

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Nneka Eke, B. López, & Rose Bell

Syracuse University

**Abstract:** In this session we address issues related to creating an inclusive learning space for all. We cover the following topics:  
Intersectionality through a discussion of ethnic, racial (recognizing race as a socio-cultural construct with real impacts), cultural/national, gender, sexuality, religious and socioeconomic diversity and how these differences affect students and TAs in the classroom.

Tools that will help TAs engage with different identities, perspectives, and backgrounds.

Strategies to create a space in which all students can learn, think critically, and express their views.

We prepare TAs to engage with some situations they may encounter, so that they can actively apply these tools and strategies.

We aim to help TAs think carefully about these issues, so that they can work to create an inclusive atmosphere from the beginning, as well as be prepared to “think on their feet” and deal with any conflicts that might arise.

## OVERVIEW



### INCLUSIVITY

Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept

### IDENTITIES

Respect all identities in the classroom

### RESOURCES

Best ideas come from collaboration

# CONCEPTS

**Diversity (one example of this term):** refers to all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used, but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. (Diversity and Social Justice Glossary)

**Critical Diversity:** Critical diversity focuses on "unearthing existing unequal power relations in organizations" (Pullen, Vachhani, Gagnon, and Cornelius 2012)

**Race & Ethnicity:** On campus and in their lives more generally, students may face discrimination and other challenges related to their racial and ethnic identity. The very fact of being the only, or one of few, students of a certain racial or ethnic identity in a classroom or on campus can itself be a significant source of stress. It is important to be considerate of challenges international students may face navigating the U.S. classroom, language, and cultural norms more generally.

**Gender:** Gender is a set of socially constructed, assigned behaviors and identity patterns which are often perceived to be intertwined with and/or equivalent to one's sexual biology. Gender is constructed and fluid, having multiple meanings across cultures, geographies, communities, and individuals. Although society promotes the dualistic concept that people are either a woman or a man, there are more than two genders.

**Sexual Orientation:** It is important to be aware of the prejudice and challenges LGBTQ students may face on campus, as well as the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment on college campuses, disproportionately affecting women and trans folks.

**Religion:** Students' religious practices, or lack thereof, should be respected. This includes religious manner of dress, beliefs, and allowances for students' absences for religious holidays and time of prayer, in accordance with university policy.

**Socioeconomic/Class Background:** Students at Syracuse University come from many different socio-economic/class backgrounds. This may impact students' ability to afford textbooks, technology and other educational materials. It affects students having anxiety about money and resources, and over-stretched from having to work in addition to studying, as well as influencing their worldview/embodied privilege and interaction with other students or instructors.

**Ability/Disability:** Disability may manifest in students in physical, cognitive, developmental, or intellectual ways. Ensuring that your teaching utilizes a wide variety of multi-modal formats will assist in remaining accessible to students who may benefit from different formats. Having knowledge of and supporting students in utilizing the university policy in regards to learning disabilities and the office of disability services is essential.

# RESOURCES

## On campus

**International Services:** <http://international.syr.edu>

**LGBT Resource Center:** <http://lgbt.syr.edu>

**Office of Multicultural Affairs:** <http://multicultural.syr.edu>

**Financial Aid Office:** <http://financialaid.syr.edu>

**Accessibility and Diversity & Office of Disability**

**Services:** <https://www.syracuse.edu/life/accessibility-diversity/> & <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>

## From Powerpoint

**"Understanding intersectionality is critical to advancing educational equity for all"**

• <http://www.swiftschools.org/talk/understanding-intersectionality-critical-advancing-educational-equity-all>

**"Teaching at the Intersections"**

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/teaching-at-the-intersections>

**"How to Start a Revolution: Use Intersectionality as a Framework to Promote Student Success"**

<http://www.myacpa.org/blogs/senior-scholar-blog/how-start-revolution-use-intersectionality-framework-promote-student>

**"Toward Inclusive STEM Classrooms: What Personal Role Do Faculty Play?"**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5008899/>

**"The Need for a Gender-Neutral Pronoun"**

<https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/tag/ze-and-zir>

**Sarah Ahmed**

2012. "The Language of Diversity", On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life, Sara Ahmed

**Examples of Discussion Guidelines**

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines>