her research interests include lifestyle and eating behaviors, motivational interviewing, intuitive eating, as well as measuring the effectiveness of various pedagogical approaches in her teaching.



DARA DIRHAN, EDD, MPH, RDN, LDN

- Associate Professor of Nutrition, West Chester University of PA
- Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) Director, West Chester University of PA
- Her research interests include best practices in teaching and learning pedagogy, game-based learning, mindfulness, intuitive eating, and advocating for nutrition courses in general education curricula.



We have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this presentation.

Objectives

1. Discuss the evidence for the constructivist model of learning and student-centered teaching.
2. Outline inclusive and engaging teaching strategies that will create a psychologically safe classroom and a community of attention.
3. Distinguish various assessment techniques to improve student learning.

Constructivist Model of Learning



HELPING STUDENTS CONSTRUCT
NEW KNOWLEDGE BY BUILDING
ON THEIR PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE



MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY
ARE AND HELPING THEM GET
WHERE THEY NEED TO GO



ASSISTING STUDENTS IN CREATING
THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING
THROUGH ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Build your classroom to be

SAFE

SUPPORTIVE

INCLUSIVE

Treat all students with respect and dignity

Care for students' success and ability

Create structured practice paired with a culture of inclusion

Evaluate your biases; meet the needs of all learners:

- Multilingual
- First generation
- Non-traditional
- Minoritized
- Learning differences
- Low-income
- LGBTQA
- Full-time workers

Provide inclusive assessment strategies

Treat Students with Respect & Dignity

Set three goals to achieve for an inclusive class

1. Begin developing the student-instructor and student-student relationships.
2. Set the stage for an environment in which it feels safe to make mistakes.
3. Have students find personal/societal relevance in your topic.

Adapted from, Hogan & Sathy (2022)

Treat Students with Respect and Dignity

Create a student-centered syllabus.

Welcome students before class begins - message on learning management system or email. Send them a survey to gain more personal information.

Invite students to share their values as assets with you, "What specific strengths do you bring to our classroom community?"

Learn each student's name with correct pronunciation

Allow students to share personal experiences

Discern trauma informed pedagogy.

Respond directly and immediately to microaggressions.

Care for Students' Success and Ability



Create a growth-
mindset among your
students



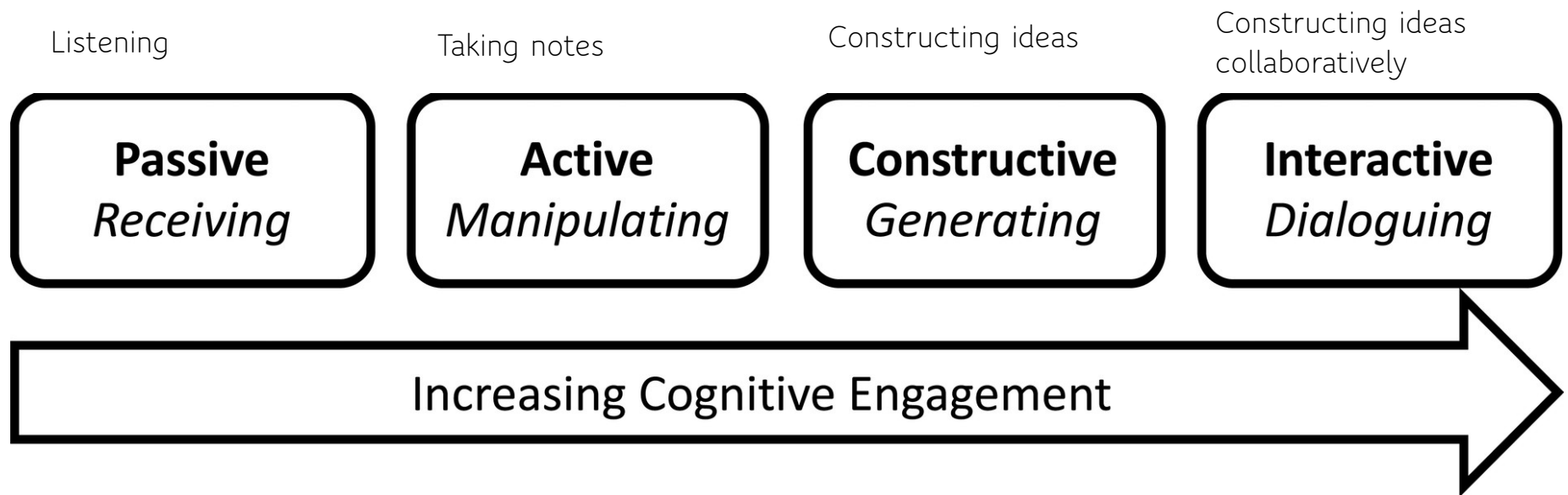
Communicate inclusion
in your e-mail with
students



Make your office hours
welcoming and a place
for guidance



Share tools and tactics
on how to be a better
performer



An adaptation of the Interactive, Constructive, Active, Passive (ICAP) Model of Cognitive Engagement. Adapted from Chi & Wylie, 2004

How is your classroom structured?

LOW-STRUCTURED

- Traditional lectures
- Only a few high-stakes assessments/exams
- Readings/suggested/not required
- One project - not scaffolded

HIGHLY STRUCTURED

- Active learning exercises to provide practice
- Daily/weekly assignments
- Scaffolding assignments/feedback
- Multiple quizzes

Inclusive Assessment Strategies

Revisit concepts from previous classes and evaluate comprehension - "Interleaving."

Provide accessible and clear instructions.

Include low-stakes assessment.

Communicate various types of feedback

Make assignments more inclusive.



Create a Community of Attention

Navigating the Digital Environment with a Technology Policy



- Cocreate with your students and have a conversation.
- Present policy in warm language.
- Remind students about responsible use of digital devices.
- Students report about their experiences with distraction.
- Be mindful of your own use of devices as the instructor.



Build Your Course Around Curiosity

Learn more effectively and deeply.

Ask questions that evoke curiosity from beginning of semester.

Questions every class period (4 questions on a slide, or questions to google).

What questions do *you* have?

- “Are there any questions?” vs “What questions do you have for me?”
- Questions on index cards
- Poll everywhere
- Minute Paper
 1. “What was the most important thing that you learned today?”
 2. “What are you still confused or uncertain about?”

Signature Attention Activities

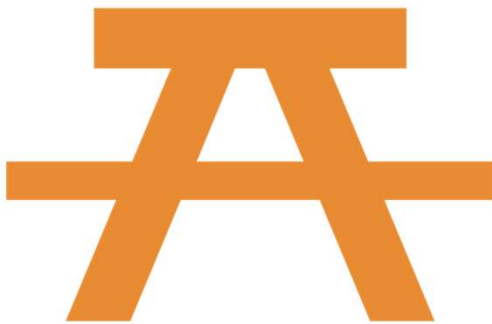
"What, So What, Now What" Paper

- Begins with attention
- Expands to collaboration in small groups
- Concludes with theorizing and reflection as a whole class

Using distractable minds to create something

- The worksheet
- Memes, tweets, Instagrams, and more

Practicing Presence



- Be present for your students
- Practice self-care to
 - maintain your own well-being and
 - to be most effective for your students
- Mindful Mondays
- Gratitude Tuesdays
- Notice rhythms in the classroom
- Cultivate compassion

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