



## Incorporate Active Learning Practices

*Intentionally select inclusive and culturally responsive learning experiences that engage students' prior knowledge and encourage them to interact with the instructor, the content, and each other.*

The activities you employ in your class can solidify the inclusive environment that your syllabus promises. By facilitating conversations that allow all students to speak to their experiences in an environment that is both safe and conducive to inquiry, you can further demonstrate your commitment to inclusivity in actions as well as words. Preparing flexible options for course activities, from seating arrangements to modalities and technological support, shows that you have taken your students' needs into account by planning activities that people from a variety of backgrounds can access.

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Remember that active learning practices do not need to involve extensive preparation. One example of active learning includes cooperative learning strategies. Cooperative learning allows students to help each other as needed and learn from each other's experiences while you can assist in facilitating conversation if a group is struggling. Variety in how you deliver your course content helps more students participate and boosts general engagement.

## Faculty Development Resources

[Student-centered learning in higher education.](#)

In her book, *Learner-Centered Teaching*, Maryellen Weimer contrasts the practices of teacher centered college teaching and student-centered college teaching in terms of (1) the balance of power in the classroom, (2) the function of the course content, (3) the role of the teacher versus the role of the student, (4) the responsibility of learning, (5) the purpose and processes of evaluation. She then gives some suggestions on how to implement the learner-centered approach. Using Weimer's five specifications, it has been possible to identify from the pedagogical literature several examples where college teachers are seeking to move toward more student-centered classrooms. This essay reports on innovations used by teachers across the academic and professional spectrum, as well as on their evaluations of their successes.

[Active learning strategies as a factor of humanitarization of modern higher education.](#)





This study examines the evidence to support the effectiveness of active learning. It defines the common forms of active learning most relevant for the University humanitarian environment.

The paper focuses on four broad categories of active learning strategies contributing to the development of the humanitarian University environment. They are individual activities, paired activities, informal small groups and cooperative students' activities and projects. The choice of this or that category will depend on the size of the class, available physical space, objectives of the class, the amount of time the teacher can devote to the activity, and the comfort level of the teacher with the strategy.

[Inclusive and active pedagogies reduce academic outcome gaps and improve long-term performance.](#)

We assessed the impacts of the implementation of inclusive and active pedagogical approaches in an introductory biology sequence at a large, public research university in the northeast United States. We compared academic performance between these sections with other sections of the same course where didactic approaches were used over a five-year period. We also compared this five-year period (2014–2018) with the previous five years of the same courses. Additionally, we also tracked the academic performance of the students from the sections where active learning and inclusive teaching were used, as well as the more conventionally taught (lecture-based) sections in future, mandatory biology courses. We found that the inclusively taught section of the first semester of introductory biology increased the odds of students earning higher grades in that particular section. The active learning section in the second semester narrowed the ethnic performance gap when compared to similar sections, both historically and those run concurrently.

**Here are some areas to focus on**

 <p><b><u>Lecture Inclusively</u></b> Break up a lecture, vary the content, and increase accessibility to engage more students.</p>	 <p><b><u>Facilitate Inclusive Discussions</u></b> Develop strategies to help all students contribute their knowledge, ideas and inquiries.</p>	 <p><b><u>Promote Accessible Learning Environments</u></b> Create an environment that provides access to learning for all students.</p>	 <p><b><u>Encourage Inclusive Cooperative Learning</u></b> Use techniques that can be effective at breaking down barriers.</p>
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*Adapted from: University of Chicago's, Inclusive Pedagogy page*

## **Navigating difficult conversations or “high stakes” topics**

### [General guidelines for navigating high stakes topics](#)

This link provides a guide as to how to facilitate lessons and conversations around controversial issues. Whatever the context, it is helpful to intentionally structure these discussions in a way that defines boundaries for the process and provides some degree of closure within the classroom.

## **Managing “Hot moments” in the classroom**

### [Managing hot moments in the classroom](#)

A ‘Hot moment’ is a sudden eruption of tension or conflict in the classroom. One might consider how to handle such a moment and how it can be used to advance student learning. No matter the discipline. It is prudent to be prepared for the possibility that a student or students will raise a controversial issue in class unexpectedly. This guide includes specific strategies to prepare for, respond to, and follow up after eruptions of tension or conflict in the classroom.

## **Guidelines for conversations around Social Justice**

### [Common guidelines for Social Justice conversations](#)

In social justice education, it is common to establish guidelines for classroom discussions. We examine the limits of these guidelines in achieving the goals of social justice education, arguing that they are not responsive to power relations. Rather than creating a supportive space for dialogue, these guidelines actually can interfere with achieving social justice education goals. We also describe our efforts to engage alternative strategies for responding to power in the social justice classroom

## **Further inclusive teaching strategies for a deeper dive**

### [Active Inclusive Teaching Strategies](#)

### [Inclusive Teaching Strategies](#)

## **Further reading**

Espada-Chavarria, González-Montesino, R. H., López-Bastías, J. L., & Díaz-Vega, M. (2023). Universal Design for Learning and Instruction: Effective Strategies for Inclusive Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, 13(6), 620–. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13060620>

Want to talk through these resources? Please contact [Georgia Madway](#), Instructional Designer of Inclusive Pedagogy.