

An Evolving Framework for Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogy

Writing in the Disciplines Program (www.uvm.edu/wid)

Center for Teaching and Learning (www.uvm.edu/ctl)

We welcome wide engagement with this document. Please contact us (ctl@uvm.edu) with comments, questions, and stories about how you connect this framework with your work.

Inclusive, equity-minded teaching seeks to equalize outcomes among all students, no matter their identity or lived experience. It works toward a future in which neither identity nor social history predict academic outcomes. Every individual has multiple identities, and no single facet of lived experience determines particular outcomes for any individual, but disparities in education are real. Race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, language abilities, first-generation, or ability status can shape experiences for instructors and students in the classroom—sometimes consciously, sometimes not.

The Five Guiding Principles

A framework for inclusive and equitable pedagogy helps instructors think through sustainable approaches to supporting all students. The principles below involve course design, day-to-day teaching, continuous instructor learning, and identity-based reflection. Although this document is written with individual instructors in mind, we acknowledge that creating an inclusive teaching and learning culture requires action at all levels. Departments, colleges, and university leadership should consider how these principles play out institutionally.

1. Foster a Sense of Belonging for All Students and Instructors

Courses are intellectual, social, and emotional experiences, and instructors and students create the learning environment together. Both instructors' and students' social and racial identities affect how we approach the course, and a foundation of shared respect and trust is essential for navigating the complexity

and uncertainty that education involves. Instructors can cultivate relationships (instructor-student and student-student) and foster a sense of belonging by

- Creating clear and compassionate syllabi and policies
- Communicating that all students can succeed
- Structuring and scaffolding learning, providing resources based on individual needs and giving timely, useful feedback
- Connecting norms and expectations to Our Common Ground and the Student Code of Conduct

2. Make Learning Goals Clear and Transparent

Inclusive and equity-minded pedagogy depends on thoughtful, advanced planning, both in terms of writing effective and focused course goals and using those goals to connect all aspects of a course or program. Instructors implement this through:

- Backward design, a process of starting course design with major and meaningful goals and then designing assignments and activities that support those goals
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework which seeks to lower barriers for student success and proactively support all students
- Transparency in Teaching and Learning (TILT), a model for communicating assignments with clear directions and expectations

3. Lower Barriers to Success

Transparent learning objectives, coupled with a belief that instructors can eliminate obstacles to student success, lead to learning environments that support all students. Instructors promote success for all by

- Creating clear and equitable grading practices
- Supporting student metacognition
- Creating accessible learning environments and materials
- Adjusting courses over time in response to student performance and feedback

4. Cultivate Equity in the Curriculum and the Classroom

Seeking equity requires transforming traditional frameworks, exploring ways disparities in outcomes or opportunities occur, engaging with concepts of power and privilege, and lifting voices and perspectives that have traditionally been left out or marginalized. Instructors can create equity by

- Highlighting how power and privilege (individual, institutional, and systemic) are at work in the classroom and in the domains addressed by the course
- Helping students see themselves in the course via the breadth of culturally relevant course materials, concepts, and activities
- Creating meaningful and equitable discussion spaces that build community and empathy
- Cultivating facilitation skills that can address challenging topics/situations

5. Learn Through Critical Reflection

Reflection, involving structured attention to the ways pedagogy affects students and instructors, enables instructors to grow over time. Reflection can be an individual activity or a group activity. It looks back to ask what worked/what didn't in a given class. It looks inward to ask questions such as who am I, who are my students, and who do we want to be? Instructors can deepen their pedagogies by

- Reflecting on how their own identities affect how they interact with others
- Considering how identities affect classroom and learning dynamics (for instructors and students)
- Participating in professional development activities, within and across social identity groups
- Articulating and refining teaching philosophies
- Asking for and using student feedback during the course to improve both classroom climate and learning outcomes

Resources for Self-Guided Learning

We hope you'll join us at WID and CTL workshops and events. If you'd like to learn on your own, here are some good starting points:

- [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Writing Classroom](#) (resources from WID on inclusion, ableism, and trauma-informed teaching)
 - [CTL's Teaching Resources and Guides](#) (including UDL and backward design)
 - [Inclusive Teaching Practices and Course Design](#), by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Innovation
 - [Guide for Inclusive Teaching](#), by Columbia University's Center for Teaching and Learning
 - [Racial Equity Course Review](#) (U Penn)
 - Center for Urban Education [Syllabus Review Guide](#)
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This Evolving Framework for Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogy is influenced by:

Artze-Vega, Isis, Flower Darby, Bryan Dewsbury, and Mays Imad. [The Norton Guide to Equity-Minded Teaching](#). W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.

Hogan, Kelly A. and Vijy Sathy, *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom*. West Virginia University Press, 2022.

Venet, Alex Shevrin Venet. *Equity-Centered Trauma Informed Education*. Routledge, 2023