WMUx Thriving and Belonging: Ideas & Resources
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This document includes links and information shared throughout the course of the event.

Event Slide Deck
- [Thriving and Belonging Presentation Slides](#)

Key Reference(s)
- Pre-read on categories of classroom practices: [Classroom Practices Library - Equity Accelerator (accelerateequity.org)](#)

Further Reading & Resources
- [Disability Services for Students | Western Michigan University (wmich.edu)](#)
- [Accessibility Support | Western Michigan University (wmich.edu)](#)
- [The UDL Guidelines (cast.org)](#)
- [Home - Equity Accelerator (accelerateequity.org)](#)
- [Cult of Pedagogy - Unconditional Positive Regard](#)

Additional Participant Notes/Ideas
- WMUx Contact Form: https://wmich.edu/x/contact
- [Visit the Office of Faculty Development](#)
- WMUx Events: https://wmich.edu/x/teaching-learning/events#upcoming
- Instructional Resources: ttps://wmich.edu/x/teaching-learning/teaching-resources

Participants Challenges and Suggestions from the Session:

- **Identity Safety/Threat:** We want to avoid creating a space where people feel SAFE creating identity threats: it's all about recognizing everyone's diverse identities and basic humanity, and we offer a variety of lived experiences to the classroom. We thought using the checklist was a very systematic way to review practices that could help with creating identity safety: https://accelerateequity.org/resource/practices-library/ensuring-id-safety/

- **Belonging! How to create that feeling–? It's complicated..:** Avoid an "of course, you belong!" message; it's not as compelling-- students can feel like they don't belong for identity reasons or because they are

struggling in the course. One option is for the instructor to share their learning struggle, that learning can be complex, and the openness about that can help students be more resilient and feel like their work in the classroom is part of the learning and not a "sign" that they do not belong.

- **Student-Centered Policies and Practices:** This is about flipping the script a bit, away from "making teaching easier" to more of a "meeting students where they are" idea. This policy review module allows thinking through the policies in a class from this perspective to ensure the student is at the center of the learning endeavor: https://accelerateequity.org/resource/practices-library/policy-review/

- **Supporting financially stressed students:** Several strategies we found useful:
    1. Flexibility with due dates and assignment starts. For example, making all assignments available at the start of the term so that whenever students want to work ahead, they can, as long as they are in touch about doing so (so that the instructor can ensure they have the right info for working ahead).
    2. Be explicit about sharing resources like a food pantry or immediate monetary support from the department or the university with all students so everyone gets the information about those supports.
    3. Reminder about free or courtesy availability for textbooks so that students know when they can access stuff for free and when they would need to figure out how to pay