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## Diversity in the Classroom

Promoting diversity is a goal shared by many in American colleges and universities, but actually achieving this goal in the day-to-day classroom is often hard to do. The goal of this teaching module is to highlight a few of the key challenges and concerns in promoting diversity, and illustrate ways to incorporate an understanding of diversity in the classroom and beyond.

Diversity is a term that can have many different meanings depending on context. This module will not offer a comprehensive definition of the term, instead, this module will highlight two key areas related to diversity:

- Identify how diversity affects the classroom
- Provide practical tips for promoting an inclusive classroom

## How Diversity Affects the Classroom

Much discussion about diversity focuses on the following forms of marginalization: race, class, gender, and sexual orientation — and rightfully so, given the importance of these forms of difference. In fact, students come to the university classroom with different backgrounds, sets of experiences, cultural contexts, and world views.

Additionally, issues of diversity play a role in how students and teachers view the importance of the classroom and what should happen there. For example, assumptions about what a typical student should know, the resources they have and their prior knowledge are extremely important.

Students may perceive that they do not “belong” in the classroom setting — a feeling that can lead to decreased participation, feelings of inadequacy, and other distractions. Teachers may make flawed assumptions of students’ capabilities or assume a uniform standard of student performance. Teachers may themselves feel out of place based on their own ascriptive traits (i.e. differences based on class, privilege, etc.).

Identifying and thinking through notions of difference and how they affect the classroom allow both students and teachers to see the classroom as an inclusive place.

## Practical Tips for Promoting an Inclusive Classroom

While many discussions concerning diversity focus on talking about the importance of diversity and recognizing difference, it is equally important to move to the next step: incorporating specific tips for addressing differences and how they play out.

One way to form strategies for promoting an inclusive classroom is to use self-reflection and think of potential classroom scenarios and how one might address them. The solutions to such scenarios are ones that each teacher should consider for him- or herself, since there are no immediate right or wrong answers.

## Downloads

-  [Diversity guidelines international tfs](#) [1]
-  [Diversity problem scenario sample responses](#) [2]
-  [Diversity problem scenarios](#) [3]
-  [Diversity student needs](#) [4]
-  [Diversity teaching questions](#) [5]
-  [Diversity useful sources](#) [6]
-  [Diversity workshop handout](#) [7]

**Source URL:** <http://ctl.yale.edu/teaching/ideas-teaching/diversity-classroom>

### Links:

[1] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_guidelines\\_international\\_tfs.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_guidelines_international_tfs.pdf)

[2] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_problem\\_scenario\\_sample\\_responses.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_problem_scenario_sample_responses.pdf)

[3] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_problem\\_scenarios.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_problem_scenarios.pdf)

[4] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_student\\_needs.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_student_needs.pdf)

[5] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_teaching\\_questions.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_teaching_questions.pdf)

[6] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_useful\\_sources.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_useful_sources.pdf)

[7] [http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity\\_workshop\\_handout.pdf](http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/diversity_workshop_handout.pdf)