

# Ideas for inclusive teaching practice

Inclusive teaching practice involves embracing diversity holistically throughout your course and activities. It is a practice of noticing that involves deliberate self-reflection and continuous efforts to improve. It is a process of weaving supportive language and ensuring that your content is accessible and inviting to everyone. It is providing a safe space where diverse voices are both included and celebrated. If you have never tried to examine your course through the lens of inclusivity before, you may be surprised by what you find!

## BE WELCOMING

**Welcome your students warmly** and offer a personal video message. Give a tour of the course navigation, where to find things, how to submit assignments and a general overview of your classroom to help them feel at home. Invite students to welcome each other in an introductions forum and provide them with an icebreaker prompt that asks them to answer one of a few unusual questions -- Who do you most admire, and why? What is your favorite plant or animal, and why? Foster a community of sharing right off the bat but know that not everyone may feel comfortable writing and responding to others.

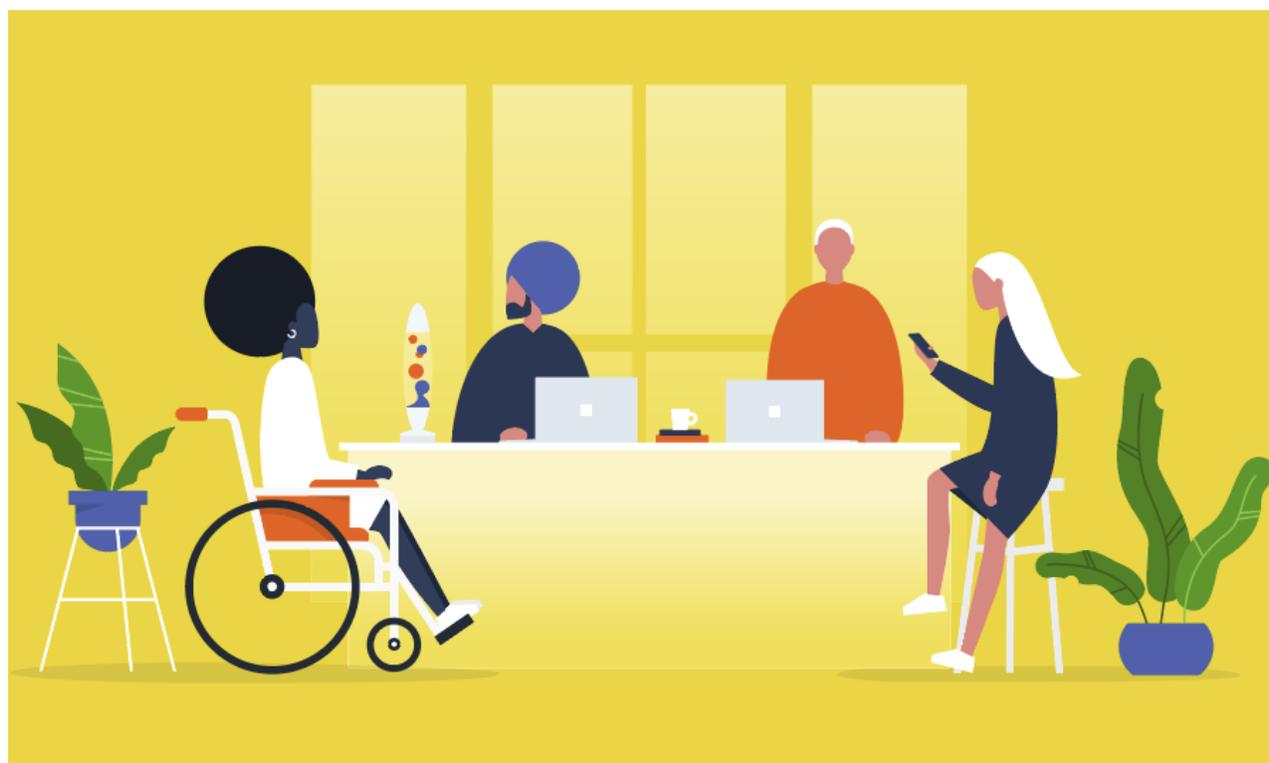
## ENCOURAGE PERSONALIZATION

Canvas LMS allows everyone to [set their pronouns](#) and [profile picture](#) globally and [notifications](#) globally and individually. Ask students to set up their learning environment to fit their needs and wishes best. The eCampus Canvas template provides a page of information on where to download the mobile app and how to set up the Canvas environment. The template can be found in the Commons section of [UAF Canvas](#) (login with UA credentials).

## USE ENTRANCE AND MID-COURSE SURVEYS

Consider asking open-ended questions in your initial course survey to invite students to share with you. What prior knowledge do they bring to class? What are their preferred learning and feedback styles? Are there circumstances that prevent them from obtaining the required materials? Is there anything they might share with you that could help you help them have a successful learning experience? Some students may hesitate or not know how to approach Disability Services Or perhaps the student is a single mother who works full-time and needs some occasional extra flexibility.

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Maybe they especially struggle with something related to your content, like math. This is an opportunity at the start of class to find out where struggles may happen and to suggest student support resources they might find helpful. At mid-term, check in to see how everyone is doing and how your approaches resonate with the group. Give credit for completing the survey but let it remain anonymous. Let students know that you may adjust your methods based on their responses and be prepared to adapt teaching methods based on their feedback.

### USE SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE AND POLICIES IN YOUR SYLLABUS

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What is the mood of your syllabus? Have a look at these resources when you next update your syllabus: [Creating a learner-centered syllabus](#), [Inclusive Syllabi](#), and this incredibly helpful slide deck [Toward Cruelty-Free Syllabi](#). If you teach synchronously, try [using agendas for each class time](#) to set expectations. Set clear course expectations and requirements in your syllabus. What does a student need to do to be successful in this course? What will students do in the classroom? What will they do outside of class? What are the students' responsibilities? Why are they engaging in specific activities? Ask someone to critique your syllabus for both clarity and supportive language.

### CHECK CONTENT FOR DIVERSE VOICES

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How can you integrate perspectives into your course content that represent the greatest diversity? If students do not see similarities between themselves and others in your discipline, they may not feel like they are welcome. Find ways to integrate a wide range of voices into your course in every module. Use guest lectures, current news topics or ask students to help you find examples to build a resource based on diversity for future cohorts.

### CHECK CONTENT FOR ACCESSIBILITY

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Does your course environment adjust to the needs of all your students? If you are hosting your course in Canvas LMS, you can rest assured that each new version of Canvas undergoes extensive compatibility testing for screen readers and browsers. Many details of the Canvas interface have been carefully considered, such as the page navigation based on international [standards](#). However, every piece of content

you provide must be presented to students using standard accessible practices such as [alt-tags on images](#), [captions on videos](#), [accessible PDFs](#) and [well-structured HTML](#).

### BE FLEXIBLE

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Finally, be as flexible as possible with attendance and late work. Provide fun and flexible options for high-stakes assessments. Perhaps you allow video or audio discussion responses in addition to text. Or shake up your term paper by allowing for creative presentations like a skit or music video based on the topic. This last year has been challenging for everyone. A little understanding and fun can go a long way toward engagement and success.

### FURTHER READING

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[How and Why to Humanize Your Online Class](#). A humanizing visual guide by Michelle Pacansky-Brock.

[Warm, wise feedback that supports effort + ability + action](#). California Education Learning Lab.

[Model inclusive language](#). Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation, Carnegie Mellon University.

[Inclusive Teaching Strategies](#). Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation

[How to Make your Teaching More Inclusive](#). The Chronicle of Higher Education

[Compassionate, Equitable, and Inclusive Assessments of Online Learning](#). AAC&U

[Demystifying trauma informed pedagogy](#). iTeachU, UAF.