**UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN THE CLASSROOM**

All of these practices can be adapted to an online environment as well.

### CLASS CLIMATE

Adopt practices that reflect high values with respect to both diversity and inclusiveness.

Practice *Community, Compassion, Justice, Partnership*, and the *Search for Truth*.

- **Welcome everyone.**
  - Create a welcoming environment for all students.
  - Encourage the sharing of multiple perspectives.
  - Demonstrate and demand mutual respect.

- **Avoid stereotyping.**
  - Offer instruction and support based on student performance and requests.
  - Don’t make assumptions that members of certain groups (e.g., students with certain types of disabilities or from a specific racial or ethnic group) will automatically do well or poorly or require certain types of assistance.

- **Be approachable and available.**
  - Learn students' names.
  - Welcome questions in and outside of class, seek out a student's point of view, and respond patiently.
  - Maintain regular office hours, encourage students to meet with you, and offer alternatives when student schedules conflict with those hours.
  - Consider making a student-instructor meeting a course requirement.
  - Consider using online communication tools as well.
    - Edgewood College currently supports Adobe Connect but other online communication tools work as well.

- **Motivate all students.**
  - Use teaching methods and materials that are motivating and relevant to students with diverse characteristics, such as age, gender, and culture.

- **Address individual needs in an inclusive manner.**
  - Both on the syllabus and in class, invite students to meet with you to discuss disability-related accommodations and other learning needs.
  - Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any student by drawing undue attention to a difference (e.g., disability) or sharing private information (e.g., a specific student’s need for an accommodation) unless the student brings up the topic in front of others.
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✓ Remind students of their role in making requests early and contributing to a positive relationship.
✓ Communicate effectively with any co-instructors, teaching assistants, guest lecturers about student accommodations. However, consider FERPA and respect the students’ rights to privacy in how you share this information.
✓ There are many hidden learning disabilities that students’ may not share with you, or even be aware they have. Consider this when designing your curriculum.

INTERACTION

Encourage regular and effective interactions between you and your students and ensure that the communication methods you use are accessible to all participants.

__ Promote effective communication.
✓ Employ interactive teaching techniques.
✓ Face the class, speak clearly; consider using a microphone in larger classrooms.
✓ Make eye contact with students.
✓ Supplement in-person contact with online communication in Blackboard.
✓ Use straightforward language, avoiding unnecessary jargon and complexity.
✓ Use student names in electronic, written, and in-person communications.

__ Make interactions accessible to all participants.
✓ Use a telephone conference only if all students can participate, given their abilities to hear, speak, and meet, and their schedule constraints.
✓ Require that small groups communicate in ways that are accessible to all group members.

__ Encourage cooperative learning.
✓ Assign group work where learners must support each other and they employ different skills and roles.
✓ Encourage different ways for students to interact with each other (e.g., in-class discussion, group work, and Internet-based communications).
✓ Insist that all students participate; facilitating their participation as needed.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS AND PRODUCTS

Ensure that facilities, activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to and usable by all students, and that all potential student characteristics are addressed in safety considerations.

__ Ensure physical access to facilities.
✓ Use classrooms, labs, workspaces, and fieldwork sites that are accessible to individuals with a wide range of physical abilities.
✓ Use only online tools that you know work across all computer operating systems and a broad range of browsers.

__ Arrange instructional spaces to maximize inclusion and comfort.
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✓ Arrange seating to encourage participation, giving each student a clear line of sight to the instructor and visual aids and allowing room for wheelchairs, personal assistants, sign language interpreters, and assistive technology.
✓ Minimize distractions for students with a range of attention abilities (e.g., put small groups in quiet work areas).
✓ Work within constraints to make the environment as inclusive as possible.
✓ Encourage administrators to apply UD principles in facility design and renovation, and to all technology purchases.

__ Ensure that everyone can use equipment and materials.
✓ Minimize nonessential physical effort and provide options for operation of equipment, handles, locks, cabinets, and drawers from different heights, with different physical abilities, with one hand, and by right- and left-handed students.
✓ Use large print to clearly label controls on lab equipment and other educational aids, using symbols as well as words.
✓ Provide straightforward, simple oral and printed directions for operation and use.

__ Ensure safety.
✓ Consider the impact of specific disabilities in emergency situations.
✓ Develop procedures for all potential students, including those who are blind, deaf, or wheelchair users. Include students in developing and testing of these procedures.
✓ Label safety equipment in simple terms, in large print, and in a location viewable from a variety of angles.
✓ Provide written and oral safety instructions.
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DELIVERY METHODS

Use multiple, accessible instructional methods that are accessible to all learners.

__ Select flexible curriculum.
✓ Choose textbooks and other curriculum materials that address the needs of students with diverse abilities, interests, learning styles, preferences, and other characteristics.
✓ Use curriculum materials that are well organized, emphasize important points, provide references for gaining background knowledge, include indices and glossaries, and have chapter outlines, study questions, and practice exercises.
✓ Consider technology-based materials in Blackboard that provide feedback, background information, vocabulary, and other supports based on student responses.
   o The Grade Center in Blackboard is a powerful feedback tool with more capability than many realize.

__ Make content relevant.
✓ Put learning in context.
✓ Incorporate multiple examples and perspectives to make specific concepts relevant to individuals with diverse characteristics such as age, ability, gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and interests.

__ Provide cognitive supports.
✓ Summarize major points, give background and contextual information, and prompt students.
✓ Provide scaffolding tools (e.g., outlines, class notes, summaries, study guides, copies of projected materials with room for note-taking) and other cognitive supports in both printed and text-based electronic formats.
✓ Provide options for gaining background information, vocabulary, and practice.

__ Provide multiple ways to gain knowledge.
✓ Use multiple modes to deliver content and, when possible, allow students to choose from multiple options for learning content.
✓ Options to consider include lectures, collaborative learning, small group discussions, hands-on activities, Internet based resources, educational software, and fieldwork.

__ Deliver instructions clearly and in multiple ways.
✓ Provide instructions both orally and in printed form.
✓ Have students summarize instructions to ensure understanding.

__ Make each teaching method accessible to all students.
✓ Consider a wide range of abilities, interests, learning styles, and previous experiences when implementing each instructional method to ensure the participation of all students. For example, speak content presented visually.
✓ Provide the same means of participation to all students.

__ Use large visual and tactile aids.
✓ Use manipulatives to demonstrate content.
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✓ Make visual aids as large as reasonable (e.g., use large, bold fonts on uncluttered overhead displays and use a computer to enlarge microscope images)

INFORMATION RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY

Ensure that course materials, notes, and other information resources are engaging, flexible, and accessible for all students. Avoid using anything that is cool or new until you verify it will work for a broad range of students.

__ Select materials early.
✓ Choose printed materials and prepare a syllabus early to allow students the option of beginning to read materials and work on assignments before the course begins.
✓ Allow adequate time to arrange for electronic and other alternative formats to be developed or obtained.

__ Provide all materials in accessible formats.
✓ Select or create materials that are universally designed.
✓ Use textbooks that are available in an accessible electronic format.
✓ Provide the syllabus and other teacher-created materials in a text-based, electronic format and place in Blackboard. The Syllabus Template created for Online Courses at Edgewood College is a great starting point.
✓ Use captioned videos and provide transcriptions for audio presentations. Dragon Naturally Speaking is great tool if you prefer talking to type. This is an excellent voice to text tool for creating transcripts of your audio.
✓ Apply accessibility standards to websites and Blackboard classes.

__ Accommodate a variety of reading levels and language skills, when appropriate, and given the goals of the course.
✓ Present content in a logical, straightforward manner and in an order that reflects its importance.
✓ Avoid unnecessary jargon and complexity and define new terms when they are presented.
✓ Create materials in simple, intuitive formats.

__ Ensure the availability of appropriate assistive technology.
✓ If computer or science labs are used, ensure that assistive technology for students with disabilities is available or can be readily acquired.

For specific guidelines for online content, consult the video and publication Real Connections: Making Distance Learning Accessible to Everyone, and the publication Equal Access: Universal Design of Distance Learning. Both articles are from the University of Washington, and early leader in accessibility issues related to classroom online learning.

FEEDBACK

Provide specific feedback on a regular basis.

__ Provide regular feedback and corrective opportunities.
✓ Allow students to turn in parts of large projects for feedback before the final project is due.
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✓ Give students resubmission options to correct errors in assignments or exams.
✓ Arrange for peer feedback when appropriate.
✓ Solicit feedback from students regarding course effectiveness.

ASSESSMENT

Regularly assess student progress using multiple accessible methods and tools, and adjust instruction accordingly.

__ Set clear expectations.
✓ Keep academic standards consistent for all students, including those who require accommodations. Making accommodations does require the softening of the course.
✓ Provide a syllabus with clear statements of course expectations, assignment descriptions, and deadlines, as well as assessment methods and dates.
  ○ Instead of multiple tables or lists for each of the above, consider doing this is one table that allows students (and you) to visually track across from learning outcome to due date. This also makes your editing or updating of an assignment easier to accomplish.
✓ Include a straightforward grading rubric for each assignment set.

__ Provide multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge.
✓ Assess group and cooperative performance, as well as individual achievement.
✓ Consider using traditional tests with a variety of formats (e.g., multiple choice, essay, short answer), papers, group work, demonstrations, portfolios, and presentations as options for demonstrating knowledge.
✓ Provide students choices in assessment methods when appropriate.
✓ Allow students to use Blackboard to complete quizzes and exams.

__ Monitor and adjust.
✓ Regularly assess students' background knowledge and current learning informally (e.g., through class discussion) and formally (e.g., through frequent, short exams).
✓ Adjust instructional content and methods accordingly.

__ Test in the same manner in which you teach.
✓ Ensure that a test measures what students have learned and not their ability to adapt to a new format or style of presentation.

__ Minimize time constraints when appropriate.
✓ Plan for variety in students' ability to complete work by announcing assignments well in advance of due dates.
✓ Allow extended time on tests and projects, unless speed is an essential outcome of instruction.

ACCOMMODATION

Plan for accommodations for students whose needs are not met by the instructional design.

__ Know how to arrange for accommodations.
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- Know Edgewood Colleges protocols for getting materials in alternate formats, rescheduling classroom locations, and arranging for other accommodations for students with disabilities.
- Make sure that assistive technology can be made available in a computer or science lab in a timely manner.
- Ensure the course experience is equivalent for students with accommodations.