



PART II

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Responding to a Changing Student Body

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Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom

As campuses continue to become more diverse, faculty members need to be attentive to prejudice, bias, and discriminatory behavior—their own and that of their students. Some historically underrepresented students describe feeling like unwelcome outsiders and encountering subtle forms of bias and unwitting insensitive comments from peers and instructors that have led to a sense of alienation and detachment (Carroll, 1998; Davis et al., 2004; Engberg, 2004; Harris and Nettles, 1996; Nora and Cabrera, 1996; Steele, 1997; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2003; Sue et al., 2007). You can begin to explore attitudes and conduct by asking yourself (or your students) the following kinds of questions (adapted from Adams et al., 1997; Chin et al., 2002; and Gay, 2000):

- Do you interact with men and women in ways that manifest double standards?
- Do you inadvertently undervalue comments made by speakers whose English is accented differently from your own?
- Do you assume that students of some racial or ethnic groups will need additional help? Or that students of some racial or ethnic groups will do better than others?
- Are you comfortable around people whose racial, ethnic, or sexual identity differs from your own?
- Are you comfortable disclosing your knowledge of and experiences with diversity?
- How do you handle your own doubts or ambivalence about multicultural issues?

You may also discover that for some students, issues related to group identity assume great importance because college presents their first opportunity to affirm their identity and join single-identity organizations or groups.

The following ideas, based on the teaching practices of faculty and on current research, are intended to help you work effectively with the broad range of students enrolled in your classes.

General Strategies

Become aware of any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed. We are all shaped and influenced by our backgrounds and experiences that have led to biases and assumptions about ourselves and others. Your attitudes and values not only influence the attitudes and values of your students, but they can affect the way you teach, particularly your assumptions about students based on race or ethnicity, which can lead to unequal learning outcomes for those in your classes. (Sources: American Psychological Association, 2003; Bensimon, 2005; Fouad and Arredondo, 2006; Hurtado et al., 1999; Sue, 2001)

Treat each student as an individual. Each of us shares some characteristics with others of our gender, race, place of origin, and sociocultural group, but these are outweighed by the many differences among members of any group. We tend to recognize this point about groups we belong to (“I’m not like all those other Texans you may know”), but we sometimes fail to recognize it about others. Try not to project your experiences with, feelings about, or expectations of an entire group onto any one student.

Monitor the climate in your classroom. Ask students to let you know if you inadvertently offend them, and tell them you’ll let them know if they unintentionally offend you. Invite students to send you a note (signed or unsigned), or add one or more of the following questions to your midsemester course evaluation (adapted from Hyde and Ruth, 2002):

- Does the instructor treat students equally and evenhandedly?
- How comfortable do you feel participating in this class? What makes it easy or difficult for you?
- Do you feel that your ethnicity, race, sexuality, or gender affects your interactions with the teacher in this class? With other students?
- Do you have suggestions for encouraging open and candid discussion in class?

Introduce discussions of diversity at department meetings. Propose that the agenda of your department meetings include topics such as classroom climate, course content and course requirements, graduation and placement rates, extra-curricular activities, orientation for new students, academic support services, and opportunities for undergraduate research or service-learning experiences.

Recognize the complexity of diversity. Diversity can include race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion and spirituality, language, family

responsibilities, immigrant status, socioeconomic status, worldview, political persuasion, academic preparation, and regional and national identity. In addition, even a category like “ethnic group” can have numerous intragroup differences. For example, the U.S. Census in 2000 listed sixty categories for Asian/Pacific Islanders. Latinas/os may come from one of twenty-five culturally different Spanish-speaking countries or territories. As of 2007, the U.S. government recognized 561 Native American tribes, each with its own language, traditions, and customs.

Students enter college with multiple, evolving, and shifting identities. Some group characteristics are fixed (for example, age) and others are fluid (for example, income level); some identities are more salient than others (for example, race over religion) and may shift from one to the other depending on the context (disability among people without disabilities but sexual orientation among people with disabilities) or at different times in students’ lives. Avoid making assumptions about students based on only one of their group characteristics and neglecting the complexities in their lives and experiences. Keep in mind that differences within groups can be as great or greater than differences across groups. (Sources: Sue, 2001; Tatum, 2003; Torres et al., 2003)

Communicating and Fostering Respect

Be attentive to terminology. Terminology changes over time, as ethnic and cultural groups continue to define their identity, their history, and their relationships to other groups. Racial categories are regularly “created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed” (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 55), and individuals within groups can disagree about preferred designations. Ask your students or your faculty diversity officer about terms that are used on your campus. For example, *minority student* has become outdated, especially on campuses where the former minority now constitutes the numerical majority. Some people favor the omnibus term *students of color*, while others dislike it because it implies that white is the norm. Some campuses use *historically underrepresented students* in discussing recruitment and retention.

Ask whether students have a preference for *African American* or *black*. Some in the community want to distinguish those who are descended from slaves from those who have recently immigrated from the Caribbean, South America, or Africa. Do students of mixed racial heritage use terms such as *multiracial*, *biracial*, or *mixed*?

In some parts of the country, Americans of Mexican ancestry prefer *Chicana/o*, *Mexicano/a*, or *Mexican American* to *Hispanic*, which carries the echo of Spanish colonialism. But in the Southwest, some descendants of the Spanish colonists prefer *Hispanic* as do some people in Florida, which has large populations of

Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, and South Americans. Others use *Latina/o* to refer to people whose forebears came from Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking regions of the Western Hemisphere. *Mestizo* reflects a mix of Native American and European backgrounds.

Oriental has long been considered a derogatory by-product of British imperialism. Because Asia is so large and diverse, many individuals prefer to be identified not by the continent but by the nationality of their ancestors (for example, Thai American, Korean American). In California, *Pacific Islander* is currently preferred by students whose forebears are from that region, rather than being grouped with *Asian American*.

Among descendants of the indigenous peoples of North America, some prefer the term *Native Americans*, others prefer *American Indians*, *Indians*, *Indigenous Peoples*, or a tribal name. In Canada, the preferred term is *First Nations*. Because Alaskan Natives include groups other than Eskimos, the preferred term is *Inuit* (*Inuk* for singular).

On some campuses, *gay* and *lesbian* have given way to *LGBTQ* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) or *LGBTQ2IA* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Allies). Some within the community use *queer* as an inclusive term, but others view *queer* as pejorative. *Sexual orientation*, *sexual identity*, and *sexuality* are all in use; *sexual preference* is dismissed as inaccurate because most people do not believe that their sexuality is a matter of choice.

Immigrant communities are described by researchers as First Generation (adults who are born and educated outside the United States), Generation 1.5 (individuals who are born outside the United States and partially educated where they were born and partially U.S.-educated), and Second Generation (children of immigrants who are U.S.-born and -educated).

Because terminology changes and can be confusing, it is tempting to just give up. But how we refer to groups can make a difference to students. When in doubt, err on the side of being more specific, not less—use *Cambodian American* instead of *minority* or *Asian American*.

Learn about groups other than your own. Cultures, for example, differ in the value they place on personal independence, competition and ambition, social harmony, and attitudes toward authority—all of which may affect a student's learning and conduct. Culture in the United States has a preference for individuals who are independent, competitive, and focused on achieving success. Individuals with origins in cultures of East Asia may prefer conformity and harmony over individualism and personal achievement. Some cultures expect professors to be experts and final authorities, whereas others recognize that professors may not

know all the answers. Students from cultures that teach respect for the wisdom of their elders may be reluctant to share their opinions, to disagree with the readings, or to challenge their professors. Some cultures value memorization as a critical component of learning, and students from those cultures can become confused when instructors dismiss memorization in favor of analysis, synthesis, and critical evaluation.

Sources of information about cultural differences include student organizations, professional development workshops and conferences, ethnic film festivals and museums, and both fiction and nonfiction literature. Perhaps the best source is students themselves, if you openly share your ignorance and express a genuine curiosity to learn about groups different from your own. (Sources: American Psychological Association, 2003; Johnson, 1997; Pratt et al., 1999; Shield, 2004–05; Yeh, 2004–05)

Convey the same level of confidence in the abilities of all your students.

Students who sense that more is expected of them tend to outperform students who believe that less is expected of them, regardless of their actual abilities. Conversely, the perception that one belongs to a stigmatized group can result in underperformance, called “stereotype threat,” which occurs when a student’s anxieties about confirming a negative stereotype cause the student to perform poorly. To address self-fulfilling prophecies and stereotype threat, convey your clear conviction in each student’s intellectual potential and let students know you expect them to work hard in class, that you want them to be challenged by the material, and that you hold high standards for their academic achievement. And then practice what you have said: expect your students to work hard, be challenged, and achieve high standards. (Sources: Gay, 2000; Steele, 1997; Steele and Aronson, 1995)

Don’t try to “protect” any group of students. If you refrain from challenging or criticizing the performance of students because of their membership in a demographic group, or if you in some way favor those students, you are likely to undermine their self-esteem and their view of their abilities and competence. (Source: Cohen et al., 1999)

Be evenhanded in acknowledging students’ accomplishments. Praise students for good work, but avoid lavish displays that may make students uncomfortable (“Why is he so surprised that I’m doing well?”) or anxious (“Will I be able to maintain this high level of achievement?”). Note also that in some cultures being singled out for personal accomplishments is neither valued nor appreciated. (Sources: Cohen et al., 1999; Guiffrida, 2005; Lynch, 1997)

Be aware of possible misinterpretations of students' nonverbal behaviors. Eye contact, nodding, verbal utterances, physical contact, smiling, pauses after speaking, physical distance between individuals—all these behaviors differ across cultural groups. For example, in some cultures the pause time between speakers is four or five seconds, compared to one second in American English; looking away from the speaker is a sign of attention, not inattention; and a pat on the shoulders is a source of shame and embarrassment—not a signal of “job well done.” (Sources: Al-Issa, 2004; Lynch, 1997; Suinn, 2006)

Pedagogical Approaches

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Use inclusive language and examples. Try to use language that acknowledges the diversity in the class:

- Use nongendered terms such as *parenting* rather than *mothering*; *chair* or *chairperson* rather than *chairman* or *chairwoman*.
- Use the more-inclusive *house of worship* rather than *church*.
- Refrain from comments that imply assumptions about students' lives (“Now, when your parents were in college . . .”).
- Use inclusive terms such as *significant other* or *partner* rather than *boyfriend* or *girlfriend*.
- Avoid comments that diminish students' perspectives (“Don't be so sensitive”).
- Draw examples and anecdotes from a variety of cultural and social contexts.

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Learn to correctly pronounce students' names. Ask students directly and jot down their names phonetically. There's nothing wrong with saying, “I'm really trying to learn how to say your name correctly. Can you tell me again how to pronounce it?” California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, has developed an online pronunciation guide for Cantonese, Chinese/Mandarin, Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese names.

Look for opportunities to give personal attention and validation to students. Research shows the critical role of faculty-student interaction in students' academic success and satisfaction. Students benefit when a faculty member gets to know them outside of class, provides opportunities for them to experience themselves as capable learners, and encourages them to succeed. (Sources: Allen, 1992;

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Anaya and Cole, 2003; Cole, 2007; Fischer, 2007; Flowers, 2004–05; Hernández and López, 2004–05; Hurtado et al., 1999; Rendón, 1994)

Cultivate an inclusive classroom. As needed, diversify the perspectives included in class materials, intervene if any students act disrespectfully to others, and make students feel comfortable in asking for help. For discipline-specific advice, see Chin, Berheide, and Rome (2002) on incorporating diversity into courses in sociology; Fowler and Villanueva (2002) on English courses; and Trent (2002) on communication courses. (Sources: Evans, 2000; Hurtado et al., 1998)

Recognize your own culture-bound assumptions. If you have earned your academic credentials in an American college or university, you know that American higher education tends to reward students who question assumptions, challenge points of view, speak out, and participate actively. Some of your students, however, may have been raised to believe that challenging their instructors is disrespectful or rude. Others may be reluctant to ask questions or speak out because they are afraid of reinforcing stereotypes about their ignorance. (Sources: Collett, 1990; Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991)

Assign group work and collaborative learning activities. In addition to enhancing academic achievement, group work can reduce prejudice and bias by giving students opportunities to interact with others from different backgrounds. Students report acquiring a strong understanding of diversity as a side effect of group projects and community service. Moreover, diverse groups and viewpoints lead to better problem solving and decision making. Small-group work during class can be as simple as counting off three to five students to solve a problem or to answer a question. (Sources: Aronson, 2002; Gurin and Nagda, 2006; Hurtado et al., 1999; Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991; Page, 2007; Slavin, 1995)

Course Content and Material

Try to select texts and readings whose language is gender neutral and free of stereotypes. If you assign readings that use only masculine pronouns or that incorporate stereotypes, point out these shortcomings in class and give students an opportunity to discuss them.

Aim for an inclusive curriculum. Try to structure your course so that students view concepts, events, and themes from diverse perspectives, rather than treating

one group's experience as the standard against which everyone else is defined. Use the following strategies as appropriate:

- Assign texts and readings that reflect scholarship and research about previously underrepresented groups.
- Discuss the contributions made to your field by historically underrepresented groups.
- Describe how recent scholarship about gender, race, sexual identity, and class is changing your field of study.

(Source: Banks, 2006)

Do not assume that all students will recognize cultural, literary, or historical references familiar to you. Your students may not share the cultural experiences, literary allusions, and historical references that you consider canonical. If a certain type of cultural literacy is prerequisite to your course, discuss that prerequisite on the first day of class. (Of course, you may want to refer to individuals or events unfamiliar to your students in order to encourage them to do some individual research or a group wiki project where they submit questions and post definitions.)

Bring in guest lecturers. Broaden and enrich your course by asking faculty or off-campus professionals of different ethnic and cultural groups to make presentations to your class.

Class Discussion

Emphasize the importance of considering different approaches. Help students appreciate different points of view. Encourage them to evaluate their own beliefs and explore how an individual's premises, observations, and interpretations are influenced by social identity and background.

Make it clear that you value all comments. Students need to feel free to voice an opinion and feel empowered to defend it. If some students seem to be ignoring the viewpoints of others, reintroduce the overlooked comments into the discussion. If you see a student frowning or making disapproving gestures while another student is talking, ask the frowner to explain his or her point of view. As appropriate, address the concern that students may be censoring themselves out of fear of being viewed as insensitive or overly sensitive to identity issues.

Balance openness and safety. Students need a balance of openness—the freedom to explore ideas that may be unpleasant or harsh—and safety, which calls for setting limits to prevent personal or disrespectful comments. Openness demands that all points of view be aired, but safety requires interrupting offensive speech—an action that some students will interpret as censorship. The ideal classroom environment is one in which all students feel as if they belong and as if their points of view matter. Early in the term, ask students to break into small groups and discuss behaviors that discourage them from participating in class discussions. Or ask the groups to define what a “safe” classroom means to them. (Sources: Adams et al., 1997; Canetto et al., 2003)

Encourage all students to participate in class discussion. From the start of the term, try to prevent any one group of students from monopolizing the discussion. Solicit alternate viewpoints, and encourage students to listen to and value comments made from perspectives other than their own. Keep in mind that some students may be reluctant to speak up in class for fear of being wrong. Having students work in small groups early in the term may make it easier for them to speak up in a larger setting. (Sources: Carroll, 1998; Steele, 1997)

Monitor your behavior in responding to students. Research studies show that teachers tend to interact differently with men and women students and with students who are—or whom the instructor perceives to be—high or low achievers. More often than not, these patterns of behavior are unconscious, but they can demoralize students. As you teach, try to be evenhanded in the following matters:

- recognizing students who raise their hands in class
- listening and responding to students’ comments and questions
- addressing students by name
- prompting students to provide a fuller answer or an explanation
- giving students time to answer a question before moving on
- not interrupting students or allowing them to be interrupted by their peers
- crediting student comments during your summary (“As Akim said, . . .”)
- giving feedback and balancing criticism and praise
- making eye contact

(Sources: Gay, 2000; Green, 1989; Hall and Sandler, 1982; Sadker and Sadker, 1990)

Speak up if a student makes a distasteful remark—even jokingly. Don’t let a disparaging comment pass unnoticed. Students may take your silence as condoning

the behavior. Consider slowly repeating back the exact words as accurately as possible to the person who made the comment and give that student an opportunity to rephrase. Or explain why the comment is offensive or insensitive—for example, “What you said made me feel uncomfortable. Although you didn’t mean it, it could be interpreted as saying” Or depersonalize the situation: “Some people think that way. What assumptions are they making?” Or ask students to comment. Keep the discussion focused on issues, not individuals, so that students can gracefully retreat from untenable positions. Try not to get rattled by inappropriate remarks and, as appropriate, protect the lone voice (the attacked or the attacker) regardless of his or her position. (Sources: Fouad and Arredondo, 2006; Frederick, 1995; Vacarr, 2001)

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Defuse heated remarks. If hurtful comments are made, stop the discussion, have students take a minute to write about the incident, and ask pairs to exchange their points of view before you restart the discussion. Or step back to focus on group dynamics and how the group wants to work. Try not to intervene too quickly: give students a chance to learn that they can handle difficult discussions on their own. (Source: Frederick, 1995)

Do not treat students as spokespersons for their demographic group. Asking a student to speak for his or her entire race, nationality, or other group both ignores the heterogeneity of viewpoints among members of any group and also reinforces the mistaken notion that every member of a particular group is an authority on his or her group. An example to avoid: after lecturing on research about the relationship between race and heart disease, an instructor called on an African American student and asked him to describe how black health professionals were reacting to the research.

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Assignments and Exams

Be sensitive to students whose first language is not English. Most colleges in the United States require students who are nonnative speakers of English to achieve oral and written competency by taking English courses. Ask specialists on your campus for advice about how to grade papers and for information about typical patterns of errors related to a student’s native language. For example, some languages do not have two-word verbs, and speakers of those languages may need extra help—and patience—as they try to master English idioms. Such students should not be penalized for misusing, say, *take after*, *take in*, *take off*, *take on*, *take out*, and *take over*.

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Help students form study teams. Peer support is an important factor in student persistence in school. By arranging for times and rooms where groups can meet, you can encourage students to make friends beyond their own personal networks. See Chapter 21, “Learning in Groups,” for suggestions on how to form study teams. (Source: Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005)

Give assignments and exams that recognize students’ diverse backgrounds and special interests. As appropriate to your field, you can develop paper topics or term projects that encourage students to explore the roles, status, contributions, and experiences of groups traditionally underrepresented in scholarly research studies or in academia.

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Use a variety of names in classroom examples and test questions. Draw from different cultural groups: Fatima, Keisha, Tran, Francisco, Juanita, Adam, Carol, Yu-Tin, and so on.

Advising, Mentoring, and Out-of-Class Activities

Meet with students informally. Frequent and rewarding informal contact with faculty members is a strong predictor of student success and persistence to complete a degree. Ongoing contact outside the classroom also provides strong motivation for students to perform well in your class and to participate in the broad social and intellectual life of the institution. Encourage students to come to office hours, invite groups of students for coffee or lunch, and consider participating in campus orientation and academic advising programs. See Chapter 57, “Academic Advising and Mentoring Undergraduates.” (Sources: Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993)

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Involve students in your research and scholarly activities. When you invite students to examine or contribute to your work, you are teaching them about your field, giving them a view of faculty life, and helping them feel more a part of the college community. Consider sponsoring students in independent study courses, arranging internships, and providing opportunities for undergraduates to participate in research. See Chapter 27, “Undergraduate Research.”

Help students establish departmental organizations. If your department does not have an undergraduate association, encourage students to create one. Student organizations can provide peer tutoring and advising as well as social and academic programs. In fields in which certain demographic groups have traditionally

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been underrepresented, some students may prefer to form caucuses based on their gender or cultural affinities.

Encourage students to join school organizations. Extracurricular activities give students the opportunity to make new friends, find their niche, and become part of a caring and supportive community. Students who are involved in formal social and extracurricular activities attain higher grades and are significantly less likely to leave college. (Sources: Fischer, 2007; Hernández and López, 2004–05)

Direct students to relevant campus resources. Let your students know about campus mentoring programs, workshops, support services, and resource centers.

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Students with Disabilities

Campuses and faculty are required, under federal law (the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) and most state laws, to make reasonable academic accommodations for students who have a documented disability. These accommodations are intended to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to learn, to demonstrate what they have learned, and to meet the institution's standards of intellectual rigor. When students with disabilities are provided with appropriate accommodations, other students and faculty benefit: a class functions best when all students can contribute to their fullest to the intellectual enterprise.

On most campuses a disability services office verifies a student's disability and helps faculty implement appropriate accommodations. Many accommodations are easy to provide and often benefit many other students in your class. If you have concerns about the effects of a proposed accommodation, discuss these with staff at the disability services office. As they will explain, an accommodation is not considered "reasonable" if it fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity—for example, if it substantially alters course objectives, essential course requirements, or academic standards, or if it presents undue financial or administrative hardships (Scott, 1997; Simon, 2000).

Approximately 6–9 percent of college students report having a physical, psychological, or learning disability that requires accommodation (Henderson, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Some disabilities are readily apparent, but others are not, including learning disabilities (for example, dyslexia), mild to moderate sensory deficits (low-level vision, slight hearing impairment), psychological conditions (depression, bipolar disorder, Asperger's syndrome), and chronic medical conditions (diabetes, seizure disorders, lupus, cancer, HIV).

General Strategies

Place a statement in your syllabus inviting students with disabilities to meet with you privately. Ask students to make their needs known at the beginning

of the semester so that the logistics and academic adjustments can be made in a timely manner. Here's a sample syllabus statement:

I am available to discuss privately appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Please see me as soon as possible so that we can work out the necessary arrangements. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to meet with specialists in Student Disability Services for advice and to verify eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Make an announcement in class. In addition to putting a statement in your syllabus, make a general announcement at the beginning of the term:

If you may need accommodations for any physical, psychological, or learning disability and have not yet contacted the student disability services office, please do so as soon as possible. Feel free to speak to me privately, either after class or during my office hours, about your accommodations needs.

Remember that all information about a student's disability is confidential. (Sources: Hartman-Hall and Haaga, 2002; Hodge and Preston-Sabin, 1997)

Avoid counterproductive approaches. Experts caution against the following attitudes (adapted from Aune, 2000; Bourke et al., 2000; Burgstahler, 2003; Kleege, 2002):

- being overly lenient with students with disabilities or holding different expectations for them
- viewing students with disabilities as tragic or helpless or as heroic and inspirational
- suspecting that students with disabilities wish they had the abilities they lack
- treating learning disabilities as "less real" than physical disabilities
- assuming that fairness means sameness
- viewing accommodations as preferential treatment

The University of Washington, through its DO-IT project, offers self-paced online instruction, downloadable multimedia presentations, and extensive resources to help faculty learn more about students with disabilities.

Be alert to the power of language. Listen to how students refer to their disability and follow their lead or ask them about terminology. Some will prefer phrases that mention the person first and the disability second: *students with mobility*

disabilities, people who have schizophrenia (but not people “suffering from X” or “afflicted with Y”). Others will use terms in which the disability comes first (*deaf people, blind people, disabled people*). Language that tends to offend includes euphemisms (*physically challenged, special needs*) and terms that emphasize a deficit (*hearing impaired, invalid*) or weakness (*wheelchair bound, handicapped*). But don’t worry about everyday metaphors: students who are blind “see” ideas or concepts, just as students who are deaf “hear” what someone means, and wheelchair users “walk” to class. (Sources: American Psychological Association, 1999; Gill et al., 2003; Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann, 2008; Longmore, 2003; Michalko, 2002; Olkin, 2002; Pledger, 2003)

Help students get the supplemental academic support they need. A student may have a legally mandated accommodation of an in-class aide (a note taker, sign-language interpreter, amanuensis), but these aides are not academic tutors. Students with disabilities may benefit from nonmandated services such as ongoing tutorial assistance. They may also benefit from specialized courses for students with disabilities to help them increase their knowledge and understanding of their disability, become more effective self-advocates, use appropriate assistive technology, and apply cognitive principles to become more effective self-sufficient learners. Chiba and Low (2007) describe a successful course for students with learning disorders.

Treat disability accommodations matter-of-factly as part of a broader range of ways in which you ensure effective learning and recognize all students as individuals. Consider, for instance, asking students on the first day to fill out an index card (or complete an online questionnaire) with standard contact information and additional details (like year in school and major), but also with anything they want to tell you about their personal situations that may bear on their work in the course: are they working many hours, commuting, parenting, and so on? Mentioning disability accommodations within a broader list conveys a quietly inclusive message.

Physical Access

Be attentive to classroom access. Most campus buildings have entrances that are accessible to students who use mobility aids (wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and walkers), but individual classrooms and laboratories may be less accessible—check with the room scheduling office and be prepared to request a change of rooms if a student with a mobility disability enrolls in your course. If a student with limited

mobility uses an elevator to get to your classroom, keep an eye on whether the elevator is working and arrange for a room change if repeated breakdowns occur. The scheduling office will also have a list of classrooms equipped with infrared listening systems, which work independently or in conjunction with students' hearing aids.

Observe seating needs. Students who use canes, crutches, or walkers appreciate having a seat that is close to the door and that can be reached without struggling with steps or uneven surfaces. Students who use service dogs may appreciate a corner seat. Wheelchair users need flat or ramped access and desks with enough clearance for their legs. Some students may want to sit near the front of the class to see and hear better, and some may prefer to be away from windows. Aides (lab assistants, readers) may need adjacent seating. Offer physical assistance only if a student requests help or if the need is obvious, but never touch students unless they have explicitly indicated assistance is appreciated.

Ensure access to out-of-class activities. Include students in out-of-class activities rather than suggesting alternatives. Be sensitive to questions of access when planning field trips and recommending visits to museums, attendance at off-campus lectures and dramatic presentations, and the like. Some students may need transportation assistance, special seating, frequent rest breaks, or interpretive aides or devices. The disability services office is usually the best place to start when seeking creative solutions to curriculum access issues. When scheduling office hours, if possible, avoid early morning which are sometimes hard for students to attend who rely on personal care assistants to help start their days.

Barrier-Free Learning

Follow good teaching practices. Many techniques that help students who have sensory or learning disabilities will also benefit the other students in your class. Here are some examples:

- Face the class when you are speaking. When you write on the board or narrate a slide presentation, try to avoid talking while facing the board or the screen.
- Speak clearly and at an appropriate volume and pace. Pause after important points. After you pose a question to students, pause before calling on someone for a response.

- Open each session with a brief review of the previous session and an outline of that day's topic. Conclude each session with a summary of key points.
- Present new or technical vocabulary orally and in writing.
- Describe the content of all visual aids (computer displays, board work, demonstrations). As you work at the board, narrate the procedure: "Adding all the scores and dividing by the number of scores gives us the mean" (rather than "Adding all these and dividing by that gives us this").
- Provide different ways of learning: group work, hands-on activities, individual work. Vary instructional formats so that students aren't passively listening the entire class session. At the same time be alert to problems created for some students with disabilities by varied formats. In-class writing poses difficulties for students who need amanuenses or assistive technology to complete writing assignments; students with communication impairments may not be able to participate verbally in small-group work. Consider notifying these students in advance so they can come to class with in-class work already completed.
- When making assignments, give instructions both orally and in writing.
- Give students opportunities for questions, clarification, and review.
- Provide students with frequent and ongoing feedback on their academic performance through multiple exams and reviews of early drafts of term papers.

Incorporate "universal design" principles into your course. The premise of universal design is that the everyday built environment should be equally accessible to everyone, disabled and nondisabled alike, without need for special modifications. The "curb cut" is the classic example of universal design: it is not only wheelchair-friendly but also friendly to skateboarders, rollerbladers, people pushing strollers, travelers with rolling luggage, and pedestrians using crutches, walkers, or canes. Similarly, universal instructional design aims to make the learning environment accessible to all types of learners without the need for special adaptations. For example, Keller's Personalized System of Instruction (Keller, 1968) allows students to work at their own pace, to retake tests as many times as needed to demonstrate mastery, and to learn course content through print or digital materials. Universal test design calls for tests to be constructed and administered so that accommodations are unnecessary, for example, administering exams without time limits.

Universal design in higher education views learning differences as a continuum, with students with disabilities at one end rather than as a separate or distinct group. Universal design relies on using an array of instructional materials, a variety of teaching strategies, and a flexible approach to measuring students' level of learning or knowledge. The Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Web site contains a comprehensive listing of resources which can help you implement universal design (ahead.org/resources/ud). (Sources: Belch,

2004–05; Brothen et al., 2002; Burgstahler and Cory, 2008; Scott et al., 2003; Silver et al., 1998; Sireci, 2005)

Design course Web sites that are universally accessible. Ask your campus instructional technology professionals for advice on accessible Web site design. Typical strategies include the following:

- providing auditory descriptions for all visual content and text alternatives for all audio content
- captioning all videos
- uniquely labeling all links and controls
- relying on keyboard commands in addition to clicking on images
- avoiding flashing or blinking elements (which may cause seizures in those with photosensitive epilepsy)
- offering customized options for text size, color, and contrast

Guidelines are available from the Web Accessibility Initiative (www.w3.org/WAI) which also reviews commercially available and open source software to test Web accessibility. WebAIM (www.webaim.org), created by Utah State and the Center for Persons with Disabilities, also offers resources for making Web sites accessible.

Ensure equal access to information. If you have a deaf/hard-of-hearing student in your class, when you show films, videos, or DVDs make sure they are open- or closed-captioned whenever possible. Provide electronic versions of print handouts so that students can use screen readers and assistive technology to create a more accessible version. To the extent possible, select textbooks, reading materials, journal articles, and newspaper articles that are available in digital format as well as print. For information on making course materials and collaboration tools (discussion boards, chat rooms, videoconferencing) accessible, see Barstow et al., 2002. Most campuses have resources to help pay the cost of transferring information from hard copy to an alternative medium.

Provide captioners or sign language interpreters with terms and names in advance. Whenever possible, provide a written list of technical terms and proper names you will use in class to ensure that they are spelled correctly. As appropriate, provide a copy of your notes before class begins. Become familiar with accessible technologies.

Ask your campus disability services office about personal and classroom accessible technologies. Personal devices include voice-recognition software, modified keyboards, mouthsticks and headwands, screen magnifiers, speech synthesizers,

Braille or large-print output devices, screen-reading programs, and personal information managers. Classroom accessible technology may include real-time captioning, whereby captioners transcribe lectures and discussions to a computer screen that students read at their desks in real time. (The captioners need not be present in the classroom as long as they can hear what is going on.) Trained keyboarders using technologies such as C-Print (www.ntid.rit.edu/cprint) transcribe lectures in real time and project the results on a laptop screen for the individual student or onto a classroom screen for the entire class to view; these transcriptions benefit students who have difficulty hearing and also students whose first language is not English. The notes can be posted on a course Web site after class.

Wear a cordless microtransmitter, if asked. Students who cannot take notes and need to record class sessions and students who use assistive listening devices may ask you to wear a cordless microphone. When you do so, remember to describe the visual elements of your presentation (computer displays, board work, demonstrations). If you are concerned about a student's reuse of the course material, ask the student to sign an agreement not to make copies of the recordings, not to share the recordings with others, and to erase the recordings at the end of the term.

Provide pointers on how to master the material. Advice can be helpful to all students, not just those with disabilities. Consider the following teaching strategies (adapted from Stage and Milne, 1996; Swanson and Hoskyn, 1998; Tincani, 2004):

- List key objectives for the week's readings.
- When lecturing, use advance organizers that build on what students already know and provide the context for new information.
- When lecturing, make easily recognizable the step-by-step progression from subtopic to subtopic.
- Use concrete examples and visual demonstrations to reinforce learning.
- Review effective study strategies such as underlining important concepts, constantly reviewing the material, blocking out time for studying, spending time in the library in a study atmosphere, and setting goals on a short-term daily checklist.
- Distribute practice test questions for midterms and finals.
- Encourage students to form study groups that meet outside of class.

Make reading lists available in advance. Students who rely on readers or need Braille, large-print, computer disks, or tape-recorded versions of books and

articles will appreciate as much notice as possible. By midsemester these students hope to obtain the reading lists for the courses they anticipate taking the following term.

Class Participation

Arrange for classroom participation or an alternative activity. Students whose disability prevents them from raising their hand to answer or ask questions may feel isolated or ignored in class. During your first private meeting with such a student, ask how he or she wishes to be recognized in the classroom. Some students will want to be called on; others may wish to make other arrangements for getting their questions answered. Students whose disability prevents them from reading aloud or answering questions in class may wish to develop alternatives.

Address the student, not the aide. When talking to a student who has an assistant, briefly greet and acknowledge the assistant's presence but look at and address the student. If you are engaging in more than a quick exchange with a student who uses a wheelchair, pull up a chair, sit down, and talk at eye level (but do not lean on, touch, or push the wheelchair unless you are asked to).

Actively moderate all class discussions. As needed, repeat students' comments or questions and identify the speaker. Try to ensure that only one student speaks at a time. Listen attentively when a student with a speech disability is speaking; do not finish a student's sentences or interrupt. If you are having difficulty understanding a student, repeat what you have understood and ask the student to confirm, repeat, or rephrase.

Give alternatives for oral presentations, as needed. Oral presentations may pose difficulties for students who have a speech disability. Some students will want to give their presentations without assistance, but others may want the help of an interpreter. Still others may want to write out their presentation and ask an interpreter or another student to read it to the class.

Exams

Be attentive to the format of exams. Exams are supposed to measure students' knowledge or mastery of course content, but the format of an exam inevitably tests other skills as well. For example, success on a print test depends on visual-processing

capabilities, success on an essay test depends on fine-motor skills, and success on an oral exam depends on auditory-processing skills. When a student's disability interferes with his or her opportunity to demonstrate mastery, an accommodation may be needed. (Sources: Barstow et al., 2002; Brinckerhoff et al., 2002)

Design print exams for universal access. The Disabled Students' Program at the University of California at Berkeley recommends the following:

- Use a large, dark font, and double-space or triple-space between test items.
- Avoid cramming too many questions or math problems on a single page.
- Group similar types of items together (for example, true-false, short answer) with extra space between types.
- If possible, eliminate matching items that are difficult to read aloud or on tape.
- As appropriate, allow students to circle answers on the test rather than fill in ovals on a Scantron sheet.

Provide appropriate test-taking conditions. The disability services office may authorize one or more of the following accommodations:

- an aide to read the test aloud or to write down the student's dictated answers
- a large-print version of the test
- a room that has better lighting, fewer distractions, or special technology
- an extended exam period, with or without scheduled breaks
- the option of substituting an oral exam for a written exam, or a written exam for an oral exam, or a multiple-choice exam for an essay exam

Grade exams as you usually do. When students receive accommodations for taking an exam, there is no need to extend leniency to grading. Of course, grading students more harshly because they had, say, the "advantage" of extra time would nullify the effect of the accommodation.

Laboratory Courses

Review safety and evacuation procedures. Ask your campus facilities office about adding auditory or visual emergency warning systems as needed.

As needed, adjust the furniture, equipment, and experiments. Give students a tour of the lab and ask what accommodations might be necessary. Consult with your campus facilities office for guidelines and temporary adjustments—for example, how to make counters, sinks, equipment, and fume hoods accessible to students who use wheelchairs. Adaptive lab equipment such as talking thermometers, tactile timers, tactile syringes, and light probes may make it possible for students with visual disabilities to conduct lab experiments. Providing C-clamps for holding objects and single-action-lever controls in place of knobs can be helpful to students who have mobility disabilities. Labeling equipment, tools, and materials can be helpful to students with learning disabilities. For detailed advice, see the University of Washington DO-IT Web site on “Science Labs.”

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Provide a personal lab assistant. A faculty-selected personal lab assistant familiar with lab procedures can help students carry out tasks they would otherwise be unable to accomplish. (Source: Pence et al., 2003)

Consider alternative arrangements. You may be able to adapt lab exercises and experiments to accommodate a student’s disability by substituting easier-to-use equipment, by structuring some lab assignments as group work, or by providing a lab assistant. (Source: Womble and Walker, 2001)

Explore virtual lab experiments. Some students may benefit from performing experiments online, where the levels of dexterity and strength are less demanding than in a lab. (Source: Martínez-Jiménez et al., 2003)

49a62777 Behavioral Risk Assessment ebrary

Be alert for worrisome behavior. The transition to college life may be particularly stressful for students with disabilities. These difficulties are compounded when students choose not to take their medication. If you are concerned about a student’s behavior—acting out, severe withdrawal, or excessively violent or bizarre writing—consult with campus counseling experts for best next steps. Mental health experts offer these recommendations (adapted from Cohen, 2007):

- Be specific as possible with the student in stating your observations and reasons for concern.
- Let the student discuss his or her feelings and thoughts.
- Avoid criticizing or making judgments.

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- Listen carefully and, as necessary, confirm your understanding by repeating what the student has said.
- Do not try to counsel the student. Make a referral to your campus counseling center, or schedule an appointment by phone while the student is in your office.
- If a student resists referral, contact your counseling service and express your concerns.

Try to distinguish between psychological distress and rebellious behavior or an active imagination. In their attire and conduct, college students are experimenting with new roles and attitudes. Not every student who wears sunglasses indoors and sits alone in the back row is in need of counseling. Similarly, not every short story that features mayhem and violence is a symptom of psychosis. Sometimes, though, dramatic behavior is a cry for help or a cry for attention, and these should not be ignored. In particular, threats directed at any member of the campus community should be immediately addressed by bringing the issue to your department chair. The Virginia Tech English department has developed a helpful guide for instructors called “Responding to Disturbing Creative Writing” (available on the Virginia Tech Web site) which describes steps to take when a student’s creative work raises concerns.

Deal directly with students’ extreme emotional states. Experts at University of California at Berkeley’s Counseling and Psychological Services make these recommendations:

- Maintain a poised, not fearful, posture, and place yourself behind a table or chair or near an exit, if possible.
- Speak in a calm, matter-of-fact tone.
- Limit interaction: don’t press for explanations; don’t argue; don’t become hostile or punitive.
- State instructions and consequences clearly; repeat as necessary.

Discuss your concerns with others on campus. If you fear that a student poses a danger to self or others, alert your department chair or dean. If your campus has a behavioral risk assessment team, contact them as well.

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Reentry and Transfer Students

Reentry students (often defined as students twenty-five years and older who have not attended school for at least two years) and transfer students constitute more than half the undergraduate student body nationwide (Bash, 2003). Despite their numbers, reentry and transfer students may feel out of step with students who started on campus as freshmen.

Compared to younger students, reentry students tend to be more motivated and to bring a more practical, problem-solving orientation to learning; they often treat their professors as peers; and they are usually clearer about their educational goals (Bean and Metzner, 1985; Bishop-Clark and Lynch, 1992). Most reentry students arrive with work-related goals (Aslanian, 2001; Hagedorn, 2005), and they tend to outperform younger students in the classroom (Hagedorn, 2005; Richardson and King, 1998). Faculty have described reentry students as highly motivated and excited about learning (Giczkowski, 1992), and their presence and participation can considerably enrich the educational experiences of all students.

Some transfer students are also older (Cohen and Braver, 2002), but the average age of transfer students has been declining (Adelman, 2005). At the same time, the number of transfer students attending four-year schools has been rising. Contrary to stereotypes, students transferring from two-year schools can be the academic equals of their third-year classmates at the destination school.

One common challenge for transfer students, regardless of age, is the culture shock they feel on a new campus with a different (often less teaching-focused) system of instruction and where they have few friends or extracurricular ties (Bingham-Newman and Hopkins, 2004). They may feel less connected to the campus and to their classmates.

The suggestions on the following pages can help you meet the challenges and opportunities of working with reentry and transfer students.

General Strategies

Avoid stereotyping your students. For example, do not make assumptions about your students' academic abilities based on their status as reentry or transfer

students and avoid considering them a homogeneous group with the same challenges, values, attitudes, or goals. (Source: Donaldson and Townsend, 2007)

Be aware of the dynamics between younger and older students. In general, both younger and older students view the mixed-age classroom as a positive experience. Help students appreciate each other's viewpoints and help them recognize how different perspectives enliven and enrich discussions. (Sources: Howard et al., 1996; Lynch and Bishop-Clark, 1993)

Help students make the transition to a four-year college. Older students who have never attended college or who did poorly in college the first time around may feel nervous about their academic abilities. Help these students feel comfortable in your classroom by offering reassurance and expressing confidence in their skills. (Source: Ross-Gordon, 2003)

Be sensitive to students' logistical constraints. Many reentry students are juggling family responsibilities, job commitments, social and community obligations, and commuting. Attending field trips and weekend or evening activities may pose special problems for these students, and commuting students may have limited access to campus resources, labs, and tutorial services. As appropriate, try to develop online resources that can surmount logistical problems.

Creating Connections

Encourage students to participate in campus life. All students thrive when they feel comfortable and connected to the intellectual life of the campus. Make efforts to help your students feel a part of campus life, and encourage reentry and transfer students to network and problem-solve with one another. As appropriate, help students make contact with other faculty and staff. Small groups, discussions, and other interactive strategies can foster peer connections. (Source: Donaldson et al., 2000; Ross-Gordon, 2003)

Help reentry and transfer students find on-campus jobs. Approximately 50 percent of four-year college students and 80 percent of two-year college students work part-time. Research shows that those who work on campus, rather than off campus, tend to be more satisfied with their undergraduate experience and tend to feel more connected to the campus—two factors that lead to higher graduation rates. (Source: Astin, 1993; Kodama, 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005)

Help transfer students with recommendations. Transfer students are at a disadvantage because they have a shorter time to build relationships with their instructors, which lay the basis for a recommendation to graduate school or career opportunity. Be open to writing recommendations for these students.

Teaching Practices

Emphasize teaching practices known to be especially effective with adult learners. These good teaching practices will help all students: presenting material clearly, being well organized, creating a comfortable learning environment, adapting to students' diverse needs, incorporating active learning strategies into the course, and demonstrating concern for students' learning. (Source: Donaldson et al., 1993)

Adopt participatory pedagogical styles. All students benefit from active learning strategies, but older students are less likely to tolerate being lectured to; they will want to interact, discuss, ask questions, and experiment. (Source: Wircenski et al., 1999)

Incorporate group work into instruction. The life experiences of reentry students can enrich classroom discussion by providing examples that illustrate theories and general principles. Capitalize on these resources by assigning collaborative learning activities that permit students to work together in small groups.

Take advantage of reentry students' capacity for self-direction. Most reentry students are used to working independently and autonomously. Opportunities for independent study and choices in assignments acknowledge and reinforce these students' learning abilities and styles. See Chapter 27, "Undergraduate Research." (Source: Ross-Gordon, 2003)

Vary the way you present course content. When working with traditional-age students, one business professor finds it most effective to introduce a new concept or idea by first discussing the theory and then presenting some applications. With older students, in contrast, he finds that they become more engaged when he begins with the applications and then moves to the theory. (Source: Watkins, 1990)

Returning Veterans

Avoid stereotyping veterans. Some veterans have seen combat, others have not. Some veterans have political views that differ from the majority of students on

campus, others do not. Some have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, others do not. In other words, do not make assumptions about a student's experiences, values, or mental health based solely on his or her military service.

Help veterans cope with culture shock and make the transition to college life.

Returning to campus life after active duty may leave students feeling out of place, disconnected, or anxious about their academic performance or the possibility of being redeployed. Be patient with students as they adjust to new circumstances and, as needed, encourage them to take advantage of campus support services such as tutoring and counseling. Some veterans may be worried about competing academically. Help them see their strengths and resiliency, and let them know you have confidence in their ability to succeed. Experts who work with veterans at the University of Texas, University of California at Berkeley, and University of Minnesota also make the following recommendations for veterans entering college:

- Limit the number of units each term to a reasonable course load or seek a reduced load.
- Get involved in school activities or organizations to connect to the larger campus community and build a support network.
- Limit exposure to traumatic information from news outlets.
- Volunteer on or off campus in activities of interest.
- Follow a daily schedule to stay organized.

Become familiar with campus support services. Your campus may have a veterans office that can help returning military personnel find tutors, arrange for work-study employment, make connections with local veterans groups, and advise about campus and military paperwork. Veterans who have a disability are entitled to services from your campus's disability programs. For advice on students with disabilities, see Chapter 6, "Students with Disabilities."

Respect students' privacy. Some students may prefer that others do not know about their military service. Some may mention their service to an instructor but not to other students because they do not want to risk being stereotyped or they do not want to be asked about their experiences.

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Teaching Academically Diverse Students

Many undergraduate classes—especially large introductory and survey courses—include students who have a range of academic abilities, interests, skills, and goals. For instructors, the goal is to prevent the stronger students from becoming bored or frustrated and yet to avoid overwhelming the weaker students. The suggestions below are intended to help you meet the needs of both groups.

General Strategies

Determine what preparation students need before enrolling in your course.

Analyze how your course relates to lower-level and higher-level courses in your department. In your course description and syllabus and during the first class meeting, be clear about what knowledge or skills students must already possess in order to succeed in your course.

Give students a pretest to help them determine whether they are prepared for your course.

At the first class meeting, give an in-class or online pretest, ask for a writing sample, or make an introductory assignment that covers the material you expect students to know. Direct inadequately prepared students to other courses or resources, or assign them supplementary work early in the term. If underprepared students want to enroll, remind them that they are responsible for catching up.

Teach to the level you expect students to reach.

For most undergraduate classes, you will want to teach at the level of the B student. When in doubt, it is better to overestimate rather than underestimate the level of the class. Students tend to learn more when a course is conducted just above their comfort level. (Source: Lucas, 1990)

Course Structure

Prepare a reading list that reflects the academic diversity of the class. Your reading list could include three sections: background reading for students who need to review or acquire skills or knowledge to succeed in class; basic reading

essential to the course; and in-depth reading, grouped by topic, for students who wish to delve deeper.

Offer a “cafeteria menu” of assignments. Allow students to choose various combinations of assignments—each worth a specified number of points, reflecting the difficulty or time required—to meet the course requirements. Weaker students may prefer to submit a larger number of shorter or easier assignments, while stronger students may choose to do one or two longer, more complex assignments.

Encourage students to learn from each other. Help students organize study groups of five or six members; see Chapter 21, “Learning in Groups.” Or assign partners to work on projects: the stronger student will develop skills in explaining and analyzing material, and the struggling student will benefit from the peer tutoring. You might also encourage students to exchange drafts with classmates for peer editing; see Chapter 34, “Helping Students Write Better in All Courses.”

Do not grade on a curve. Grading on a curve disadvantages the less well-prepared students. Instead, grade students on clearly defined criteria. See Chapter 44, “Calculating and Assigning Grades.”

Monitoring Students’ Learning

Arrive early for class. Use the time before class to chat with students about how well they are understanding the material and to answer questions they may have from the last session or from the homework.

Ask questions during class. Asking questions about key concepts and ideas will help you judge whether students are keeping up or falling behind. Have students give definitions, associations, and applications of the ideas, or ask students to name two or three key concepts or main ideas from the day’s session. See Chapter 32, “Informally Assessing Students’ Learning.”

Be aware of who is talking in class. Do the stronger students tend to dominate the discussion? If so, be sure to direct your comments and questions to the entire class, and ask follow-up questions of all students; see Chapter 9, “Leading a Discussion.”

Watch for nonverbal cues. If you see students having trouble taking notes or sitting with blank or quizzical looks on their faces, stop and say, “I seem to be losing some of you; let me explain this point another way.”

Helping Students Who Are Having Difficulty

Early in the course, identify students who are struggling. If you give a quiz or test during the first two or three weeks, you and your students will know how well they are doing. Watch class attendance as well. When students feel lost or overwhelmed by a course, they may stay away.

Ask to see students whose papers or tests are weak. At the top of the assignment, issue an encouraging invitation: “I have some advice that will help you do better work. See me during my office hours.” (Source: Eaton and Sleigh, 2003)

Try to determine the source of difficulty. When 250 students on academic probation were asked to name the source of their problems, inadequate academic preparation was not among these top ten answers: procrastination, missed class, stress, lack of time management, lack of motivation, lack of study skills, test-taking problems, poor study environment, inadequate study time, and inability to concentrate. Some of these problems are, of course, beyond your control, but you might be able to help procrastinators and students with poor time management skills by adding more structure or intermediate deadlines to assignments. Other struggling students may benefit from a referral to the campus tutoring center. (Source: Kamphoff, n.d.)

Prepare supplementary materials. If some students find the assigned readings too challenging, recommend other texts that explain the concepts in a different way. Prepare or call attention to glossaries that include short definitions and examples.

Hold review sessions during office hours. Instead of slowing the pace of the class, invite students who are having trouble with a particular topic to meet for a group review during your office hours; schedule a classroom if your office is too small.

Show students how to do the tasks you set for the class. Struggling students are unlikely to benefit from broad admonitions to work harder. Often they need advice on specific skills (how to read a journal article critically, how to move from topic to thesis when writing a paper). Give students suggestions on four topics: reading text material for comprehension and retention, taking and reviewing notes, studying and the amount of time to spend studying, and preparing for exams. (Source: Forsyth, 2003)

Distribute copies of good papers or lab reports. Circulating copies of good (B or B+) but not outstanding work helps students understand your standards and expectations. Students can also compare their work against the models. Always obtain permission from students before distributing their work.

Encourage graduate students or advanced undergraduates to mentor younger students. Older, more advanced students, especially those who have overcome academic difficulties of their own, can help first-year students work through problems related to time management and study habits. (Source: Bartlett, 2004)

Encouraging Your Best Students

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Prepare supplementary materials. Give your best students opportunities for special assignments such as recommended readings, additional papers, or fieldwork. Even those who do not follow through will appreciate the extra attention.

Use office hours for advanced exploration of a topic. During an office hour, provide a group of students with an in-depth analysis of a topic that was covered only briefly in class. Suggest follow-up independent study. For students who wish to pursue specific topics in more detail, recommend enrollment in an independent research course the following term.

Engage your best students in research. See Chapter 27: “Undergraduate Research.”

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