

# We Are ND: Creating Inclusive Spaces

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## Defining Culture, Diversity, and Cultural Competence

“**Culture** is the sum of total experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests. While culture is often defined and perceived as the celebration of important people, religions, traditions, and holidays, as well as an appreciation of the customs of different groups, it is also more than that. Culture is as much, or as little, as the everyday experiences, people, events, smells, sounds, and habits of behavior that characterize students’ and educators’ lives. Culture shapes a person’s sense of who he or she is and where he or she fits in the family, community, and society.” – *National Education Association*

“**Diversity**, more than race and ethnicity, includes the sociocultural experiences of people inclusive of, but not limited to, national origin, color, social class, religious and spiritual beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, and physical or mental disabilities.” – *National Association of Social Workers*

**Cultural competence** brings together cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and operational effectiveness, meaning: that you know about some cultural characteristics, history, values, beliefs, and behaviors of another ethnic or cultural group; that you are aware and open to the idea of changing cultural attitudes; that you know that differences exist between cultures, but you do not assign values to the differences (better or worse, right or wrong); and finally, that you have the capacity to bring together different behaviors, attitudes, and policies and work effectively in cross-cultural settings.

At the individual level, this means an examination of one’s own attitude and values, and the acquisition of the values, knowledge, skills, and attributes that will allow an individual to work appropriately in cross cultural situations.

Cultural competence mandates that organizations, programs, and individuals must have the ability to:

- 1) Value diversity and similarities among all peoples;
- 2) Understand and effectively respond to cultural differences;
- 3) Engage in cultural self-assessment at the individual and organizational levels;
- 4) Make adaptations to the delivery of services and enabling supports; and
- 5) Institutionalize cultural knowledge

– *Adapted from the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas*

## Who I Am

*\*This may include statements of where you are from, your identities, memories from different points in your life, interest and hobbies, mottos or creeds, favorite phrases, family traditions and customs, and anything else that defines who you are.\**

## Case Studies

**#1** - It can be really difficult to be gender nonconforming at a religious university. Maddy recently told her family that she was transitioning, which was less scary than seeing her classmates at the start of the school year. While her parents have been accepting of her choice, most of her classmates have not. During classes, students don't want to work with Maddy, and she feels excluded from most campus events because of who she is. She chose to move off-campus, but still experiences trouble from students who think that she is violating God's law. (As an evangelical Christian herself, she is still figuring out her own religious beliefs.) They continue to refer to her by her previous name, use male pronouns, or have even stopped talking to her altogether. One day, as she was packing up to leave the classroom, another student makes a derogatory comment about "that man in the women's bathroom."

- As an instructor who is aware of Maddy's experience and who overhears this comment, how do you respond?
- What is the obligation of a faculty member and the university to ensure Maddy has an equal opportunity to learn? What steps might they take to make sure she is included?
- If you were Maddy and your experience didn't change after a semester, what would you do?
- How does the context of being at a religious university affect the story?

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**#2** - In a reflection paper, a student writes: "A candid conversation in my high school English class sparked my sudden awareness of the impact our identities can have on us. Our class had just started reading *Huckleberry Finn*, and it was going about as well as you would expect in a predominantly white, affluent community. I'm black but some do not perceive me to be. When one of my classmates made a comment about race I stated I am black. Without skipping a beat, a student in front of me whipped around in his seat and said, 'You don't count.' I am a lot of things; I am black, white, and Chippewa. I'm a lesbian. I'm a woman. I'm a sister. I'm a daughter. I'm a scientist. And I am an artist." Suddenly your mind is racing trying to recall if you or others in your literature class may have said something offensive.

- What proactive measures could you have taken to ensure this student felt welcome and included?
- If you recall a negative comment from another student, what might you do in the next class?
- You are the author of the reflection. What might you be feeling? What are your expectations of the instructor?
- You are a classmate of the author of the reflection. How might you support her?

**#3** - Ryan is a new assistant professor in the Russian language and literature department. He has always excelled academically and enjoys his research. However, he prefers to avoid his colleagues due to anxiety, and sometimes even finds it difficult to connect with students, who misunderstand him and occasionally report being uncomfortable with his personality “quirks.” Sharing these experiences with a counselor eventually led to a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome (part of the autism spectrum). Specifically, his doctor identified differences in communication, social skills, and some minor vocal and motor tics. Ryan is comfortable talking about his diagnosis, but is not sure how it would affect his career. He is excited about starting his new job and wants to get off on the right foot.

- If you are Ryan, how might you approach this situation? What are your concerns?
  - As the chairperson of Ryan’s department, what might you do to ensure Ryan is welcome in the department and at the university?
  - What social norms in academia might affect Ryan’s case? How could those norms be changed?
  - If Ryan is your instructor and decides to disclose his diagnosis, how might you respond?
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**#4** - John did not anticipate coming to college. His family was not supportive and, up until his senior year of high school, he had not made any plans to attend college. He received a college scholarship his senior year that was too good to pass up. He is struggling to stay enrolled. Several personal problems combined with a lack of clear goals for his future have contributed to his feeling that college may not be the best fit for him. He is the first in his family to attend college yet fears becoming a dropout statistic. He tries to remain motivated to continue. He recently changed his major from sociology to biochemistry. He really enjoyed sociology, but worried about career prospects after college.

- As John’s new academic adviser you are determining what the advice to give him. What issues do you foresee John bringing to discuss with you? And what advice are going to give him?
- If he walks into your office today and states he is dropping out, what will you say and why?
- You (John) just received a call from a sibling informing you that your father has been injured and will be out of work for 3 months. On top of a full class schedule and labs, you also manage to pick up a part-time job to help your family. By week three, your course work is beginning to suffer. What should you do?
- Whenever John’s roommate Chris invites him out to dinner he says he is busy. He was looking forward to a ski trip the guys were planning and getting to spend some time with John, but then John backed out at the last minute, and Chris is left frustrated. How might different members of the university (faculty, residence life, other students) have contributed to this frustration, and how could they help fix it?



# Checklist for an Inclusive Classroom

| <b>Creating Inclusive Classrooms</b>  | Yes/No |
|---|--------|
| Do you include a statement on your syllabus that diversity is valued?   |        |
| Are various perspectives and scholarship being presented?   |        |
| Have you included materials created by people with different perspectives?  |        |
| Does the perspective presented validate, instead of further marginalize, a group?   |        |
| Have you examined the course content for inaccurate information about different groups of people?   |        |
| Do you give serious consideration to student requests for alternative materials?  |        |
| Have you created a classroom that encourages critique of the course content?  |        |
| Are you utilizing universal design principles? (Accessibility of materials)   |        |
| Are course learning objectives and assessments clearly articulated?   |        |
| <b>Avoid Assumptions about Student Learning Capabilities</b>  |        |
| Have you encouraged students to use your office hours?  |        |
| Do you have high expectations for all students?   |        |
| Have you ascertained students' prior experience and skills with your topic?   |        |
| Do you provide all students the attention needed?   |        |
| Do you avoid assuming students from a particular group are bilingual?   |        |
| Do you avoid assuming students from a particular group share the same perspective?  |        |
| Do you avoid assuming students relate only to characters who resemble them?   |        |
| Do you have a plan for collecting feedback from students?   |        |
| <b>Planning Considerations</b>  |        |
| Have you considered the cost of your course materials?  |        |
| Have you asked students if they require an accommodation for attendance, participation, or assignment completion due to religion or a disability? |        |
| Do you take attendance at every class to avoid just noticing when highly visible students are absent?   |        |
| Do you use a variety of cultural reference points?  |        |
| Do you use a variety of instructional strategies?   |        |
| Do you use a variety of methods to create learning groups?  |        |
| Do you use guidelines to set classroom behavioral expectations?   |        |
| Do you utilize low-stakes assessments in addition to high-stakes ones?  |        |
| Have you been transparent in why you designed your course a certain way?  |        |

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| <b>Planning for Controversial Topics</b>   |  |
| Have you identified hot button topics in your subject area?  |  |
| Have you asked how “hot button” topics might contribute to your learning goals?                    |  |
| Have you identified for students the connection between learning goals and the “hot button” topic? |  |
| Have you thought through possible outcomes of heated discussions?                                  |  |
| Have you established a structure for the discussion?   |  |
| Are students aware of the classroom guidelines for dialogue?                                       |  |
| Are you prepared to respond to stereotypes?  |  |
| Do you know a few techniques to use to if a “hot moment” erupts?                                   |  |
| Have you prepared students to discuss sensitive issues?  |  |
| Have you appropriately contextualized difficult topics?  |  |
| <b>Classroom Climate</b>   |  |
| Have you considered classroom power dynamics (among all people)?                                   |  |
| Have you encouraged all students to contribute to the class discussions?                           |  |
| Do you reward introverted students fairly compared to extroverted students?                        |  |
| Are you noticing gender and other group dynamics in discussions?                                   |  |
| Are you preparing students for conflict in the classroom?  |  |
| Does your response to student comments validate their input?                                       |  |
| Are you modeling the desired behavior?   |  |

*This documents draws from related materials from Cornell University, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Michigan, University of Washington, and Vanderbilt University.*



## 10 Tips for Creating an Inclusive Classroom

- 1) Use the following reflections to engage the multicultural classroom:
  - **Who are you?** Spend some time examining your own experiences, values, assumptions, and stereotypes, and consider which aspects are most salient for you in the classroom.
  - **Who are your students?** Get to know your students, and just as important, give them opportunities to get to know each other.
  - **What are your pedagogical choices?** Create a more student-centered teaching model that engages students.
  - **What are your content choices?** Model inclusive behavior by ensuring diverse perspectives.
- 2) Have a plan to deal with difficult conversations, such as using a reflection essay, small group discussion, or targeted questions to further discussion.
- 3) Be intentional about creating safe learning environments. Set and model classroom ground rules.
- 4) Use a variety of teaching methodologies that meet diverse learning styles, abilities, experiences, and backgrounds.
- 5) Be clear about course expectations and grading. Students should know the learning outcomes you expect from the course materials.
- 6) Set high standards for learning and achievement. Make sure all students are aware of student support services, both academic and nonacademic.
- 7) Become familiar with the concepts of microaggressions, stereotype threat, and implicit bias. *(And come to the Kaneb Center workshop on microaggressions on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>!)*
- 8) Be sure all students have a voice during classroom discussions. Invite students to take turns. Be aware of social group dynamics.
- 9) Do not assume familiarity with the format or references to pop culture or jargon.
- 10) Avoid asking a student to speak for a whole group. Allow more time to formulate oral responses to questions.

### **Additional Resources**

*Faculty Focus: Inclusive Classrooms*

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/tag/inclusive-classroom/>

*Cornell University Center for Teaching Excellence: Inclusive Teaching Strategies*

<https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/inclusive-teaching-strategies.html>

*An Approach for Teaching Diversity: A Dozen Suggestions for Enhancing Student Learning (Jim Winship)*

<http://www.uww.edu/learn/improving/aboutdiversity/approachdiversity>

## (Select) Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Resources at Notre Dame

**Sara Bea Disability Services** coordinates the process by which qualified students with disabilities can request and receive reasonable accommodations.

(574) 631-7157 ■ [sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu](http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu)

**Campus Ministry** seeks to care for the spiritual needs of all students, regardless of denomination, faith tradition or level of education at the University.

114 Coleman-Morse Center

(574) 631-7800 ■ [campusministry.nd.edu](http://campusministry.nd.edu)

**Center for Social Concerns** coordinates service- and community-based learning students, supports community-based research by faculty and students that responds to community needs near and far, and facilitates Notre Dame's community partnerships in support of the demands of justice. Shaped by the Catholic social tradition, the Center's programming aspires to bring together education of mind of heart as we prepare our students for the responsibilities of faith-filled global citizenship and help the University fulfill its mission to "create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice."

Geddes Hall

(574) 631-5293 ■ [socialconcerns.nd.edu](http://socialconcerns.nd.edu)

**Director for Academic Diversity and Inclusion**, Pamela Nolan Young, works with partners across all academic levels to ensure the University fosters an environment in which everyone may flourish. The key responsibilities center on coordination, training and development, recruitment, retention, and communications, the director serves as a point person for colleges and departments as they implement the diversity and inclusion plans developed in response to the Faculty Experience Survey and aimed at enhancing Notre Dame's faculty climate.

300 Main Building

(574) 631-7573

**Director of Staff Diversity and Inclusion**, Eric Love, is housed in Human Resources where he develops innovative strategies for diversity and inclusion programs and multicultural competency training. His programming includes, *We are ND*, a cultural competency workshop, and *Hiring Game Changers*, a workshop for hiring managers and a discussion series. In addition, he serves as the advisor to two student organizations.

100 Grace Hall

(574) 631-2859

**Gender Relations Center** (in Student Affairs) designs and implements programs about sexuality, identity, gender and healthy relationships with the Catholic character of the University.

311 LaFortune Student Center  
(574) 631-9340 ■ [grc.nd.edu](http://grc.nd.edu)

**International Student and Scholar Affairs** provides a wide array of support services and educational and cultural programs for international students, scholars and their families. Services include providing pre-arrival correspondence, coordinating International Student Orientation and advising international students and clubs. Programs include International Education Week, the International Ambassador Program and the Family Friendship Program.

105 Main Building  
(574) 631-3825 ■ [international.nd.edu/issa](http://international.nd.edu/issa)

**Office of Institutional Equity** is committed to promoting an equitable educational and work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in accordance with Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, other applicable federal and state laws, and University policy.

100 Grace Hall  
(574) 631-0444 ■ [equity.nd.edu](http://equity.nd.edu)

**Title IX Coordinator**

Karra Miller, J.D.

**Faculty Affairs Specialist**

Todd Dvorak, J.D.

**Deputy Title IX Coordinator (Division of Student Affairs)**

Heather Ryan

**Sexual Harassment Ombudsperson**

Anita Kelly

**Discriminatory Harassment Ombudsperson**

Dwight King

**Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning** supports the pursuit of teaching excellence by stimulating scholarly reflection and conversation about teaching and encouraging the adoption of practices that enhance learning.

353 DeBartolo Hall  
(574) 631-9146 ■ [kaneb.nd.edu](http://kaneb.nd.edu)

**McDonald Center for Student Well-Being** helps students find balance in everyday life by offering tools, resources, and activities that support your emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, environmental, and spiritual well-being.

204 Saint Liam Hall

(574) 631-7970 ■ [mcwell.nd.edu](http://mcwell.nd.edu)

**Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services** administers the programs and services specifically designed to assist with the retention and the academic success of traditionally underrepresented students. The academic initiatives focus on providing faculty mentors, exposing historically underrepresented undergraduates to research opportunities, and networking with academicians and alumni in their area of interest.

210 LaFortune Student Center

(574) 631-6841 ■ [msps.nd.edu](http://msps.nd.edu)

**President's Oversight Committee on Diversity and Inclusion**, chaired by University President Father John Jenkins, meets quarterly to ensure that initiatives are underway in the various divisions and progress is being made. Rather than managing efforts, the committee identifies areas for improvement, setting achievable and measurable goals, and monitoring progress toward those goals.

**University Committee on Women Faculty and Students** serves in an advisory capacity reporting to the president through the provost. The committee may make recommendations for action to the president, or, as he directs, for action by the other officers of the University and the Academic Council on policies, practices, and the general environment of the University as they relate to women faculty and students.

**University Counseling Center** is located on the third floor of Saint Liam Hall, located next to Stanford and Keenan Halls. The UCC offers a broad range of services to currently enrolled and degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students. Individual and group counseling 24-hour urgent crisis services, and psychoeducational programming are available.

(574) 631-7336 ■ [ucc.nd.edu](http://ucc.nd.edu)

## (Select) Resources on Academic Diversity and Inclusion

### Books

- Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, & Pat Griffin (eds.). 2007. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Adams, Maurianne, Warren Blumenfield, Carmelita Castaneda, Heather Hackman, Madeline Peters, & Ximena Zuniga (eds.). 2013. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brookfield, Stephen D., & Stephen Preskill. 2005. *Discussion As a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cain, Susan. 2012. *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. New York, NY: Crown.
- Chang, Mitchell J., Daria Witt, James Jones, & Kenji Hakuta. 2003. *Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Colleges and Universities*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Dunn, Dana S., Regan A.R. Gurung, Karen Z. Naufel, & Janie H. Wilson (eds.). 2013. *Controversy in the Psychology Classroom: Using Hot Topics to Foster Critical Thinking*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Farmer, Marion, Barbara Riddick, & Christopher M. Sterling. 2002. *Dyslexia & Inclusion: Assessment & Support in Higher Education*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Gay, Geneva. 2010. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Goodman, Diane J. 2011. *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gutiérrez y Muhs, Gabriella, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. González, & Angela P. Harris (eds.). 2012. *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jensen, Eric. 2009. *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Martin, Judith N. & Thomas K. Nakayama. 2012. *Intercultural Communication in Contexts* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education.
- Steele, Claude M. 2010. *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Sue, Derald Wing. 2015. *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2008. *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

## Journal Articles

- Armstrong, Mary A. 2011. "Small World: Crafting an Inclusive Classroom (No Matter What You Teach)." *Thought & Action*: 51-61.
- Cannon, Lynn Weber. 1990. "Fostering Positive Race, Class, and Gender Dynamics in the Classroom." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 18(1/2): 126-134.
- Frederick, Peter. 1995. "Walking on Eggs: Mastering the Dreaded Diversity Discussion." *College Teaching* 43(3): 83-92.
- Lusk, Amy B., & Adam S. Weinberg. 1994. "Discussing Controversial Topics in the Classroom: Creating a Context for Learning." *Teaching Sociology* 22(4): 301-308.
- McKinnon, Dolly, & Catherine Manathunga. 2010. "Going Global with Assessment: What to Do When the Dominant Culture's Literacy Drives Assessment." *Higher Education Research and Development* 22(2): 131-144.
- Novis-Deutsch, Nurit, & Chen Lifshitz. 2016. "When Bible and Science Interact: Teachers' Pedagogic and Value Challenges in Teaching Religious Minority Students in Higher Education Settings." *Teaching in Higher Education* 21(5): 487-500.
- Pittman, Chavella T. 2010. "Race and Gender Oppression in the Classroom: The Experiences of Women Faculty of Color with White Male Students." *Teaching Sociology* 38(3): 183-196.
- Pryor, Jonathan T. 2015. "Out in the Classroom: Transgender Student Experiences at a Large Public University." *Journal of College Student Development* 56(5): 440-455.
- Sepúlveda, Enrique. 2011. "Toward a Pedagogy of Acompañamiento: Mexican Migrant Youth Writing from the Underside of Modernity." *Harvard Educational Review* 81(3): 550-572.
- White, John. 2011. "Resistance to Classroom Participation: Minority Students, Academic Discourse, Cultural Conflicts, and Issues of Representation in Whole Class Discussions." *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 10(4): 250-265.

## Online Resources

- "Conditionally Accepted." [insidehighered.com/users/conditionally-accepted](http://insidehighered.com/users/conditionally-accepted)
- "Diverse Issues in Higher Education." [diverseeducation.com](http://diverseeducation.com)
- "Diversity and Inclusion in the College Classroom." A special report from *Faculty Focus*.
- "Diversity in the Classroom." UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development.
- "Moving Beyond Access: College Success for Low-Income, First-Generation Students." The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education
- "Teaching First-Generation College Students." Ben Galina, Vanderbilt Center for Teaching

*\*Note: these resources are merely a cross-section of a large body of literature on inclusion in academic and non-academic settings. They do not necessarily represent the "canon" of resources on these topics.*

## NOTES

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