

UMass Amherst

Suggested Classroom Equity Actions

GOAL: Improve equity by addressing persistent racial and ethnic gaps in student success and belonging in the classroom.

A. Implement Course Design and Construction Strategies to Improve Equity

1. Create opportunities for students to revisit, revise, and resubmit material after incorporating timely, specific, and actionable feedback.
2. Provide opportunities and guidelines for student peer-to-peer support and connection.
3. Reduce dependence of final grades on high stakes, end-of-semester assessments by offering multiple assessments/assignments through the semester and scaffolding large projects/assignments.

Suggested Resources:

- University of Massachusetts Center for Teaching and Learning. (n.d.) *Inclusive Syllabus Design*. <https://www.umass.edu/ctl/resources/deeper-dives/inclusive-syllabus-design>
- Tulane University. (2015) *Accessible Syllabus*. <https://www.accessiblesyllabus.com/>

B. Articulate the Relevance of Your Course to Students' Lives and Futures

1. Provide classroom activities and learning experiences that connect content to students' lives in and out of the classroom. This may include providing opportunities for students to explore current events and highlighting the practical societal and environmental applications of course material.
2. Provide opportunities for students to share their own experiences, perspectives, and questions. Offer opportunities for students to develop critical thinking tools to contextualize their positionalities.
3. Connect course content to career opportunities/goals and increase awareness of and encourage participation in HIPS (high impact practices; i.e., research experiences for undergraduates and internships) by students from minoritized groups.

Suggested Resources:

- University of Denver Career and Professional Development. (2020, August 2). *Faculty Tips for Integrating Career Development into the Classroom* <https://career.du.edu/blog/2020/08/02/faculty-tips-for-integrating-career-development-into-the-classroom/>
- Eddy, S. L. & Hogan, K. A. (2014) Getting Under the Hood: How and For Whom Does Increasing Class Structure Work? *Life Sciences Education*, 13(3), 453-468. <https://www.lifescied.org/doi/10.1187/cbe.14-03-0050>

C. Recognize and Celebrate Student Identities

1. Use the correct pronunciation of student names, including providing an option for students to record that pronunciation, i.e. <https://namedrop.io/>. Encourage and model the use of applicable [pronouns](#) and/or students' chosen name (available in SPIRE) in course materials and course settings.
2. Choose course materials, create learning experiences, and invite speakers representing and/or drawing on a variety of identities, voices, and perspectives.
3. Ask for any other information that the instructor should know at the start of the semester with a Get-To-Know-The-Student Google Form or Index Card.

Suggested Resources:

- Lewis, K. L., Stout, J. G., Pollack, S. J., Finkelstein, N. D., & Ito, T. A. (2016) Fitting In or Opting Out: A Review of Key Social-Psychological Factors Influencing a Sense of Belonging for Women in Physics. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 12(2), 020110-1-020110-10. <https://journals.aps.org/prper/abstract/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.12.020110>
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology Teaching and Learning Lab. (n.d.) *Academic Belonging*. <https://tll.mit.edu/teaching-resources/inclusive-classroom/academic-belonging/>
- Sample Get-to-Know-the-Student Google form: <https://forms.gle/6rBBybNpPoEFPtJEA>

D. Normalize and Encourage Help-Seeking and Support

1. Offer multiple clear and easy opportunities for students to communicate with the instructor, i.e. individual/small group meetings, flexible Zoom and in-person office hours, out-of-classroom interactions. Normalize meeting with the instructor for reasons other than “asking for help.”
2. Proactively engage with students to build connections. This may include emailing students a welcoming message at the beginning of the semester, directed outreach to students from racial/ethnic populations traditionally underserved in higher education inviting them to attend office hours or other impromptu meetings, and/or make an effort to meet students one-on-one or in small groups, as well as the Get-To-Know-the-Student suggestion offered in the previous section.
3. Provide multiple mechanisms to ask questions anonymously and receive feedback during class.

Suggested Resources:

- Dewsbury, B. & Brame, C. J. (2019) Inclusive Teaching. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 18(fe2), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.19-01-0021>.
- Payakachat, N., Gubbins, P. O., Ragland, D., Norman, S. E., Flowers, S. K., Stowe, C. D., DeHart, R. M., Pace, A., & Hastings, J. K. (2013). Academic help-seeking behavior among student pharmacists. *American journal of pharmaceutical education*, 77(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7717>