

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING "MINORITY STUDENTS" <sup>(8)</sup>**

- Give "minority" students equal attention in class, and equal access to advising outside class. Don't overlook capable but less experienced students.
- Give "minority" students equal amounts of helpful and honest criticism. Don't prejudge students' capabilities.
- Revise curricula if necessary to include different kinds of racial and cultural experiences, and to include them in more than just stereotypical ways.
- Monitor classroom dynamics to ensure that "minority" students do not become isolated.
- Vary the structure of the course to include more than just individual and abstract modes of learning.
- Don't call on "minority" students as "spokespersons" for their group.
- Recognize and acknowledge the history and emotions your students may bring to class.
- Respond to non-academic experiences, such as racial incidents, that may affect classroom performance.

NOTE: The general principles and specific strategies listed here often echo those for gender. Such repetition permits you to read each handbook section separately. In addition, such similarity illustrates how the problems and solutions for each group mirror one another in fundamental ways. Thus various sections are finally not separate, but mesh together to form a general system of responsive teaching.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES: STUDENTS WITH MINORITY STATUS<sup>(9)</sup>**

	<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>MODERATE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>ADVANCED STRATEGIES</b>
<b>CRITERIA</b>		<p>Teach your students not only "what," but also "so what?"</p> <p>Don't assume a certain level of experience.</p> <p>Show your students what it means to be in your field.</p>	
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p>Don't ask students to give the "minority" point of view of a subject.</p> <p>Don't underestimate student responses that indicate an emotional investment.</p> <p>Be honest about your own ideas and convictions.</p> <p>Don't shorten or change students' names without permission.</p> <p>Learn the order and pronunciation of students' names and use these names when calling on them.</p>	<p>Move, or use a procedure that will make students move, if you find that certain students always sit together and participate less.</p> <p>If some students hesitate to speak up in class, let them contribute first in small groups.</p>	

<p><b>LECTURE</b></p>	<p>Avoid falsely inclusive or exclusive terms. Don't say "women" if you mean only certain types of women, or "all Americans" if you mean only certain Americans.</p> <p>Use examples that include people of differing races and ethnicities.</p> <p>Be honest about your own relation to the material.</p>	<p>Don't just give rules, but explain the reasons behind the rules.</p> <p>Move around if you find only certain students sit close to you.</p>	
<p><b>TEACHING / WRITING</b></p>	<p>Allow students to use "I" in their papers.</p>		
<p><b>DYNAMICS</b></p>	<p>Challenge students' statements when they make unwarranted generalizations about types of people ("All Xs are like Y").</p>	<p>Pay attention to the dynamics of the class. If you sense unusual tension, address the situation clear the air.</p>	
<p><b>STRUCTURE</b></p>		<p>Use small group activities and projects.</p> <p>Let learning be more than just individual.</p>	
<p><b>EVALUATION</b></p>		<p>Evaluate students' progress more often than just midterm and the end of the course.</p> <p>Let students know early in the course if they are not doing well.</p>	<p>Take notes or have a colleague take notes to see who is talking when. Use these notes to counter non-productive participation patterns.</p> <p>Make sure the students do not think you are paying attention to some types or students over others.</p> <p>Have your class videotaped and review it with a consultant from the TA Development Program.</p>

**ADDRESSING VALUE CONFLICTS IN THE CLASSROOM <sup>(10)</sup>**

	<b>GENERAL PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>SPECIFIC STRATEGIES</b>
<b>DISTURBING REMARKS IN THE CLASSROOM</b>	<p>Don't ignore the remark.</p> <p>Don't label the student as racist, sexist, etc., for the remark.</p> <p>Examine the assumptions or implications of the comment.</p>	<p>"Mirror" the student's comments back in an exaggerated form.</p> <p>Examine the terms involved.</p> <p>"Translate" the statement to other categories (such as gender or race).</p> <p>Make distinctions clear (such as between definitions and practice).</p> <p>Define appropriate class behavior.</p> <p>Focus analysis on the text.</p>
<b>VALUE CONFLICTS</b>	<p>Be honest about your own values and beliefs.</p> <p>Don't simply discount students' beliefs.</p> <p>Ask, however, that they examine them.</p> <p>Focus on critical thinking.</p>	<p>Encourage students to consider their audience.</p> <p>Ask them to present their beliefs effectively by taking other views into account.</p> <p>Ask students to understand other points of view even if they don't agree with them.</p> <p>Present discussion as finding common ground rather than as pure opposition.</p>

**TEACHING STRATEGIES: NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH (ESL) <sup>(11)</sup>**

	<b>EASIER STRATEGIES</b>	<b>MODERATE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>ADVANCED STRATEGIES</b>
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<p>Don't assume lack of comprehension simply because a student's spoken English is heavily accented, or assume high levels of comprehension simply because of oral fluency. Get to know the students.</p>	<p>Be aware of the difference between the student who makes a variety of grammatical or lexical errors and the one who makes the same kind of error often.</p>	<p>Point out the most prevalent error pattern and ask the student to concentrate on that pattern when editing.</p>
<b>LECTURE</b>	<p>Highlight key points and articulate them in more than one way.</p> <p>Write key terms on the board or overhead.</p> <p>Encourage the use of double</p>	<p>Provide written handouts for key ideas and instructions.</p> <p>Vary presentation methods and forms of student-teacher interaction.</p> <p>Supplement oral presentations with visual material.</p>	<p>Build rhetorical and actual questions into lectures.</p> <p>Supplement visual with oral information and vice versa.</p> <p>Supplement exposition with interactive exchange of information.</p>

	<p>entry note-taking.</p> <p>Give students breathing room by illustrating key points anecdotally rather than packing too many ideas and factual support into your presentation.</p>		
<b>READING</b>	<p>Check reading comprehension by giving short writing assignments- abstracts, brief summaries, brief responses to text.</p> <p>Regularly read student writing and clarify concepts and facts for students who have repeated difficulty.</p>	<p>Help students understand how to use the dictionary strategically for field specific and frequently used academic terms.</p> <p>Provide study questions or lists of key terms.</p> <p>Ask students to identify terms or concepts they think are crucial but unclear.</p>	<p>Have students write about passages of text that don't make sense or seem contradictory to them.</p> <p>Illustrate how word form affects meaning of key terms and concepts.</p>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p>Periodically review and ask questions about main points.</p> <p>Be sensitive to reluctance of students to speak voluntarily.</p> <p>Acknowledge the difficulty of some concepts.</p>	<p>Have students write and talk in small groups before asking them to articulate answers to interpretive and sophisticated questions in whole-class discussion.</p>	<p>Imagine the ways that students are likely to experience confusion and ask questions that will illustrate the potential for confusion in the material.</p>
<b>PAPERS</b>	<p>Encourage students to share rough drafts with you and focus first on content, not grammatical error or stylistic weakness.</p>	<p>Suggest ways to improve drafts by separating issues of organization and content from issues of language error. Encourage language improvement by noting one or two most pervasive errors at the word or sentence level.</p>	<p>Address key problems with comprehensibility, pointing out the elements that create confusion for you as a reader. Encourage self-editing with a focus on a pervasive pattern of error.</p>
<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<p>Encourage students to come to office hours by bringing a sign-up sheet.</p> <p>When returning an assignment, issue a written invitation to see you.</p>	<p>Allow students to do oral presentations (at least the first one) in groups or pairs, and build in practice time.</p> <p>Offer review sessions before exams.</p>	<p>Offer a variety of group work opportunities.</p> <p>Let students select tasks that emphasize their strengths.</p>
<b>EVALUATION</b>	<p>When writing questions, express them in simple, clear language, avoiding confusing constructions such as double negatives.</p> <p>Emphasize the value of authentic work and redrafting or editing.</p>	<p>Evaluate students' comprehension early in the quarter and frequently.</p> <p>Provide instructive comments on written assignments and invite those who are having trouble to make an appointment to see you.</p>	<p>Ask students to submit all drafts of work to you with editors', tutors', and you comments visible to assure work is their own.</p>

## USING COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS <sup>(12)</sup>

### COOPERATIVE LEARNING

*"Form yourselves into groups of five or six and discuss the next example in the text. I'll give you 15 or 20 minutes, then we'll hear from all the groups. Any questions? Okay, go ahead."*

Teachers use small groups frequently-to generate ideas for classroom discussion, for a change of pace from the lecture, or to encourage students to speak out in class. This occasional use of small groups, however, differs from cooperative learning in a number of significant ways. In a cooperative learning classroom, the teacher would pose a clear task for students to perform and give specific instructions about how to do it:

*"Look at the next example in the book and think about the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions which Clarkson proposes. Think about their economic feasibility. Write down your ideas and then compare them with one of the other students in your usual group of four. Make sure you justify the reasons for your answers, especially if there is any disagreement with your partner. Once you are satisfied that you understand your partner's choices-you don't have to agree with them-I'll ask you to share your answers with the rest of the class so that we can come up with the main advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions."*

This structure, **Think-Pair-Share**, is a commonly used cooperative learning strategy. It exemplifies clearly how cooperative learning differs from the occasional use of group work in classrooms.

### WHAT IS COOPERATIVE LEARNING?

Cooperative learning is a strategy which involves students in established, sustained learning groups or teams. The group work is an integral part of, not an adjunct to, the achievement of the learning goals of the class. Cooperative learning fosters individual accountability in a context of group interdependence in which students discover information and teach that material to their group and, perhaps, to the class as a whole. The teacher's role changes as Alison King (1993) says "from sage on the stage to guide on the side." Although they learn in groups, the students are evaluated individually on the learning they have achieved.

**Cooperative Learning is Structured** and focused to make sure that learning is taking place. The teacher chooses the groups to reflect a diversity of viewpoints, abilities, gender, race, and other characteristics. Letting the students choose their own groups can result in a homogeneity which reduces the acquisition of social skills and increases the possibility of a lack of focus on the learning task (Cooper, 1990).

The groups contain fewer than six students-most likely four. Four is a good number; more than that, and individuals may not have equal opportunity to contribute. Four students can work in pairs (each student having 3 potential partners) or together. The group is large enough to contain a diversity of perspectives, yet small enough to facilitate useful interaction (Millis, 1993).

**Cooperative Learning Creates a Classroom Community** which involves students in a kind of interdependence whereby all are working towards a common goal, often with group members responsible for different aspects of the content and teaching it to other members of the group. The group's work is not complete until all its members have mastered the content. Furthermore, individual learning is reinforced as a result of explaining the content to others. Once established, the groups can stay together for the entire semester or can be reformed to concentrate or disseminate their acquired knowledge at various stages throughout the semester.

**Cooperative Learning is a Sustained Approach** which lasts longer than a 15 - 20 minute small-group discussion. An entire course or module may be taught using the cooperative learning method. Because they are in the same group for a longer period of time, students experience greater continuity than in occasional small-group situations. The cooperative method enables the groups to identify areas which they need to study further. Groups can recognize connections between what they have learned and what they are discovering, thereby integrating their knowledge. It is important to note that this method encourages students to seek information actively; they are no longer only passive recipients of information.

**Cooperative Learning Requires and Enhances Students' Communication Skills.** The success of the group depends upon the interaction of its members. Before cooperative learning can begin, students will learn some of the skills required for successful group interaction:

- paraphrasing other's words to ensure and verify comprehension;
- giving and receiving feedback;
- allowing everyone to contribute ideas; and
- refraining from taking over the group or allowing another to do so.

Regular questionnaires can be useful in gauging the success and maintaining the integrity of the group process.

**Cooperative Learning Balances Interdependence with Individual Accountability.** Instructions to the students are specific: each group and each student within that group has a task to perform. In other words, each student must demonstrate his or her mastery of the subject and receive an individual grade. Group grades, which may result in some students coasting to a higher mark on the effort of others, do not emphasize individual accountability and are not recommended.

**Cooperative Learning Responds to Classroom Diversity** and has a positive impact on students whose voices may otherwise go unheard in the classroom. These students include women, minorities, and those who for other reasons may be shy to speak in front of the entire class. Those whose learning style preference is cooperative and collaborative rather than competitive are also served well by this classroom technique. Let's face it; most teaching techniques emphasize students working as individuals-alone in the library, classroom, or study-or as competitors. Students in the cooperative classroom are responsible for each other's learning. Competition may still exist; however, it is among groups rather than individuals.

#### **BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

- **Improved Attendance:** Because of their commitment to others in their group, students in cooperative classrooms tend to have better attendance.
- **Higher Grades:** Because of their active participation in class, students' self-esteem and understanding of the material are increased. They earn higher grades.
- **Increased Participation:** Because they are contributing to the group and participating in class, students become more active learners.