

Inclusive Teaching Strategies

Yale Center for Teaching and Learning

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Inclusive teaching works to ensure that all students can participate fully in the learning process, regardless of background, belief, or learning preference. It asks why do some types of students seem to participate more frequently and learn more easily than others? How might cultural assumptions influence interaction with students? How might student identities, ideologies, and backgrounds influence their level of engagement? Finally, how might course and teaching redesign encourage full participation and provide accessibility to all types of students?

Inclusive teaching strategies can be separated into two categories.

- *Incorporating diverse perspectives* into course content by expanding reading lists beyond white male authors, offering various ethnic and racial perspectives in case studies, ensuring PowerPoints and lecture examples offer a variety of human examples, and avoiding tokenizing particular individuals, students, or representations.
- *Creating an inclusive classroom climate* where all students are encouraged to participate, by learning about students' backgrounds and tailoring approaches accordingly, establishing ground rules for discussing controversial issues, and developing (and helping students develop) deeper racial and socioeconomic awareness.

Recommendations

- **Provide Support** - Instructors can structure their courses to support students in and out of the classroom, through open office hours, additional learning and grading opportunities, formative assessments, and reliable email habits. Such support visibly extends the instructor's commitment to all their students' learning.
- **Examine Implicit Biases** - Instructors can consider their own attitudes towards students and strive to minimize negative impacts. This process can involve actively monitoring interactions with different types of students, implementing policies like name-blind grading and inter-rater grading to minimize the impact of bias, and maintaining high expectations for all students.
- **Maintain Awareness of Classroom Diversity** - Instructors can develop and maintain their understanding of various racial and socioeconomic factors in class, ensure equal access for all their students, and use diversity, with care, to enrich classroom discussion.
- **Incorporate Diversity into the Curriculum** - Instructors can be sure to represent diverse types of peoples and perspectives through course content and materials, including readings, lecture examples, images in PowerPoint presentations, and case studies. Doing so helps all students to imagine themselves within various learning scenarios.

- **Cultivate an Inclusive Climate** - Instructors can create a nurturing classroom where students feel valued because of their differences, and feel comfortable participating in class. Effective syllabus and classroom behavioral policies can promote an inclusive environment, especially when instructors take time to discuss such policies in class with students.
- **Add a Diversity Statement to Syllabus** - Instructors can address diversity issues head-on during the first class session by inviting students to discuss the syllabus in earnest; explaining the teaching philosophy with regards to other inclusive teaching methods; and outlining classroom ground rules for respectful classroom discussions and an inclusive community.
- **Consider Universal Design Principles** - UDL provides an intensive framework to enable varied and comprehensive access of course content to all students. UDL helps instructors present information both orally and visually to accommodate student visual or auditory impairments, while recognizing various student learning preferences.
- **Solicit Student Feedback** - Instructors can use anonymous online surveys to gather information from students regarding their prior knowledge and/or mastery of course material at the start of the semester, and continue to monitor how students feel about the course content and class climate by the middle of the semester. Midterm student course evaluations or observation protocols can also help instructors comprehend the climate and effectiveness of their classroom, and address inclusivity concerns (among other concerns) in real times.
- **Review the Literature** - Instructors can learn more about critical pedagogies and classic texts on diversity in education through discipline-specific resources regarding diversity in a particular field.

Additional Resources

Armstrong, M.A. (2011). Small world: Crafting an inclusive classroom (no matter what you teach). *Thought and Action*, Fall, 51-61.

Creating Inclusive College Classrooms - UMichigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (website)

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Inclusive Teaching Strategies - Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation (website)

Kaplan, M. & Miller, A. T. (Eds.). (2007). Special Issue: Scholarship of multicultural teaching and learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, (111).

Teaching a Diverse Student Body: Practical Strategies for Enhancing our Students' Learning - UVA Center for Teaching Excellence (website)