

## Supporting Learning for All Students with Inclusive Pedagogy and Content

Selection of teaching strategies and content have implications for student engagement and learning. Some teaching strategies are particularly effective in engaging and supporting learning in students from a wide range of backgrounds. Methods that encourage [active and collaborative learning](#) improve student engagement and learning for all students, and close the achievement gap between underrepresented and majority students.

Possible Strategies	Additional Considerations
Active learning-Read, write, discuss, solve problems, design something	Ask students to do more than just listen to facilitate their deeper comprehension of the material
Cooperative small group learning	Organize groups for active learning. Avoid isolating underrepresented students or creating homogenous groups
Problem-based learning	Try problems that are grounded in students' experience
Increased course structure	Assign guided reading questions, preparatory homework, in-class activities to provide more structure to in- and out- of class time
Continuous assessment of student outcomes (e.g., attending to student learning as you go)	Use formal and informal assessment to gauge whether your methods are helping students achieve the desired outcomes, and whether you are engaging students from a wide range of backgrounds. When outcomes fall short, make changes to address those challenges.
Increased transparency	Demystify what it takes to succeed on an assignment by providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goals and rationales for assignment</li> <li>• Clear explanation of the task and steps for successful completion</li> <li>• Criteria for evaluation- make visible what high quality work looks like</li> </ul>
Diverse content, examples, and images; inclusive language; attention to multiple perspectives	Use content and examples that are meaningful to students with a range of backgrounds; acknowledge that not all students have points of reference or experiences often assumed to be shared by all ("If you have ever been on an airplane") to normalize experiences that are possible points of marginalization.

## Advancing Equity by Teaching Transparently

### The Transparency and Problem-Centered Learning project,

[www.aacu.org/problemcenteredlearning](http://www.aacu.org/problemcenteredlearning), has shown that increased transparency in college courses can produce demonstrable improvements in students' success, particularly among underrepresented groups. Faculty at five diverse postsecondary institutions implemented two "transparently- designed," problem-centered take-home assignments in courses for first-year college students. Students in these courses reported increased academic self-confidence and sense of belonging, showed improved problem solving, and course completion rates improved. These gains were especially dramatic for underserved students (Winkelmes et al., 2016).

### How can you teach "transparently?" (adapted from Salis et al., 2016)

1. Set clear goals and expectations
2. Provide students with specific criteria on which they will be evaluated
3. Employ various additional transparency strategies, such as:
  - In-class discussions of learning goals, requirements and expectations
  - "Scaffolded" assignments, that break assignments into the steps required for successful completion
  - Explicitly connect assignments to the relevant learning outcome(s)
  - Provide clear rationales for choosing an assignment
  - Connect assignments to real-world applications

**Designing Transparent Assignments** (adapted from Winkelmes et al., 2016). Transparent assignments provide clear explanations of:

1. The purpose
  - What skills will be practiced and why? How will these be relevant to students in the future?
  - What knowledge will be gained and why?
2. The task
  - What to do
  - How to do it (steps for successful completion)
3. The criteria for evaluation
  - Make visible what high quality work "looks like" (e.g., rubric and/or examples of excellent work)
  - Provide criteria/examples in advance

### References

- Salis, A., Ferrari-Brigers, F., Kaur, S., Stroumbakis, K., Traver, A., & Zhelezcheva, T. (2016). Advancing student success through faculty intentionality in problem-centered learning. *Peer Review*, 18(12), 15-17.
- Winkelmes, M., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, M., Golanics, J., & Weavil, K. (2016). A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students' success. *Peer Review*, 18(12), 31-36.