Equity Toolkit: Inclusive Teaching and Learning

CREATING AND MAINTAINING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

Inclusive Teaching Strategies: Reflecting on Your Practice

Do you or would you use any of the following strategies?

✓ = I use this in my teaching

~ = I sort of use this in my teaching

X = I do not use this in my teaching

☆ = I would like to try this, though I may need more information or resources

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Content

❑ Choose readings that deliberately reflect the diversity of contributors to the field.

❑ Use visuals that do not reinforce stereotypes but do include diverse people or perspectives.

❑ Use diverse examples to illustrate concepts, drawing upon a range of domains of information.

❑ Avoid references that are likely to be unfamiliar to some students based on their backgrounds (e.g., citing American pop culture from 'when you were in high school' in a class with many international students).

❑ Emphasize the range of identities and backgrounds of experts who have contributed to a given field.

❑ Use varied names and socio-cultural contexts in test questions, assignments, and case studies.

❑ Teach the conflicts of the field to incorporate diverse perspectives.

❑ Deliberately choose course materials with a range of student physical abilities in mind.

❑ Deliberately choose course materials with students' range of financial resources in mind.

❑ Analyze the content of your examples, analogies, and humor; too narrow a perspective may alienate students with different views or background knowledge.

❑ Include authors' full names, not just initials, in citations. (This can help emphasize gender diversity or unsettle assumptions about authorship).

Instructional Practices

❑ Assess students' prior knowledge about your field and topics so that you can accurately align instruction with their needs.

❑ Help students connect their prior knowledge to new learning (e.g., before introducing a new topic ask students individually to reflect on what they already know about the topic).

❑ Invite students to identify examples that illustrate course concepts.

❑ Use a variety of teaching methods and modalities (verbal, visual, interactive, didactic, etc.) rather than relying on one mode of engagement.

❑ Avoid giving verbal instructions without a written corollary. (Multiple modes can be helpful to students with processing disabilities as well as non-native English speakers.)

❑ Ask students for concrete observations about content (e.g., a reading, image, set of data) before moving to analytical questions. (This can give everyone a common starting point and model analytical processes you want to teach).

❑ Use a pace that lets students take notes during lecture.

❑ Allow ample time for any in-class activities that require substantial reading, and provide guidance that reflects the fact that processing times will vary (e.g., how to approach the task given you may not finish reading, or what to do if you do finish it before the time is up).

❑ Clearly communicate the expectations and grading scheme for each assignment.

❑ Dedicate time in class for students to discuss and ask questions about assignments or assignment expectations.

❑ Emphasize the larger purpose or value of the material you are studying.

❑ Carefully frame objectives when raising potentially sensitive or uncomfortable topics.

❑ Structure discussions to include a range of voices: e.g., take a queue, ask to hear from those who have not spoken, wait until several hands are raised to call on anyone, use think-pair-share activities.

❑ Use brief in-class writing activities to get feedback on what students are learning and thinking.

❑ Use anonymous grading methods, when appropriate.

Instructor-Student Interactions

- ❏ Learn and use students' names -- what they choose to be called and how they pronounce it.
- ❏ Clarify how you want students to address you, especially if you teach students from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds.
- ❏ Distribute a student background questionnaire early in the term to learn about students' experience with the course topics, educational background, professional ambitions, general interests, etc.
- ❏ Encourage students to visit office hours, and use that time to ask about their experiences with course topics as well as their interests outside the class.
- ❏ Communicate high expectations and your belief that all students can succeed.
- ❏ Allow for productive risk and failure. Make it known that struggle and challenge are important parts of the learning process, not signs of student deficiency.
- ❏ Seek multiple answers or perspectives to questions.
- ❏ Avoid making generalizations about student experiences.
- ❏ Avoid making jokes at students' expense.
- ❏ Refrain from asking individual students to speak for a social identity group.
- ❏ Communicate concern for students' well-being, and share information about campus resources (e.g., Counseling & Psychological Services, Sexual Assault Prevention & Awareness Center, Services for Students with Disabilities).
- ❏ Communicate in writing and person your goal of making learning equally accessible to all students. Welcome requests for documented accommodations as a chance to include everyone more fully in learning.
- ❏ Model productive disagreement, showing how to critique a statement or idea rather than the speaker.
- ❏ Elicit formative feedback from students about their learning experiences in the course (e.g. facilitated Mid-Semester Feedback session or survey).
- ❏ Ask a trusted colleague or CRLT consultant to observe your class and collect data about how you include or interact with different students.

Student-Student Interactions

- ❏ Encourage students to learn and use one another's names.
- ❏ Use icebreakers regularly so students can learn about one another.
- ❏ Establish guidelines, ground rules, or community agreements for class participation.
- ❏ In class, have students work in pairs, triads, or small groups.
- ❏ Have students write and share about how their background can contribute to a particular class activity.
- ❏ For long-term teams, structure in check-ins and opportunities for peer feedback about group process.
- ❏ On the syllabus, identify collaboration or perspective-taking as skills students will build in the course.
- ❏ In class, explain the value of collaboration for learning. Speak of students' diverse perspectives as an asset.
- ❏ Provide students opportunities to reflect on what they learned through collaborative activities (formal or informal).
- ❏ Deliberately assign students to small, heterogeneous groups that do not isolate underrepresented students.
- ❏ Have students complete a self-assessment inventory and discuss with peers.
- ❏ Set up study groups that deliberately group students with different strengths.
- ❏ Have students complete low-stakes small group activities that help them see and value the contributions of others.
- ❏ Establish ways for students to intervene if they feel a certain perspective is being undervalued or not acknowledged.
- ❏ Stop or intervene in a discussion if comments become disparaging or devalue other students' experiences.