



The Work - by Kelly Langley Cook

Overview: The Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) workbook, titled "The Work," is a self-paced digital workbook designed to provide accessible and meaningful DEI training to students, faculty, and staff. "The Work" is an Open Educational Resource (OER) compiling existing materials from a variety of trusted spaces. These materials provide insight into various areas where community members might lack understanding of each other's identities including race, gender and sexuality, identity, faith, ability, body, neurodiversity, mental illness, substance abuse and recovery, income, origin, upstanders, and allyship.

"The Work" workbook was developed in response to observations of campus climate, knowledge of time as a limited commodity, and to support already effective DEI training at the University of Northern Colorado. The project was initiated through the DEI Fellowship during the 2022-2024 academic year. The Work was tested in SOSC 341 (Methods of Teaching Social Studies, where-in students also added a worksheet page as part of the OER design of the workbook), available to the college of HSS to supplement the college wide DEI day in October of 2023 and during one on one training with a colleague needing to address feedback from student evaluation forms. It is now ready to launch university and community wide!

Intended Audience: Faculty, Staff, Students, and community members connected to the University of Northern Colorado.

Possible Audience: Any person willing to engage DEI work and self growth

"The Work" is a vital resource for promoting full community growth, as it focuses on UNC's strategic plan "Rowing not Drifting" by identifying ways community members need to learn and grow to better respect and support each other. The program works in conjunction with existing trainings created and implemented by UNITE, TIE, CETL, and cultural centers to create a campus climate that better supports student and staff success and retention by fostering a greater appreciation of the diversity of specific identities and cultures. "The Work" provides awareness and tools that will aid in the creation of a more welcoming and inclusive campus environment for all students, faculty, and staff. The program provides community members with the tools necessary to understand these efforts and motivate them to prioritize them.

"The Work" also aims to renew the focus on campus culture and engagement, with the objective of creating a vibrant and dynamic community where all members feel connected and invested in the university's success. Persons engaging "The Work" will feel empowered to improve culture and

engagement by actively listening and learning, accessing a tangible guide to better community appreciation, understanding, and ultimately engagement.

"The Work" aligns with UNC's existing cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity development activities. While a stand alone tool, the work supplements existing programs such as UNITE, TIE, and CETL. Participants will demonstrate a commitment to equity and justice, making them more desirable candidates in the eyes of potential employers. This ultimately benefits both participants and the larger UNC community. "Rowing not Drifting" emphasizes the importance of student success and focuses on ways to increase graduation rates and decrease time to graduation. Doing "The Work" can improve advising and support services, classroom culture, departmental dedication to student success, student empowerment, and campus-wide empathy. "The Work" in conjunction with trainings created and implemented by UNITE, TIE, CETL, and the cultural centers can help create a campus climate which will support student and faculty success and retention as community members can use the learning to honor and understand both individuals and groups. Like "Rowing not Drifting", "The Work" prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, with the goal of creating a more welcoming and inclusive campus for all students, faculty, and staff. "The Work" is one of the tools that will allow community members to personally access those efforts and empower them to work towards making them a priority.

Assessment:

Embedded in The Work is a broad assessment tool that can be used individually for reflection, or more formally as a way to indicate learning and growth over time. "The Work" includes a pre and post "test" to check for understanding and change in habit and heart. Evaluation of this data, along with possible mentor meetings, journal prompts, and a final project will determine the usefulness of the tool. With extended financial support for an assessment evaluator, participants could receive mentorship, responses to self-reflection, and submit their final workbook for review.

Measures of Success:

The success of the Work can be measured in three ways

1. Quantitative: Simply by counting the number of folks who choose to do activities and learning connected to the workbook
2. Qualitative: A measurement of growth over time. For example, those who engage in "The Work" might report that they learned about identities and shifted their language or faculty might look a certain elements of faculty evaluations as a before and after engaging "The Work"
3. Holistic: Shifts in campus climate, retention, and character (hardest to measure, but most important and impactful).

Next Steps:

"The Work" workbook is done! It is ready for individuals and groups to use for engagement, training, and discussion. The true usefulness will be revealed as more folks commit to the hard work of self reflection and change and, with optimism and hope, shift the campus climate to one of true inclusivity and mutual respect.