Universal Design for More Inclusive Pedagogy: A Checklist

Adapted from Chickering & Gamson (1987) & Center for Teaching Excellence at Cornell University

1. Create a welcoming, respectful learning environment	Now	Future
Create introductory exercises that are personable and related to course content		
Include a syllabus statement that fosters an inclusive learning environment		
Learn students' names		
Let students know from the outset that the environment is inclusive and that all voices will be heard		
As a class, establish ground rules for discussion. Revisit them throughout the term.		
In addition to letting students know what you expect of them, let them brainstorm expectations for you as a teacher		
Encourage questions and use sufficient wait time		
Positively acknowledge student participation		
Use a "Student Information Sheet" to help you get to know your students		
2. Address essential course components (use backward design)	**Now**	**Future**
Provide class sessions and assignments that align with intended learning outcomes, and be explicit about that alignment		
Discuss with students the components of the course that build toward subsequent courses, or toward more complex parts of this course		
3. Communicate clear and high expectations; provide constructive feedback	**Now**	**Future**
Post comprehensive, accessible, user-friendly syllabus online prior to start of course		
Share your teaching style and philosophy before the start of the term		
Provide clear written and audio explanations of course assignments online		
Post grading rubrics of all assignments online at the beginning of class, and refer to them as the assignment due dates approach		
Start each class session with an overview of the day's objectives		
Ask students to match course objectives with course content, lectures, and assignments		
Discuss in class general overall strengths and weaknesses of completed assignments		
Ask students to complete structured peer evaluations for group members when assigning group work		
Foster a growth mindset: Encourage students to submit assignments prior to due date for teacher and peer review before resubmitting revised assignment.		
When giving critical feedback, focus on the effort that stands between their current level of proficiency and a higher level ('You can't do this *yet,* but if you try… you will')		
Provide students with information regarding how to access support services such as tutoring, writing center, mental health services, disability services, and other out-of-class assistance		
Ask students to do a one-minute paper at the end of class to outline what they learned, indicate when they were the most/least engaged, and provide comments about the day's class		
Request feedback from students on the course/instruction throughout the semester		

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4. Providing natural supports (including technology) for learning to enhance opportunities for all learners	Now	Future
Post all reading materials (except text books) and website URLs online		
Post some sample student assignments (e.g., book reviews, movie reviews, etc.) on course site so that other students may review them		
Provide all handouts and evaluations in 12-14 pt sans serif font		
Provide all slides & handouts in Universal Design format (i.e., few words per slide, san serif font, large bold print) with no more than two-three slides per page for handouts		
Be available to students via email, phone, online course site, and in person for assistance, and be clear about the response time they can expect from you		
Consider the cost of textbooks; if possible, use original sources that can be bought at second-hand book stores, create your own packet of readings, or mention if books are available in library		
Ensure that field trips, labs, and educational opportunities outside of the classroom are accessible to all students, physically, financially, and schedule-wise		
Allow for ample time for exams and assignments		
5. Use teaching methods & content that consider diverse learning preferences, abilities, ways of knowing, and previous experience and background knowledge	Now	Future
Utilize a constructivist approach to teaching by providing information and having students construct meaning from new information based on prior knowledge and experiences		
Incorporate opportunities for students to reflect on and share their own backgrounds and experiences in relation to course material		
Utilize multi-modal teaching techniques including lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, think-pair-share, role playing, case studies, games, in-class writing exercises, guest speakers, panels, movies, videos, podcasts		
Use captioned videos, DVDs, and video streams		
Include course materials representing a diverse set of perspectives and experiences		
6. Offer multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge	Now	Future
Offer students the option of papers, presentations, PowerPoints, online presentations, team assignments, poster sessions, role playing, websites, games, exercises, case studies, online discussions, individual and group projects		
7. Promote belongingness	Now	Future
Be available and encourage conversation and assistance via email, phone, discussion board, chatrooms, and in person		
Establish learning communities/peer-to-peer relationships in the course to provide students with classmate resources		