

Strategies for Creating an Inclusive, Accessible Environment

Content

- Choose readings that deliberately reflect the diversity of contributors to the field, and emphasize the range of identities and backgrounds of experts who have contributed.
- 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).
- Teach the conflicts of the field to incorporate diverse perspectives.
- Deliberately choose course materials with a range of students' 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.

Instructional Practices

- Help students connect their prior knowledge to new learning.
- Use a variety of teaching methods and modalities rather than relying on one mode.
- 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 before moving to analytical questions.
- 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)
- Clearly communicate the expectations and grading scheme for each assignment.
- Emphasize the larger purpose or value of the material you are studying.
- Carefully frame objectives when raising potentially sensitive or uncomfortable topics.

Instructor-Student Interactions

- Learn and use students' preferred names; encourage them to learn one another's names
- Encourage students to visit office hours
- Communicate high expectations and your belief that all students can succeed.
- Allow for productive risk and failure. Make it known that struggle/ challenge is important and not a sign of deficiency
- Avoid making generalizations about student experiences.
- Refrain from asking individual students to speak for a social identity group.
- Model productive disagreement, showing how to critique a statement or idea.
- Elicit formative feedback from students about their learning experiences in the course.

Student-Student Interactions

- Establish guidelines, ground rules, or community agreements for class participation.
- Structure in check-ins and opportunities for peer feedback about group process.
- Explain value of collaboration for learning. Speak of students' diverse perspectives as assets.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on what they learned through collaborative activities.
- Deliberately assign students to small, heterogeneous groups that do not isolate underrepresented students.
- Stop or intervene a discussion if comments devalue other students' experiences.

Adapted from: U-M [Center for Research on Learning and Teaching](#) (CRLT). Some content adapted from Linse & Weinstein, Shreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, Penn State, 2015.