

Teaching Towards Equity

Shared doc rules:

- Feel free to contribute to this shared doc synchronously or asynchronously.
- ***Be a good neighbor. Don't delete others' contributions.***
- Remember that we're all here to help each other and our students and to try out new ideas. Be patient and generous with your colleagues. All comments should be respectful and constructive.

What structural, pedagogical, logistical, or other barriers to an equitable classroom have you seen in courses you've taught or taken?

Guen: Courses taken as a student / working environment as an instructor: no large prints/audio material provided (I am partially sighted) / little clarity over the procedure to get disability assistance / no help to overcome the language barrier.

Flavia: as a student, I remember not being given rubrics, or choices of assignments.

Betsy: Lack of assignment choice is definitely a big hurdle I remember from when I was an undergrad. One of the first classes I TAed for was taught by a professor who assumed that students knew what she meant when she assigned different kinds of papers (formal analysis, research paper) and it was very clear that students were struggling because of the lack of clear scaffolding and context.

What solutions can you imagine to help minimize these barriers?

Guen: I try to be considerate of all my students' struggles and disabilities and try to find ways to help them (especially seeking assistance from the Disability Office, if there is one in my institution) To help my students overcome their language barriers, I try to create comprehensive rubrics with "easy language" and I also write all the important information on my ppt slides (which I make available to my students) to make sure they are not missing out bits.

Rachel: As far as expectations on individual assignments, I have been creating very detailed rubrics in my courses over the last couple years. I try very hard to have these available when the assignment is presented but, at the very least, before the due date so that students can understand what is expected of them.

Flavia: Providing rubrics and expressing expected performance clearly would minimize my first point. For choice of assignments, also a matter of designing different and multiple options of assessment rather than the same old kinds.

Betsy: I have been offering alternatives to the standard research paper, and lots of invitations to students to let me know either in class or in private when they run into something that isn't clear to them, whether in the course content or in the assignments.

What things have you done or are you currently doing to increase accessibility and inclusivity in your classes?

Guen: I research (and try to apply the best as I can) pedagogical methods to my students' needs. I try to make my material relevant to their cultural background and to involve them in my classes with different types of activities in order to give each of them a chance to open up, learn, and show me their skills and talents.

Rachel: at my university, students with any kind of disability are encouraged to work with the office of student assistance, which then prepares a letter for each instructor identifying the accommodations that student requires. I meet with every students at the beginning of the semester to make sure I can provide/find appropriate resources or alternatives for them. I check in with students at least 1-2 times during the semester to make sure those options are still working for them or if we need to try something else.

Flavia: I always talk to more capable and experienced peers to know how they approach these things in order to learn different ways and test new ideas.