OFFICE FOR FACULTY EXCELLENCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Montclair State University's Principles on Teaching

These principles were written by the Office for Faculty Excellence Advisory Board in 2020, and in consultation with the University's provost, deans, and faculty who provided suggestions and feedback during the drafting process, in college meetings, through surveys, and in University Senate reviews. The Dean's Council and the Provost approved these Principles. These Principles have been reorganized to provide the backbone of OFE's Teaching Resources, found on the OFE website (www.montclair.edu/faculy-excellence).

Principle 1: Disciplinary Excellence

Create and deliver a coherent course of study with activities and assessment strategies that are consonant with current best thinking in the discipline.

Principle 2: Supportive Environment for Learning

Create class and research environments that build community, foster belonging, and promote mentoring.

Principle 3: Clear Expectations and Goals

Provide clear expectations and explicit course learning goals to help foster student success.

Principle 4: Diversity and Inclusion

Integrate and show respect for a diversity of views and experience within the course materials and pedagogical practices.

Principle 5: Universal Design for Learning

Design and deliver all course elements for maximum accessibility to give all students equitable opportunities for success.

Principle 6: Teaching as a Reflective Practice

Reflect on one's teaching practices and beliefs to maximize self-awareness and continual improvement.

Principle 1: Disciplinary Excellence

Create and deliver a coherent course of study with activities and assessment strategies that are consonant with current best thinking in the discipline.

Summary and Rationale:
Design and deliver courses that encourage students to connect to the disciplinary material with a sense of expansiveness and rigor. At the core of the teaching enterprise is a commitment to discipline: to the questions that animate scholars and connect the discipline to the world. At Montclair State, faculty and departments retain a lifelong relationship to their disciplines, seeking ways to make relevant the disciplinary waves and shifts in emphasis and thinking to all students, from general education to graduate level. The challenge for instructors is to find the right pitch for students, advancing student thinking and knowledge as much as is possible, right to the edge of capacity. With an emphasis on curiosity, critical thinking, and capacity building, instructors seek to have students recognize courses as rigorous and impactful.

Courses designed with disciplinary excellence in mind allow students to make connections among themselves, their disciplines, and the systems that impact the world around them. It prepares students for rich lives, strong careers, and develops their ability to be able to think innovatively about the future. Instructors retain disciplinary excellence through engagement in their fields of study, through research and reading, and also through attending professional activities with other instructors to develop discipline-specific pedagogical strategies and course materials.

Strategies:
- Highlight new discoveries and research findings from the course's disciplines.
- Follow and integrate innovations from the disciplinary community's pedagogical research and praxis in each course.
- Make connections between course content and current disciplinary discoveries, happenings, and questions.
- Make the course compelling, linking course content and skills learned to important questions in the discipline and ideally the world.
- Communicate high expectations and hold students close to the edge of their mastery to help all students reach their potential, creating a robust learning environment for all.
- Model respect for intellectual property, hold high expectations for original content, and guide students in honest academic practices.

Resources:

Principle 2: Supportive Environment for Learning

Create a class and research environment that builds community, fosters belonging, and promotes mentoring.

Summary and Rationale:
Use appropriate teaching strategies to build and foster an inclusive learning climate that allows for transformative learning for each student. Such a climate is the result of a collaborative effort between instructor and student.

The learning environment is essential to creating an inclusive course that values the individuality of each student and allows for transformative learning; it is the "intellectual, social, emotional, and physical environments in which our students learn" (Ambrose). Student participation strongly depends on feeling included and respected and understood as having varied lived experiences. When instructors are aware of the linkages connecting identities of students in the course – or in a research lab or other learning environment– they are better able to engage all students. Inversely, negative practices, often unconsciously engaged in such as exclusion, stereotyping, and micro exclusions can prevent students from engaging in the course.

Notably, learning environments are not only in courses, but also environments such as field-work, studio practice, research labs, and instructor-advisee relationships. In these sites, the opportunities for inclusivity may be less obvious but no less important: encouraging and engaging all students to participate and take advantage and succeed in these out-of-course experiences requires attention to individual students' circumstances and learning styles. One special teaching environment of note is the participation of students in research activities as part of the research program of a faculty member. Such activities provide unique opportunities for mentoring and teaching, not only with regard to the specific field of study and its techniques, but also related to career counseling and professional development. It is critical that these learning environments are intentionally inclusive and value the contributions of each student including their intersectional identities.

Strategies:

- Create community in the learning environment by building nonjudgmental, positive relationships with students and fostering positive student to student relationships.
- Treat students as individuals, and demonstrate equal confidence in the ability of each student to succeed. Address issues known to affect the success of learners, such as impostor syndrome, first-generational issues, stereotype threats, etc.
- Avoid stereotyping, excluding students, and engaging in microaggressive responses when students behave or speak in ways that are unfamiliar, unexpected, or unwelcome.
- Deal directly with challenges from students, though not necessarily immediately as reflection and time to consult with colleagues can be helpful in unpacking and understanding relational dynamics.
- Seek feedback from students on your teaching and course through anonymous surveys, open discussion, and other invitations. See the success of the course as a collaborative endeavor between students and instructor.
- Demonstrate openness to understanding the lens each student brings to the course. Encourage students to counter dominant narratives and viewpoints by embedding opportunities within the curriculum for students to share their own personally- and culturally-grounded experiences and perspectives.
- Ensure equitable opportunities for students to engage in research and projects by considering student life circumstances (such as non-traditional work hours or multiple jobs). Consider shifting times and/or offering non-"typical" research opportunities.

Resources:

Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman. How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

Barr, Jason. "Developing a Positive Classroom Climate." The IDEA Center (October 2016): 1-9.

Ginsberg, Margery B., and Raymond J. Wlodkowski. Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching in College. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

Salazar, M., Norton, A., & Tuitt, F. (2009). Weaving promising practices for inclusive excellence into the higher education classroom. In L.B. Nilson and J.E. Miller (Eds.) To improve the academy. (pp. 208-226). Jossey-Bass.
Winston, R. B., Vahala, M. E., Nichols, E. C., Gillis, M. E., & Rome, K. D. (1994). A measure of college classroom climate: The college classroom environment scales. Journal of College Student Development, 35, 11–18

Principle 3: Clear Expectations and Goals

Provide clear expectations and explicit course learning goals to foster student success.

Summary and Rationale:
Design courses with appropriate learning goals and measurable outcomes that are aligned with departmental and programmatic expectations to serve both students and discipline. Student expectations are best when clearly stated and easy to understand. Feedback designed to make clear students' progress towards meeting course expectations is most useful when offered in a timely manner to help students succeed. Clear expectations and goals help provide scaffolding for student academic growth and establish trust between the instructor and student.

When instructors make learning goals and expectations explicit to students, students are better able to meet those expectations. Explicit expectations reduce opportunities for bias, ensuring that all students understand the rules for success, and encouraging student engagement in course materials. Clear learning goals create a roadmap for instructors to design course content that is relevant to the course objectives and has clear methods of assessment. Tying individual course goals and expectations to departmental and programmatic expectations further supports students' learning and achievement throughout the curricula.

Strategies:
Strategies to provide clear expectations and make learning goals explicit may include the following:

- Provide clear criteria for how work will be assessed. Make the dimensions of high-quality work clear through a rubric or other statement of the important features of the assignment.
- Provide specific, actionable, and timely feedback and help students understand the purpose of that feedback. Instructor feedback can consist of:
    - brief written or audio/video-recorded comments to highlight strengths and weaknesses
    - annotations on a rubric; in-text comments on a written assignment.
    - Objective feedback (scores), particularly when assessments are returned so students can view and understand mistakes
- Extensive written feedback is most helpful when students will revise an assignment to continue to meet learning goals. Feedback does not necessarily need to come from the instructor; students may also receive feedback from each other or reflect on their own work in light of a rubric or course learning goals.
- Design course assignments to be purposeful in moving students towards meeting class goals. Student work does not always need to receive a formal grade or extensive feedback from the instructor, but assignment design and feedback given should be context-specific to help students progress in course goals.

- Design authentic assessments that connect to real-world situations, problems, or contexts and make sure that students know the broad purpose of an assignment beyond the course itself.
- Provide models of high-quality student work, especially with annotations that make its high-quality features visible, to help students understand how to meet expectations.
- Build in early, low-stakes assessments to identify students who need extra support, and offer a range of options for assisting those students. Such supports may include additional in-person, phone, or video meetings; providing informal feedback on assignments before they are due and/or providing opportunities for revision; and connecting students with each other to form small learning communities. Reach out to students who need extra attention.

Resources:

Ambrose, S.A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M.C., & M. K. Norman. (2010) *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.

Bean, J. C. (2011). *Engaging ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom*. 2nd Ed. Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 3-7.

Eyler, J. R. (2018) *How humans learn: The science and stories behind effective college teachin*g. West Virginia University Press.

Hattie, J. (2009) Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement 1st Edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kluger, A. & DeNisi, A. (1996) “The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory.” *Psychological Bulletin*, 119 (2), 254-284.

Lang, J. (2009). “Try and Fail.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved 4/22/2019,

McGuire, S. (2015) *Teach students how to learn*. Stylus.

Stenger, M. (2014) “5 Research-Based Tips for providing students with meaningful feedback.” Edutopia.

Tolman, A.O. & J. Kremling. (2017) *Why students resist learning: A practical model for understanding and helping students*. Stylus.

Winkelmes, M. (2013). Transparency in Teaching: Faculty Share Data and Improve Students' Learning. *Liberal Education* 99 (2).

Principle 4: Diversity and Inclusion

Integrate and show respect for a diversity of views and experience within the course materials and pedagogical practices.

Summary and Rationale:
Develop and teach courses through inclusion of content from multiple perspectives, considering diversity in all its forms, as understanding differing experiences is critical for all students’ deep learning. Therefore instructors are encouraged to select content to support, facilitate, and interrogate barriers to inclusion.

Knowledge experts from across disciplines have discovered critical gaps in their disciplines' advancement and understanding based on conscious or unconscious exclusion of diverse experiences and perspectives, and therefore in both research and teaching it is incumbent upon instructors to actively counter disciplinary and other habits of bias through systematic evaluation of course content and pedagogy for diversity: in viewpoints, population focus, as well as author identity.

Strategies:

- Embrace and make visible inclusive course design as a valuable opportunity to interrogate historical consciousness and our assumptions about various peoples and ideologies.
- In introducing content, acknowledge systemic inequities--and the power and privilege that attend them in our disciplines, workforce, and global society--and use intentional course design to make visible and address these inequities.
- Practice culturally responsive teaching (CRT) to cultivate awareness of the identities and dynamics that shape educational experiences and impact learning, provide efficacious and responsive accommodations for equitable and optimal learning and assessment, and effectively leverage diversity in the course environment.
- Audit course content for 1) diversity and inclusion of authors and creators, noting gaps and areas of concentration and 2) diversity and inclusiveness of topics, examples, and experiences selected. Remain open to changing texts and voices highlighted.
- Critically evaluate texts for assumptions, stereotyping, and missing perspectives and bring these elements to students' attention. Highlight contributions made by diverse voices made to the field to further facilitate inclusion. Avoid marginalizing non-dominant voices by highlighting and discussing homogeneity when it occurs.
- Demonstrate how understanding diverse voices is essential for creating high quality, rigorous, and competitive academic programs that serve student needs and continue to elevate the institution's reputation.
- Avoid assuming familiarity with cultural references (for example, WASP or Lassie), understanding that few cultural references are widely shared, and assuming shared references undermines the confidence of those for whom the reference is unknown.

Resources:

Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman. How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

Davis, Barbara Gross. Tools for Teaching. Second Edition. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

Eddy, Sarah L. & Kelly A. Hogan. Getting Under the Hood: How and for Whom Does Increasing Course Structure Work? CBE--Life Sciences Education, 13, 453-468, 2014.

Hockings, Christine. Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: A Synthesis of Research. York: Higher Education Academy, 2010.

Landrum, R. Eric and Maureen A. McCarthy (Eds.).Teaching Ethically: Challenges and Opportunities, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2012.

Lee, Amy, Robert Poch, Marta Shaw, and Rhiannon Williams. Engaging Diversity in Undergraduate Classrooms: A Pedagogy for Developing Intercultural Competence. ASHE Higher Education Report 38, no. 2. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

"Online Equity Rubric." Peralta Community College District Distance Education. web.peralta.edu/de/equity-initiative/equity/.

Sellers, Sherrill et al. Reaching All Students: A Resource for Teaching in STEM. Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), last modified 2007, accessed

July 19, 2017. https://career.ucsf.edu/sites/career.ucsf.edu/files/PDF/Researchersreachingallstudents.pdf

Tobin, Thomas J. and Kirsten T. Behling. Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education, Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2018.

Yancy, George and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson. Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms : Scholars of Color Reflect. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Principle 5: Universal Design for Learning

Design and deliver all course elements for maximum accessibility to give all students equitable opportunity for success.

Summary and Rationale:
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) recognizes that students have a diverse range of abilities and experiences, and provides multiple means of learning and expression for these students. By prioritizing accessibility in a course, instructors design their course from the vantage point of multiple perspectives, creating learning experiences that can engage a diverse group of students.

Research on student learning demonstrates that "multi-modal access" helps to improve learning outcomes for all students. Multi-modal access essentially means providing several pathways to access course material. By using Universal Design for Learning, all students can benefit from increased access to their course content, including many who are not registered to receive formal accommodations through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Stigma, cost, and numerous other factors are barriers to registering with the DRC. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, many people without impairment of any kind become "disabled" when their environments are suddenly rendered less accessible. Practicing UDL in courses means making no assumptions about the learner's abilities or experiences and avoiding biases in methods of expression. Following the principles of UDL, instructors go "beyond compliance" with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and aim to provide the maximum access to the greatest number of their students.

Strategies:

- Work with the MSU IT Dept, DRC, and other campus entities to stay current on "assistive technology" and accessible formats. UDL strategies and technologies are constantly evolving.
- Select accessible materials from the start, including software, apps and tools that supplement the delivery of course content.
- Engage responsively and respectfully with official accommodations by working with students to support their needs for student success. Most accommodations provided (i.e. 2x time on tests) set a *minimum* standard for instructors, and should prompt instructors to engage directly with learners about their needs.
- Make course materials accessible. For text-based documents, such as PDFs, assure they are accessible to screenreaders. Use captions for all instructional video and audio content. Provide alternative information for any visual content (for example, audio or text-based descriptions of visual elements).

- Consider utilizing a range of options for students to demonstrate course mastery. Avoid bias towards only one mode of expression (i.e. only accepting written work). Consider oral submissions, video submissions, class presentations, and other modes of demonstrating learning mastery.
- Promote the use of American Sign Language (ASL), Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), and Audio Description (AD) in all MSU sponsored presentations, events, activities.

Resources:

Bridge Multimedia:
http://www.bridgemultimedia.com/1_projects.php

CAST, About Universal Design for Learning
http://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl

Doyle, Nancy. "We Have Been Disabled: How The Pandemic Has Proven The Social Model Of Disability," Apr 29, 2020
https://www.forbes.com/sites/drnancydoyle/2020/04/29/we-have-been-disabled-how-the-pandemic-has-proven-the-social-model-of-disability/#49b0e4912b1d

Edelberg, Elisa. "Deep Dive: How Audio Description Benefits Everyone", updated June 2019
https://www.3playmedia.com/2018/06/21/deep-dive-how-audio-description-benefits-everyone/

Kleege, Georgina and Wallen, Scott. "Audio Description as a Pedagogical Tool," in DisabilityStudies Quarterly, Vol 35 (2), 2015.

Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). Universal design for learning: Theory and practice. Wakefield, MA: CAST Professional Publishing.

National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM): https://www.wgbh.org/foundation/what-we-do/ncam

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines from Center for Accessible Technology (CAST)
CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org/

Principle 6: Teaching as Reflective Practice

Reflect on one's teaching practices and beliefs to maximize self-awareness and continual improvement.

Summary and Rationale:

Growth as an effective and inclusive instructor is a continual process involving self-reflection, critique, and ongoing learning. Self-reflection includes identifying personal areas of bias or weakness in teaching. One's beliefs about students, teaching and learning feed directly into how one practices teaching. Engaging in a reflective practice ensures that our beliefs, values, and practices are in alignment through continual growth and adjustment.

Instructors, students, disciplinary norms, and the state of the pedagogical art are all in continual flux, so even the best-prepared and skilful instructor is only such at a moment in time. Successful instructors assert authority and responsibility over their own teaching practices, and develop the reflective capacity to become aware of, and institute, needed changes in their approach to teaching. Exemplary instructors model life-long learning for their students through their own engagement with their discipline, their teaching, and the ever-evolving students in their courses.

Strategies:

- Reflect on current portfolio of pedagogical strategies when preparing any course, even ones that have worked successfully on multiple occasions.
- Incorporate regular informal feedback from students and adapt pedagogical approaches to best support student success.
- Reflect on how to set up courses to foster inclusive engagement with students.
- Proactively seek out novel approaches, activities, and resources to experiment with teaching, and conscientiously collect data to evaluate its effectiveness, including (but not limited to) professional development and feedback from students and peers.
- Stay current in disciplinary developments and disciplinary-specific best teaching practices.
- Create and participate in communities of fellow instructors that allow for support, peer review, pedagogical strategizing, and critical engagement with teaching practices.

Resources:

Brookfield, Stephen D. Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.

Ambrose, Susan A., Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman. How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.!

OFE Advisory Board, 2020: Kathleen Kelley (chair, Theatre and Dance), Yolanda Alvarez (Dean of Students), Deepak Bal (Mathematics), Bond Benton (Communication and Media), Danné Davis (Teaching and Learning), Henk Eshuis (Chemistry and Biochemistry), Elaine Gerber (Anthropology), Emily Hodge (Educational Leadership), Yanick Joseph (Nursing), Archana Kumar (Marketing), Kirk McDermid (Philosophy), Daniele Peterka-Benton (Justice Studies), Yanling Sun (Instructional Technology), and Kate Temoney (Religion). OFE Executive Director: Emily Isaacs.