What is inclusivity, in students' views?

❖ **Building community**

  o *"[It's] an environment in which each student is respected and embraced by their peers."*

  o *"If you are stuck in a bubble, there is no room to grow as a person."*

❖ **Being aware of differences in backgrounds and lived experiences**

  o *"Being conscious that there are other experiences on campus and not everyone is having the same experience as you…"*

  o *"Acknowledging that not everyone comes from the same background educationally…and not everyone had access to the same resources growing up, so people come in with different levels of preparation for this school."*

❖ **Encouraging authenticity and empathy**

  o *"We're talking* AT *people instead of* WITH *them."*

  o *We need to "see the person as a person and not just a clump of ideas."*

  o *"Be more open to understanding someone's views by getting to know them and where they come from and why they may have those views."*

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DISCUSSION IN PAIRS/SMALL GROUPS:

What do you already do in your classes to build community, acknowledge difference, and encourage authenticity and empathy?

The fear of ostracization is terrifying … of being the only one and a social outcast."

How can we help to promote inclusivity?

1. **Acknowledge the complex and difficult social dynamics.**
   Focus on promoting a positive affect—not just on preventing discord.

   Examples:
   - Include get-to-know-you activities *throughout the semester*- not just on Day 1. (e.g., "personal haiku")

   - Offer discussion/assignment prompts that invite personal connections.

   - Provide opportunities for students to make new social connections, especially beyond first-year (e.g., study groups, shared meals, co-curricular events, other?).

2. **Recognize the "unequal playing field"**
   - Be explicit about your expectations: *How should we read? How should we write? What cultural knowledge is assumed?*

   - Offer as much scaffolding as possible, even if only a few students need it (e.g., supplemental materials, study groups, review sheets, multiple forms of assessment).

   - Encourage use of other support resources (e.g., CTLR).

   "Leaning into discomfort plays a role in inclusivity. Just because something is an awkward moment… We shouldn't shy away from it, but instead lean into that discomfort with a baseline of an open mind."

3. **Create the conditions for students to engage discomfort productively**
   - Be explicit about goals.
     (e.g., to further understanding—not to change minds)
   - Discuss some ground rules.
     (e.g., How do we "call out" something without shaming the person?)
   - Consider the setup for the discussion/engagement.
     (e.g., Can we all see one another? What can help us "settle in"?)

   - Use varied groupings (pair, small group, large group, online) and question types.
   - When conflict/tension emerges, **acknowledge it,** even if you can't "fix' it.
   - Invite student feedback and suggestions along the way.

4. **Consider which perspectives might be missing from your course content**
   - What perspectives are represented? Who/what is left out?
   - Who is likely to feel that they "belong" in this class, because of the topic/material?
   - Who might be put "on the spot"?

   In case you're curious...
   https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/06/18/middlebury-professor-surveys-student-attitudes-about-free-speech-opinion