

STRATEGY 1

Revise tone of syllabus

An inclusive syllabus can help foster relationships, create a sense of belonging, and support student success. This document can help convey your genuine care for every student's well-being and academic success. You can model respectful behaviour through the use of inclusive language and thoughtful diction, acknowledging that the classroom (whether that is online, in person, or both) is a shared learning space governed and shaped by all involved.

The tone of your syllabus (e.g., rewarding or punishing) has an impact on students' perception of instructor approachability and their comfort going to the instructor for help. The wording of a syllabus has the most impact on first-year students.

(-excerpt from UBC's Student Diversity Initiative)

Ask yourself:

- What does the tone of my syllabus convey? Is the syllabus welcoming, and convey a commitment to student success and learning?
- Do I include a statement of equity, inclusion, or non-discrimination in order to set the tone for the class?
- Does my syllabus signal to students that diverse perspectives are welcomed; that accommodations can be made; and that acts of intolerance and disrespect will not be permitted?
- Do I have explicit statements on my course syllabus about the Indigenous community whose land the university sits on?

Some examples of Equity & Inclusion statements:

[English Language Learner Syllabus Statement](#)

“Brown University welcomes students from around the world and recognizes the unique perspectives international students bring enrich the campus community. To empower students whose first language is not English, an array of ELL support is available on campus including language and culture workshops and individual appointments. For more information about English Language Learning at Brown, contact the ELL Specialists at ellwriting@brown.edu.”

Respect for Diversity statement

“It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to

improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups..”-[Lynn Hernandez, Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health, Brown University](#)

Regarding name, gender identity and/or gender expression

“Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.”

Territory Acknowledgement

“UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.”

NOTES:

STRATEGY 2

Include diverse course content & perspectives

Your choice of course content and reading lists give students a sense of what perspectives are included in the class. Ideally, a reading list would include authors of different identities and from a variety of backgrounds. This diversity may not always be obvious based on the name of the authors so you can draw students' attention to this diversity when introducing the course.

When teaching class material, it is important to use examples that are relevant to diverse audiences and represent different perspectives and experiences. This helps a wider range of students connect to the material, see themselves included in the discipline, and draw on their existing knowledge to contribute to the course. Be mindful not to perpetuate negative associations in doing so (e.g., always discussing African countries in relation to poverty, or gay men in relation to HIV) as that will further marginalize students who belong to these groups.

(-excerpt from UBC's Student Diversity Initiative)

Ask yourself:

- Why do I select the content I do? Has it been intentionally curated with attention to the perspectives represented?
- Does my course recognize the contributions of people who have been historically less visible in my field/discipline?
- Do I use examples that are representative of a diversity of students and experiences?
- Do I bring attention to these diverse examples during class? (ie. not simply include them on the reading list, but speaking to them)
- Do I encourage students to present alternative perspectives?

Tip: *Looking for research from Indigenous perspectives?* Try visiting the Xwi7wxa library (<https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/>)

- Make a consultation request: <https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/services/make-an-appointment/>

Other resources from Xwi7wxa library:

- Indigenous research guides <https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/2018/04/06/research-guides-at-xwi7xwa-library/>

- Open Indigenous content (databases with significant Indigenous content)
<https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/open-content/>

Notes:

STRATEGY 3

Include multiple forms of assessment

By varying assignments and the ways in which you assess learning, you can assess a broader range of skills and give diverse students different ways to demonstrate their mastery of the course content and learning outcomes. For example, concept maps can help students who are not as fluent in English demonstrate proficiency of the learning outcomes for your class better than an essay. Multiple forms of assessment also help to motivate students by better engaging them and showing them how the skills they are learning can be applied outside of class.

Other examples include:

- Use of flexible assessment (giving students some choice of which assignments to complete);
- Use of participation assessment (Are there grades for participation in your course? What does good participation look like? Does it assume extroversion? Power balance? What mitigation do you provide for dominated and/or introverted students?)

Ask yourself:

- Are these the best assessment strategies for this course *and for the diverse student population represented?*
- Do I use different forms of assessment, so as to not prioritize one type of assessment? (ie. and one type of student)
- Are there alternative or better ways to evaluate student work?
- Are there opportunities for students to provide feedback on how they are experiencing the course and learning environment?
- If you include participation as your assessment strategy, have you considered diverse ways in which students participate?
- If you use peer assessment, what supports do you have in place for marginalized students?

Example participation rubric

	Exemplary 9-10	Proficient 7-8	Developing 4-6	Weak 0-3
Preparation	Has reviewed previous lessons and may have questions. Has annotated assigned readings.	Has reviewed assigned reading(s) and has notes from previous classes accessible.	Has assigned reading(s) but may have insufficient comprehension to analyse language features.	Does not have and/or has not read assigned reading(s). Insufficient materials in class.
Participation	Helps create a good working environment; welcomes others' ideas, asks interested questions, and engages in different ways of thinking. Helps classmates understand.	Cooperates with group members and supports classmates' ideas and learning. Asks appropriate clarification questions.	Responds to requests appropriately, but does not take much initiative to engage with others. May be distracted or off topic in class, or ignores others' input.	Very little engagement in the class tasks and environment. Does not pay much attention to others' needs and/or contributions.
Attendance & Punctuality	Attends every class on time.	Attends most every class, takes care of missed lessons and tasks. Rarely late.	Irregular attendance and/or frequently late.	Infrequent attendance and/or often significantly late.



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STRATEGY 4

Consider the accessibility of your course

Accessibility has many components, including but not limited to physical and financial accessibility. When designing a course, you can ask yourself the following questions to consider barriers that might impede the participation of some students in your course:

- Are your class and the building accessible for students with mobility impairments?
- Are there washrooms for people of all genders available nearby, including an accessible, all-genders washroom?
- How much do students have to spend in addition to tuition to participate in your course (e.g., textbooks, field trips)?
- Are online materials designed to facilitate student engagement (e.g., easily legible font, description of data represented in charts)?
- Are your videos subtitled for students with auditory impairments or students for whom English is an Additional Language?
- Are your office hours held when [the majority] working students cannot attend? Do you propose alternatives for those who cannot attend office hours?

Efforts you make toward accessibility should be communicated to your students, such as on the syllabus. You may consider ways to solicit feedback from your students on the accessibility of the course.

You can reduce many of these barriers by following practices of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). You can read more about UDL here:

- University of Calgary: [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Guide](#)
- [CAST's Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) info pages](#)

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