Incorporating diversity into your curriculum may involve including topics of diversity as a learning goal, and critiquing and redesigning your curriculum to accommodate the diverse learners in your course. The techniques below are just a few strategies that instructors have used to incorporate diversity into their courses.

Be reflective
- Consider your discipline’s ideologies & established conventions; how might students from different backgrounds think or view knowledge in different ways than you might expect?
- Let the answers to these questions inform your curriculum choices:
  - What are your own cultural influences and personal ways of teaching & learning?
  - What are your students’ cultural influences and personal ways of teaching and learning?
- Predict how course content might be alienating to some students
- Think about what types of students would do well in your course and why. Are some students advantaged while others are disadvantaged?

Communicate and model your commitment to diversity
- Include inclusivity and disability statements in your syllabus
- Build a safe space by creating ground rules for classroom interactions and be consistent when dealing with difficult classroom situations. Consider asking students to contribute to ground rules and include them in the course syllabus

Diversity as a learning outcome
- Include diversity as a learning outcome and make it explicit in the syllabus
- Refrain from tagging diversity topics at the end of a unit; rather, thread these topics throughout the course curriculum
- Connect course content to current events or local histories

Course materials, activities, and assignments
- Plan your curriculum with ‘universal design’ principles; for example, present course content both orally and visually
- View course materials from multiple perspectives; ensure they depict people and histories accurately.
- Include materials that represent various viewpoints
- Use a variety of learning activities such as group work, active learning strategies, and reflection
- For assessments, allow choice when possible; for example, allow students to choose the topic of a paper or presentation
- Ask for feedback on course materials; consider having students suggest course readings
- Design class time for facilitating student discussions that encourage sharing perspectives

Sample Statements

From San Juan College: Academic Accommodations—Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
If you believe you need academic accommodations due to physical or learning disabilities, you are encouraged to contact the college’s Disability Services Coordinator in the Advising/Counseling Center at 566-3271. The counselor can work with you in verifying your disabilities and developing accommodation strategies.

From the University of Colorado’s College of Education and Behavioral Science: Inclusivity Statement:
The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We
expect that students, faculty, administrators, and staff will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own.
Some thoughts on incorporating diversity into the curriculum:

“Inclusive faculty transform learning through curriculum content changes (Yuitt, 2003), integrating into the curriculum multiple identity groups (not just black and white) in the form of cultural histories and contributions (Banks, 2007; Chesler et al., 2005; Knight, Dixon, Norton & Bentley, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Osei-Kofi et al., 2004) and using culturally accurate curriculum books, and teaching tools (Banks, 2007, Gay, 2000; Yosso, 2002). They go beyond superficial multiculturalism (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003) that molds, distorts, and devalues the lived experiences of communities of color by incorporating multiculturalism throughout a course, not just in one lesson or at the end (Stone Norton, 2008; Tuit, 2003). Furthermore, they review the curriculum for hidden forms of oppression such as stereotyping, inaccurate generalizations, and historical omissions and make appropriate changes (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2006). They also recognize students’ personal experiences as worthy knowledge (Elenes, 2006; Gonzalez, 2001; Matusoc & Smith, 2007; Yosso, 2006) and introduce local histories into the syllabi (Danigelis, 1998)” (Salazar, Norton & Tuitt, 2009, p. 215).

“Because we as educators exert a powerful influence over classroom norms, it is important to make explicit those values that are most often implicit and profoundly affect students in our classrooms.” (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, p. 13).

“….a curriculum that exposes students to knowledge about race and ethnicity acquired through the curriculum and classroom environment and to interactions with peers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in the informal college environment will foster a learning environment that supports active thinking and intellectual engagement.” (Gurin, Dey * Hurtado, 2002, p. 336).

References and Resources:


For further information on this topic and others, please contact the CTX at:
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