WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM?

“In inclusive classrooms, all students feel supported to learn and explore ideas, safe to express their views in a civil manner, and respected as individuals and members of groups; they view themselves as people who “belong” in a community of learners. Inclusive classrooms support rigorous academic work and deep learning by all students.”

“Inclusive classrooms are places in which thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and academic excellence are valued and promoted.”

References: ¹http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/teaching/inclusive%20classrooms/default.xhtml; ²http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1
5 DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

INTERPERSONAL AWARENESS

INTRAPERSOINAL AWARENESS

CURRICULAR TRANSFORMATION

INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The following slides are ideas generated by first-year faculty in a new faculty development session Spring, 2016

INTERPERSONAL AWARENESS

Making time to build relationships with your students.

- Learn and use your students’ preferred names.
- Learn about who your students are.
  - Have students write a short autobiography.
  - Have students fill out a questionnaire.
- Assign reflection essays about how they learn.
  - This could be discipline-specific.
- Require students to attend office hours.
- Design activities in which students get to know each other and share their own experiences.
  - Have students pair up and interview each other.
- Let them get to know you.
  - Have students come up with 20 questions to ask you.
Examining the ideas, values, and assumptions that you bring to the classroom. Inclusive faculty are reflective practitioners.

- Keeping a list of who the professor calls on
- Keep an attendance list
- Make sure you stay in contact with students
- Share with students your own background and formative experiences
- Be aware of assumptions you might be making about students, e.g.
  - Students will seek help when they are struggling. Students will come to office hours if they need to.
  - Poor writing is a reflection of intellectual ability.
  - All students from a particular group share the same worldview or have had similar experiences.
- Anonymize exams
  - But problems with tracking progress
- Mid-semester evaluation
  - Be open to student feedback
CURRICULAR TRANSFORMATION

How to change your course content to be more inclusive.

- Statement on syllabus about classroom and office as a “safe space”
- Sensitivity/awareness of discomfort that topics could raise—even through analogy
- Diversity of assessments for different learning styles
- Mid-semester evaluations -- opening up dialogue about how class is going, different teaching and learning styles
- Being clear about different skill sets that students need to develop—understanding that they don’t all come to classroom with same skills
- Making class a space where students feel comfortable asking questions
INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

How you organize your class sessions and design in-class activities.

- Assess and meet the needs of students in class
  - access: economic (make readings available online, don’t assume they have laptops), learning needs (notes), sensitivities to multiple exceptions (holidays, planning events)

- Diversity in scholarship
  - diverse authors, theories

- Diversity in classroom activities
  - group work- be thoughtful how to choose groups and partners; vary the way you put people into groups
  - writing, types of writing assignments
  - varied types of activities in class; varied instructional strategies

- Make sure the central story itself is diverse- not a central story that leaves others on the periphery. Use examples and stories that aren’t just from your own cultural experience.
INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Creating a safe and productive climate through your comments and behaviors.

● Collectively agree upon guidelines for having discussions on difficult topics
● During discussion, ask for “other voices” or “new voices” to enter the conversation; do not allow certain students to dominate
● Exercises where everyone is required to participate
  ○ Assigning roles based on student abilities
● Examples and material that speak to different disciplines, regions, and backgrounds
  ○ People have different disciplinary-educational backgrounds
  ○ Different educational experiences and expertise
  ○ Assignments that allow students to are flexible and relevant to their background and interests
● Liberating structures
  ○ Creating discussions that have everyone participate (e.g. pair and share; group discussion)
  ○ Poker chips or talking stick - structures inclusive discussion
  ○ Ask for “other voices” or “new voices” to enter the conversation; do not allow certain students to dominate discussion
● Don’t force students to share background
  ○ Normalizing experiences (e.g. language students talking about family vacations)
A SELECTION OF RESOURCES: WEBSITES

from the University of Michigan: http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1

from Vanderbilt University: https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/diversity/

from Cornell University (includes other links):

from Elon University (includes other links as well as print resources, many of which are available at Sewanee in the Center for Teaching book collection): http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/teaching/inclusive%20classrooms/resources.xhtml

A shortcut to Elon’s “What should I do more of?” practical tips and strategies:
http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/teaching/inclusive%20classrooms/practicalsuggestions.xhtml

an article from Inside Higher Ed:

from Harvard University (includes other links to tip sheets, such as “Dealing with Hot Moments”):
http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/classroom-dynamics-diversity
from the University of Missouri (with simple 2-page handout with helpful tips):
https://diversity.missouri.edu/learn/inclusive-classroom.php

From Evergreen State College (with extensive list of resources):
http://evergreen.edu/washingtoncenter/professionaldevelopment/inclusiveclassrooms.html

from National Education Association (NEA): http://www.nea.org/home/50031.htm

from the University of California, Berkeley (several links provided to other Centers as well):
http://mep.berkeley.edu/classroom

from the University of Virginia (associated with a large theme of “Teaching a Diverse Student Body”):

https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/the_mentors_dilemma.pdf
A SELECTION OF RESOURCES: PRINT


Books available to check out from the Center for Teaching or elsewhere in duPont Library:

Classroom communication and diversity: enhancing institutional practice / Robert G. Powell, Dana Caseau.

The art of discussion-based teaching: opening up conversation in the classroom / John E. Henning

McKeachie's teaching tips: strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers / Wilbert J. McKeachie, Marilla Svinicki (includes a relevant chapter)

Transforming classroom culture [electronic resource]; Inclusive pedagogical practices / Edited by Arlene Dallalfar, Esther Kingston-Mann, Tim Sieber