

Example Classroom Inclusion Strategies

Diversity Syllabus Statement

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Safe Zone Syllabus Statement

I am a member of a Safe Zone Ally community network, and I am available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

Preferred Name / Pronoun Syllabus Statement

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Preferred Name / Pronoun Strategies for the classroom

1. Remove birth/given names from your class records, roster, and attendance sheet. On the first day, call the last name, and ask students to introduce themselves using preferred names and pronouns – INSTEAD of calling roll using the names in the university's student information system. Start with yourself – e.g., I am Professor Burke and I use she and her pronouns.
Many universities still include birth/given names in the student information system. Using this name could accidentally "out" a student who uses a different name.
2. Pass around 3 x 5 cards and ask students to write down preferred names and pronouns. Could be combined with another introduction activity, e.g. photo + one of your interests/hobbies.
3. Use a syllabus statement (see example above).
4. When in doubt, ask! Generally, it is best to use pronouns that are consistent with the way an individual presents. If you are not sure, it is OK to ask politely and with discretion.

Gender Neutral Pronouns

More information available at: <https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/tag/ze-and-zir/>

They/them/their	Ze/zir/zirs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They finished the exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ze finished the exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They turned in their exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ze turned in zir exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That exam is theirs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That exam is zirs

More tips for an Inclusive Classroom

1. Examine your assumptions. It is common for people to make assumptions, often subconsciously, that others share the same background, perspectives, or experiences. We might be unaware that the examples we use are less meaningful to students from other backgrounds. Expectations that students share similar cultural backgrounds, economic privilege, come from traditional families, have parents who attended college, or are heterosexual or cisgender can make students outside the majority feel marginalized. It is important to develop an awareness of these assumptions and to replace them with inclusive language and behavior.
2. Avoid stereotypes. Every culture fosters stereotypes and we sometimes promote them unconsciously. In the classroom, particularly detrimental are the stereotypes that assign certain skills or weaknesses, abilities, or potential based on students' membership in a particular classification. For example, one might expect Asian students to be strong in science and math or minority students to need extra help. According to cultural stereotypes, sometimes individual characteristics are associated with ability level, for example a woman who dresses very femininely might be assumed to have less technical competence than male peers. Men who exhibit traits/behaviors that do not conform to cultural expectations for masculinity have reported being treated as being less technically competent.
3. Model inclusive language. For example, avoid using masculine pronouns or terms like "guys" to refer to both men and women. Show respect for differences in gender identity by asking students their preferred name and pronouns and remembering to use them.
4. Model inclusive behavior. Implicit biases often result in unequal treatment of students in class through verbal and nonverbal cues [Schnellmann & Gibbons, 1984]. Take an Implicit Biases Test online <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>. Reflect on the results with an open mind. Most of us have biases of which we are unaware.
5. (Schnellmann & Gibbons, 1984). Make sure to create equal opportunities for all students to participate in class discussions and answer questions. Beware of low ability signals such as asking women less challenging questions.
6. Use diverse examples. In STEM this might include a variety of applications that would be meaningful to different gender identities, sexual orientations, or cultural backgrounds, or that address different societal needs. An instructor might seek opportunities to highlight contributions of LGBTQ engineers or scientists or others from minority or underrepresented groups, giving appropriate acknowledgement to the individual's identity.
7. Include a diversity statement on your syllabus. A diversity statement should express your core values of inclusion, for example: "I am committed to creating an inclusive environment in which all students are respected and valued. I will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior on the basis of age, ability, color/ethnicity/race, gender identity/expression, marital/parental status, military/veteran's status, national origin, political affiliation, religious/spiritual beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or other visible or non-visible differences."