

## 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- Don't assume that all students will recognize cultural, literary, or historical references familiar to you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

Based on: Davis, Barbara Gross. Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

### ***Managing Hot Moments***

- Establish ground rules for discussion and managing conflict. You might do this with student input.
- Think ahead, to see what could possibly 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

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