

## Dead Ideas in Teaching and Learning Podcast Series

Season 2, Episode 5: What Inclusive Instructors Do with Tracie Marcella Addy, Derek Dube, Khadijah A. Mitchell, and Mallory SoRelle  
Center for Teaching and Learning, Columbia University

Catherine Ross ([00:05](#)):

Hello, and welcome to Dead Ideas in Teaching and Learning, a higher education podcast from the Center for Teaching and Learning at Columbia. I'm Catherine Ross, the center's Executive Director. Let's get started. I'm speaking remotely today with the authors of an about to be released book titled, What Inclusive Instructors Do. It is my great pleasure to introduce today's guests. Dr. Tracie Marcella Addy is Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, where she oversees the Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship. Dr. Derek Dube is an Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Center for Student Research and Creative Activity at the University of St. Joseph, in Connecticut.

Catherine Ross ([01:04](#)):

Dr. Khadijah A. Mitchell is the Peter C.S. d'Aubermont, M.D. Scholar of Health and Life Sciences and Assistant Professor of Biology at Lafayette College. Mallory SoRelle is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. Welcome to Dead Ideas podcast Tracie, Mallory, Khadijah, and Derek. And I would ask each of you to respond by just saying your name and hello to our listeners so people can recognize who's speaking throughout the podcast.

Tracie Addy ([01:44](#)):

Hello, this is Tracie Addy, and I'm pleased to be here.

Derek Dube ([01:50](#)):

Hello, this is Derek Dube, and I'm also glad to join you today.

Mallory SoRelle ([01:55](#)):

Hi. This is Mallory SoRelle and I'm delighted to be with you all this afternoon.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([02:00](#)):

Hello, this is Khadijah Mitchell. I'm very happy to be here with you all.

Catherine Ross ([02:06](#)):

Great. I am super excited about this conversation, so we're going to dive right in. I think it would be good if we get Tracie to perhaps set the stage a little bit for us, since the book is not out yet, just to give us a little bit of an overview on how the book is structured.

Tracie Addy ([02:29](#)):

Happy to do so. Thank you, Catherine. The book, What Inclusive Instructors Do, is structured in an increasingly kind of progressive way. First, we present some of the research and frameworks that support why inclusive teaching is essential to implement in our classrooms. Then we summarize a

number of the key mindsets and perspectives of inclusive instructors that were part of our study, and that basically frames the rest of the book. Chapters three, four, and five, in those ones we highlight inclusive teaching practices. First we focus on how instructors can be inclusive when designing the course, starting with the syllabus, to how they can build a welcoming environment throughout the entire course. And then on very practical, specific strategies for inclusive teaching in their classrooms.

Tracie Addy ([03:19](#)):

We also follow that with providing a tool, the "Who's in Class" form, and that we've also shared around with others to help instructors build more inclusive courses. The book essentially ends with how to build a culture around inclusive teaching at your institution. So the book speaks to individuals on a variety of levels, from instructors who are implementing inclusive teaching, to educational developers who are supporting instructors in their implementation of inclusive teaching practices, and then also administration who are really interested or invested in thinking about how to be more inclusive within regards to the classrooms in their institution.

Catherine Ross ([04:01](#)):

Thank you, Tracie. That was very helpful. All right. We're going to start with a big wide open broad question here. Why did you all decide that you needed to write this book? I'm sure you've asked yourself that a few times in the process. You do hint in your preface. You gave a little bit of a hint. You wrote, and I quote here, "In general, the classroom continues to be a closed off setting and we are hopeful that this book provides more of an entry into what inclusive instructors do." So you start off immediately by noting a dead idea, that teaching is something that happens behind closed doors and that it is not community property, which makes it really difficult for instructors to learn from one another. Can you expand on this or maybe other reasons why you decided that now is the time to write this book? Was there some kind of aha moment perhaps in your decision?

Tracie Addy ([05:08](#)):

I'm happy to lead that off because I feel as if I spearheaded my colleagues into writing this book and they all have their own reasons for choosing, I think, to do so and playing a role in how it's developed over time. And so I think in general, one of my long-term goals in working with faculty members has been to demonstrate how much we gain by sharing our teaching practices, by observing courses, by making it more visible what we do when we're teaching. In this book, I wanted to kind of think about how do we do that with inclusive teaching? How can we make it more visible, evident in what it means. And a lot of confusion can happen around what is inclusive teaching? What exactly is it? What does it look like if I implement it in my classroom?

Tracie Addy ([05:50](#)):

My hope in this book, and this was kind of my aha, is that I was hopeful that we would be able to kind of demystify inclusive teaching. We could focus on those instructors who do it, what do they do, their mindsets, their practices, their frameworks, and then provide good tools, et cetera, to actually help us understand what this thing called inclusive teaching that we talk about is. So to speak in a lot of ways, I like, I guess, the analogy of thinking about seeing through the window of your classroom kind of thing. I feel like the book, I was hopeful that we could actually do that with regards to inclusive teaching. And I'll let my coauthors also answer because I was excited to work with them on this book because I thought of them in different ways in which they integrate, like implement inclusive teaching, and how much of an asset they would be to help co-author this book.

Mallory SoRelle ([06:44](#)):

I'm happy to chime in. I was, I think, the last one to join the party. This book was going to get written whether I was there or not. But for me, one of the things that was really appealing to sort of join on to work on this project was exactly what Tracie said. I can't think of a stage in my own development as an instructor that wasn't profoundly shaped by learning from others, whether that was my first time TAing for courses of graduate instructor, to this current moment where we're all trying to navigate teaching in a pandemic, and just learning so much from both successes and failures of other instructors who are trying to accomplish the same thing that you are.

Mallory SoRelle ([07:32](#)):

There are so many ways I think in which we're able to share with one another and learn even more with the changing social media landscape where you can hop on Twitter and say, "Hey, I need a suggestion for an assignment or for a reading." And so the idea of focusing really on what we can learn from other instructors was really appealing to me.

Derek Dube ([07:57](#)):

Great. I'll jump in. I wrote this book for really a number of reasons, the first of which was to give myself a chance to reflect and thoughtfully consider and absorb the current research and perspectives around inclusive teaching in higher education. Selfishly, I felt that that process of writing the book would improve my own teaching and my own ability to connect with my students, so there was some personal gain I was going to get out of it. But really in the bigger picture, I participated in writing the book to help others that are on their own journey as educators, specifically those in their early careers or early in the process of developing an inclusive classroom.

Derek Dube ([08:33](#)):

I know for myself as a white male from a middle-class family, I came into teaching with my own background, my own set of conscious and unconscious biases. It took me a while to fully appreciate the diversity of experience that every classroom holds and how that can be a real asset to the learning process. Finding ways to unlock that asset is something I feel like every teacher and every classroom can benefit from. So I wrote this book to support those looking to unlock the strength in their classrooms and allow them to profit, not only from my experiences, but from the research done on the topic and especially from the voices of the faculty and instructors from around the country that we collected and heard from in our national survey on inclusive teaching. And finally, as Tracie was mentioning, any opportunity to work with this set of colleagues and learn from this set of colleagues was something I didn't want to let pass me by.

Catherine Ross ([09:25](#)):

That's great. And I will mention, because it's ties to what you just said, Derek, that in this book, integrated throughout the sections are questions for reflection, which I think is extremely helpful for people who do want to use this as a self reflective time and to really think about their own practices in the classroom. So, very much aligning with what Derek was saying. Khadijah, you want to add something here?

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([09:55](#)):

Sure. Just to echo what my colleagues said. A lot of points resonated with me. I think that teaching and learning really happen in a community space. And so a lot of time I think about building classroom

community, and I was really excited about this project because we were able to see how people built classroom communities across different types of courses, different disciplines in around the country. And when we wrote the book, I think that one thing that came to mind is how do we celebrate and appreciate these different ways of building community? The book allows us to do that, and I think that often we think this is a heavy lift, but there are so many small ways that we can promote inclusive teaching.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([10:40](#)):

So that was one of the things that really got me excited is that there wasn't a huge overhaul that had to necessarily be an expert. You had to do this for decades or a day, that there are small ways that you can promote inclusive teaching. So this was a huge motivator for me.

Catherine Ross ([10:57](#)):

Great. And that same thing I really appreciated about the book, the tone that you said, and you may have even said this explicitly at some points in the book, that many instructors are already doing this work. Whatever name they have for it, they are doing it and they are doing it in small steps and some in very big steps, but there's no just one right way to do it. So honoring the practices that are out there and that people are using already, I thought was really affirming and a nice approach to it.

Catherine Ross ([11:38](#)):

I'm going to go through the book pretty much chapter by chapter just to hear thoughts on each of these sections. In chapter one, you rightly raised the many systemic issues that students face. Students like first gen, adult learners, socioeconomically challenged students, LGBTQ, international students, students with disabilities, students of color. In our institutions of higher ed, there are a lot of, maybe not barriers, but sometimes almost barriers for them to feel like they belong in these spaces. And you stress the importance, as a result of this, of knowing who is in your classroom, whether it's a virtual classroom or a physical classroom, and who is in your institution. Even in the bigger picture, I found that very interesting.

Catherine Ross ([12:40](#)):

But then sort of a reality check, in chapter two, there is a quote where you say that some of the instructors who responded to your survey reported that, and I quote here, "That their colleagues did not believe it to be their responsibility to implement inclusive teaching approaches, but rather the offices of diversity or others on campus involved in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts," should be doing that work. And I thought that was really an interesting contrast.

Catherine Ross ([13:23](#)):

In chapter one, we really talk about that in order to be effective teachers, we have to know our students, but then there's this whole sense among many faculty that it's just not part of my role to do that kind of work. This is a clearly, deeply embedded dead idea in the academy among some instructors that their role is content expertise and content delivery in some fashion. So how do you approach instructors when they don't see the need to know their students, or yeah, persuade them that social belonging is a really important part of learning.

Tracie Addy ([14:12](#)):

Yes. I will jump in there. I think you raise a very hard and challenging question that we face, especially as also educational developers who work in this area, and in general, like if you're faculty members who were trying to convince your colleagues that this is important for our students. I will say that there's been a number of ways that I've seen this effective in my experience. And one of them, which is a big push for my center is by hearing students, by actually hearing students' voices, by having students tell them the importance of social belonging to them and also just been included in the classroom.

Tracie Addy ([14:52](#)):

So one of the things that we've done to help promote this is to have students as partners with teaching with faculty members and to actually have outlets for them to share this type of thing and how their classroom experiences is greatly impacted by belonging. So I think one of the biggest ways we can do that is by actually having opportunities to hear student voices, to hear them tell us that this is important to them.

Tracie Addy ([15:23](#)):

Another thing here I've seen as kind of effective in my experience too is just having some faculty members who are very invested in it, or instructors who are very invested in this to kind of help their colleagues kind of see how important it is and how invested that if they can actually do this, the changes that they can make, the transformations that they can make in their classrooms. So having some faculty leaders who are really invested that will take a lead role and showing that to others and also building a culture of community, I think, with this kind of like we're all in this together to support our students and having that framework I think is a more effective framework. It's not always easy, I think, to do that, or to have everybody believe as well.

Tracie Addy ([16:19](#)):

And then the third thing I'll mention is we've actually asked our students these questions, what aspects of their experience in college have they felt the most importance or worth, and belonging is impacted. And they've actually told us very clearly in their top reasons that in the classroom and with my professors. And so I can use that as kind of evidence that this is something that's very important to your students, and we can actually see that because our students have said this to us.

Derek Dube ([16:54](#)):

And one of the things that I would add to what Tracie so nicely explained there is what Khadijah had actually mentioned before in like letting the faculty know that it doesn't have to be a complete overhaul from ground up. You don't have to tear down what you're doing and start again, but doing a small thing. Or like you mentioned, Catherine, that many faculty are already doing these things, but amplifying those and putting them to the best use possible and working on those things you already know how to do can be... Kind of get that snowball rolling down the hill and then over time it can build and build and build.

Mallory SoRelle ([17:28](#)):

I would just add onto that. I think in addition to the fear of what Derek is alluding to here, faculty and instructors have real time constraints. Folks who are working in any number of positions at an institution are often overburdened and the expectations for what we're doing with our time frequently exceed the amount of time that we have. And so I think one of our hopes with writing this book is that not only does it say what Derek just said, which is, look, you don't have to reinvent the wheel, there are some small things you can do to make a real difference, but also we can point you in the right direction. We

can give you some questions to ask. We can give you some templates to use to make that process more efficient so that when you are constrained sort of in your own time and energy, let's kind of get you over some of these hurdles and give you a blueprint to help move forward with sort of reworking your course to be more inclusive.

Catherine Ross ([18:35](#)):

Moving on to chapter three, you talk a lot about the importance of the syllabus as a tool for inclusive teaching, and I'm right there with you. I have always thought that the syllabus was under appreciated as a teaching tool. And you say in the book, I quote, "The syllabus is one of the first ways that an inclusive instructor begins to foster student belonging and equitable practices in a course end." Of course, in higher ed, there are a lot of dead ideas about the syllabus. As I just discussed in a previous podcast with the authors of a new book called *The Syllabus*, it's often viewed as something we write for administrators. It's a document where we house things, it's a contract. The tone doesn't matter. It's just deadlines and penalties, policies. But I'd like for you all to share why you think the syllabus matters so much and maybe share some steps that instructors could take towards a more inclusive syllabus.

Mallory SoRelle ([19:53](#)):

Sure. I'll take that one. I think actually in the book we talk about some of these dead ideas with respect to the syllabus. The idea that the syllabus is a contract where we're sort of defending ourselves against claims that students might make that we didn't give them what they needed for their course, or that it's for administrators. We talk about some of the sort of course design choices that may also be dead ideas. But when it comes to the syllabus, I think the syllabus is a critical tool for inclusive instruction because inclusivity isn't going to happen by accident. You're not just going to wander into your course and cross your fingers and have the sort of like beautifully inclusive course come to fruition without some thought.

Mallory SoRelle ([20:39](#)):

So I think from the perspective of the instructor, the syllabus is really a chance for you to put together a strategy, a roadmap to create an inclusive course, to be thoughtful about it. And from the perspective of students, a syllabus is really important in part because it's the first point of contact in a lot of instances that instructors have with their students. And so it is a tone setter for the course, but it's also a resource that students are hopefully going to return to throughout the semester. And as much as it's a resource, it's going to be giving students information on really sort of how to participate in the course. And those are all pretty crucial things for building an inclusive course.

Mallory SoRelle ([21:29](#)):

In the book, we talk about inclusivity as revolving around or sort of creating belonging in the classroom, which Tracie was just talking about, and also sort of creating equity in the classroom. So when we think about the syllabus as a mechanism to start creating belonging and to promoting equity, in the book we talk about that around three sort of big strategies when it comes to the syllabus. With respect to belonging, the first is you're really trying to show students that they have a place, both in the classroom but also in the larger field.

Mallory SoRelle ([22:10](#)):

And so one of the first things I think, and this is I think one of the most intuitive things perhaps for instructors is to think about, does your syllabus sort of expose students to diverse perspectives in your fields in terms of the readings, in terms of the media you're using. And not only diversity in terms of who

is contributing to those sorts of intellectual material you're having students read, but also what are they talking about, and are those things going to be relevant to the lives of different groups of students in their classroom? So that's, I think, question one. Does your syllabus provide diverse perspectives?

Mallory SoRelle ([22:50](#)):

The other thing that's really critical to belonging that we talk about in the book is, does your syllabus provide a framework for engagement that is going to give students both permission and also the tools to be sort of full active participants in the course to help shape the course. And so a syllabus is a critical way to set expectations not only in terms of what you as an instructor expect from students but also, and I think this frequently gets left out of syllabi, what students should expect from you as the instructor and also what they can expect from one another.

Mallory SoRelle ([23:30](#)):

For example, we can think about that as information about sort of community standards for participation, or if we're thinking about what students can expect from the instructor, information about how you're going to respond to student work and if you're going to give feedback in a timely manner or make yourself available to students in particular ways. And so those are really critical things that the syllabus can set up that address belonging.

Mallory SoRelle ([24:02](#)):

When it comes to the question of equity, in the book we talk about sort of the syllabus as a document that can help promote the conditions for success for sort of all students in the course. We talk a little bit about explaining in the syllabus sort of the what, the how, and the why of what you're doing in the course. So it's not enough just to tell students what you're doing, which is kind of the thing for traditional model of the syllabus.

Mallory SoRelle ([24:28](#)):

But give them the resources and explanation to explain how they should be doing it and also the rationale for why, because when we're thinking about inclusive course design, we need to be mindful of the fact that most of our students aren't coming in understanding how higher education works and how academia works. They don't really know why you're asking them to do certain things, and the syllabus is a great place to start conveying that information. So I think those are some of the basics that we talk about in terms of the importance of a syllabus and then sort of course design more broadly to making an inclusive classroom.

Catherine Ross ([25:07](#)):

Right. I think that's really important, that students come in probably expecting to work very individually, and the idea that they're becoming a part of a community of learners and a community for learning is most likely something relatively new to them. So it's really important to get that out front, especially with the why, as you just said, Mallory.

Derek Dube ([25:37](#)):

Around the syllabus, just as an anecdote of my own experience, I very much started off teaching and thinking about the syllabus as that contract. Okay, this is all the things we're going to do, this is what deadlines we're going to need to get them in, and thinking about the what are you going to learn. Over the last couple of years over the process of writing this book over what the COVID pandemic has thrust

us into, my syllabus now, instead of opening up with the course description right at the top and my name and the course description, it now opens up with a course context.

Derek Dube ([26:12](#)):

What is the context that we're coming into this course with, and hitting on some of those concepts of being a community of learners and how the expectation is that each of us are going to be contributors, each of us are valuable to the course. What's going on in the world that may affect how we learn in this course or what we learn in this course; and how my expectation is that we're going to have mutual respect across all members of the classroom, and that includes me respecting my students and being a part of that community, not just standing on a pedestal above that community in any way.

Catherine Ross ([26:49](#)):

Right. So really centering the equity and even addressing some of the power dynamics of the role of the instructor. I'm going to move on to talking a little bit about the parts about what instructors do, what inclusive instructors do in their classrooms. And in chapter four you say, and I quote here, "Inclusive instructors across the country work hard as welcome ambassadors. They build positive classroom environments using a variety of strategies, but agree on the same three basic tenets of making students feel welcome in higher education classrooms." Could you share those three tenets with us and just perhaps note, in passing, what dead ideas you're displacing with those?

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([27:46](#)):

Sure. The first basic tenet is how to intentionally create welcoming classroom environments by respectfully, I think that's a key word there, respectfully acknowledging student differences, encouraging equitable participation, and building positive relationships, both inside and outside of the classroom. I think some of the dead ideas that we thought about when we were writing this chapter was thinking about positive relationship building happens inside the classroom. There are a lot of instances where we saw inclusive instructors talk about going to see their students compete or perform or going to see other activities. I think that historically we think the learning and the teaching much impact and this relationship building happens inside this physical classroom. Also we know that office hours were a space that traditionally we thought this is the only space outside of the classroom.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([28:48](#)):

The second tenet is when to create a welcoming classroom environment, while working out it is never too late. This deads the idea that you have to make a student feel welcome on the first day. You can actually make it seem welcome before they set foot in a classroom or log on to your course in this remote context. You can make a student feel welcome at the end of a class. You can invite them, even after the course is over, to come back and have a conversation with you. So there are numerous instances of inclusive instructors having this second tenet.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([29:22](#)):

And finally how to re-establish welcoming classroom environments after some type of violation, or some type of disruption, using conflict resolution approaches and community building practices and pedagogies. I think this is deading the idea that the instructor is the disciplinary, that this is a shared space, and that everyone in the community, whether it's the person in harm or someone unintentionally inflicted this practice, that you can work together to restore the balance in a positive classroom community.

Catherine Ross ([29:55](#)):

That's really interesting and you're addressing a dead idea I think that students come in with very frequently, which is that everything depends on the instructor. The instructor holds the power. So you're communicating to your students that no, it's all of us. We're all in this together. So that's great.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([30:20](#)):

And Catherine, I think I really love the fact that the book has tools to help you restore that balance, in explaining what restorative justice is and how you can do this from both instructor and the student's perspective.

Catherine Ross ([30:34](#)):

In chapter five, which you've titled, How Do They Conduct Class Inclusively, you highlight a lot of ways that inclusive pedagogy can be enacted in classes, and many of them are things we've heard about already in this podcast, such as student centered and transparent and community based, things like that. There's so much to say here, and unfortunately we don't have time to go into all of these topics, but there's one topic that I really want to talk about, and that's assessment. I want to talk about that because there are so many dead ideas around assessment in higher education, and it's the one place where students often can get stuck or get hung up. It can become a real barrier to, as someone earlier said, to seeing themselves in these spaces, to seeing themselves in this discipline.

Catherine Ross ([31:35](#)):

Assessment sometimes is that thing that makes people say, oh, I don't belong in science, or I'm not good at languages, whatever the discipline is. Here's a quote I want to hear more about. "Inclusive instructors strive to use assessment measures that are fair and unbiased and continually seek feedback from their students to modify their approaches." So fair tests. I think most instructors would say they try to make their tests fair, or they would just say, "My tests are fair. Of course my tests are fair." But could you just give us a couple of things people should maybe look out for when they want to be sure their tests are fair? And the idea that students should be asked to give feedback on how they're being assessed, that's a little bit radical.

Derek Dube ([32:32](#)):

Yeah. I would love to chime in on this one. One of the things I've implemented in my own classes that's been kind of out of the box way of assessing student knowledge and understanding and learning has actually been a student created exam. The way this worked was that instead of a cumulative final exam at the end of this semester that I, as the instructor, created, what I had was each day, each class session or each assignment, there was one or two or maybe three students, depending on the size of the class, that were tasked with creating a question that they believed kind of pulled some of the most important parts of that day's learning or that assignment's learning out.

Derek Dube ([33:13](#)):

Then what would happen is the following time we came into class or between classes, however you want to administer it, everybody in the class would actually answer those student created questions. And then the next time we had a meeting, the next assignment that came up, it would be a different student or a different set of students creating a question based on that. And what this does is it, first of all, allowed the students to be assessed on both the question that they created and are they gaining the knowledge that you want them to kind of right in the moment, almost in real time, not fully while you're

actually doing it but the pretty immediately thereafter, which was really nice for me as an instructor, because then in my next session I could say, okay, these were some of the main ideas that came out.

Derek Dube ([33:55](#)):

We saw this in the questions that the students created, or maybe I need to drive this home a little bit more and kind of revisit this topic, and that was really useful for me. But also then they're still getting assessed on questions, on important topics throughout the semester as well, which is really nice, and it gives the students kind of an agency in their assessment and challenges them in different ways than they might normally be on just a cumulative final exam at the end. And it keeps them engaged kind of throughout the breadth of the course as well.

Derek Dube ([34:28](#)):

The second part of your question kind of asks if students should really be asked to give feedback on how they are assessed. And I would say absolutely. By learning about our students in the classroom, it can help us frame an exam or another assessment in a way that both challenges the students and is fair to where they are coming to the course and where they should be currently.

Derek Dube ([34:48](#)):

Remember, we're not in the field of education as instructors to separate the cans and the cannot in our classroom. That's not our goal. We're here to help students realize that they can, show them ways to figure out how they can and support their progress towards learning success, both in and out of the classroom, as they move forward. So with that in mind, it's important that instructors recognize that tests aren't the only way to assess a student's mastery of a topic or its application, and in many cases may not even be the best. There's research that suggests that offering mixed modality assessments, things like tests or writing assignments, multimedia presentations, oral discussions, things like that, whether they're student choice or instructor selected, can lead to increased student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

Catherine Ross ([35:35](#)):

Yeah. I've always been a big fan of student questions, students providing questions for exams. I have found that to be really powerful in the classes I've taught, and very motivating. The last question I have, and this is one of my favorite questions that I ask everyone that I interview, and that is, tell me something you've learned from your students.

Tracie Addy ([36:00](#)):

I guess I'll go here. I would say just to listen to them to get their feedback. I think it's so important to understand the perspective of our students, and with regards to inclusive teaching, focusing on belonging and equity. They know best what it looks like because they're experiencing it. So I think that's one of the best things I've learned from students and working with students is just listen to them.

Catherine Ross ([36:30](#)):

Sounds so simple, right?

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([36:35](#)):

Well, I guess one of the things that I've learned from my students is you're never too old to learn. And so I think I really appreciate that students aren't blank slates and they bring to the classroom their own identities, like Tracie mentioned, perspectives and lived experiences. I try to respectfully acknowledge them as individuals, and use whole student approaches. But I think that every course I teach, I learn more about the students than I anticipated. So definitely you're never too old to learn.

Catherine Ross ([37:09](#)):

Great. Love it.

Derek Dube ([37:12](#)):

Yeah. One of the things that I am continuously learning is just how strong many of our students are and how many of them are overcoming challenges and obstacles along their academic journeys, along their life journeys that I never had to face in my own. I had my own step, but some of these students have totally different experiences and totally different obstacles that they're faced with. And in order to keep that in mind and to really create a course with that in mind, it makes it a lot more powerful of a reason to actually build a course that is inclusive when you can consider that your students have all those different experiences and that somebody may not have them. I show up, I study. I go home, I study. I come to class and that's my day.

Derek Dube ([38:01](#)):

There's so much more than that going on in our students, especially now, again, in the time that we're in where there's been conversions from virtual or from in-person to virtual and vice versa. The challenges are real there and our students are really strong and in many cases really driven to overcome them in some fantastic ways if we give them the opportunity.

Catherine Ross ([38:25](#)):

Right. So avoid making assumptions about what might be going on and pay attention to what might be going on, especially in these times.

Mallory SoRelle ([38:36](#)):

I think for me one of the lessons I've really taken from my students is how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, which I think is really critical for inclusive instruction. This idea of fear has come up a lot today, being sort of nervous that you're going to do something wrong, or this is going to be hard. But if you're talking about inclusive teaching, one of the keys is being able to recognize our own biases and make mistakes, and then correct them. And those are all uncomfortable and I think there are especially uncomfortable when we have this model of instruction where we're supposed to be experts.

Mallory SoRelle ([39:16](#)):

But the flip side of that is we expect our students to be uncomfortable all the time. We just kind of think of that as part of the learning process. And as a result, it turns out students are actually really pretty good about that. And so watching students be willing to be uncomfortable, to make mistakes, to learn from those mistakes. I think they have a lot of lessons to teach us as instructors about how to do the same thing. And also that students, I think, ultimately appreciate and respect that when instructors can be uncomfortable and can make mistakes and can accept those and sort of grow from them. So that's been a big lesson, I think, for me.

Catherine Ross ([39:56](#)):

Yes, very much in sharing our own vulnerabilities with students. That's something I've heard from students during this pandemic that they appreciated that in some cases the instructors were also uncertain and vulnerable and they thought that was very helpful in building a relationship with that professor.

Catherine Ross ([40:22](#)):

Well, thank you all so much for been here. I really appreciate your time. It was great to have this opportunity to chat with you all.

Khadijah A. Mitchell ([40:34](#)):

Thank you.

Mallory SoRelle ([40:35](#)):

Yeah, thanks for having us.

Derek Dube ([40:38](#)):

An absolute pleasure, thank you.

Catherine Ross ([40:40](#)):

If you'd like to learn more about our guest book, What Inclusive Instructors Do, check out the show notes. If you've enjoyed this podcast, please visit our website where you can find any resources mentioned in the episode, [ctl.columbia.edu/podcast](http://ctl.columbia.edu/podcast). Please like us, rate us and review us on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Dead Ideas in Teaching and Learning is a product of Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning and is produced by Stephanie Ogden, Laura Nicholas, Abie Sidell and Jon Hanford. Production support from Kate Tigh-Pigott. Our theme music is "In the Lab" by Immersive Music.