Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms

Activity

1) Please mark each strategy in the following way:
   — Strikethrough any strategy not appropriate for your course(s)
   ✗ I already do this in my class
   ≈ I sort of do this, but I could make it more explicit/visible
   ✧ I’d like to try this

2) Discuss one ✗ with each other.

Design an Inclusive Course Curriculum

_____ Use visuals that do not reinforce stereotypes, but do include diverse participants.
_____ Choose readings that consciously reflect the diversity of contributors to your field; consider whether
   tradition-based reading lists represent past stereotypes (or present ones).
_____ Use varied names and socio-cultural contexts in test questions, assignments, and case studies.
   Analyze the content of your examples, analogies, and humor; too narrow a perspective may ostracize
   students who have differences or are different from the “norm” in some way.
_____ Invite guest speakers and ensure that they have varied backgrounds and experiences.
   Recognize how your choices of materials, readings, and content organization reflect your perspectives,
   interests, and possible biases.
_____ Teach the conflicts of your field to incorporate diverse perspectives.

Motivate Learning/Establish Relevance

_____ Situate the course in a broader global and/or societal context.
_____ Connect the course to other courses within or outside of the major.
_____ Discuss how the course will help students function more effectively with a diversity of people.
_____ Relate specific topics within a course to previous and future topics.
_____ Provide students opportunities to make connections inside and outside of the course.
_____ Use personal anecdotes to create interest among students.

Get to know your students as individuals and create opportunities for students to do the same.

_____ Examine your background and experiences (so that you understand how your students see you!).
   Consider your academic traditions and the biases that they may inadvertently reinforce. For example, if
   the older literature in your field is exclusive, you may want to point out how the field has evolved.
_____ Learn students’ names and make an effort to correctly pronounce names that are unfamiliar to you.
   Ask students how they would like to be addressed in class; do not encourage students to adopt a name
   that is easier for you to pronounce or that sounds more “American.”
_____ Ask about students’ interests and backgrounds.
_____ Ask about students’ experiences with and concerns about the subject matter.
_____ Provide opportunities for students to learn about each other and from each other.
_____ Address your students consistently, i.e. do not use given names with some students and surnames for
   others.
Create an Inclusive Course Environment

- Set high standards and communicate your confidence that each student is capable of achieving them.
- Let your students know that you believe each has important contributions to make.
- Applaud creative solutions and sincere efforts to learn.
- Help students understand that intelligence is not a fixed ability, not all academic challenges are a result of personal inadequacies, and many academic challenges can be overcome.
- Talk to students about how they learn best and what they can do to adopt compensatory strategies.
- Do not ask or expect students to represent an entire group, either by look or by request.
- Encourage multiple perspectives (as opposed to consensus) in discussions.
- Establish ground rules; in collaboration with students develop rules for respectful course conduct.
- Use a variety of strategies to encourage contributions and to reduce over-participation by verbally assertive students. Consider ways to randomize how you ask questions or encourage participation.
- Create a culture of shared-purpose by periodically collecting anonymous feedback to learn how students are experiencing your course.
- Avoid assuming that a student needs assistance, which can convey that you have low expectations and further hinder their learning.
- Do not ignore or change the subject when students voice negative comments about a group.
- Make diversity and the free-exchange of ideas an early discussion topic.
- Avoid religious holidays when scheduling tests and inform students how to make up missed work.
- Avoid expressing racially charged political opinions.
- Do not ask individuals with hidden disabilities to identify themselves in class.
- Deliberately and consciously avoid assuming the gender, sexual identity, or faith of any student.
- Do not assume all students speak English fluently.
- Ensure that the physical classroom space is inclusive for all students; e.g. are students who are alternately-abled marginalized in some way?

Provide Varied Opportunities for Success/Achievement

- Allow students to accumulate grade points in a variety of ways.
- Allow students to select the weighting of different aspects of the course.
- Provide explicit information about your grading criteria using matrices or rubrics. Stereotyping is most likely to occur when expectations are ambiguous.
- Allow students to collaborate/cooperate on homework and class assignments.
- Offer a variety of ways for students to participate in class other than speaking aloud.

Teach Inclusively

- Use a variety of teaching methods; do not rely solely on lectures and didactic questions.
- Use pictures, schematics, graphs, simple sketches, films, and demonstrations.
- Provide a balance of concrete information (facts, data, real or hypothetical experiments) and abstract concepts (principles, theories, models).
- Balance material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods with that emphasizing fundamental understanding.
- Provide brief intervals during class for students to think about what they have heard, seen, and learned.
- Provide opportunities for students to use or apply the course material/content.
- Have students work on class activities in pairs, triads, or small groups.
- Assign group membership randomly. Do not allow students to choose their own groups.
- Allow students to work on projects that explore their own social identities.
Creating Inclusive Courses
Resources

Microaggressions
What is a Microaggression? Derald Wing Sue, https://youtu.be/BJL2P0JsAS4
Microaggressions in the Classroom, Center for Multicultural Awareness, University of Denver http://otl.du.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/MicroAggressionsInClassroom-DUCME.pdf
Racial Microaggressions, Voices of Students in the Classroom @University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, http://www.racialmicroaggressions.illinois.edu/files/2015/03/RMA-Classroom-Report.pdf

Stereotype Threat
Rising to the Challenge of Stereotype Threat, Joshua Aronson, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahNdSh_lTc

Creating Inclusive Classrooms
An Approach for Teaching Diversity, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater http://www.uww.edu/learn/diversity/dozensuggestions.php
Diversity and Multicultural Education Teaching Tips, Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment, Western Washington University, http://cii.wwu.edu/cii/resources/teaching_tips/diversity.asp#diversity
Ground Rules for Class Discussion, https://edocs.uis.edu/plang1/WGS333/classdiscuss.htm

Making Excellence Inclusive, American Association of Colleges and Universities
Teaching and Learning – Diversity Resources, Center for the Integration of Research Learning & Teaching, University of Michigan, http://www.cirtl.net/diversityresources
Exploring Your Implicit Attitudes
Teaching Tolerance, Southern Poverty Law Center, Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT)
http://www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias

Please be sure to watch any video before showing it to make sure it is appropriate for your audience!

Microaggression Videos
Look Different: MTV, in association with the NAACP, Anti-Defamation League, and the Trevor Project

Look Different Playlist
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBPLVvU_jvGssvzwax_GijPAnZqbiQqyB
  Your English is so good
  You don’t look Jewish
  What up, Bin Laden?
  You’re pretty for a dark girl.
  How’d you get into that school?
  I can’t tell Asians apart.

http://www.lookdifferent.org
http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do
http://www.lookdifferent.org/videos

“Reverse” Microaggression Videos
Where are you from? Ken Tanaka, https://youtu.be/crAv5ttax2I
If Latinos Said the Stuff White People Say (cursing in one scene), https://youtu.be/XnFUDx3wC-Y
If Asians Said the Stuff White People Say, https://youtu.be/PMJI1Dw83Hc
If Black People Said the Stuff White People Say, https://youtu.be/A1zLzWtULig

Other Videos
21 Things Asian People Are Tired of Hearing, https://youtu.be/0hwGuXWdBQc
24 Questions Black People Have For White People, https://youtu.be/GuVMJmC0V98
33 Questions White People Have for White People, https://youtu.be/z1PviSrWYqw
What is Privilege?  (e.g. of the privilege walk), https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ

Ahsante Bean Videos
Constructing Space | A Documentary, https://youtu.be/4JmQU_3v6gA


Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom

Prior to the Course
- Be aware of issues that raise strong feelings in you so that you can prepare or practice an appropriate response.
- Consider how students see you and how they might hear what you say as other than you intend.
- Learn about perspectives other than your own.
- Explore your own biases (e.g. take the Implicit Attitudes Test [http://www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias]).

At the Beginning of and During the Course
- Ask students to develop ground rules for discussion. If students do not suggest it, ensure that the list includes items about students being respectful to each other and avoiding personal attacks.
- Encourage open discussion of difficult material.
- Be open to multiple perspectives.
- Ask students to argue responsibly.

In the Moment

Manage yourself
- Model the behavior you want to see in your students; maintain control of the classroom and try not to be visibly rattled.
- Breathe deeply – take time to calm yourself.
- Taking a moment where you are silent is also fine.
- Do not take remarks personally, even if you are attacked. You may be a target because you are the authority figure in the room.

Manage your perceptions
- Take a step back from the specific comments being made. Visualize yourself at a higher elevation in order to see what is happening from a broader perspective.
- Listen for what the student trying to express. A student may be trying to say something other than what their words reflect.

Help students manage their thinking
- Address the issue. Do not ignore it. A lack of response to bias or disrespect will likely be perceived as agreement or indifference. If you need time to think about the incident/comment, tell students that the issue is important and you will return to it in a future class session.
- Refer to the course ground rules.
- Turn the comment into a general issue for all students to discuss. For example, you could say “Many people think this way. Why do they hold such views? Why do those who disagree hold other views?”
- Ask students to listen carefully to the other point of view and restate the position.
- Ask students to write about the issue. Consider having students argue the position with which they most disagree.
- Ask students to reflect on what they might learn from the moment; consider asking them to briefly write about what they have learned.
- If a student breaks down or discloses a past injury or harm, give them the option of leaving the classroom. It is best to do this while talking individually with the student, rather than stating it in front of the class. Talk with them while other students are busy, or after class. If appropriate, let the student know where they might seek counseling; perhaps walk with them to the counseling center.
- Talk with students outside of class to help them learn from the experience—about themselves, about others, about possible perspectives, about the topic as a whole—and how to voice their thoughts so they may be heard.

Adapted from “Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom” by Lee Warren, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. [http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html] 9-26-2016