

Positionality Statement

My lived experience as a femme-presenting queer person informs my approach to DEI-informed Dialogic Pedagogy in many ways. Firstly, as someone who presents femme the majority of the time, I notice the ways in which people that are not cisgender males are taken less seriously in academia and expected or encouraged to create work-arounds in order to create community, gain credibility, and contribute to the academic sphere. My experiences with these unspoken expectations and micro-aggressions impact my perspective of what diversity, equity, and inclusion means in the classroom by highlighting how centering DEI can start to dismantle these practices. My lived experience as a queer person has shown me the ways that hetero- and cis-normative culture in the US being presented as “default” can be damaging to individuals’ self-expression and can encourage limited, binary thinking that sets back innovation, creation, and problem-solving. I believe that a commitment to DEI in the classroom is a commitment to centering non-hegemonic voices. In order to fight back against normative expectations for academia and its associated communities and environments, I am speaking about my positionality as a teacher to create a site of synthesis for my students to explore a more expansive mindset. As a teacher and global citizen, I strive to engender a safe space for identities that have traditionally been “otherized” and through the practice of implementing DEI-Informed Dialogues into my pedagogy, aim to help students who do identify with aspects of identity that have benefited from power structures to expand consciousness and cultural competency as well as restructure internalized narratives and acknowledge biases. Through this critical process of self-inventory and embrace of community through dialogue, I believe my students will be able to begin to shirk the weight of environmental stressors that inhibit their ability to learn and internalize information as well as be able to expand their ways of thinking to be more inclusive in terms of connection with other people as well as in diversity of problem-solving and cognitive flexibility - skills that I believe are essential to employ in the dynamic world in which we live.