

## Strategies for Inclusive Teaching: Suggestions for Instructors

### ***Selecting Course Content and Curriculum***

- Select readings and course material that reflect diverse experiences, perspectives, and contributions, including from groups who have been historically underrepresented in the field.
- When preparing lectures, exam questions, assignments, and case studies, consciously include examples, socio-cultural contexts, language, and images that reflect human diversity.
- Continually broaden your knowledge of the field and seek out new and varied perspectives, ideas, facts, “real-world” applications, and questions from colleagues, students, and current scholarship.

### ***Actively Support Equality of Opportunity to Learn***

- Set high standards for student learning and achievement in your course and express confidence that each student can achieve these standards.
- Encourage students to adopt a “growth mindset” (intelligence is not a fixed, “natural” ability, but grows over time) and to view any academic struggles or faltering as opportunities to learn and develop.
- Articulate and share with all students the criteria you will use to evaluate their work. Grade with rubrics or other methods that promote fairness and transparency.
- Ensure that assistance provided outside of class is equally available and accessible to all students (e.g. if you share information regarding how best to approach an assignment with one or a few students in conversation outside of class, repeat it to the entire class).
- Use your course syllabus to inform all students about academic and non-academic assistance and resources that are available at the university. Keep in mind that all students will not be equally aware of—or equally comfortable in seeking out—academic help and resources provided by advisors, Cornerstone, the Dean’s offices, Student Health Services, etc.
  - When students approach you to let you know that they have a disability, help them get in touch with the Disabilities Resources Office (at Cornerstone, on the Danforth Campus). The Disabilities Resources staff will then communicate with the instructor regarding any required accommodations.

### ***Create an Inclusive Classroom Environment***

- Communicate your goals concerning what should happen in the classroom and set clear expectations or ground rules for collegial and respectful classroom conduct—especially when discussing potentially controversial topics. *Keep in mind that your students will bring into the classroom different expectations about the roles of the instructor and students, based on their own prior experiences in diverse, international educational cultures and in diverse disciplines.*
- In classroom discussions, encourage multiple perspectives (over consensus); describe the free exchange of ideas as a shared goal for everyone.
- Create a comfortable environment; encourage students to express different points of view and to “think out loud.”

- Show respect for all questions and comments; use verbal and non-verbal cues to encourage participation and to challenge all students to think deeply and critically; integrate student questions and contributions back into the discussion.
- To the extent that is possible (depending on the size of your class), get to know your students and the skills and perspectives they bring into your course.
- Ask a colleague to observe your teaching and help you identify patterns in instructor-student, as well as student-student, interactions. Consider which of these patterns might be encouraging full participation and inclusion of diverse perspectives and contributions, and which might be perceived as barriers to full participation and inclusion. Identify adjustments you can make to minimize the latter.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the course and to give you feedback on the methods and strategies you are using. For example, ask students to complete brief, anonymous evaluations at midterm. Take time in class to explain how you are integrating their responses as you make adjustments during the remainder of the semester.

### ***Use Varied Teaching Strategies***

- Utilize a variety of teaching methods to encourage participation by all students and to provide multiple means for students to ask questions, develop ideas, or contribute to class discussion (e.g. combine lectures or class-wide discussions with short, in-class writing assignments and small-group work; incorporate visual as well as verbal explanations; combine theoretical ideas with practical applications).
- Provide structured, facilitated opportunities for students to work in diverse groups and to learn from one another; require students to take different roles within these groups throughout the semester (e.g. facilitator, spokesperson, note-taker).
- Use an incremental approach when incorporating a new strategy, and seek out feedback from students and colleagues to help you understand what went well, as well as what you might do differently next time to refine or improve the new approach.

### ***Manage “Hot Moments” and Difficult Conversations in the Classroom***

- When discussing potentially difficult or “charged” identity-related issues, prepare and anticipate topics that are likely to be controversial.
  - Encourage students to think of the discussion as an opportunity to learn about how to explore tensions in a well-informed, civil, but challenging environment.
  - Provide a structure for such discussions that will help students understand their own assumptions, as well as think carefully about perspectives that may challenge those assumptions.
- If a “hot moment” or a tense interaction with or between students erupts, whether it is related to course material or not, it is important to address the issue in the moment or soon after.
- Pausing for a short time to ask students to discuss in small groups or write individually their reactions to the issues raised by a tense moment in class will allow students to reflect on what might be at stake and what they might learn from it.

## **Helpful Resources**

The Center for Integrating Research, Teaching and Learning's (CIRTL) web pages have case studies related to diversity in STEM Education. <http://cirtl.net>

The Center for Research on Teaching and Learning (CRLT) at the University of Michigan publishes inclusive strategies, as well as a series of *Occasional Papers* presenting research on diversity in higher education at <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/multicultural-teaching/inclusive-teaching-strategies>

[CRLT Occasional Paper #7: \*Perceptions of Faculty Behavior by Students of Color\* \(Chesler, 1997\)](#)

[CRLT Occasional Paper #12: \*The Effect of Student Diversity on Student Learning at the University of Michigan: Faculty and GSI perspectives\* \(1999\)](#)

[CLRT Occasional Paper #17: \*Making Accommodations For Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Faculty and Graduate Student Instructors\* \(Bierwert, 2002\)](#)

Steele, C. M. (2002). *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*. New York: Norton.

Sue, D. W., Lin, A. I., Torino, G. C., Capodilupo, C. M., & Rivera, D. P. (2009). Racial microaggressions and difficult dialogues on race in the classroom. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 15(2), 183.

Warren, L. (2006). *Class in the Classroom*. (2002).

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/class.html>.

----- . Managing hot moments in the classroom. Retrieved from:

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html>

### **On stereotype threat:**

[reducingstereotypethreat.org](http://reducingstereotypethreat.org)

[Aronson, J., Lustina, M. J., Good, C., Keough, K., Steele, C. M., & Brown, J. \(1999\)](#). When White Men Can't Do Math: Necessary and Sufficient Factors in Stereotype Threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35, 29-46.

[Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. \(1995\)](#). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African-Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797-811.

[Spencer, S. J., Steele, C. M., & Quinn, D. M. \(1999\)](#). Stereotype threat and women's math performance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35, 4-28.