

Teaching tips for an inclusive classroom:

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Considering Curriculum:

1. Develop course content that feels relevant to the experiences (past, current and future) of our students. This includes what we chose for reading materials, speakers, and classroom assessment methods. Consider using examples of scientists of color, LGBT, women, etc.
2. Consider the needs of students with disabilities when planning course activities in and out of the classroom.
3. Provide clear guidelines for assignments and how they will be evaluated well in advance of due dates both in writing and orally. This gives students time to talk to us or support services to arrange assistance if they need it.
4. Connect theory to real world practices. Concrete examples are very helpful for many students.

The Inclusive Classroom:

1. Treat each student as an individual:
 - Try not to assume we know where our students come from. Ask them questions and get to know them as individuals.
 - Refrain from remarks that make assumptions about our students' experiences.
 - Never ask someone to speak for their entire group. This can be accidental (like looking at a particular person when posing the question), so we need to be aware of body language as well as what we say.
2. Convey the same level of respect and confidence in the abilities of all our students. Be conscious of our own biases and where we are the weakest.
3. Understand that some of our students were brought up to believe that challenging people who are in positions of authority is disrespectful or rude.
4. Include a statement of respect for diverse peoples in our syllabi. For example:

*"This class will be conducted in an environment that is open, welcoming, and safe to all students. The instructors are willing and committed to providing an atmosphere of support and affirmation for all people. **Do not** display disrespectful behavior toward any individual based upon age, ability, race/color/ethnicity, religious/spiritual, political affiliation, socioeconomic, immigration, marital, military/veteran status, gender identity/expressions, sexual/affectional orientations, relationship status, and/or anything that is likely to be perceived as disrespectful to someone's background, culture, or identity. **For instance, some derogatory, but commonly used language includes 'that's gay' or 'that's retarded.'** Unprofessional, derogatory, and/or offensive behavior may result in disciplinary action."*

5. Don't assume that all students will be familiar with the cultural, literary or historical references that we are familiar with. Always try to say the main points in multiple ways.
6. Incorporate the experiences of non-traditional students (people of color, LGBT, women, etc.) to enrich classroom discussions/activities.

Teaching Best Practices:

1. Be aware of the language used in the classroom. Words have weight and can be exclusionary even when we don't intend to be. For instance:
 - Use terms of equal weight when referring to parallel groups (men and women rather than men and ladies)
 - Switch the pronouns used in classroom examples (i.e. use she and he).
 - Instead of referring to groups of students as "guys", try using a more inclusive "folks", "everyone", or "y'all".
 - Use "parent" instead of "mother" or "father"; "spouse" or "partner" rather than "wife/husband/boyfriend/girlfriend".
 - Try to keep abreast of current terminology for different social groups for instance use "LGBT" or "the queer community" or "Latina/Latino" to refer to people of central/south American ancestry
2. Emphasize the importance of considering different approaches and viewpoints for problem solving.
3. Encourage all students to participate in class discussion and demonstrate that we value all students' comments. For example, don't interrupt students when they are speaking and don't allow their classmates to do this either.
4. Do not diminish or make fun of issues that women, people of color, LGBT folks, or students with disabilities face.
5. Encourage cooperative learning through group work and classroom work. Create cohorts or structured study groups to develop peer support and guarantee no one is left out.
6. Own up to our mistakes. Apologize. Let students know that their concerns and experiences in the classroom are important to us.