

## Inclusive Pedagogy

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Teaching with inclusive pedagogy means creating a classroom in which students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities are welcomed and supported. Inclusive pedagogy asks instructors to reflect critically on their own identities, assumptions, and biases and to interrogate the way these might influence classroom culture, assignments, activities, and grading practices. In doing so, instructors can avoid teaching a hidden curriculum, an invisible agenda of lessons, values, and viewpoints that is communicated to students, however unintentionally, alongside course material. Inclusive pedagogy can mean providing opportunities for students to discuss difficult subjects or encouraging students to express a range of perspectives. Research demonstrates that student outcomes are improved in environments in which instructors use inclusive pedagogy to support students across difference.

### Some ways to promote inclusivity:

Reflect on your own teaching practices.

- Demonstrate your awareness of multicultural issues in the classroom (for example, provide accommodations for learning differences, use gender neutral language, do not make assumptions about students' backgrounds or knowledge, and avoid generalizations that might exclude or alienate students).

Represent diversity in your syllabus.

- Add content by or about non-dominant people.
- Structure content to transform or destabilize dominant people's narratives.

Promote inclusivity in your classroom culture.

- At the start of the semester, establish a group-generated Code for Engagement.
- Consider making your own identity explicit to students, in order to destigmatize identity conversation.
- Do perspective-taking exercises, in which students argue for positions not their own.
- Ask students to use the LARA method of responding (listen, affirm, respond, and add), in order to practice **active listening**.
- Allow students to offer anonymous reactions to material via index cards.

Use assignments that promote inclusivity.

- Use debate assignments in which students present opposing arguments about a difficult topic.
- Create assignments that use real-world examples and ask students to make impact in real communities (for example, using math to calculate the total square footage of grocery stores in an underdeveloped neighborhood, then using that data to write to local politicians, asking that they address the issue).

## References

- Johns, Ann M. and Maureen Kelley Sipp, eds. *Diversity in College Classrooms: Practices for Today's Campuses*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004.
- Landis, Kay, ed. *Start Talking*. Anchorage, Alaska: University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University, 2008.

## See also

- Active Listening
- Building Classroom Community
- Managing Difficult Class Dynamics