

# ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING

## Key Concepts

### Accessibility

Accessibility is the proactive creation of an equitable experience for all individuals. From course conception to completion, equity was intentionally given precedence. This often requires changes to the "norm" to ensure that marginalized students have the same access to the material and inclusion in the course as their peers.

### Accommodation

Accommodations are an individually requested modification to a preexisting situation. Accommodations specifically have the goal of including someone who would have been left out or have had an inequitable experience. Inclusive teaching requires both course accessibility and individual accommodation.

### Inclusion

Fostering both belonging and empowerment to marginalized students and actively encouraging multiple viewpoints and diversity while rejecting assimilation and tokenism. Inclusive teaching allows students to develop autonomy, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy.

### Hidden Curriculum

Implicit and unspoken cultural "norms", values, behaviors, and expectations that instructors categorize as "common knowledge". This reproduces both academic and social inequities for students outside the dominant culture or with different ability levels. An example of a hidden curriculum would be expecting students to know to raise their hand if they have a question. An instructor may get frustrated that the student spoke out of turn, but the student may not have known or may not be able to raise their hand.

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## Grounding Principles

1

### Integrate Diversity

- Establish that diversity is inherently valuable.
- Highlight diverse voices in class.
- Discuss campus supports with your students.
- Review your curriculum to see if you have integrated knowledge from women, BIPOC, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- If there is a lack of diversity in your field, acknowledge that with your class and consider reasons why that may be the case.
- Introduce yourself with your pronouns and preferred name then encourage students to do the same.

2

### Expand Access

- Consider accessibility concerns for your class in advance while you are still structuring your course to reduce the need for accommodations during the semester.
- Create and utilize accessible course materials and understand that taking proactive access measures benefit all students in your course.
- Establish the understanding that accessibility is a civil right and not simply a "special need". Allow students to know that you are ok if they have these needs.
- Review information about Accessibility Services and share that information with all students on the first day.

3

### Foster Belonging

- Create a classroom environment that shares the responsibility to address and interrupt inequity and exclusionary practices.
- Reflect on what the hidden curriculum is for your department or class and update policies or expectations for students with this in mind.
- Make well-being a priority and model that for students.
- Connect course content back to the everyday lives of your diverse students.
- Be mindful of social power dynamics and how it can impact the class, specifically marginalized students.

# 4

## Utilize Differentiated Instruction

- Discuss with your class that one teaching style or approach will not meet the needs of all students in class.
- Incorporate differentiated instruction by seeing each student as a unique and individual learner.
- Use a variety of assessment methods and ways for students to demonstrate knowledge (exams, papers, presentations, etc.)
- Offer multiple ways for students to participate in discussions or in class activities (small group discussions, chat/discussion boards, written reflections, virtual polls, etc.)

# 5

## Embrace Structured Flexibility

- Plan and acknowledge change as a shared need for both instructor and student.
- Establish class policies that support flexibility and understanding. Brainstorm ways you can support students to be successful (deadline windows vs hard deadlines, breaking down large assignments, creating a work progress timeline, etc.)
- Model flexibility by asking for feedback mid-semester and implementing changes or having open discussions about ways to improve the course.

# 6

## Model Transparency

- Explain goals, requirements, and pedagogical choices for clear expectation and why these expectations are important to the course.
- Be mindful that not all students come from the same educational background and all have different expectations for you as an instructor.
- Illuminate the hidden curriculum and provide rubrics as often as possible.
- Alert students to upcoming deadlines, new content, or changes.

# 7

## Incorporate Feedback

- Allow students the opportunity to provide you anonymous feedback and utilize that information to update and revise your course.
- Create a safe environment for your students to openly share with you any questions or concerns they may have.
- Include spaces for students to collaborate, provide each other feedback, and hear different perspectives from their classmates.
- Collaborate with your department to share best practices and resources. This allows for consistency for students in your department.