Inclusivity

- Everyone participates
- Equality – level playing field

- What might keep people from being treated equally? Solutions?
  - Location in class (back of the room) → instructor parts attention to all parts of class
  - Lack of interest
  - Lack of personal investment
  - Fear, don’t want to be picked on (asked questions)
  - Language barriers

- Gently try to draw out students that appear shy
- Create community guidelines
- Make sure everyone understands terms/language used
- Direct students to resources
- Set a good tone from day 1
  - Create a safe environment at the beginning
  - Ice breakers – get people comfortable
  - Small talk

- Language barriers?
  - Give time for students to respond
  - Don’t rush students
  - Helps students find the right word
  - Have students write out answers

- What to avoid in a class
  - Hurrying student (especially when language problem)
  - Make students aware of resources – Access and Diversity
  - Idioms and humour can be excluding
  - Sarcasm can be a problem
  - Create a safe space for all students
  - Don’t pick favourites

- What are barriers to inclusivity?
  - Lack of academic background
  - No friends in class
  - Lack of confidence
  - Shy
  - Cultural differences
  - Have experienced discrimination
• Not at university by choice

• Try to vary assessments or questioning
  o Group work → self-selected groups vs. instructor-selected vs. random
  o Enforcing English only could be a barrier to inclusion
  o Getting everyone involved – breaking the ice
  o Highlighting diverse strengths of students in class
  o Create safe space

• What prevents inclusivity?
  o Awkward/negative atmosphere
  o Time (eg. Biol 140 – very scheduled)
  o Language – even if English is 1st language. Lack of vocabulary can be exclusionary
  o Inappropriate jokes/comments
    ▪ For sensitive topics instructor may need to take the lead/rephrase statements where intention was not to offend
    ▪ Can acknowledge that a comment could be offensive

**Time Management**

**DO:**

• Make a schedule/to do list*
  o Short: long term*
• Establish a routine
  o But be flexible*
• Be realistic about time requirements/demands*
• Use time efficiently*
  o Eg. When on bus, e-mailing
• Get a calendar to schedule your time**
• Establish priorities/deadlines*
• Write thing down (hard copy)
• Keep a balanced life (decrease stress) – go for a walk, bake cookies
• Seek advice/help from others
• Block certain websites during key hours (decrease procrastination)
• Clarify common questions on Connect or blog
• Be clear on when you will respond to emails
• Exams: mark question by question
• Papers: organize by quality (eg. After reading one section)

**DON’T:**
• Forget to eat!
• Be too strict (increase stress)
• Procrastinate (minimize)

**Participatory Learning**

- Group work designed into course**
- Facilitate group formation (helps shy ones)
  - Force them to change groups
- Make learning environments comfortable
- Community guidelines → use it as icebreakers
- Chat them up → encourage them**
- Allow silence – guide them through material
- Getting first answer is often the hardest
- Mixing up groups to balance relationships
- Role playing → demonstration
- “Are there any questions?”
  - “Do you understand concept X?”
- Walk around and talk to students
- Adjust your style to the class you have
- Have them write ideas and then share with neighbours
  - Start with YES/NO question
- Take turns answering questions
- Snack to bribe them!

**Grading**

**Concerns/challenges in grading**

- Plagiarism – report to your supervisor ASAP
- Providing consistent and constructive feedback
  - Mark the same question for all papers all at the same time
  - Follow a rubric, provide feedback accordingly
- Do no wait until the last moment to start marking
  - Communicate readily with your supervisor if you do not feel comfortable about how you were instructed to mark
  - How to standardize marking between various TAs?
  - When it is hard to read the handwriting of your students?
How to be efficient in marking tasks?
  - Break down the task to small chunks of work

- Very important to provide specific feedback so students know where they went wrong and how to improve
- Communicate with other TAs and instructors readily to assure yourself that you are doing fine
- Timely turn around time
- Keep track of common student mistakes and report back to the supervisor

**Classroom Management**

- Be upfront if you know you have a “weakness”
- Prepare students for what is going to take place
- Circulate and monitor progress. Make suggestions to keep on track
- Be aware of resources available
- Create comfortable environment and be approachable
- Patience/keep your cool
- Give rotational responsibilities to groups for lab cleanup
- Keep a schedule/allocate time
- Inform students about schedule and activities for each session
- Recognize there is only so much you can do if people are distracted
- Use guidelines!
- Be explicit about expectations
- “Pass the ball” in a review session

**TA/Faculty Relations**

- Early communication
  - As question/issues arise. Eg. Grading
  - TA/Faculty rules clearly defined → Clarity
  - Negotiating between multiple faculty
- Teaching hours
  - Not matching estimates?
    - Documenting actual time
    - Tips for being efficient: rubric, discussion
- Last minute instructions. Eg. Late grading rubrics
  - Communicate needs
  - Advise to faculty concerns
  - Response to faculty concerns
    - Clarifying concepts/issues
- Students in need
- Absent Faculty
  - Lab support needed → who is the other support staff?
  - Ask for support → suggestions, ideas for help