Recommended Practices for Inclusive Teaching

Planning for your Course

☐ **Make explicit on your syllabus that your course policies are inclusive, in alignment with University policies.**

- Review the University's [Discrimination and Harassment FAQs](#) and index the University's [anti-discrimination policy](#) in your syllabus.
- Review the Office of Disability Services [information for faculty regarding accessibility](#) for students with disabilities and inform students of the [Office of Disability Services](#) in your syllabus so they know where to turn for accommodations.
- Check religious holidays each semester to make sure they do not make your course calendar challenging for some students to be involved. [Academic regulations](#) allow for excused absences or missed assignments for religious holidays when students notify faculty and plan to make up work.
- Ask your students to share additional challenges they may experience over the course of the semester in a pre-semester survey and in periodic follow-ups

☐ **Explain how your students can contact you and how to use office hours.** This is especially important for first-year students.

- Encourage your students to use office hours by incorporating a discussion with faculty into one of your early assignments (i.e. a revision workshop, discussion about research proposal, etc.)

☐ **Clearly state your expectations for broad participation in discussions and explain how students will be evaluated and graded.**

- Invite students to share their own expectations for classroom participation and discussion.
- Give students an opportunity to share any barriers to participation they are experiencing throughout the semester.

☐ **Put readings and other [course materials on reserve in the library](#).** State clearly on your syllabus that these materials are freely available and where to locate them.

- If you are using Canvas, [your site is integrated with reserves](#). We recommend adding reserve readings to individual modules so that they are very accessible to your students.

☐ **Think carefully about your students' academic and social experiences, preparation and expectations that they bring to coursework.**

- What age/class level are your students? Consider that college students are still experiencing brain and social development.

- Are there prerequisites for the course? What content, and skills can you expect your students to bring with them? What skills might you need to teach?
- What social experiences and cultural knowledge may give some students a "leg up" in their participation in class or their comprehension of course content?
- Make your "hidden curriculum" explicit by clearly defining the terms of your assignments and explaining terms like summary, analysis, critique, etc.

Disseminating Material

☐ **Create short online video lectures and assignments in especially challenging areas of your course to support the many different ways that people learn.** This will level the playing field and make the material more accessible for all of your students.

☐ **Make documents and materials as accessible as possible following McGraw's general accessibility guidelines.**

- Test the accessibility of any materials you upload on Blackboard and Canvas using the Ally tool. Follow Ally's instructions once you upload documents for making materials more accessible. These instructions of best practices for making documents and PDFs accessible may also be helpful.
- Use tools such as Kaltura (which automatically captions videos) and Ares course reserves (which optimizes text for screen readers) that comply with ADA standards for accessibility.

☐ **Create active learning opportunities.** Some examples include:

- Create opportunities such as assignments, polls, whiteboard activities, problem sets, quizzes, labs, and discussion boards to encourage your students to process and work with the material, not just passively absorb it.
- Use your course website or blog to stimulate and continue discussions that may invite a wider range of participation. In some instances, students may be more comfortable taking risks in online discussions rather than in the classroom.
- Expand the classroom activity into an online learning environment. Meaningful online discussions and collaborative assignments can increase engagement among students who typically learn less effectively in lecture and seminar style settings
- Tools for asynchronous engagement you might consider include: Ed Discussion, VoiceThread, and (if your course is text heavy) an annotation tool such as Hypothesis or Perusall.

Cultivating Your Classroom Environment

☐ **Establish ground rules and values for discussion.** This is particularly important in courses where controversial topics are at the center. Invite your students to discuss concrete expectations for ensuring confidentiality, openness, respectful disagreement and civil debate.

- Invite your students to voice their own desires for the course, which increases their ownership over the course and gives them the opportunity to advocate for their own needs and interests.
- Address blatantly offensive and discriminatory comments and hold students accountable for their behavior.

☐ **Give students time to process material.**

- Pause for students to take a quiet minute to think of responses to key questions or jot down new questions. This practice enables everyone to more confidently contribute to class discussion.
- Give students brief opportunities to pair up to discuss key questions and share back with the group to provide a stronger basis for individual participation. McGraw's suggestions for encouraging active learning offer many options for such interactive work.

☐ **Moderate small group work.**

- When asking students to work together be sure to create well defined tasks.
- When possible, avoid outnumbering or isolating students from underrepresented groups.

☐ **Use identity-language thoughtfully.** Use gender-inclusive language that avoids gender binaries by using plurals instead, such as "their" instead of he or she.

☐ **Be aware of contemporary terms for cultural identities.** Use terminology that is clear and inclusive, but not divisive or essentialist. Preferences within cultural communities change over time and vary across regions. If you are unsure what term to use, ask in a non-threatening context.

☐ **Treat students as individuals rather than as token examples of an identity or group.** Do not assume a student belongs to a particular group or can represent a fixed or unitary perspective on behalf of a group. Instead, encourage students to think of themselves in terms of their unique experiences and characteristics rather than in terms that evoke homogeneous or stereotyped identities.

☐ **Show respect for perspectives and ideas that do not match your own.**

☐ **Connect individually with your students.** Encourage students to meet with you one-on-one at least once during the semester.

Giving and Soliciting Feedback:

☐ **Set high expectations and affirm your students' abilities.** When giving a student critical feedback, affirm your standards and, when possible, assure the student of your belief that the student can meet those standards.

☐ **Adopt a growth mindset.** Encourage students' potential for intellectual growth and dexterity in your feedback, rather than praising intrinsic abilities or referring to external constraints that might be attributed to stereotypes.

☐ **Consider a midterm evaluation to gauge students' level of comfort in the class.** These can be done on paper or through Canvas or Qualtrics. Good questions will help students reflect on their processes of learning, rather than focusing solely on instructor performance or content. Be sure to discuss the results in the next class session and tell students about any changes you plan to make as a result of their feedback.

☐ **Identify areas of student confusion.** Leave a minute at the end of class for students to anonymously jot down on notecards questions or points of confusion from the day's class.