Approaching Intersections in the Classroom

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Perspectives of Diversity
Most university professionals are accustomed to understanding diversity by demographics. For example, the pie chart below was retrieved from www.collegeportraits.org/NV/unlv.print.

While this perspective is quite useful for understanding the student body en masse, it falls faculty in providing a clear understanding of how students experience diversity in the classroom. The below graphic more accurately portrays how diversity impacts individual students on a daily basis.

Intersectionality
Intersectional theory began in sociology as an attempt to understand how various identity groups influence a person’s lived experience of diversity. Though it initially focused on race, gender, class, and sexuality, it has come to emphasize a much wider range of identity components.

There has been research on the impact of intersectionality on students in the classroom. Yet little research has been done to utilize this approach as a pedagogical paradigm.

Intersectionality Studies
There are many books and research papers that address how multiple identity markers influence students’ perceived experience in the classroom. There are few current books that address intersectional theory as a pedagogy in higher education. Examples include:


Intersectionality as a Pedagogical Paradigm:
- Encourages a growth mindset in faculty
- Provides for students to be more than NSHE numbers
- Enhances community building
- Encourages and promotes the use of Transparency in Learning

Application
I have successfully created two tools within the classroom to reach out to students with inclusivity. In addition to improving student/faculty relations, these tools promote student understanding of differences and identity. I am happy to share the files for use.