

**Inclusive Teaching Strategies[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Inclusive teaching strategies refer to any number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment, in which students feel equally valued.

**Why use inclusive teaching strategies?**

“Even though some of us might wish to conceptualize our classrooms as culturally neutral or might choose to ignore the cultural dimensions, students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door, nor can they instantly transcend their current level of development… Therefore, it is important that the pedagogical strategies we employ in the classroom reflect an understanding of social identity development so that we can anticipate the tensions that might occur in the classroom and be proactive about them” (Ambrose *et. al*., 2010, p. 169-170).

**Benefits of inclusive teaching:**

* You can connect with and engage with a variety of students.
* You are prepared for “spark moments” or issues that arise when controversial material is discussed.
* Students connect with course materials that are relevant to them.
* Students feel comfortable in the classroom environment to voice their ideas/thoughts/questions.
* Students are more likely to experience success in your course through activities that support their learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds.

**Strategies for teaching inclusively**

* Be reflective by asking yourself the following:
* How might your own cultural-bound assumptions influence your interactions with students?
* How might the backgrounds and experiences of your students influence their motivation, engagement, and learning in your classroom?
* How can you modify course materials, activities, assignments, and/or exams to be more accessible to all students in your class?
* [Incorporate diversity](http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/designing-your-course/incorporating-diversity.html) into your overall curriculum. Does the syllabus reflect a variety of perspectives and viewpoints? Does the syllabus incorporate scholars with different identities (e.g. scholars of color, LGBTQ scholars, etc?).
* Be intentional about creating a safe learning environment by utilizing [ground rules](http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/establishing-ground-rules.html).
* Be proactive in [connecting with and learning about your students](http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/connecting-with-your-students.html). Learn your students’ preferred names & pronouns.
* Hampshire enrolls a significant number of transgender students. A way to support all students begins with learning their preferred name and pronoun.
* Utilize a variety of teaching strategies, activities, and assignments that will accommodate the needs of students with diverse learning abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.
* There is great significance in intentionally:
  + - **building self-efficacy** (through assignments: come to class with two questions and comment)
    - **making a practice of recognition and validation**—Some students, particularly first generation college students, may not take for granted they should be in college after hearing many counter-messages. How can your approach to teaching help work against negative self-talk?
    - Don’t assume students come to college knowing how to critically examine texts or engage critically in discussion. Scaffold their participation with in class writing, sharing ideas in pairs before large group discussion. Ask them to come to class with two questions and a comment.
* Create classes that are accessible for learners with special needs. For example, present information both orally and visually to accommodate both students with visual or auditory impairments in addition to students with various learning preferences. Write in print rather than cursive to assist learners less familiar with written English.
* When possible, provide flexibility in how students demonstrate their knowledge and how you assess student knowledge and development. Vary your assessments (for example, incorporate a blend of collaborative and individual assignments) or allow choice in assignments (for example, give students multiple project topics to choose from, or have students determine the weight of each assignment on their final grade at the beginning of the semester.)
* Be clear about how students will be evaluated and your expectations for assignments and classroom participation. Provide justifications. (Why create a bibliography?)
* Take time to assess the [classroom climate](http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/classroom-climate.html) by obtaining [mid-semester feedback](http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/designing-your-course/student-evaluations.html) from students.
* Pass out index cards during class for anonymous feedback.
* Ask students to rate from 1-5 how comfortable they are in class. Also ask for 2 suggestions for how they could feel more comfortable participating.
* Discuss your findings in the next class and share any changes you will make regarding the feedback.

**Hampshire Statement on Diversity**

Hampshire College values diversity because it enriches our campus community and advances our intellectual and creative endeavors. Diversity encompasses multiple and intersecting identities including but not limited to race, class, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religious expression, physical and mental abilities, military/veteran status, and political expression.

Hampshire aspires to foster a welcoming community inclusive of individuals from an array of backgrounds and perspectives who share a commitment to all forms of anti-oppression, social justice, respectful discourse and engagement. We believe that diversity is central to the academic and work experience and campus culture and therefore, we recognize that recruitment, retention and support of a diverse community are fundamental responsibilities related to the sustainability of the College.

Diversity is at the core of our collaborative, creative, inquiry-based model of education. Our pedagogy depends upon the free and open exchange of ideas informed by different perspectives, fields, and methodologies. We offer an interdisciplinary education that is inclusive of the knowledges and experiences of groups who have been historically underrepresented in academy. Together, we strive to be a community of scholars and artists engaged in respectful exchanges of different perspectives and ways of being, critical and analytical thought, all essential factors for transformative learning.

1. This is a revision of a resource from Cornell Center for Teaching and Learning.

   http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/inclusive-teaching-strategies.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)