

Inclusive Teaching Principles

These lists offer examples of concrete strategies aligned with general inclusive teaching principles. Reflecting upon your teaching 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

TRANSPARENCY

Clearly communicating about norms, expectations, evaluation criteria

- Explicitly communicate the purpose, task, and grading criteria for each assignment.
- Clarify how you'd like students to address you, especially if you teach students with a range of educational and cultural backgrounds.
- Share in easy-to-find places (syllabus, Canvas site, etc.) your preferences for how students should communicate with you, whether to ask questions or talk more broadly about course material: what kind of questions/topics are best for office hours, which are best for email, what do you want brought up in the full class, what should be addressed to a GSI, etc.
- Explain the learning objectives of the activities you use class time for (e.g., discussion of readings, lectures, critique of peers' work, independent work on projects).
- Communicate your sense of the instructor's and students' respective roles in shaping and guiding class discussions. (What are students' responsibilities, what are yours? When and why might these shift?)
- For writing assignments, explain your expectations around the relative importance of students' ideas/analysis and their sharing of information or ideas/words published by others. (This can be especially important if you have students who have previously learned in educational systems where deference for expertise is prioritized over original thought.)
- Offer guidance on how students ought to allocate time on assignments and prioritize various out-of-class tasks.
- Dedicate time in class for students to ask questions about assignments and expectations.
- Invite students to share information about their own expectations about the learning environment based on their prior experience to help you understand where your expectations may be mismatched.
- Communicate (on a syllabus and/or in person with your class) your goal of creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

What other ways do you seek to be transparent about norms and expectations? What are additional areas where you could be more explicit about your expectations or assessment process or criteria?

ACADEMIC BELONGING

Cultivating students' sense of connection to the discipline + scholarly and professional communities

- Communicate high expectations and your belief that all students can succeed.
- Allow for productive risk and failure. Emphasize that struggle and challenge are important parts of the learning process, rather than signs of student deficiency.
- Assess students' prior knowledge about your field and topics so you can accurately align instruction with their strengths and needs.
- Help students connect their prior knowledge to new learning (e.g., when introducing a new topic, ask students individually to reflect on what they already know about the topic).
- Learn and use students' names and pronouns; learn what they choose to be called (which may differ from a name on a roster) and how it's pronounced.
- Encourage students to learn and use one another's names, correctly pronounced.
- Build rapport through regular icebreakers.
- Emphasize the range of identities and backgrounds of experts who have contributed to your field, and/or sponsor discussion about the reasons for a history of limited access to the field.
- When inviting outside critics or speakers, seek to identify professionals who bring a range of backgrounds, including identities that are different from yours.
- Prepare outside visitors to contribute to the inclusive environment in your classroom (by making sure they are aware of accessibility needs, sharing norms you've established for inclusive discussions, etc.).
- Acknowledge campus events or incidents that may be creating barriers to students' sense of being welcomed and valued; acknowledge the differential effects incidents have on different students.
- Encourage or require students to visit office hours early in the term, and use that time to ask about their interests and experiences with course material.
- In class, avoid generalizations that may not include all students. These might include assumptions about life experience, economic means, or future goals.
- Avoid referencing pop culture without providing sufficient orienting context. (This would include making clear whether you're citing a movie, comic book, band name, etc. so students can learn more if they're not familiar with the reference.)
- Create structured opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience of the learning environment and contribute ideas for improving it.

What other ways do you help facilitate students' sense of belonging in your class, discipline, or professional field? What else could you do?

STRUCTURED INTERACTIONS

Providing or eliciting goals, protocols, processes to make sure group interactions don't default to patterns of privileging already-privileged voices or otherwise reinforcing systemic inequities

- Develop discussion guidelines or community agreements about interactions during class. (See examples at crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines.)
- Reflect upon those guidelines with students at strategic points throughout the term.
- In facilitated discussions, use strategies for including 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, or use paired or small group conversations to seed larger discussion.
- Give all students time to gather their thoughts in writing before discussing with the whole group.
- Task students to work in pairs or small groups on brief, well-defined activities (with a timeline and specific goals/outcomes).
- When possible, assign student groups/teams or provide criteria for student-formed groups/teams that help leverage diversity and avoid isolating students from underrepresented identities.
- In presentations of group projects, guide students to share speaking responsibilities equitably.
- At the beginning of group or team projects, create time and a process for students to discuss their respective strengths, personal learning goals, anticipated contributions, etc.
- During long-term group or team projects, provide a process for students to reflect upon the team work/dynamics and provide constructive feedback to one another.
- Give students regular opportunities to reflect upon ways their learning has been enhanced by interaction with classmates. This could be as simple as asking them to reflect on their learning at the end of a session with the question, "What did you learn from someone else today?"
- Establish processes for ensuring you're giving equitable time and attention to each student.

What other strategies do you use to structure equitable and inclusive interactions among and with your students? What else might you do?

CRITICALLY ENGAGING DIFFERENCE

Acknowledging students' different identities, experiences, strengths, and needs; leveraging student diversity as an asset for learning

- Where relevant, highlight the range of (more and less visible) identities and experiences among the students as assets for learning.
- Reflect upon and share the ways your own identities shape your relationship to your work/the discipline.
- Deliberately choose course materials and activities with a range of student physical abilities in mind.
- Deliberately choose course materials with students' range of financial resources in mind.
- Invite students to identify examples from their own arenas of knowledge or expertise to illustrate course concepts.
- Use a background questionnaire early in the term to learn about individual students' past academic experiences, goals, concerns, or other information that would be useful for you to know as their teacher.
- Welcome requests for documented accommodations as a chance to include everyone more fully in learning.
- 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).
- Ask students for concrete observations about content (e.g., simply describe an image, passage, or diagram) before moving to analytical questions. This can provide everyone a common starting point, highlight students' different perspectives/approaches, and model analytical processes you want to teach.
- Present course material in a variety of modalities (readings, diagrams, lectures, podcasts) rather than relying on one mode of engagement.
- Try to accompany verbal instructions with a written corollary. (Multiple modes can be helpful to students with processing disabilities as well as non-native English speakers.)

How else do you acknowledge or affirm students' different identities, strengths, or needs in your courses? What else could you do?