



Cultivating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the GSB Classroom



The following ideas for cultivating DEI in the classroom come from faculty presentations and student panel events held in Spring 2022. Here are their insights, perspectives, and actionable tips that may be adapted and implemented in your course. We recommend focusing on a couple that you think might be most relevant to your teaching. Reach out to us at the Teaching and Learning Hub if you'd like any support (<http://tiny.cc/TLHubContactUs>).

View the entire April 13 faculty panel discussion *Cultivating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the GSB Classroom* here: <http://tiny.cc/Apr13DEIShowcase>

Prefer to view this online? Check out this resource on our website.
<http://tiny.cc/CultivatingDEI>



Create an Inclusive Environment

Cultivating a higher level of engagement among all students is a core goal for high-impact learning. Below are some promising practices faculty have shared that bolstered high engagement and inclusivity in their classes.

- **Share a few relatable details about yourself** in the first class to build community.
- **Acknowledge the diversity in the room** and the varied perspectives each student brings. Here's how Associate Professor of Marketing Szu-chi Huang expresses this to her class:
We need to keep in mind that we as human beings are coming from different backgrounds, and we will respond to things differently. I want to hear all kinds of perspectives because they all matter.
- **Clearly outline your expectations** for honest and open participation in class discussions.
- **Consider implementing Warm Calls.** Unlike cold calls, warm calls give students time to think and prepare more deeply. You can do this by emailing students ahead of class, letting them know verbally at the beginning of class, or writing names of people on the board who will be called on that day. You can decide if you want to assign a specific question to individuals or let them know it could be any of the pre-assigned study questions. Either way, make your expectations clear.
- **Take a moment at the start of class to review previous content** and make connections to what you're covering today. This helps students warm up to the topic and begin to formulate their thoughts ahead of the discussion.
- **Ensure everyone is called on** within the first few classes of the quarter as it can lower the barrier for students to continue to participate throughout the quarter. Here is how Associate Professor of Political Economy Kate Casey makes a point to include everyone early in the course:
My basic goal is to get everybody to make at least one comment in the first few sessions. I do this in two ways. I use a random number generator at the start to get a list of 10 or 15 names per session... After the first few sessions, I switch to purposely calling on people who haven't said anything yet. So, my goal is that everybody's on the board [to be called on], maybe by session four.
- **Leverage your course assistant (CA), if you have one, to track who is getting called on** to identify participation patterns and to capture what contributions are being made. This can help you discover if you are missing potential blind spots when calling on students and aid in grading participation.
- **Reach out and check-in with students who have lower in-class participation** to encourage them to engage further and determine how you can best support them.
- **Consider offering alternative ways to participate and receive credit** such as through written responses to in-class discussions, feedback for peers on group presentations, or weekly surveys on course content. This can be a way to include students who may not be as comfortable speaking out in class.
- **Be explicit about how you are grading participation** so that students coming from different cultural norms and backgrounds have a better understanding of what participation means in your classroom.

- **Ask students to record their names** in Name Coach (found in Axess) to help with learning the correct pronunciation. This platform will automatically sync with Canvas making it easy for you and your teaching team to learn how to say your students' names. Revisit again halfway through the course to keep yourself familiar (and avoid inadvertently settling on a mispronunciation).
- **Consider occasionally forming groups and teams that diversify students across their experiences and backgrounds** to allow for cross-learning on small tasks or case studies, balancing out the times where you may want teams to self-form based on project preferences.
- **Recognize students for their efforts and contributions** as it can be motivating and helps cultivate continued strong efforts in class. For example, you can reach out to students to acknowledge a particularly great point that they made during class.
- **Use inclusive and gender-neutral language**, preferred pronouns, and terms such as 'partner' that don't make assumptions about relationships. Additionally, sharing your own preferred pronouns can signify you're open to others sharing theirs.
- **Explicitly state that you welcome open discussions** about your students' GSB experiences, and not just class-focused topics, during your office hours.

Diversify Course Content and Guest Speakers

Course content becomes even more meaningful when students feel connected to examples of industry leaders, guest speakers, or case protagonists who are featured in your course.

- **Seek opportunities to supplement your course content with examples representing people of diverse backgrounds.** Assistant Professor of Operations, Information & Technology Jann Spiess has approached this by highlighting the contributions of women and underrepresented minorities to the field of statistics. He also leverages the fact that he's teaching in the Winter Quarter to highlight Black History Month and International Women's Day.

- **Be authentic and open, acknowledging you may not be an expert,** and that you are willing to learn. Here is what Jann Spiess has said about this:

I struggled a bit with how I should even go about talking about these topics, especially as somebody who is white, who is a man, and whose native language isn't English. I never quite know which terms to use and how to use them. In the beginning, I shied away from having any discussions, but I decided it is too important to not do it. I try to be authentic about it even if I don't have the right words.

- **Bring in founders of diverse backgrounds as guest speakers.**

Student Quote: It's good to have the big CEOs be people who look like us a bit more. I think it's kind of frustrating when we don't see people from diverse backgrounds because it sends a message that maybe we don't have the right look to be in one of these positions.

- **Increase the pool of guests with diverse backgrounds by mixing in remote visits via Zoom.**

Student Quote: Instructors do a great job of facilitating, so I think we can still have really great discussions over Zoom.

- **Share with guests the strategies you use to be inclusive during discussions** so that they can continue the trend during the Q&A portion of their visit. Also, share with guests why you care they are inclusive when they call on students.
- **Work with your guest speakers to create open and inclusive opportunities** for students to connect and network with them. You might suggest drop-in lunches open to all students in your class to attend.
- While you're planning your guest's visit, **invite them to openly share with your students any unique challenges** they may have faced on their professional journey.
- **Invite student feedback on guests' content after each session** to discover what's working and what may still be missing from the student experience.

Manage Sensitive Moments and Hot Button Topics

Sensitive topics can be extremely diverse and may reach your classroom whether you initiate them or not. Below are some strategies you can use to handle sensitive moments when they arise.

When a sensitive topic comes up unexpectedly

- **Acknowledge difficult topics in the moment they arise.**
- **Decide** whether you are ready and willing to engage with the topic now.
- **Acknowledge the value of having a discussion, but you can defer** until you have a plan or dedicated class time to address it.

When discussions about a sensitive topic are planned

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION:

- **Allow enough time for the discussion** and share this planned time frame with your students at the outset of the discussion.
- **Employ content notices**, cautionary statements that are spoken or printed, to alert students to the sensitive nature of material that will be seen, read, or discussed in class. Content notices are *not* intended to permit students to skip class or censor your material, but rather to give students the time to make use of the strategies that will decrease the harmfulness of encountering triggering material.
Student Quote: I found that when we generally preview the next case at the end of class, it is super helpful, especially if acknowledging the reasons why this topic is important and explaining how we're going to be developing the skills in how to talk about it.
- **Plan what you will say** to be supportive when you initiate the topic and to close the discussion.

DURING THE DISCUSSION:

- **Establish ground rules.** Urge students to speak for themselves and listen to each other, taking care to respect each other and the value of constructive discussion.
- **Expect the topic to stir emotions.** Be attentive to the human and emotional toll it is taking and the impact of information disseminated by you and others.
- **Explicitly acknowledge the difference in the types of comments** made during the discussion (emotional, informational, analytical).
- Allow everyone a chance to talk (when possible), but **don't force students to participate.**

- **Be a learning partner with your students.** If someone unexpectedly disagrees with a point you've made, approach their statement with curiosity and model openness to your students.

CLOSING THE DISCUSSION:

- **Be sure to have a strategy for bringing the discussion to a close**, such as making a connection to the class content or simply acknowledging the sensitive topic is significant.
- Make sure students are aware of **Stanford University support resources** available to them.

Contact Us

Looking to implement or adapt any of these tips on creating an inclusive classroom, diversifying course content, or managing sensitive topics for your courses? The Teaching and Learning Hub is here to help.

<http://tiny.cc/TLHubContactUs>

