

## **Three Best Practices for Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice**

### **Reflect on your role as teacher; be transparent**

- Explain reasoning behind curricular and pedagogical choices
- Admit lack of expertise in diversity issues and/or acknowledge discomfort with a topic when appropriate
- Generate trust and respect through language and tone
- Demonstrate cultural self-awareness; acknowledge what you represent to others
- Establish writing & speaking ground rules
- Set goals in relation to disability
- Have a vocabulary to address class proceedings; what's working and what's not?

### **Create an inclusive learning environment**

- Have a range of social groups/critical perspectives represented in the curriculum
- Allow discussions to be discussions. Listen more than you speak.
- Design assignments that meet diverse learning styles
- Have students learn one another's names (if a large class, maybe just in pairs)
- Allow students to have input in class goals. Collectively set ground rules.
- Create small working groups that facilitate cross-cultural learning
- Acknowledge, allow for cultural differences in communication styles/norms
- Encourage willingness to disagree that respects the person but honestly confronts "the view"
- Push the conversation when students hesitate to be honest; acknowledge difficulty/ hindrance of the need to be politically correct
- Allow time for cognitive processing in discussion (silence can be fruitful)
- Don't single out a student to represent a social group unless you identify a student ally ahead of time who is comfortable working with you to further the discussion
- Create mid-semester check-ins/evaluations in courses

### **Integrate experiential and classroom/scholarly learning**

- Define terms that pertain to social issues relevant to your course/discipline
- Use community learning and/or informal writing to bridge theory and experience
- Identify spaces/times for "the personal" separate from or connected to research
- Distinguish between social systems and individual experience (especially when confronted with: "that's not true for me/in my experience.")
- Value process time; create room in your syllabus to integrate information
- Make individual student growth a learning outcome for your class