

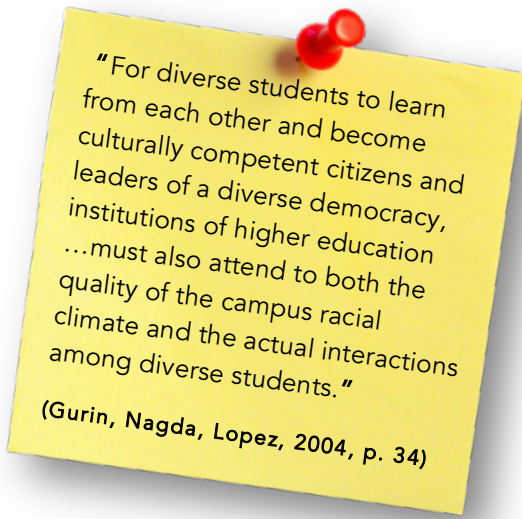


DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN LEARNING

Inclusive teaching refers to a number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students of various backgrounds, learning styles and abilities. These strategies intend to ensure that all students learn unreservedly, explore new ideas, feel safe to express their views in a civil manner, and are respected as individuals and members of groups.

Inclusive teaching:

- uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are highly engaging.
- acknowledges the diversity of student experiences and the larger world.
- strives to create a safe teaching environment where all students feel like they belong and rich, diverse dialogues can occur.



"For diverse students to learn from each other and become culturally competent citizens and leaders of a diverse democracy, institutions of higher education ...must also attend to both the quality of the campus racial climate and the actual interactions among diverse students."

(Gurin, Nagda, Lopez, 2004, p. 34)

Why engage in inclusive pedagogies?

Students have a broad range of culturally and historically situated experiences that influence prior knowledge and motivations for learning. By account for this range, faculty can enhance students' achievement with the use of inclusive pedagogies. Inclusion of difference improves historically marginalized students' aspirations, self-confidence, and performance in the classroom. It also promotes effective interaction among all students, refining their problem solving and critical thinking abilities, fostering creativity and innovation, challenging biases, and creating opportunities for students to learn to work productively with difference. Taken together, this results in higher levels of civic engagement and creates informed citizens.

Who is the most at risk of exclusion?

It will vary by faculty, discipline, and approaches to teaching, but women, students of color, first-generation students, disabled students, and low-income students tend to be at more risk of exclusion from traditional teaching environments.

How do I practice inclusive teaching?

Plan ahead

- Vary your instructional methods, curriculum, and examples
- Learn and adopt **universal design for learning (UDL)** and **culturally responsive teaching (CRT)** practices
- Adapt your teaching to allow space for the expression of approaches and perspectives of all students
- Make accommodations for students with documented disabilities and understand how UDL can help students with visible and unknown disabilities. Make clear that you want to be an ally in students' learning.
- Set high expectations of all students
- Ensure that all students understand expectations for learning and how these will be assessed

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)³

UDL refers to a set of principles for curriculum design that aims to give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. The framework helps instructors capitalize on the variety of skills, needs, and interests that students bring into the classroom. Following are three main ideas to apply UDL in your classroom: **Provide Multiple Means of Representation of Information** A variety of course materials beyond text makes information more accessible and increases engagement. Consider YouTube videos, blogs, slide presentations, accessible and downloadable PDFs, and websites that feature real-world applications of content. **Provide Multiple Means of Student Action and Expression** Give students options for expressing what they know. **Provide Multiple Means of Student Engagement** Use digital media and real-world cases to help students engage with course material

Embrace diversity in content and practices

- Assume students are diverse in ways that you cannot see – that might be related to race, national origin, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, physical and neuro-disabilities, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, or many other possibilities.
- Design group assignments and intentionally mix groups, at times requiring students to work purposely with others they may not know and other times making sure students in the minority are not isolated. Encourage or help set up diverse study groups as well.
- Examine and consider revising texts, resources, guest speakers, examples, and authors to include contributions from diverse scholars.

Monitor class dialogue

- Use language that is inclusive and respectful. Know students' names and pronounce them correctly. Avoid gender-limiting language.
- Set up class discussions and expectations for students to get into the habit of taking peers' ideas seriously and responding to one another with civility; add statements to your syllabus that set a tone for respect; consider ways to structure difficult discussions so that varying points of view will be included.
- Plan for how to respond to racist, inflammatory, or insensitive comments. If ignored, students may think faculty agree with or do not care about the impact of the comments.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING (CRT)²

CRT refers to a set of principles that integrate cultural content that enhances achievement for all. It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and a worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum. Following are four main ideas to apply CRT in your classroom: **Establish inclusion** by creating a learning environment in which learners and teacher feel respected and connected to one another; **Develop a positive attitude toward learning** by providing some choices, which helps students find personal relevance in course concepts, skills, and values; **Engender competence** by incorporating relatable aspects of various cultures and students' lives through multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects (p. 29).⁴ Competence also emerges through on-going formative assessments that help students check for understanding and consequently increase trust in their own competence; **Enhance meaning** through norms and practices that create challenging and engaging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values.

Selected References:

- 1: Gurin, P., Nagda, B. & Lopez, G. The Benefits of Diversity in Education for Democratic Citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2004, pp. 17-34.
- 2: Ginsberg, M., & Wlodkowski, R. (2009). *Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching in College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 3: National Center on Universal Design for Learning "UDL Guidelines – Version 2.0" Retrieved from: <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>
- 4: Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

Additional resources:

- CTAL (2015) "Diversity and Inclusive Teaching" <http://sites.udel.edu/ctal/enhancing-teaching/inclusive-teaching/>
- Rajagopal, K. (2011) Create Success! ASCD. Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/111022/chapters/Culturally-Responsive-Instruction.aspx>
- Sue, D.W. (2010) *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.