

## Inclusive teaching practices

*This is extra material for the peer-learning activity of module 4. Print the following pages (copies: number of participants / 5) and cut on the lines so that each practice becomes an individual card to distribute among participants.*

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### Content warnings

Content or trigger warnings are what forecasts are for rain; they prepare us to weather distressing experiences. In a higher education context, these warnings allow students to choose if and how to engage with the course content, such as by employing emotional management skills, refraining from a discussion or leaving the classroom. Common content/trigger warnings can for example related to abuse, violence, sexual assault, war, suicide, mental health struggles, poverty, racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism/misogyny, religious persecution (i.e. islamophobia, anti-Semitism), and more.

*Do you, or would you use content/trigger warnings in your classes? For who would these warnings be important and how could they contribute to a more inclusive learning environment?*

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### Diverse representation and perspectives in curriculums

When students see a range of people, voices and perspectives reflected in course materials, it can not only foster a sense of belonging but also a more critical awareness and a broad social impact. For example, the medical illustrations of Chidiebere Ibe—which feature Black bodies—challenge the longstanding Eurocentric bias in medical imagery, which has traditionally depicted only lighter-skinned patients. His viral illustration of a Black fetus in the womb sparked global discussions on the need for inclusive medical imagery and equitable healthcare education. By incorporating diverse representations, Ibe's illustrations help improve medical education, ensuring that students and professionals can recognize how various conditions appear on darker skin.

*What might diverse representation look like in your discipline? What bodies, lived experiences and perspectives are dominant in your curriculum, and which may be underrepresented? What could be the impact of diversifying your curriculum?*

## **Recognizing and challenging stereotypes in teaching materials**

The materials we use in classrooms—readings, case studies, examples, and media—can shape students’ understanding of the world. Sometimes, these materials reinforce stereotypes by portraying certain groups in limited or biased ways. For example, history textbooks may emphasize Eurocentric narratives while minimizing non-Western and Indigenous perspectives, or literature selections might predominantly feature male protagonists or heteronormative narratives. Underrepresented groups may not be represented or appear only in negative, stereotypical ways.

By actively evaluating course content, educators can work toward presenting more accurate, balanced, and inclusive materials. This might include diversifying reading lists, analyzing whose perspectives are missing, and encouraging students to critically examine representations in media and textbooks.

*What stereotypical representations do you come across in your discipline? What are some ways to identify and address stereotypes in your teaching materials?*

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## **Diverse means of engagement, learning and assessment**

Not all students learn in the same way. Providing varied ways to access and engage with material—such as readings, videos, discussions, or hands-on activities—can make learning more inclusive. For everyone, but especially for neurodivergent students (e.g., those with ADHD, dyslexia, autism), flexible approaches can help reduce cognitive load and increase engagement. Strategies like respecting different social needs, offering both visualized as textual content, or allowing movement-based learning can support diverse cognitive styles. Additionally, traditional exams work well for some but can be a barrier for others. Allowing students to select from different project formats (e.g., written essay, podcast, infographic) to demonstrate learning might provide more equitable opportunities.

*How do you already implement diverse and flexible means of engagement and assessment in your classes? Where may there be room for improvement?*

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## **Inclusive language**

Language shapes the way we perceive the world and interact with others. In the classroom, the words we use can either create an environment of inclusion and respect, or unintentionally reinforce exclusion and bias. Inclusive language acknowledges and affirms diverse identities, experiences, and abilities, making all students feel seen and valued.

For example, using gender-neutral terms like ‘everyone’ instead of ‘ladies and gentlemen’ respects students of all gender identities. Recognizing that terms evolve—such as shifting from ‘illegal immigrant’ to ‘undocumented person’, or shifting adopting culturally sensitive terminology—helps ensure language remains humanizing and respectful. Encouraging students to introduce themselves with their pronouns and learning correct name pronunciation are simple yet powerful ways to model inclusivity.

*What inclusive languages practices do you already actively implement in and around the classroom? What are some other ways we can adapt our language practices to reflect inclusivity?*