Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom

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Why is diversity important in the geosciences?
Questions to frame today’s discussion

• What biases do we bring into the classroom?

• Defining issues & how they impact student learning and performance

• What strategies might we employ to make our classrooms more inclusive?
What biases might students bring into the classroom?

2016 NIH study on how college biology students view classmates’ intelligence and achievements:

• Males more likely than females to be named by males as knowledgeable about course content

• Males overestimated male grades by 0.57 on 4-pt scale

• Females appraised students based on performance without showing bias

Bias & micro aggressions in the classroom

• “I’m almost guaranteed to have two seats next to me open, unless one of my black friends is in my class.”

• “It wasn’t so much that the professors made the class hard, it was the study groups and stuff...Sometimes you are not even invited into the study groups.”

• “One day I was standing in the hallway and there was this group of white kids talking, and they basically said that the only way you come to this school as a black kid is if you’re on an athletic scholarship or if they lowered the standards for you.”

Alexander et al., 1998. Minority Undergraduate Retention at UW-Madison; LEAD report
- Types of biases & assumptions
  
  Stereotype threat
  Imposter syndrome
  Implicit bias
  Microaggressions
  White privilege
Reading article
Equitable teaching strategies

• Allow students opportunities to think and talk about geoscience
• Encourage, demand, and actively manage the participation of all students
• Build an inclusive and fair classroom community for all students
• Monitor (your own and students’) behavior to cultivate divergent geoscience thinking
• Teach all of the students in your classroom

Equitable teaching strategies

• With the provided article, consider each suggestion and mark a:
  • “N” for never used
  • “O” for occasionally used
  • “R” for used regularly
  • “W” for something you’d like to try
  • “?” For any that need more explanation or examples

What strategies might you employ to create a more inclusive class in your next course?