

## Scenario A - International/Intercultural

Lee comes from China and is beginning his first semester. Serge is from Russia. Both spent a lot of time and money studying English back home so they could pass the entry requirements for admissions but neither has much experience listening to or speaking in English in a classroom setting.

During the first 3 weeks of class discussions, Lee has not contributed anything and is bewildered by the casual nature of the back and forth with the teacher. Lee is not experienced at throwing ideas out there. In his educational background, you only presented an idea to the teacher if it was worthy of consideration. He has noticed some of the students even offer wrong information and the teacher still looks happy. In Lee's culture, the newbie should watch and learn before participating. He is especially shocked that some students contradict the teacher, tell the teacher they can't answer as they weren't listening, and seem unprepared for class. He is uncomfortable whenever the teacher stops lecturing and opens conversations.

Serge has been giving answers in class. Serge guesses it's the same rules as in Russia where you need to impress the teacher with your knowledge and study habits. He expects the professor to build on and challenge his responses but no matter how hard he tries the teacher doesn't take him on. Serge is surprised at how little his classmates say as in Russia one conversation turn is usually 5-7 sentences. He does not know that in this culture, one turn is usually no more than 3. In Russia, the valence or tone of conversations doesn't have to stay cheerful so he is really confused by the teacher's attempts to keep everyone happy. Serge is looking for a good debate but just when any conversation gets interesting, the teacher re-channels it. One class, someone gave a wrong answer which would have drawn a snort of contempt and harsh words about studying in Russia but the teacher went to the board and re-explained the concept. Serge felt this was a waste of everyone else's time

He speaks quite forcefully sometimes giving 5-7 sentences. The teacher just responds briefly. This past class, the teacher actually said, "Let's hear from someone else now." In week three, the teacher assigns a group report and asks the class to get into groups of 3-4. Within minutes students have sorted themselves out and Lee and Serge are without a group.

Discussion:

- What non-verbal and verbal mismatches will likely occur throughout this encounter?
- Did either party reach the desired outcome for themselves or for the class?
- What could the instructor have done differently to facilitate a successful outcome for everyone?

## Scenario B - Religious Diversity

One of your advisees, who is Muslim, comes to see you about problems that have arisen in some of her classes. The student feels that she is expected to speak on the behalf of her entire faith, and was even asked to help explain the actions of Muslim extremists. She is not an expert on Islam, and she doesn't understand Muslim extremism herself. At the same time, there are several Catholic students in the class who were not singled out to comment on that church's sex abuse scandal.

The student wears a hijab by choice, and in a WGSS class she felt extremely uncomfortable when the class talked about how oppressive the custom is. She didn't feel that she should have to explain something that is a personal

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decision based on her religious belief. She already feels like she is viewed as "other," since she is often asked where she is from. People seem surprised and even a little disappointed when she says "Pittsburgh."

All this came to a head this week when she was denied her request to move to a single room. She has to remain covered in the presence of men, and her roommate now has a boyfriend who shows up at anytime of the day or night. Although the College provides a Muslim prayer space, she prays first thing in the morning and just before bed, and having to go out in the cold to get to the prayer room discourages her practice. She feels so isolated that she is considering transferring to be closer to home and in a more diverse community.

- How do you respond to your student's concerns?
- Where do you turn for resources to help her and yourself?
- As a faculty member and department chair, what can you do to keep students from underrepresented religions from being singled out in the classroom?

### Scenario C - Racial Diversity

C1) You teach at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) where students of color often express feelings of not belonging. You are familiar with the data that suggests "sense of belonging" is strongly correlated with retention for students (and you think maybe that's true for employees as well). Your campus is regarded by some as having a racially charged climate. One of your advises "Anna" a Junior who identifies as Latina comes to your office hours tearful. Anna tells you she tired of feeling like she needs to defend against the demeaning comments about immigrants that her ignorant peers often make. Yesterday she was in one of her classes and they were having a discussion about the labor force. She heard the same attack she has been hearing for three years, that Mexican immigrants are to blame them for the economy. She tried to argue in class but they other students all ganged up on her and the verbal attacks felt very personal. (Her mother came from the Dominican Republic and worked three jobs to put her through high school. She is financing her own student loans (with an uncle because her parents don't have the money and are not sure that college is going to be worth it.) She also speaks with the director of the cultural center.. She says that over her 3 years she has had this conversation over a dozen times. She expects to have to deal with offensive and hurtful comments about Latinos in the dorms. She said she didn't mind arguing her view but she felt personally attacked and emotionally unsafe. She just could not believe that Prof. A did not do anything in the class. She said that she had spoken with two of her other faculty members who have expertise is in stereotypes and prejudice yesterday and Professor's B and C said they were going to give Professor A a "piece of their mind". What do you say to the student? What do you do?

C2.) You and a colleague have overheard some overtly racist comments made by students to their peers outside your just concluded class. In a previous conversation with a colleague you were told that as long as the students don't use that kind of language in your classroom, it is best to ignore it as ' they don't mean anything by it'. What do you do?

### Scenario D - Title IX Issues

While waiting for class to start you overhear several students talking about a party they attended the previous weekend at the Greystone, an off campus house notorious for hosting beer parties, or "keggers". One of the students shares that the party got a "little out of hand" - there was a 'girls only' keg stand contest and several of the participants were really drunk, stumbling and slurring their words. Another student shares that she heard, from a good source, that a girl was raped in one of the upstairs bedrooms that night. What do you do?

## Resources, Definitions, and Policies

- Spiritual and Religious Life (SRL): <http://sites.allegheny.edu/religiouslife/religion-and-diversity/>
- SRI Staff: <http://sites.allegheny.edu/religiouslife/staff/>
- Project Nur: <http://sites.allegheny.edu/religiouslife/program/ias/>
- <http://www.conestogac.on.ca/intercultural-communication/casestudies/saveme.jsp>
- Title IX webpage: <http://sites.allegheny.edu/titleix/>
- Policy Against Discriminatory and Sexual Harassment Including: Sexual Assault and Other Forms of Sexual Violence, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence and Stalking:  
<http://sites.allegheny.edu/deanofstudents/student-conduct-system/student-handbook/> (pg. 133)

Definition of Responsible Employee: A "responsible employee" includes all Allegheny College employees except for the professional counselors in the College Counseling Center, professional staff in the Winslow Health Center, and the College Chaplain and Catholic Campus Minister. Responsible employees have an obligation to promptly report incidents of sexual violence or other types of misconduct prohibited by this policy to the Title IX Coordinator or one of the Deputy Title IX Coordinators. The report should include all relevant details about the alleged incident that a student or another person has shared with the responsible employee, including the name of the alleged perpetrator, (if known), the student or other member of the campus community who experienced the alleged misconduct, others involved in the incident as well as the date, time and location of the incident. Before a student reveals this type of information to a responsible employee, the responsible employee should make every effort to ensure that the student understands the employee's reporting obligation and the student's option to request that the College maintain his or her confidentiality (which request would be considered by the Title IX Coordinator), and the student's ability to share the information confidentially with certain individuals on-campus or off-campus sexual assault resources centers, advocates and health care providers.