

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

Grunspan et al., 2016, Males Under-Estimate Academic Performance of Their Female Peers in Undergraduate Biology Classrooms. PLoS One 11 (2): e0148405

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

- 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

Tanner, 2013, “Structure Matters: Twenty-One Teaching Strategies to Promote Student Engagement and Cultivate Classroom Equity.” CBE – Life Sciences Education, v. 12, p. 322-331.

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

Tanner, 2013, “Structure Matters: Twenty-One Teaching Strategies to Promote Student Engagement and Cultivate Classroom Equity.” CBE – Life Sciences Education, v. 12, p. 322-331.

Diversify your Syllabus

- Make a concerted effort to include readings from diverse authors & perspectives on your syllabus
 - Example: “History of Oceanography”
- Include a statement about inclusion on your syllabus
 - “[Our Department] embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We are especially committed to increasing the representation of those populations that have been historically excluded from participation in U.S. higher education.” –example from Brown University <https://ctl.yale.edu/DiversityStatements>

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