

CLIMATE Curriculum and Training Committee's
Resource List: Inclusive Teaching Practices for Graduate Psychology Courses

This resource list is intended to provide information and ideas for professors seeking to make their courses and teaching practices more inclusive. This list is not exhaustive and intends to be a living document that may be continuously updated by each successive Curriculum and Training Committee and by interested USC Psychology community members. Please add any new resources you can think of via suggestion, and the committee will approve or deny suggested additions.

Best Practices

- 1. Establish and communicate clear, specific, and measurable [learning objectives](#) and expectations**
 - Use [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) to determine the types of learning that will take place in your course and select appropriate and measurable action verbs for course objectives.
 - Utilize **grading rubrics** that students have access to.
 - **Provide examples** of exemplary work.
 - Provide **clear and actionable feedback** in a timely manner to allow students to improve upon their performance.
- 2. Get to know your students and avoid making assumptions about their prior understanding, both in terms of foundational knowledge and prior experience with assessment tasks**
 - Give the students an **anonymous survey** before the first class to understand what experiences they are coming in with. This may help to guide where you should start in the course and how much support you provide students for certain aspects of the course.
 - The "[Who's in Class?](#)" form is a commonly used tool for getting to know one's students.
 - **Ask your students about their perspectives** on inclusive classrooms with [questions](#) like the following:
 - How do you recognize that/if you are in an inclusive classroom?
 - How do you feel when you are in an inclusive classroom and how is that different from that of a classroom that may not be inclusive?
 - What does an inclusive classroom look like and operate for you?
 - What would you NOT expect to see in an inclusive classroom environment?
 - Throughout the course, **maintain awareness of classroom diversity** and consider how the unique experiences of the students may interact with the material.
- 3. Create Opportunities for Students to Get to Know Each Other**
 - Have an activity that **encourages students to introduce themselves** and talk to one another on the first day.
 - For example, the activity "What Do We Have in Common?" is structured as follows: Have students get in groups of three. Tell them that their assignment for the next five minutes is to find three distinctive things that the three of them have in common. The three things should not be related

to the program or obvious (ex: physical appearance). When the time is up, have the groups introduce themselves to the class and present what they have in common.

- Other ideas for inclusive icebreaker activities can be found [here](#). Some activities may require students to disclose more about themselves than others. Be mindful of the class context and whether disclosing certain information may make students uncomfortable.
- This is also a great opportunity for the professor and fellow students to **learn each other's names** (including how to correctly pronounce them).

4. Set Discussion Norms

- On the first day of class:
 - **Create communal guidelines** and/or discussion norms that will guide how students are expected to interact with one another.
 - Lead an activity in which the students list guidelines that they believe are important for having productive and inclusive discussions. Write them down (on the board or in your notes) and put them somewhere that students can reference. This will help to establish community, emphasize mutual respect for each other's ideas, and promote comfort with engaging in discussions throughout the course.
 - Commonly adopted discussion norms can be found [here](#).
 - Make the students aware that they are encouraged to bring their own lived experience into course discussions if they feel comfortable.
 - **Address how challenging classroom behaviors and attitudes**, such as microaggressions and offensive or alienating comments, **will be handled**.

5. Examine How Your Identity Impacts Your Teaching

- **Examine how your experiences, beliefs, and biases** impact the way you structure and present material and in turn influence student learning.
 - Examples of reflection questions on instructor positionality can be found [here](#).

6. Manage Potentially Emotional or Challenging Discussions

- Consider how students' identities may interact with the material and anticipate sensitive discussion topics.
- Begin the discussion by stating the **goals** and **learning objectives** that students should aim to achieve. If necessary, reiterate these goals during the discussion and ask the students to redirect the conversation back towards these goals.
- Be prepared to address students who become upset during academic discussions. See [video](#) from USC's Center for Excellence in Teaching on how this could be done.
- Recognize problematic classroom behaviors and attitudes in both yourself and your students. If possible, address them in the moment. If you recognize that problematic behavior occurred after the class period, be sure to address it at the next class meeting.
- Allow students to submit anonymous feedback after each class. When initially introducing this task, encourage students to indicate whether something during the discussion made them uncomfortable.

- Consider making problem behaviors into teachable moments by asking students to reflect critically on assumptions and positions they hold without attributing motives to their behavior.

7. Solicit Feedback

- **From Students:** Allow students to provide anonymous feedback on the course several times throughout the semester to allow time for corrective action. Ask specific questions about how inclusive they felt the course/classroom has been and ways they think it could be improved.
- **From Peers:** Seek out advice and recommendations from other professors that may have more experience teaching in diverse classroom settings or implementing inclusive teaching practices.

8. Reflect on Your Use of Inclusive Teaching Strategies

- As you are going through the course as well as after it has concluded, **take time to reflect** on some of the following [questions](#):
 - Which techniques or approaches to inclusive teaching were successful and which were less successful? Why might this be?
 - How did students with varied identities react to and interact with the strategies and materials used in the course?
- Check out [additional questions to consider](#) here.

Additional Resources

- [USC's Center for Excellence in Teaching Resource Center](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning Framework Website](#)