Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom

General Strategies
• Become aware of any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed
• Get to know your students and treat each student as an individual
• Monitor the climate in your classroom, perhaps with anonymous mid-term evaluations
• Recognize the complexity of diversity (i.e. heterogeneity within groups, intersecting identities and identifications)

Communicating and Fostering Respect
• Be attentive to current preferred terminology (i.e. underrepresented students or students of color vs. minority, Asian not Oriental)
• Learn about groups other than your own
• Convey the same level of confidence in the abilities of all your students
• Don’t try to “protect” any group of students
• Be evenhanded in acknowledging students' accomplishments
• Be aware of possible misinterpretations of students’ nonverbal behaviors

Pedagogical Approaches
• Use inclusive language and examples
• Learn to correctly pronounce students’ names
• Look for opportunities to give personal attention and validation to students
• Be aware of cultural difference in participation
• Assign group work and collaborative learning activities
• Vary formats for presenting material (visual, auditory, collaboratively constructed)
• Describe the content of visual aids
• Speak clearly and at appropriate volume and pace. Pause after important points.

Course Content and Material
• Try to select texts and reading whose language is gender neutral and free of stereotypes
• Aim for an inclusive curriculum
• Don’t assume that all students will recognize cultural, literary, or historical references familiar to you

Class Discussion
• Emphasize the importance of considering different perspectives
• Make it clear that you value all comments
• Balance openness and safety
• Encourage all students to participate in class discussion
• Monitor your behavior in responding to students
• Do not treat students as spokespersons for their demographic group
• Include an online discussion component


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Managing Hot Moments

- Establish ground rules for discussion and managing conflict. You might do this with student input.
- Think ahead, to see what could possible arise, given the topic at hand
- Don’t intervene immediately. Give students opportunity to navigate the tension
- If things are too heated, Stop. You might:
  a. Have students write about the conflict, then talk in pairs
  b. Depersonalize the situation: “Some people think that way. What assumptions are they making?”
  c. Keep discussion focused on issues, not individuals, so students can retreat from untenable positions
  d. Repeat back the exact words of offensive comment as accurately as possible, and give student an opportunity to rephrase
  e. Explain why a comment is offensive or insensitive
  f. Ask students to comment
  g. Ask students what they have learned from the moment
  h. Use the moment as an opportunity to discuss the learning environment in the group
  i. Defer – tell students you will deal with the issue, but deal with it later -- in order to gather your wits and make a plan that will be effective

Assignments and Exams

- Give assignments both orally and in writing
- Share your expectations and grading criteria
- Consider giving more than one option for conveying learned knowledge or skills: paper, presentation, website design, poster. . .
- Design print exams for universal access, with large font and space between items
- Provide frequent and on-going feedback
- Be sensitive to students whose first language is not English
- Help students form study teams
- Give assignments and exams that recognize students’ diverse backgrounds and special interests
- Use a variety of names in classroom examples and test questions