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THE WRITING PROGRAM
MLL Support Committee
PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY GUIDE 2022

Promoting Classroom Inclusivity Guide

Co-Authored by the USC Writing Program's MLL Support Committee*

---------------------------INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM VALUES------------------------

Compassion	Kindness	Self-Reflection
Collaboration/Teamwork	Community	Learning
Growth	Purpose	Consciousness
Unity	Awareness	Acceptance, Not Tolerance
Active Engagement	No Complacency	Support
Valuing Experiences	Respect	Understanding
Adaption	Agency	Open-Mindedness

--------------------HOW TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM------------------

Step 1: Acknowledge + Reframe

⇒ **Acknowledge conscious, subconscious, and unconscious bias** and promote perspective consciousness (awareness of the limitations of our own experiences and views).

⇒ **Actively challenge our assumptions** (about students' identities, backgrounds, performance, and capabilities as well as our practices, regardless of past perceptions of success or effectiveness) and encourage students to do the same.

⇒ **Challenge socio-linguistic hierarchies** (such as Standard Written English) and shift focus to audience and context.

Step 2: Model + Engage

⇒ **Create an environment where respect is paramount** and accountability is required.

⇒ **Lead with openness, understanding, and compassion**, and model how to do this for students.

⇒ **Model identity acknowledgements through offering a "positionality statement,"** wherein instructors disclose their identities, aiming to create acceptance of a diverse

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mosaic of identities to co-exist in the learning space.

⇒ **Show the value of diverse perspectives** and model this through reading and topic selection.

⇒ **Pay attention to each student as an individual**—to their identity and background, to their unique performance and progress, to their specific goals for the semester.

⇒ **Create spaces for quiet and introverted students to participate**—to speak and to be heard—while remembering that participation is not just about talking.

⇒ **Work to create an inclusive classroom community** in which students listen and respond to each other.

⇒ **Change from a "product-oriented" system/way of thinking to an "idea-oriented" environment.**

⇒ **Diminish hierarchies in a discussion-based class**, aiming over time to have students talk more than the instructor.

⇒ **Utilize silence more often in the classroom** to help 1) elicit more student responses and to 2) enable the instructor to respond thoughtfully and to assess/attend to their own biases.

Step 3: Activate + Empower

⇒ **Explore constructs of privilege** and interrogate the systems that sustain them.

⇒ **Provide opportunities for students to bring their expertise, languages, cultures, and experiences into their writing.**

⇒ **Create identity-based curricula** to build community through language inclusion and code-meshing.

⇒ **Utilize translingualism to demonstrate identity, heritage, and clarity of message.**

⇒ **Encourage code-meshing** as a world English and as a tool for equity in written discourse.

⇒ **Create class community values through celebrating diverse paths of language acquisition.**

⇒ **Build student confidence** by seeking to create assignments—both formal and informal—that allow students to use experiential evidence to convey points.

⇒ **Make multicultural readings and examples central components of assignments.**

⟹ **Carve out spaces throughout assignment cycles in which students can share their work** (small groups, peer editing, presentations), so that the multicultural focus is central to class discussion.

--------SUPPORTING APPROACHES FOR YOUR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM-------

Establish Your Own Classroom Values Within Inclusivity

o **Establish classroom community values collaboratively** and continue to reiterate the classroom as a community.

o **Focus on commonalities and shared values and goals,** when possible (you can even use a visual aid like overlapping and moving concentric circles with Discourse Communities we belong to--the classroom is a good start).

o **Upend the idea of rules and "right"/ "wrong" in academic writing**; talk about choices writers can make and their possible effects on readers; help students discover/hone their agency and voice as writers and thinkers.

o **Acknowledge that international students may want to learn about American culture**; explore parallels that may exist between structures of oppression and prejudice— topics such as race and class in U.S. provide a space for reflection and comparison for some students, and criticizing the government may be an uncomfortable idea—some students may not take it lightly.

o **Show that diversity is an asset by encouraging students to draw from personal experience and cultural background** in both low stakes and high stakes modes—blurring the boundary between these modes can also enhance development of voice.

o **Create an atmosphere of inclusivity that acknowledges the degree to which socioeconomic class influences a sense of belongingness on campus** and consider how this translates into action. For example, not making assumptions about access to transportation, technology, cultural capital, etc.

Align Your Classroom Practices With Those Values of Inclusivity

o **Shift classroom practices to student-centered.**

o **Consciously mediate discussions with established goals** on your part; these can be shared with students depending on your goals; transparency can be very useful at times.

o **Engage with relevant current issues and events** (This can be student-led).

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o **Emphasize voice as subjective**; promote the idea that the individual voice (that weaves perspective with authority) is more compelling than a generic, impersonal voice.

o **Create activities and assignments that have components of critical self-reflection.**

o **Facilitate peer work that takes into account difference, and the benefits of difference.**

o **Role-Play and take on positions of "stakeholders"** to promote students moving away from their own, often limited, perspectives (This can be engaged in Peer Response activities).

o **Model inclusivity through diverse reading and topic selection;** use diverse models of both published and student work.

o **Highlight audience, context, genre, and purpose to explore unique approaches** to class work and assignments.

o **Change punitive rubrics to "reward-based" ones and have students create the rubric with you** (especially if you pare down the rubric categories to be broader).

o **Create rotating small groups** so students get to work with/learn from different classmates.

o **Employ different forms of discussion and collaboration**; from oral small group discussions to "silent discussions" that occur through writing to collaborative group work on Google Docs.

o **Balance modeling practices with dismantling hierarchical classroom structures;** give students autonomy to boost confidence, provide opportunities for them to guide others and nurture their own writing practice.

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