**CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE**  
**Inclusive Teaching**

“While many courses do not (and many cannot) include content that directly addresses diversity, and many classes and institutions (regrettably) do not reflect a powerfully diverse student demographic, I contend that all classrooms can contribute to an inclusive climate. Classrooms are social environments, and all social environments are places where inclusivity happens—or fails to happen” (Armstrong, 2011, pg. 53). The techniques below are just a few strategies that instructors have used to incorporate inclusive teaching practices in their classrooms:

**Be Reflective**
- Examine your own cultural-bound assumptions and consider how they might influence your interactions with students
- Consider your comfort level with sharing your own experiences with diversity
- Reflect on how the experiences and backgrounds of your students might influence their motivation and learning

**Create a Safe and Inclusive Learning Community**
- Communicate clear expectations; include a code of classroom conduct in the syllabus
- Treat students fairly and as individuals
- Encourage multiple viewpoints in discussions
- Meet students informally outside the classroom for discussions; use office hours for this purpose
- Provide constructive and encouraging feedback
- Encourage all students to establish or participate in departmental organizations or school organizations that align with their interests
- Introduce students to the various available campus resources such as campus mentoring programs, workshops, support services, and resource centers

**Critically Examine Course Content**
- Look at your curriculum from multiple perspectives
- Include materials (videos, articles, case studies, etc.) that represent various viewpoints and are written/created by a diverse group of experts
- Discuss with students the ideologies and established conventions valued in your field
- Encourage students to share views and experiences related to course topics in class or in online discussions
- Be open to students’ reaction to the course material and give serious consideration to their requests for alternative study material that could be more up-to-date or represent aspects of student groups more accurately

**Utilize Various Teaching Methods**
- Vary your teaching and assessment strategies to address diverse learning styles and preferences (ex: individual/collaborative learning)
- Keep lessons relevant (bring in “real world” cases or research, host guest speakers, etc.)
- Incorporate “universal design” principles in your teaching such as wearing an assistive listening device and presenting material both orally and visually
- Offer multiple ways for students to engage in class discussions (in class, online discussion boards, or blogs)

**When Dealing with “Spark” Moments...**
- Anticipate conflict when dealing with sensitive material
- SOAR (stop, observe, assess, react)
- Acknowledge emotions (“I see that you’re upset,” or “I understand that this is a powerful topic for you”)
- Address any disrespectful behavior immediately
- Turn the situation into a learning opportunity and present it as such to the students
- Listen and restate perspectives, especially if one student is receiving all of the heat

**Assessing Classroom Climate**
*Take some time to assess the classroom climate through feedback from students. It is optimal to do so mid-semester so you can make changes as needed.*
- Explain to students that you are collecting feedback on their experiences in the course so far
- Provide students with blank index cards
- Ask them to respond to prompts anonymously
- Prompts can be: 1) I feel comfortable participating in class: Yes; Always; Sometimes; Never 2) One thing that would help me be more comfortable is: __________
- Collect responses and review for common themes or issues
- Summarize responses in the next class and explain how you will respond to the feedback; describe any changes you will make

For further information on this resource and more, please contact the CTE at: cornellcte@cornell.edu 607-255-3990 http://www.cte.cornell.edu  
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Notes and ideas for my course:

References and Selected Resources:


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