

Inclusion Means All

by Jane Vella, PhD

I have a raging new agenda: inclusion. I believe this agenda will be a great challenge to me and to all Dialogue Educators since we see the value in small groups working together to learn via learning tasks. In the words of Danah Zohar, we want to hear "a chorus of conversations" as learners engage with tough new content, unraveling it, making associations with their prior knowledge, adapting their learning to their unique contexts. Such vocal and immediate outward engagement comes naturally to extroverts like me! What about my sisters and brothers who are naturally introverts? How can we design to include ALL?



I trust you will join me in discovering and creating ways to include ALL in the dialogue. Susan Cain's brilliant book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, offers sound and compelling research that tells what a loss we face when we exclude thoughtful, sensitive, quiet folks. And exclusion of any kind destroys dialogue.

Let me start our search with a wonderful suggestion from GLP Senior Partner Karen Ridout: When we set a learning task, let's always include a quiet time before the conversations begin. So, we say:

Learning Task # 1 - The Best Learning Experience

In pairs, share the best learning experience in your life. Analyze that experience: Decide and tell what made it so memorable. Write those factors, one on each note card. Post those cards on the chart, and we will share all.

Before you start sharing your stories in pairs, spend two minutes of quiet time...reflecting, thinking, and remembering. When I design now, I build that two minute quiet time into every learning task. Thank you, Karen!



Another great idea for inclusion involves pacing. When excited groups report on their learning, leave quiet time after you thank a speaker for what they offered. Count internally to 10 (one, one thousand, two one thousand...) before inviting the next comment. (That's 10 seconds!)

I once said: "You cannot go too slowly or teach too little." That was a long time ago, and I have not lived by that axiom which came from a deep intuition for inclusion. Let's help one another curb our impatience and really learn to listen.

Join me in this raging new agenda. Thanks y'all!

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