



Inclusive Teaching Tips

Online Version

As we ask faculty to move classes online in record time, we may feel we have little time to reflect on how online teaching practices may impact students differently, and at times, inequitably. As we work to center inclusive teaching practices in online instruction, the following list is provided as a quick reference to promote greater inclusion and equity.

What is Inclusive Teaching?

Inclusive teaching involves deliberately cultivating a learning environment where all students are treated equitably, have equitable access to learning, and feel valued and supported in their learning. Such teaching attends to social identities and seeks to change the ways systemic inequities shape dynamics in teaching-learning spaces, affect individuals' experiences of those spaces, and influence course and curriculum design.

Inclusive Teaching Strategies

Recreate Ground Rules/Community Guidelines/Etiquette: You may have previously utilized these strategies to norm in-person spaces. Moving to an online format provides opportunity to readjust these guidelines and update them as needed for the virtual space.

- Consider defining group expectations when posting or responding to conversations.
 - For Example:
 - We welcome diverse perspectives and experiences, and respectful exchanges.
 - If you disagree with someone's view, we recommend that you first "listen" and confirm understanding before adding new information.
 - No post will be removed for presenting dissenting ideas, however, inappropriate or abusive language, personal attacks, disrespectful conduct, or spam will not be tolerated.
 - Be mindful of content: If you see content that you believe is inappropriate, please "Report" so an administrator can review the post.
 - If posting a link, please provide a brief explanation of why you are linking to it and why it's important.

Utilize Small Group Learning: There are a variety of ways to engage students in small group interactions, even in online and asynchronous platforms. As we utilize this high impact practice to build connections, even in large classrooms, consider creating small group norms.

- Consider utilizing a small group expectations/covenant to better articulate expectations, meeting times, group behaviors, and shared assignments.



Emotional State of Students: We know that many of our students are currently navigating emotionally taxing personal and familial challenges. As we move instruction, deadlines, and class expectations online, consider the emotional trauma students are experiencing in addition to their class assignments and expectations. Students may find themselves studying at different times and in locations which are unfamiliar to them.

- Consider making yourself available at different times throughout the week to connect, chat, and answer questions.

Practice Accessibility: Utilize the existing resources available at CSU regarding accessible instruction through the [Assistive Technology Resource Center](#) and [Student Disability Center](#).

- Consider pursuing how to make your [online documents accessible](#).

*Please be aware that use of exam proctoring software can cause access barriers for students with disabilities that are users of assistive technology. Please consider flexibility in the choice of proctoring platforms and provide the one to students that is most accessible to their assistive technology. For specifics on what these options are please visit [TILT Online Proctoring](#).

Active Facilitation: to keep a discussion focused and purposeful, it is important to be an active facilitator rather than a passive observer. Be careful to maintain some control but no one thrives in a micro-managed classroom.

- Consider rewording questions posed by students, correcting misinformation, referencing relevant reading materials or course content, asking for clarification, and reviewing main points.

Addressing Harmful Comments: Creating inclusive teaching and learning spaces requires attention to words, phrases, or behaviors which perpetuate harm. Examples include stereotypical representation, biased language, and exclusionary group behavior.

- Consider when it is necessary to address microaggressions, harmful comments, or behaviors which can cause obstacles to learning.

Gathering Student Feedback: There are a variety of ways to gather student input and feedback throughout the course. Asking students for real-time feedback is tremendously valuable insight into how the course can continue to develop and meet the needs of all of your students.

- Consider building in weekly small assessments for students to reflect upon learning and to gather critical feedback regarding the online process.
 - For Example:
 - What are the three most important points you learned today/this week?
 - What important questions remain unanswered for you?
 - What did you learn specifically from the materials, the lecture, or from what someone else said today/this week?



Be Flexible. Online learning does not mean lessening expectations or dumbing-down material; it does mean that your course materials and the way students engage and learn should, and will, look different.

- Consider the opportunities for you to display empathy; consider how you can adjust your expectations, both for yourself and your students; offer individual flexibility as able; continue asking the question - how can I update and change my class to reflect the needs of all my students?

Other Considerations

Maintain awareness of the digital divide

- Know that vulnerable students may not have reliable devices and internet
- Offer individual flexibility
- Make attendance optional

Practice critical consciousness of social identity dynamics – See examples below:

- Gender Identity & Expression: Address misgendering by peers and instructors; Also “[dead names](#)” (May be legal or birth name, but the non-preference name) may appear in different software
- Race & ethnicity: Are students responding to all students regardless of background? Are there any groups/individuals experiencing isolation or targeting or tension? Are there microaggressions happening, particularly towards Asian and Asian Americans due to the COVID-19?

This document was created by the [Office of the Vice President for Diversity](#) in collaboration with [The Institute for Learning and Teaching](#).