TEACHING & LEARNING *for* DIVERSITY AT UTSC

Reflections from a Conference

Prepared by Teaching & Learning Services

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AT SCARBOROUGH

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, governments, educational institutions and corporations have developed policies designed to promote equality within an increasingly diverse population. Intended to preserve core freedoms and rights, such policies have had much deeper social impacts, radically changing the ways we think about human interaction. Higher education in particular has been profoundly changed: not only have traditional assumptions about pedagogy been reshaped in response to the needs of diverse student populations, but so have conventional assumptions about research–including the subject matter as well as methods and approaches.

Among Canadian universities, the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC) has experienced significant changes during this period, both among its student population and among its faculty. Although relatively small, our campus is among the most culturally diverse in the world. In addition, we draw significant numbers of mature students seeking an accessible place to study.

Recognising that the concept of diversity is both ever expanding and evolving, and that our own practice must shift in response to change, a group of partners proposed a conference on the theme of Teaching and Learning for Diversity (TLFD), which was held in February 2002 at UTSC. The product of a collaboration between Access*Ability* Services, Advising, Career and Student Success Services, and Teaching and Learning Services, the primary concern of the conference was to increase awareness of issues related to diversity, inclusion, and access. Aimed specifically at fostering a climate in which student learning would be enhanced, sessions focused on practical and ideological dimensions of the processes of teaching and learning at university. Participants included faculty and support staff from the University of Toronto and other institutions, as well as students and teaching assistants (TAs).

The purpose of this booklet is to bring together the substance and outcomes of the TLFD conference. Its two aims are to provide an overview of current issues related to diversity and to develop practical strategies for developing a more inclusive teaching style. Following the organisation of the conference, the booklet highlights four main areas of interest: the call for a scholarship of teaching and learning for diversity (including an overview of the main threads that unified the conference presentations and a summary of some key themes that emerged throughout the day), developing an inclusive curriculum, fostering inclusivity in the classroom using available resources, and undertaking teaching and learning assessment that supports diversity.

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Section I: The Call for a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Diversity

Difference is Multiple

> *It is important that I begin with my own language. . .*
>
> Eileen Antone, TLFD Conference, February 2002

When we think about diversity, we often think of key, highly visible, groups. Given the heavy focus on questions of gender and racial equality in academia since the 1970s, as well as the more belated concern to accommodate students of varying physical abilities, it is easy to assume that these are the differences that comprise "diversity." While those who are visibly different must often struggle against entrenched stereotypes, it is worth bearing in mind that obvious membership in a visible group may represent only a small portion of a student's identity–and that obvious similarities may obscure significant differences.

When thinking about inclusion, it is therefore important to bear in mind those invisible differences that shape students' experiences–including linguistic background, learning style, level of acculturation, and religion, as well as sexual identity, class, or regional affiliation–and that can account for significant differences among apparently similar students. Thus, for instance, two female students of Indian ethnicity may share little beyond family place of origin because of differences in religious belief, linguistic, regional, and cultural background, as well as their level of acculturation to Canadian society. Similarly, male Anglo-Canadian students may not necessarily represent a privileged "normative" perspective due to economic status, sexual identity, or learning disability.

Paying attention to issues related to diversity can have a significant impact on students' success levels at university. Feeling understood or personally "visible" to a teacher can influence levels of participation and motivation, particularly for students who must overcome significant hurdles in order to pursue their studies. If understanding levels of difference among students and being sensitive to the ways that diversity can affect them as individuals is an important facet of teaching, there are larger benefits to teaching for inclusion. On a structural level, teaching for diversity not only recognises and addresses social complexity at the most fundamental human level--an important facet of higher education–it also demands a learner-centred mode of teaching that benefits all students.

> "*What is of immediate importance is the fact that, whether consciously or not, students bring their religious heritage to class with them. Their views of cosmic and social order, their conceptions of gender roles, family, work, and so on reflect deeply entrenched religious beliefs and values, even if these are not coupled with the overt regular practice of religion . . . it takes a much greater intellectual commitment to recognise and accept the fact that many of the ideas that we take as given are not only open to alternative interpretation but may be considered simply wrong or irrelevant.*"
>
> Robert Campbell, TLFD Conference, February 2002

Teaching for Diversity is Just Good Teaching

In recent years, a student-centred model of teaching has been recognised as the most effective way to help students acquire the highly developed skill set we associate with critical thinking, including the ability to question methods and assumptions, as well as to grasp issues in some complexity and express substantiated opinions about them. Courses dealing specifically with issues of diversity are well suited to the development of critical thinking skills, because they require students to think reflexively about their assumptions and to understand how meanings are negotiated by groups. Such forms of inquiry force students to move beyond easy explanations and help them appreciate the complex ways that meaning is constructed. If benefits to students are noticeable in courses whose content highlights diversity, however, they are not necessarily a function of content. Rather, they may also be transmitted in the organisation and teaching methods of a course. In these terms, even very traditional material can be delivered in such a way that students learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and thus feel welcome in a course.

Far from representing something foreign to the university system, then, such outcomes are entirely compatible with the goals both of academic research and of a traditional liberal arts education. As Kenneth A. Bruffee suggests, the ability to explore different perspectives and to cope with complexity are central to the enterprise of higher education. He contends that if higher education does not challenge students' assumptions and make them rethink their preconceptions, then it has not done its job (Change Jan/Feb 2002: 11-12). Bruffee's point is reinforced by studies which confirm that diversity can enhance the learning experience of all students. For example Lee Shulman's call for a "scholarship of teaching"(1990), the original Boyer Report (1990) and subsequent Boyer Commission Report (1998), and our own Provost's White paper, "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Toronto" *(Academic Planning for 2003 and Beyond)* are all indicative of more inclusive trends in higher education. Moreover, diversity issues often have implications not just for teaching but also for research. In many disciplines the last twenty years have seen the rise of new methodologies and approaches that have transformed traditional fields or created new interdisciplinary fields such as Women's Studies. Even in disciplines that have

maintained a focus on traditional content, the idea of an "objective" perspective is often questioned, as researchers are asked to think about how their assumptions shape the kinds of knowledge that can be constructed.

Because this fit between pedagogy and the larger concerns that shape how we research is central to the enterprise of higher education, thinking about diversity can be an important starting point for better teaching. Not only does it recognise the often unexamined fact that the university represents a new culture to which students must acclimatise, it challenges the faculty members who are responsible for bringing new members into this culture to reflect on their own modes of thinking. In an enterprise dedicated to fostering critical engagement this is perhaps the best outcome of all, as it highlights the fact that thinking and knowledge construction are processes rather than products.

In this regard, though the experience captured in Gerald Gold's essay below is not necessarily typical, his insights have broad applications for all teachers in higher education. Not only does his work exemplify the desired fit between research and teaching interests, the classroom adaptations he has adopted in order to continue teaching suggest a powerful model for teaching in a student-centred classroom and for instilling a stronger sense of intellectual community. Prompted by the need to accommodate Gerald's physical limitations, students must become active participants in the classroom experience–and what begins as practical adaptation often ends by stimulating greater engagement.

Making the Fit between Research and Teaching: Lessons from the Classroom

Gerald Gold is a Professor of Anthropology at York University.

I focus these comments on events that began gradually and continued with my turning to a number of changes in my teaching and research as ways to meet new challenges in my academic environment. As someone recognised as different from my colleagues, I have had to focus independently on rediscovering how to teach effectively, usually without any institutional assistance. With the gradual onset of disability in 1987 I carefully disguised my differences from others, a convenience that allowed me to be like many others who separate their disabilities from their teaching and research. After I began to use a wheelchair, however, it was no longer possible to continue with a pretense of normality. My alternative was to incorporate disability as part of my everyday teaching, developing a new embodiment and presentation of self which students deal with in a classroom context.

My resolution to continue teaching and research categorically rejects options like long-term disability, an option that is widely used in university settings to remove the disabled from a teaching context and place them in a liminality which is neither retirement, illness, or welfare. My initial change was to modify the focus of all my studies from research with ethnic and minority groups to Disability Studies. As a trained field researcher, I decided to study disability through the eyes of others. I thought of this research as the social construction of disability, as I was researching how students shape their environments to live with disability. One limitation of this research is that I can only operate through the eyes and actions of others, and am no longer able to do the self-directed research that characterises most Anthropology.

Teaching with a disability has an important impact on both my students and on myself and I discovered how to transform some aspects of what I initially considered to be a liability into a resource. I use teaching materials that involve the student in living with and defining Disability. This means sharing the experience of books such as The Body Silent (by Robert Murphy) or Venus on Wheels (by Geyla Frank). In my course "Disabling Lives," I ask students to choose from a long list of disability biographies and to complete their own anthropological analysis using ideas from Murphy, Frank and my own experiences. I also introduce outside speakers as participants in my Disability courses, and for my own presentations I use adaptive technologies such as voice recognition software in combination with overhead transparencies and PowerPoint slides to prepare my classroom presentations.

My focus on the anthropology of disability is in a constant process of renewal, informed as it is both by my research and by my interactions with students, who help me to better understand the meaning of disability as they look at it themselves.

"*Teaching with a disability has an important impact on both my students and on myself and I discovered how to transform some aspects of what I initially considered to be a liability into a resource.*"

Gerald Gold, TLFD Conference, February 2002

Section II: Developing an Inclusive Curriculum

Recognising Individuals, Teaching for All Students

The idea that one does not teach "to" groups but rather "for" individuals is consistent both with a learner-centred model of education and with the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. One of the cardinal rules of teaching *for* diversity is not only that one must be respectful of individual experience but also that students should not be asked to speak as representatives of a particular group (Derek Bok Centre, Harvard University http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/TFTrace.html). This rule embodies the spirit of learner-centred education by refuting the idea that students' ideas are defined by their membership in groups. Students in general appreciate being "seen" as individuals, and students from diverse backgrounds are, in this respect at least, no different. It is not by accident that all "guides" to teaching suggest getting to know students by name, as this is the most fundamental way we have of recognising and valuing individuals.

Universal Instructional Design: Learning from Accessibility Advocates

One way of practically implementing the goal of recognising individual students is through *Universal Design*–also called "Universal Instructional Design" or "UID." Originally developed by a group at North Carolina State University to apply to the physical environment, advocates at the University of Washington and the University of Guelph have since suggested that *Universal Design* can also be applied very effectively to the classroom context. Universal Design allows a faculty member to consciously and explicitly think through accessibility issues related to course design, delivery, and assessment before the course begins and can help ensure that it functions smoothly. It is an approach that allows teachers to address problems of adaptation at a structural level in a way that facilitates learning for all students (please see the following *TIPS*). *Universal Design* can take account of issues of physical access to environments or course materials–including wheelchair accessibility in buildings or visibility of overheads– as well as questions of course content and design. For example, the approach focuses on making learning environments and tools as user-friendly as possible, and may include anything from classroom layout to webpage design to selection of a course text to handouts explaining assignments.

Most faculty have experienced the problem of having to spend large amounts of time explaining mechanical requirements of assignments to students at busy times of the year. In principle, the *Universal Design* approach can help minimise such difficulties, thus allowing instructors to focus their energy on helping students assimilate the difficult information central to most university-level courses. Seemingly small adjustments, such as making course information available over the web or setting readings and assignments early, can allow students to work at their own pace and reinforce the goal of self-motivated learning, while saving time for the faculty member.

As a factor in course delivery, *Universal Design* recognises that learning goals must be achievable by diverse individuals. It therefore makes flexibility central–including provisions for alternative ways to demonstrate participation (necessary for students with certain types of learning disabilities but also for students with different cultural norms), and ensuring that students are given different ways and opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned–and works to reinforce important information by making it available in several formats.

TIPS

Tips for Universal Design, adapted from the University of Washington web site, http://www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty/Strategies/Universal/

- Create a classroom environment that values diversity
- Put a statement on your syllabus inviting students to discuss disability-related accommodations with you. A suggested UTSC statement can be found at http://tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/faculty/accessability.html (see also p. 19 below)
- Ensure that classrooms, labs, and fieldwork sites are accessible to students with a wide range of physical abilities
- Use multiple methods to deliver content, including lecture, web pages, discussion, and hands-on activities
- Make all course materials available on a web site
- Provide different ways for students to interact with you and each other, in and out of the classroom (group and individual office hours, email discussion lists, etc.)

Universal Instructional Design: A Student's Perspective

Kelly Ludlow is a student in Life Sciences at UTSC.

I am a student at UTSC and am close to finishing my honours Bachelor of Science degree. In 1996 I returned to UTSC after unsuccessful attempts to obtain a degree in the late eighties and early nineties, armed with the knowledge that I have a learning disability and that with appropriate accommodations could succeed where previous attempts failed. My learning disability becomes evident when one compares my performance on measures in auditory media with my performance on measures in visual media. I process and communicate information far more efficiently and effectively in auditory media than I do in visual media.

I would like to share some positive experiences I have had in lectures and courses. These have helped to facilitate a greater level of success for me as a student with a disability but I am convinced that they would work for all students. I have had numerous courses where the instructor would use overheads during the lecture. These were sometimes prepared ahead of time or sometimes instructors would write on the overheads as they lectured. In either case this resulted in students anxiously copying whatever was on the overhead. My first exposure to PowerPoint lecture slides was in a psychology statistics course taught by Dr. Joordens. Dr. Joordens would prepare PowerPoint slides for the entirety of each lecture and make them available on the Internet ahead of time.

When I first encountered Dr. Joordens' PowerPoint lecture slides, I was immediately struck by the benefits that I would be able to derive from this lecturing method. I was able to download the lecture notes and look at them ahead of class time. As a result, I felt less anxiety about trying to copy down the projected lecture material. Being able to sit back and focus your attention on the instructor helps to facilitate a greater understanding of the material and a greater appreciation of examples used in lecture to clarify certain points.

For me personally, having the ability to read class lecture notes ahead of time results in the need to take fewer notes. This permits me to sit back and process the two sources of information. In the lecture, I can manipulate the information to fit into my schemata or my frameworks, helping to improve my retention. A question that one might be tempted to ask is: If students have the text ahead of time and have the lecture notes ahead of time, then why would they go to class? I would respond to

the question of student attendance by saying that having the lecture notes available permits all students to sit in the lecture and process the information through two modalities (visual and oral). Moreover, I would submit that an instructor brings the material to life and facilitates a level of understanding that cannot be gained through the simple visual presentation of lecture material. My statistics and symbolic logic courses are perfect illustrations of my point. These are subjects that are not easy to grasp simply by reading the lecture notes. Classes help show us where to focus our attention, how to isolate challenging issues, where we are most likely to get stuck and how to work through the difficulties. Students can make connections to the material that might be missed when reading. I believe students are able to participate more actively when things like the textbook information are provided early enough and when PowerPoint notes are used.

Just as multiple methods of presentation help students learn more effectively, multiple methods of assessment can help them demonstrate their knowledge. Dr. Joan Foley is a brilliant implementer of multiple methods for assessment. In her course on “Scientific Communication in Psychology,” we had assignments due almost every week. At first, I HATED THAT, but as I progressed, I realised that if I messed up on one assignment it would not devastate my final mark. I realised that she had built in multiple opportunities to succeed and multiple opportunities to learn from my mistakes. This permitted me to refine my skills through assignments that focused on different skills. One assignment involved writing an abstract, another assignment involved creating an outline, and another assignment involved writing an introduction. Each step built on the previous culminating in a 10-12-page review article on current research in Psychology. Tests comprised a number of sections usually involving multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and short essay questions. This organisation allowed students who were weak performers in one mode of testing to demonstrate their knowledge in a range of forms.

I hope that I have been able to share with you some aspects from the student perspective that are keys to greater success and richer experience in the academic environment.

Enhanced Curriculum Design: Beyond "Issues" to "Methods"

> *Technology is a wonderful enabler of diversity. Through the Harmony Project hundreds of students from across Canada have come to appreciate each other's perspectives, to understand more about each other's lives and to share resources for learning. http://www.harmony.ca/*
>
> Leslie Chan, TLFD conference, February 2002

It is exciting to participate in university level research because it enables the scholar to test and expand the limits of knowledge. The same should be true of the scholarship of teaching (Shulman, 1990), since university level instruction should push students and teachers to think about issues and actively ask questions about existing assumptions. If you begin by examining your own assumptions about what should be taught and how, you will probably see opportunities to incorporate alternative perspectives and model thoughtful responses for your students.

At first glance, the idea of incorporating diversity into the curriculum can seem strictly a matter of adjusting content. Thus, when teachers develop courses they often focus on issues or modules that can be added to existing curricula. While this achieves the immediate end of incorporating other perspectives, this kind of "add on" approach can send mixed messages about the value of diversity–particularly when modules are tacked on at the end of a course rather than integrated into the design of the course as a whole.

A far better approach is to link content related to diversity to the learning goals of the course. Such an approach moves from a focus on "facts" about difference to critical engagement with different perspectives, as students must evaluate not just ideas but assumptions. This kind of approach not only situates critical thinking as a key concern, it also places the student at the centre of the learning process. In these terms, the faculty member does not merely "deliver" content but must instead facilitate active learning by providing the tools and guidance students require to create knowledge. Thus, it is possible to engage with questions about different perspectives–whether or not a course is focused explicitly on issues related to diversity.

Even when content and approaches seem fixed, varying your methods can help. In other words, the *way* you teach calculus can make a difference as to *who* succeeds in your course.

***The following table on pages 14 to 17 provides some common teaching goals and suggests some inclusive ways to achieve them.**

Common Teaching Goals and Typical Ways to Achieve Them

Prepared by Teresa Dawson, Teaching and Learning Services

1. Common to most courses

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Teach a particular concept or idea	Clear presentation of material (usually oral and visual combined) in a lecture.	• Do your visuals reinforce the messages of your verbal presentation? Are they clear? Are they available in alternative formats? • Can you be seen speaking from the back of the room? • What are the light levels like in class? • Can you break up lecturing with small group work or discussion to accommodate different learning styles and provide an alternative way to learn a concept? • When you give examples, do you vary the types of people you use to demonstrate an idea? Something as simple as varying names typical of different cultures, giving women leadership roles, and mentioning same sex relationships can help to make all students feel welcome in a class. More broadly, do you ask yourself "What is missing in my class in terms of voices, perspectives, experiences?" • If material is controversial and presentation in a lecture format may shut down discussion you might try case studies (that present alternative perspectives) as an effective way to teach understanding of issues surrounding, for example, race, ethnicity, class, politics or sexual orientation.
Convey information (content)	Notes presented in such a way as to make material easy to understand and reproduce. If done well conveys structure (of course and class) to students. Can be accompanied by handouts, textbook chapters to read, PowerPoint notes on the web, etc.	• Are materials (such as class outlines and agendas) posted to the web ahead of time so students can review them in preparation for class? • Are materials on the web simple and clear? Are images described in text format? • Are textbook choices made early enough so that students who need books recorded on tape have sufficient lead time to organise this (it takes several weeks for a text book to be recorded by a reader for blind/visually impaired students or students with learning disabilities)?
Teach students a body of literature	Textbook/journal/on-line readings accompanied by students doing written summaries/essays.	• How will you teach students how to think like an academic and help them to acculturate to academic forms of intellectual inquiry and expression? Teaching a student to think like someone in your field is perhaps one of the hardest things to do since it is so intuitive to long-term practitioners. One approach is to use questions to guide the students' reading. These should be provided ahead of time in written form, allowing students' answers to then be integrated into the lecture and contribute to the building of knowledge in the course.

1. Common to most courses (continued from page 14)

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Apply concepts learned/ Find connections/ Problem solving	Problem sets/tutorials to practice and apply (in class or at home) what has been learned in lecture. Examples on the board, or for students to try on their own, or in groups. Modelling of relationships.	• How will you assign students to groups so they can work on a problem together? • How will you deal with any cultural issues that might arise as the result of mixed groups and how will you make sure that everyone gets a turn to demonstrate their knowledge if there is a participation grade?
Teach students to make an effective argument	Students learn to gather and present data and to communicate an argument effectively. Examples might be an oral submission to a "panel of experts," a position paper for a government think tank, a web page in support of a non-profit organisation, etc.	• How can you assist students who find presenting very challenging (perhaps they are nervous, have a speech impediment or are ESL students)? • What other forms of presentation might be acceptable? • For participation and discussion grades, can students participate in on-line discussion instead?
Develop necessary academic skills for success in the discipline	Building research techniques, writing skills, use of technology to make a web page, etc. into assignments for the course. May be in the context of a foundational or methods course. Often includes discuss-ions of how to avoid plagiarism and how to reference sources appropriately. Tends to be very discipline specific. Faculty may incorporate visiting the Writing Centre and instructional librarians into assignment goals.	• How can you encourage students to use all the necessary resources available to them to meet their educational and career goals? For example, how can you encourage students who have self-disclosed to work simultaneously with both Access*Ability* Services and other UTSC services such as the Writing Centre or Research Skills Instruction to maximise their ability to succeed in research and writing assignments? • Could you build a research and writing workshop into your syllabus or ask the Writing Centre to reserve a block of time for students working on your essay?
Engage students in critical thinking	Asking the right questions of students to elicit higher forms of learning. Common methods include: class discussion, group work, having students make presentations that respond to evaluative questions.	• Do students in your class need the opportunity to write their thoughts down ahead of time so that they can reflect and give more thoughtful responses when called upon in class? • What questions should they come to class prepared to answer?
Develop intellectual curiosity in students/win over the best students to be majors or graduate students	Done by being enthusiastic and excited about the material and its relevance in class, stimulating a questioning attitude, encouraging students to undertake independent study with a faculty member, or events that make students feel part of an important scholarly group.	• Can video clips or other materials be used to show students role models in your field? • How can you make it possible for a much greater number of students from diverse situations to see themselves in influential roles and career paths? • Have you recommended the Academic Advising & Career Centre to your students?

1. Common to most courses (continued from page 15)

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Test effectively	Multiple-choice tests, essays, take-home exams, final papers, presentations, and portfolios.	• Be sure to use multiple methods of assessment. • Break down the percentage of a grade attributed to each method or assessment aspect on the syllabus. • Be clear about your assessment methods ahead of time. • Throughout the course, give examples of your testing method so that students can see that you test in the way that you teach. This will also give them a sense of how you structure your thinking vis-à-vis assessment. • Be open to exploring alternative ways for students to demonstrate knowledge or mastery of subject matter by consulting Access*Ability* Services and Teaching and Learning Services for tips on assessment options.

2. Practical techniques

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Teaching basic procedures and methodologies (mostly in the sciences).	Often associated with teaching the scientific method. Includes teaching hypothesis testing, accurate measurement, appropriate ways to observe, describe and analyse data, and the conventions for writing up empirical investigations. Usually done as a series of lab assignments or tutorials taught by TAs associated with the course. After a mini-lecture, students are taken through the steps of replicating a "recipe" for an experiment and are taught to understand the relationship between the results and the underlying principle that was the rationale for the experiment in the first place. Also involves setting up and operating key pieces of equipment used to obtain data.	• What lab procedures might students find physically or mentally challenging? • What additional safety features could you implement that would benefit everyone? • How might these most effectively be communicated?
Clinical apprenticeship	1. Learning diagnosis and application in complex realities of actual real-world patient scenarios. 2. Suggesting treatment options.	• What might the barriers to personal interaction be? How can these be facilitated? • Can technology be used as a tool to help? How have other professionals achieved their goals as practitioners?

2. Practical techniques (continued from 16)

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Pre-professional training/ Experiential education/ Service learning/Co-op placements	Have students experience a taste of the real world, usually by applying theoretical knowledge in a real world context. Can also be preparation for a career. Can be job-related, a fieldwork assignment or volunteerism; can be paid or unpaid. If done properly, the faculty member usually undertakes to generate some kind of learning agreement between themselves, the placement and the student.	• Are some placements inappropriate for some students? If yes, under what conditions? What, if any, safeguards should be put in place? • How might placements be adapted to make them more accessible?
Real world demonstration of concepts often focused on the application of classifying techniques for things you cannot easily bring into the classroom because they need to be observed in situ or are too big. Examples include: soils, rocks, whole landscapes, types of settlements, meteorological definitions, climate zones, cultural groups, eco-systems, etc.	Fieldtrips. Students need to see first hand and in the real world certain concepts they are studying in class. The entire experience may be relevant– it might be argued that you have to see, touch, feel, smell, etc. whatever it is to establish its classification. The fieldtrip is such an integral part of some disciplines (such an established part of its methodology) that faculty may argue you cannot be of that discipline without knowing this method.	• Are there more easily accessible examples of the concept you are trying to teach? For example, can a particular rock formation be seen from a highway cut? • Could a virtual tour be an acceptable substitute so that all students have access? For example, so they can see/have described works in a foreign art gallery regardless of income?

3. Other

Instructional Goal	Some Common Approaches	Questions to consider (tips for good teaching)
Citizenship	1. Proper behaviour in class such as respect, equity and rules of academic debate. 2. The student's place in the larger world context and associated responsibilities of same, such as implications and ramifications for social problems, issues and values.	• How can you use your course and classroom to mentor/model respect for others? • How will you use the opportunities generated by class interactions to do this? • How will you teach students to make a controversial point effectively and persuasively but without personalising it or hurting the feelings of others? • How will you give and receive feedback with these goals in mind?

Learning Styles and Course Design

> *Most university teachers are auditory learners who process information best through lectures–but the majority of university students are strongest at visual or kinesthetic learning.*
>
> Susan Weaver, TLFD conference February 2002

When shifting to a learner centred classroom, teachers must begin to question their assumptions about learning. Everyone has a preferred learning style–it is perhaps the most basic level of diversity in the classroom–and there is no "right" way to teach or to learn. Yet, teachers often present material the way they themselves learn best, without considering alternatives. By challenging our own assumptions about learning, it is possible to address more students more effectively.

Learning styles can be assessed in many ways with many levels of complexity. For classroom practice, it is most useful to bear in mind the ways that students process information. *Auditory learners* prefer to hear information, and this group learns well in a traditional lecture setting. *Visual learners* process information best by seeing it presented in pictures, diagrams, or charts that allow them to "see" concepts. *Kinesthetic learners* absorb material best through hands-on activities, and often like to break information down into steps in order to digest it.

Few learners have one exclusive preference, and most students are able to adapt their process of learning. When material is presented in various forms, however, it can reinforce key concepts by allowing students to process information several ways. This approach not only helps students grasp course material more easily, it also makes learning more stimulating and enjoyable.

TIP

For a free instrument to assess learning style see http://tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/LearningFair/styles/learning_style_inventory.pdf

By thinking about learning styles when designing a course, you will not only make it more accessible to students, but also enhance the growth of students' critical capacities. Adjustments can be as simple as incorporating visuals into lectures to reinforce key points, or may take more creative forms–including structuring the course around activities such as group discussions or class presentations that require students to play an active role in the course.

In some ways, students with disabilities are at one end of a continuum of difference in learning style, forcing us to think more creatively about teaching and testing methods in such a way that these students enrich the class for everyone. The box on page 16 gives some sense of what to expect if students in your class need accommodations for a disability. In addition, the following is a suggested syllabus statement about Access*Ability* that can help to make all students feel welcome in your class.

Suggested Access*Ability* Statement for Your Syllabus

"Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible.
Tina Doyle, the UTSC AccessAbility Manager 416-287-7560 is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let her and me know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course."

Inclusive Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: What to Expect in Your Class

Making accommodations does not mean compromising standards. It also does not mean that you have to develop new approaches all by yourself. The following is meant to help you better understand the kinds of accommodations your students might need. Adapted from Nancy Rodgers and Martina Jordan, "Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities" (1993) http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/gateways/pubs/section1.htm. For more information check with the Access*Ability* Services at http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/.

In Class

- Note-takers–may be present for students who are deaf, visually impaired or experience difficulty writing
- Special Seating Arrangements–are often required for students who are physically handicapped, blind or deaf; students with attention deficit difficulties
- Written rather than Oral Presentations–will greatly assist students with speech difficulties

Tests/Exams

- Additional time–will be needed for students who have medical conditions that affect writing speed, experience fatigue, or require pain management; students with learning disabilities; students who experience extreme stress related to a psychiatric condition
- Oral rather than written exams–will greatly help students with learning disabilities related to print material to express themselves to the best of their ability and to convey their learning in the course.

Section III: Fostering Inclusivity in the Classroom

Classroom Dynamics: Challenges and Opportunities

For most students, classroom experience defines university culture more than any other aspect of university life. It is the place where students come together as a community and where their assumptions and beliefs will be tested, shaped, and possibly reaffirmed.

As a community, the classroom is subject to many of the same pitfalls as society at large. It will be comprised of diverse individuals who come to it with unexamined beliefs and stereotypes about other groups, and about the process of learning itself. At the same time, when properly managed, the classroom can also function as a crucible for change. Central to the realisation of this possibility are the teacher's abilities to establish rules that define exchanges and to ask and moderate replies to questions that move students beyond superficial responses.

Creating a Climate for Learning

In order for students to take intellectual risks and examine their views, they must feel safe and secure in the classroom space. As the central authority figure, it is important for the teacher to establish ground rules for class discussion, highlighting the need for mutual respect and tolerance. By laying out rules early, it is possible to address problems before they arise and to help students understand both the value of disagreement and ways to express conflict without personalising the response. An instructor's job is not just to elicit personal responses from students but also to help determine a critical basis for the response. Asking questions is an important part of the classroom dynamic in which both teacher and student should participate–when questions are formulated on an intellectual basis they are far less likely to be taken personally. Students should also have a clear understanding of the method underlying the thought processes behind questioning, including logic, method, and organisation. By making these factors explicit to students, they will acculturate more quickly to the norms of academic life.

Crucial to the creation of a welcoming climate in the classroom is the need to examine one's own beliefs and be vigilant about respect for diversity oneself, since even casual and apparently innocent comments can damage the classroom environment. By setting an example for students, it is also easier for an instructor to deal with outbursts when they occur and to set clear limits on acceptable behaviour to others.

Such an approach should be less about policing your classes than about modeling attitudes for students. This process not only includes addressing instances of inappropriate behaviour but also, more positively, helping the class to develop as a community. An effective teacher can also help establish positive relationships among students by encouraging them to get to know one another through group exercises before proceeding to discussions of charged issues.

Building Learning Opportunities for Students Outside the Classroom: Identifying UTSC Partners

Teaching for diversity emphasises a student-centered approach to learning; yet, the idea of treating each student as an individual can be daunting to faculty who carry increasingly heavy teaching loads. One solution is to accept that you do not have to do everything yourself: by building strong partnerships with services available at UTSC, you can help students become more self-sufficient participants in the university community.

Writing Centres are one place you can start. Less "remedial" in focus than most students and faculty realise, Writing Centres can provide significant out of classroom support for learning. For students, this might mean receiving individual tutoring in order to better understand the conventions of the academic culture in which they are expected to communicate. For faculty, writing instructors can provide useful perspectives on students' difficulties and suggest strategies for assignment design and delivery that help students generate better end products. Similarly, Presentation Skills Instruction and Practice Labs can significantly reduce the stress students feel when they have to present their work orally in an unfamiliar academic environment **http://tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/instruction/presentation/default.htm.**

Other Resources to Help You

- Librarians–can help design assignments that test critical thinking and assessment of sources; can instruct students about how to find and use resources and can give in-class workshops designed specifically to assist students with your assignment. http://tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/instruction/default.htm.
- Academic Advising–can provide insights into learning styles and common reading and study problems students experience at key moments in the term or a student's university career. http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~counselling/
- AccessAbility Services–can help instructors better understand issues related to diversity, and can help them assist students who have trouble in the academic environment. http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/

TIPS

Tips for fostering an inclusive classroom

- Encourage all students to participate in discussion, and look for ways to include students who seem quiet without singling them out
- Do not ask students to speak for a characteristic point of view, and discourage them from universalising their personal experience
- Make yourself available during office hours, by email, and after class to discuss issues with students one-on-one
- Demonstrate respect for students' opinions and cultural norms and require that they do the same
- Be conscious about the tendency for one group's experience to emerge as the norm against which others' are judged–and encourage students to reflect on this
- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for comments and behaviours that are disrespectful to others
- Never assume anything about an individual student's experience

Using Case Studies to Teach Controversial Material

If your course deals with particularly emotional and controversial content, one useful tip is to use case studies to help students understand the issues. A case study (or detailed scenario), with questions to guide the reader ahead of time, can depersonalise a situation, distancing students somewhat from the experience and thus allowing them to express views and be honest about their feelings (often "in character") without getting too emotional or hostile.

Using TAs to Support Diversity

Teaching Assistants have an important role to play in the classroom. Not only are they one of your best links to students, they may also be an important support for diversity in lab situations. To prepare them to help achieve your learning goals in the classroom, talk to your Teaching Assistants about the organisation of the course and encourage them to learn more about issues related to diversity, including methods, syllabus design, and grading techniques **http://tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/ta_services/default.html**.

Helping Students who have English as a Second Language (ESL)

Students who speak English as a second (or third or more) language (so called "L2" learners) can find some aspects of classroom learning particularly challenging. Making presentations or writing essays can be especially intimidating and require some thought on the part of the teacher. This is still an evolving field, and some of our current assumptions about ESL learners have recently been challenged as the following research abstract indicates.

Other Voices in Academic Discourse: The Case of Writing in a Second Language

Rena Helms-Park is a Professor of Linguistics at UTSC.

In response to the focus on a normative "voice" in much of the literature on academic writing, currently I am examining ways in which "other" voices may be integrated into the discourse of the larger academic community. In my research, I argue that the L2 literature yields little empirical evidence of a relationship between the features commonly associated with individualised voice in native-speaker English discourse (e.g., the use of first person singular, intensifiers, or voices and countervoices) and the assessed quality of L2 academic writing. In fact, some of these features may be of little consequence in certain L2 writing contexts, and if coupled with poor content and inadequate documentation of sources, might actually make L2 writing seem weaker than it is. In one of my recent studies, writing samples requiring students to argue in favor of or against an aspect of Canada's immigration policy (e.g., family reunification or refugee protection) were elicited from 63 ESL students in a first-year course. These samples were scored by three raters for "voice," with the help of a special Voice Intensity Rating Scale with four equally weighted components: assertiveness; self-identification; reiteration of central point; and authorial presence (including the use of countervoices). In addition, the samples were evaluated for overall writing quality by three raters, with the help of a multiple-trait scale. No significant correlation was found between overall quality and overall voice intensity; neither was there a significant correlation between overall quality and any of the above-mentioned components of voice. The results suggest that at least within some genres and at some levels of writing proficiency, there may not be a connection between the quality of L2 writing and the linguistic and rhetorical devices associated with individualised voice in native-speaker English discourse. Thus, it is entirely possible that *new* L2 academic writers would generally benefit most from a pedagogy that placed value on ideas and the reasoned support of these, as opposed to a pedagogy that demanded that students employ a different "voice" or adopt linguistic or rhetorical devices that may seem alien or awkward to them.

For further details about this study, see "Questioning the importance of individualised voice in undergraduate L2 argumentative writing: An empirical study with pedagogical implications" (co-written with P. Stapleton; forthcoming) in *Journal of Second Language Writing*.

Section IV: Teaching & Learning Assessment that Supports Diversity

The "True Test" of Assessment

Assessment can be a positive tool in support of diversity in terms of both the assessment of students' learning and faculty teaching. It is during the assessment phase of teaching and learning that we often find out what we really believe with regard to diversity, and hence experience some of our greatest personal challenges with regard to implementing our own diversity goals in education. For example, although many of us intellectually can accept that the way arguments are written vary from culture to culture, when we are faced with a pile of essays, it is hard not to go back to applying our own norms and frames of reference. Diversity constantly challenges each of us, and so, while few of us are truly comfortable with ultra-relativist forms of grading, understanding the cultural context of writing might help us to realise the need to outline what we mean ahead of time by "developing an argument for an essay" in a course. Most students can learn the rhetorical forms of other cultures, but the instructor's style may come more or less naturally to some. For example, the North American style may seem "very direct" to some students (and their parents), while the instructor may see this approach as simply "clear and organised" and "getting to the point." Understanding these differences enables an instructor to know where students may "get stuck" and to help them move towards the academic style for the discipline.

Assessing Student Learning with Diversity in Mind

Assignment design and test construction are two of the most important aspects of curriculum development, and they should reflect the basic goals of the course while recognising students' differing strengths as learners. Thus, for example, a course that focuses on fostering critical thinking should not test students on fact recall. By the same token, a course designed to examine different perspectives on large issues should not test students by expecting them to engage in forms of detailed analysis they have never practiced. Common sense suggests that all students will be happier and have a better chance of succeeding if they can expect consistency between the delivery of course material and subsequent assignments or exams employing that material. For those already sensitive to difference, surprises in evaluation can be particularly demoralising.

Bearing in mind the principles of variety that inform thinking about learning styles discussed above, students will generally do better if they are allowed to demonstrate what they know in a variety of ways. It is therefore better to assess students using different methods and continuously (including tests, quizzes, written assignments, and presentations) rather than only in one form and at one time. Always be clear about the breakdown of your assessment methods on the syllabus and allow students room to learn from their mistakes earlier in the course.

Assessing Faculty Teaching with Diversity in Mind

While we often think of student diversity when we consider issues of assessment, assessing teaching also provides us with an invaluable opportunity to support faculty diversity, as the following essay suggests.

Making Diversity Count in the Assessment of Teaching: Using Teaching Portfolios to Document Faculty Success

Teresa Dawson is a faculty teaching consultant and Director of Teaching and Learning Services at UTSC.

Teaching portfolios as a method of faculty teaching assessment developed in Canada in the late 1980s, but are now widely used across North America. They resulted from a grass roots faculty movement that no longer wished to be assessed using one global number from a student course evaluation form. The teaching portfolio, analogous to an art portfolio in capturing the depth and breath of a teacher's skills and development, demonstrates the range of a teacher's ability. It includes data from many sources (including students, peers, and the teacher him/herself) thereby allowing for the triangulation of evidence as to a teacher's performance. Most importantly, perhaps, the portfolio focuses on a teacher's potential and begins with a set of goals against which that teacher may be fairly judged in future.

The key distinguishing feature of a teaching portfolio, as advocated here (and compared with the traditional U of T "dossier" or "submit-everything-available" approach) is the reflective narrative written by the teacher. This organising narrative, placed at the front of the portfolio, is used to guide the reader through all the evidence (data) such as syllabi, feedback, student comments, etc. provided in a set of well-structured appendices at the back of the document. The narrative is often based on the identification of key teaching goals or strengths (e.g. "I encourage critical thinking in my students") with illustrative

examples of how the teacher implements them (e.g. through description of a particular class exercise) and includes references throughout to the associated documentation that is provided in the appendices (e.g. "Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of my class outline on Exercise X and student testimonials from the qualitative feedback questionnaire indicating the impact of the exercise on their critical understanding of concept Y").

Over the last ten years I have had the privilege of helping a wide range of faculty and TAs at three large research institutions in North America to develop their teaching portfolios (mostly for tenure and promotion purposes). In the process, I have become aware of the enormous value of teaching portfolios for promoting diversity. Teaching portfolios support diversity in two ways. First, they encourage diversity in the curriculum and methods used for its delivery and hence help us to attract and retain diverse students. Second, they help us to support and retain diverse faculty who feel that their non-traditional approaches will be fairly and effectively documented, valued and rewarded.

The teaching portfolio demonstrates a faculty member's commitment to diversity by capturing key aspects missing on course evaluations completed by students (e.g. revision of a syllabus to include methods and content supportive of diversity, extensive mentoring of students outside of the course, being a role model, participation in community events, etc.). As our faculty diversify and become more reflective of our student body at UTSC, inevitably those new faculty will bring with them (and we hope they will) new ways of knowing embodied in their research and teaching. It follows from this that we will need new ways to assess them and to capture and do justice to the exciting improvements they make to the student experience. The teaching portfolio is one very effective way this goal can be achieved.

TIPS

Tips for demonstrating your commitment to diversity in your teaching portfolio

- Explain how diversity fits into your teaching philosophy–especially if it informs the connection between your teaching and research–in the course of your teaching portfolio narrative. Refer to course syllabi, assignments, lesson plans, or ways you manage discussion or assess student work for evidence.
- Show how you have changed your approach/methods etc. in order to address problems in the past and how thinking about your understanding of diversity has helped you to improve your teaching.
- Consider publishing accounts of techniques that have worked well for you, or explanations of how teaching for diversity has impacted classroom dynamics.

Practical Resources

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Derek Bok Centre for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University.
http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/TFTrace.html

"Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Toronto." *Academic Planning for 2003 and Beyond.* Toronto: Office of the Vice-President and Provost, University of Toronto.
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