



AIICE ALLIANCE FOR IDENTITY
INCLUSIVE COMPUTING EDUCATION

Teaching Assistant Professional Development

Identity - Reflection

This is intended to be an opportunity for TAs to identify and reflect on their own various social identities and how they might impact their experiences within Computer Science. While it can lead to meaningful conversations for people at all levels of experience in discussing these ideas, it is specifically geared towards people who have not had many opportunities to reflect on identity in a constructive way. If you have time to do both, it pairs well with the Belonging - Reflection activity.

Approximate Length: 60 min

Facilitator Preparation

- Review both the [Identity](#) and [Belonging](#) topics of the course site (while you might not get into discussing the Belonging content, it will be important for you to keep it all in mind as you facilitate the conversation)
- Take time to reflect on your own identities and the identities of the people who are likely to participate. Think about the various power dynamics and how they might affect participation and your facilitation impulses.
- Print copies of the Identity - Reflection worksheet
- If you expect any of those participating will need or prefer to take notes electronically, you can create a QR code and/or shortened link to post so that participants can download the PDF of the worksheet
- Prepare printouts or slides of the discussion prompts if you think you might need to break the discussion up into small groups
- Be sure to arrange for a space that will allow for minimal distractions and interruptions, and will not feel like a space for lectures or traditional content delivery
- Bring spare writing implements

Participant Preparation

- Complete the [Identity](#) topic of the course site

Activity Description

- Review the Community Guidelines you want observed in this workshop (see [Tips for Facilitating Discussions](#)) and invite participants to suggest any additions which will allow them to feel more comfortable engaging fully
- Explain why you think it is important to discuss the role of identity in education. Especially if you hold visible privileged identities (white, cis-gendered man, etc.), it is helpful to openly name them and acknowledge that your own identities have impacted your experiences, and that they impact your presence in that space. It is also worth naming any authority you may hold over them in your professional role and indicate that in this space you are a facilitator and participant, not a boss/supervisor.
- Pass out the worksheets and read the list of categories.
- Ask if anyone would like an explanation or examples for any category.
- Ask if anyone has an identity they would like to add to one of the spaces below. If someone suggests an identity that is more of a personal identity rather than a social identity:
 - Thank them for the suggestion and acknowledge that it is an interesting addition
 - Use this opportunity to remind them of the difference between personal identities and social identities
 - Indicate that you would be happy to discuss the impact of that identity on their work as TAs at the end if there is time, but that for now you want to focus on social identities
- Tell them that you are going to give them 8 to 10 minutes to go over the fill in their own identities, then mark which identities hold privilege, which identities they think are relevant to being a TA and which identities are relevant to tech in general
- Make it clear that you will not be collecting these worksheets
- Make sure everyone has a writing implement and ask if everyone is clear on what they are expected to do (answer any questions that surface)
- Start a timer for 10 minutes, and provide a 2 minute warning when 8 minutes have passed
- If everyone seems to be done before the time ends, you can turn of the timer and call them back early
- At the end of the 10 minutes, ask if anyone would like more time (allow another 1-3 minutes as needed)

- Bring everyone's attention back to the group and ask for any initial reactions
- If dealing with a larger group or if you suspect it will be difficult to get the group talking:
 - Provide everyone with the prompts below
 - Break the larger group into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the first 4 prompts for approximately 15 minutes
 - Start a timer for 15 minutes, provide a 2 min warning when 13 min have passed
 - Allow an additional 1-2 minutes as needed
 - Once everyone has returned to the larger group, invite them to share things that came up in their small group discussion
 - Repeat process for remaining prompts (breaking it into two rounds helps keep them focused on the prompts - things can get pretty off topic with 30 min of unstructured discussion!)
- Sometimes just opening the space for discussion is enough to get conversation flowing. If it isn't, here are some potential prompts (use as many as needed, it's not necessary to use them all if people are actively engaging):
 - Were there any categories where you found it difficult or uncomfortable to think about your own identity?
 - Which of these identities are most central to how you think about yourself?
 - Which of these identities do you think most shape how other people see you?
 - Are there any identities you wrote down that you think have had a particular impact on your own experience in CS?
 - Which of your identities did you consider relevant in tech?
 - What identities are usually associated with Computer Science?
 - Which of your identities did you consider relevant to your role as a TA?
 - When thinking about the identities where you hold privilege in CS, how might they impact students you interact with who don't share those identities?

Things to Keep in Mind

- This is a conversation where it is particularly important for you as a facilitator to make sure that no one person is expected to speak for everyone in their identity group (see [Facilitating Discussions](#) tips)
- We do not recommend trying to facilitate this discussion if you yourself are not comfortable answering the provided prompts -- when conversation stalls, it can be helpful for you to offer some of your own reflections