

Instruction that overlooks the diverse backgrounds of students often produces unequal outcomes. If a student is grappling with whether they feel accepted and welcomed in a classroom environment, how can instructors expect them to be an active participant in the classroom community? Through my experience as an educator, I have interacted with and met the needs of a diverse range of students. I have incorporated Universal Design for Learning (UDL) standards to create an equitable classroom environment to help all students succeed to their fullest potential. I have fostered inclusivity and a sense of belonging by creating a welcoming classroom environment and engaging positively with my students. In my future classroom, I will continue to enact the same principles I'm currently practicing, as well as learn from my students and always strive to grow and improve as an educator and mentor.

In my various roles at UC Davis, I have spent more than a thousand hours speaking with undergraduate students. These conversations have occurred during discussion sections, office hours, exam review sessions, and through the H(elp)-Bar tutorial sessions. I have gotten to know many students quite well from varied academic disciplines, learning about their journeys and upbringings that led them to UC Davis. I believe these students feel comfortable seeking advice and guidance from me because they understand that I care not only to see them grow and develop in the classroom, but also as people and professionals. Many of these students aspire for higher education after they graduate, and I've helped students with their personal statements for graduate school, and letters of recommendation. To date, all students for whom I've written a letter of recommendation have gotten into their program of choice, including dental school, veterinary school, and pharmacy school. It is a joy to mentor and help these students find their way to their next adventure and learn from them to become a better teacher.

Much of my teaching experience has been as a TA for 2.5-hour long discussion sections, occurring multiple times per week, which involve lots of work in small groups. When the quarter begins, I emphasize that our classroom is a place of mutual respect, where failure is accepted as part of the learning process. I reward and encourage student curiosity and enthusiasm, but quickly address behaviors that hinder collaboration. I diversify my presentation of course materials, making sure to show written equations and illuminating visualizations, accompanied by clear and precise verbal explanations. These sections often have many English language learners (ELLs). I make sure to discuss how Greek letters are written and pronounced so that students can discuss variables with ease. When writing equations on the board, I remind students not only of the names of each variable, but the physical meaning behind them, to provide scaffolding by tying new material to things we've already discussed. Students can earn extra points towards their final grade based on participation in the discussion sections. I offer multiple avenues for students to earn these points, valuing questions asked during whole class discussions, questions asked privately, written answers to questions, helping other students within a group, etc., to enable extraverts, introverts, and students across the academic spectrum. In office hours, when students ask me to work through practice questions, I utilize think-alouds to help students practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills. I have received great reviews from students both verbally and in my end-of-quarter evaluations. As a TA, my overall teaching effectiveness was rated at a 4.9/5.0 (N=170), and my organization, timeliness, enthusiasm and receptiveness all averaged at 4.8-4.9/5.0 (N=~169).

As an instructor who was in charge of lecturing and writing assessments, I made sure to use straightforward language and diagrams to avoid creating barriers for ELLs. I also constructed course policies designed to balance compassion and fairness, addressing both the needs of students experiencing tragic circumstances and those with accommodations for occasional absences. I like to use in-class physics demonstrations whenever possible to keep students engaged in instruction and create vivid memories highlighting key course concepts. I have created a final exam containing questions with varied levels of difficulty to engage different levels of understanding. I also created a partial credit scheme for

multiple choice questions to help students with test anxiety. As an instructor my overall teaching effectiveness was an average of 4.1/5.0 (N=118), with only 5% of respondents giving me a 1.0 or 2.0 score. My enthusiasm, organization, and creation of a positive learning environment all received 4.4-4.5/5.0 (N~117). I credit my high scores partially to the incorporation of many UDL practices. These practices were put into effect by reflecting on my instruction and seeking feedback from students, and through discussion of good teaching practices with other instructors.

I have been an active member of the Graduate Teaching Community at UC Davis for multiple quarters. As a part of this group, I read and discussed pedagogical research with a community of like-minded graduate student instructors. Many of our conversations centered around how we confront our biases as instructors, and how the learning experiences of students from marginalized communities are drastically impacted by the action or inaction of the instructor. This program has helped guide my reflections and has made me a stronger and more cognizant instructor.

While I served as an instructor, I interfaced heavily with the Student Disability Center (SDC) to help students receive the necessary accommodations to help them succeed. I scheduled all examinations with the SDC before the term began so that students needing extended time and alternative testing environments could take advantage of those resources. I worked with the SDC to obtain remote proctoring and attendance for students with circumstances that required them to be away from the University and have worked closely with classroom stenographers to help students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging will be a central pillar of my future classroom. It will be clear that my classroom is a place where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to try, fail, gain new understanding, and try again. I will prioritize collaborative inquiry-based learning where possible, to foster student curiosity and lower the barrier for participation. I will continue to implement UDL standards to ensure that all students regardless of background are receiving a high-quality educational experience. I will provide continuing questions to keep fast finishers engaged in the lessons and provide extra support to prevent other students from falling behind. While implementing my own plans, I will always be seeking feedback from my students. This will let me understand how specific teaching practices are affecting their educational experience, improve my instruction, and make the students feel that their voice is heard in the classroom.

While I do not personally identify as part of a historically underrepresented group, I am committed to fostering equity and inclusivity in all my teaching practices. I am continually listening to and learning about the experiences of my diverse students and incorporating feedback to improve the quality of my instruction, to create a classroom environment that welcomes and supports all students and helps them not just succeed but thrive.