4 Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Classroom

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Big 4 Strategies

1. Engage in Critical Self-Reflection
2. Diversify Course Content
3. Incorporate Flexibility into Course Design
4. Establish an Inclusive Environment
Discussion:
What differences in identity, context, or experience may impact the way a student learns? (please use individual words)
1. Critical Self Reflection
Wheel of Power and Privilege

➔ Teacher to Student
➔ Student to Teacher
➔ Student to Student

Adapted from ccrweb.ca
Identifying Deficit Based Perspectives

“We teach who we are”
- Parker Palmer

➔ How does my identity and positionality contribute to the underachievement of students?
➔ What were my interactions with people from different racial and cultural backgrounds like growing up?
➔ Who helped shape my opinions about people from different racial and ethnic groups?
➔ If I have prejudiced thoughts, how might those thoughts affect students from those backgrounds?

Reflection-in-Action

➔ Thinking about one’s actions and then modifying accordingly

➔ Symbiotic relationship between reflection and teaching

➔ Ongoing and Continuous

Reflection Activity

Develop a few questions you can use to reflect on your privilege, identity, and their effects on your students.

➔ Share in the chat if you would like
2. Diversifying Course Content
Where to Begin

➔ Include diverse names (maybe your students?) in examples
➔ Include diverse pictures
➔ Ensure scenarios/problems/examples are relatable to various socioeconomic statuses, ages, & religions
  ◆ Ask students in a start of course survey about their background and experiences
  ◆ Have students construct these scenarios/problems
➔ Share literature using full names and pronouns
What does this problem assume a student already knows?

A ski resort charges $45 for a lift pass and $40 per day for renting skis. At a store, you can buy skis for $360. How many times must you go skiing at the resort for the cost of buying your own equipment to be less than renting?
Taking Another Step

➔ What is the history/culture of your field that accounts for a lack of diversity and how to communicate that to student?

➔ Discuss limitations

◆ “This study conducted research on white male Ivy League students in the 1970s, which changes the way we apply the findings to higher education classrooms today.”

◆ Health statistics based on non-representative population samples
Walking Another Mile

➔ Diversifying your curriculum can take time
➔ First, reflect on your curriculum to determine gaps:
  ◆ What scholars make up the cannon? What are their social identities?
  ◆ How has the cannon evolved over time?
  ◆ What perspectives am I prioritizing and which are missing?
➔ How can diversity change or enrich the subject matter I am already researching and/or teaching?
3. Incorporate Flexibility into Course Design
Flexibility in Course Design

What does it mean?

➔ Develop policies that allows responses to students in crisis and encourages students to be self-directed learners through empowering them with choice

Why does it matter?

➔ Student identities as workers, caregivers, or athletes can have legitimate emergencies
➔ Flexibility and compassion lead students to care about their instruction and become self-directed learners
In a couple words, how do you respond when a student emails you 12 hours after a deadline and begs to submit an assignment late?
Flexibility and Late Work

➔ Build in flexible policies to accommodate some late work
◆ Formal extension policies
◆ Token systems
◆ Customized due dates in your LMS
Flexibility and Attendance

➔ Attendance and participation policies
   ◆ What level of attendance is important in your course?
   ◆ Participation is usually better than attendance
   ● Consider giving a range of participation options
   ◆ Incentives for attendance that allow for flexibility
Flexibility and Student Choice

➔ Balance choice with structure
  ◆ Choice empowers students to be more self-directed
  ◆ Too much choice leads to confusion

➔ Methods for infusing choice
  ◆ Choice of assignment topic
  ◆ Choice of assignment format
  ◆ Ask students to create problems/scenarios/etc
4. Establishing an Inclusive Classroom Climate
Getting to Know Your Students: Introductory Surveys

- Student introduction surveys can be a valuable way for students to share important information with you privately.

- Surveys can help lower barriers to communication throughout the term.

- Avoid requiring questions, especially around gender and pronouns.

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Dr. Appleby’s French Introductory Questionnaire:

1. Full name as it appears on my roster ______________________
2. Name you’d like me to call you in class ____________________
3. What are your pronouns? he/him she/her they/them ze/zir other:
   a. Is it ok to use these publicly in class? Yes No
   b. Is it ok to use these in front of other faculty? Yes No
   c. Would you like to discuss this further privately with me? Yes No
4. Year and major?
5. Where are you from?
6. Why did you sign up for this course? (be honest!)
7. What grade are you willing to work for in this class?
8. Everyone is super nerdy about something... what’s your thing you get really excited about?
9. What is something you’d like me to know so that I can better help you succeed in this course?
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Setting the Tone for a Gender Inclusive Classroom - Jessica Appleby
Getting to Know Your Students: More Questions to Ask

➔ What are your preferred modes of communication with your instructors (e.g., phone, email, FaceTime, text, or other)?
➔ What name do you prefer I call you?
  ◆ Use Media Recording or File Upload question types so students can record themselves saying their name. Refer back as needed!
➔ If you are currently employed, tell me about your job.
➔ Are there any reasons you may need to arrive late or leave early for this class?
➔ What are your personal and career goals for your college education? In other words, what are you hoping to get from the time, money, and energy you are putting into your education?
➔ Which course topics or learning outcomes are most relevant to your personal and/or career goals, and why?
Chat
Waterfall

What questions have you asked students that have helped you better understand their needs, interests, or experiences?
Establishing Classroom Norms

Include students as co-creators in the process of establishing norms for behavior, discussion, and participation.

1. Ask students to reflect on their most meaningful, positive, and/or lasting learning experiences.
2. Brainstorm a list of actions that created those experiences
   a. What did your instructor(s) do that supported your learning?
   b. What did your peers do that supported your learning?
3. Synthesize the list into a set of norms and guidelines for the semester
4. Share these with students during the next class, and invite feedback and modifications
5. Revisit these as needed throughout the semester
Establishing Classroom Norms

Possible questions for students to consider:

◆ How should we handle “hot moments” or emotionally charged topics in discussion?
  • What is my role in shaping discussions? What is your/your peers’ role?

◆ How should we handle conflict in group work or projects?

◆ What does support from me as the instructor look like for you? What does support from your peers look like?

◆ What is the best way for me to get feedback from you throughout the semester? What feedback do you want from me?
Chat Waterfall

Consider your own most meaningful, positive, or lasting learning experiences:

➔ What did your instructor(s) do that supported your learning?
➔ What did your peers do that supported your learning?
Maintaining an Inclusive Climate

➔ Build community by helping students reflect on how their peers have supported their learning

◆ Ex. At the end of class, ask students to jot down or share: “What did you learn from someone else in today’s class?”

➔ Use inclusive language--in particular, remember that not all students will share the same points of reference or lived experiences.

◆ Ex. if you’re using a sports example or analogy, you might acknowledge possible international backgrounds by prefacing it with, “In this example, “football” means U.S. football, not what Americans call soccer…”

◆ Use phrases such as, “For those of you who have been on an airplane,” or “If you grew up with siblings to whom you were biologically related…” This can help normalize and destigmatize experiences that are possible points of marginalization for your students

Setting the Tone for an Inclusive Classroom - University of Michigan Center for Teaching and Learning
Maintaining an Inclusive Climate

➔ Remind students about university support resources throughout the semester, not just at the beginning
  ◆ CAPS, Disability Services, Writing Centers, Learning Centers (tutoring, academic coaching, study groups), Career Services

➔ Use the Critical Incident Questionnaire (Brookfield, 1995; Keefer, 2009)
  ◆ At what moment did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
  ◆ At what moment were you most distanced from what was happening?
  ◆ What action that anyone (teacher or student) took this week did you find most affirming or helpful?
  ◆ What action that anyone took this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
  ◆ What about class this week surprised you the most? (This could be about your own reactions to what went on, something that someone did, or anything else that occurs).

Using the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) - Stephen D. Brookfield
Planning for Action

What is one strategy from today that you might plan to adopt into your practice?
Questions?
References


