

Inclusive, Equitable, and Anti-oppressive Pedagogies

Created by Aidan Luter '24

The purpose of this DocuGuide is to serve as a reference for members of the Colorado College community interested in inclusive, equitable, and anti-oppressive pedagogies. The DocuGuide highlights these pedagogies as distinct from one another, while acknowledging many points of overlap.

This guide defines five areas of teaching that inform the practice of these pedagogies. Content concerns class material, curricular design, and how students engage with class resources. Pedagogy includes modes of teaching, student engagement, and learning. Assessment considers how students demonstrate their learning. Climate is the atmosphere and dynamics of a class. Power relates to dynamics between teachers and students, among students, and throughout the entire learning context (i.e., the college).

Inclusive Pedagogies

Inclusive pedagogies stem from disability studies and universal design for learning. It ensures that all students feel included in the course, and that the course itself is inclusive of a multitude of perspectives. Inclusive teaching approaches also provide the foundation for equitable and anti-oppressive pedagogies.

Content

- Ensure that course content recognizes diversity and acknowledges barriers to inclusion
- Design all course elements for accessibility, for example, offering multiple means of engagement with class materials
- Be attentive to the costs of course materials

Assessment

- Be explicit about how learning will be assessed
- Consider designing assessments that allow for student choice; consider allowing for multiple means of engagement

Power

- Reflect on your own beliefs about teaching to maximize self-awareness and commitment to inclusion
- Consider your own social identities and how they may lead to feelings of inclusion or exclusion

Pedagogy

- Set explicit expectations for students, for example, what kind of class engagement you anticipate from them
- Build a community with students – learn their names and share your process

Climate

- Establish and support a class climate that fosters belonging for all students
- Be aware of implicitly or explicitly marginalizing diverse perspectives
- Take care to intentionally centralize and validate historically marginalized groups

Equitable Pedagogies

Equitable pedagogies (sometimes called equity pedagogies) ensure not only that the course is inclusive of student identities and course content includes multiple perspectives, but that students learning needs are equitably met in all aspects of the class.

Content

- Ensure that real-life applications are used and that materials are relevant to students, for example, a reading or project with ramifications for local communities
- Focus on knowledge generation and creation of new understandings over memorization, for example, a large project that is relevant to students and the community rather than a large multiple-choice exam

Assessment

- Focus on real-life applications which allow for more equitable and realistic forms of assessment
- Offer student-focused assessments that center on growth and feedback over grades and points
- Offer students detailed feedback and encourage students to revisit their work
- Allow for choice in subject matter covered in assessments, so learners can showcase their individual growth

Power

- Engage in reflective self-analysis of biases which may lead to inequity in the classroom
- Challenge the image of the teacher as a citadel of knowledge and students as passive recipients of knowledge

Pedagogy

- Offer multiple ways to know, contribute, and engage with class material. This can include varying perspectives, verbal and written participation, and choices in types of assignments
- Acknowledge and consider the “hidden curriculum”: informal interactions, classroom environment, and peer relationships

Climate

- Be aware of and attend to informal interactions, the classroom setup, and relationships among students
- Actively interrogate the structure and culture of higher education – for example, ask questions about what could be improved at your institution

Anti-oppressive Pedagogies

Anti-oppressive (and anti-racist) pedagogies interrogates traditional conceptions of education and how these may be oppressive and limiting. It seeks to break down systemic barriers both in and out of the classroom.

Content

- Topics of race and inequality should be incorporated into course content and challenge Eurocentrism
- The development of the discipline should be acknowledged and critiqued. Address the question, what are the contexts under which these paradigms became legitimized?

Assessment

- Process of learning should be emphasized over outcomes
- Students shouldn't be banking information, but rather critically thinking, analyzing, synthesizing, and applying theories to practice

Power

- Disrupt the positivistic and objective view of knowledge and knowledge production – allow for more diverse forms of knowing, for example, Indigenous ways of knowing
- Go beyond the classroom in support of anti-oppressive organizing
- Critically reflect on your own social position, internalized oppression, and/or internalized superiority
- Embrace mutual learning to flatten hierarchies in the classroom, be willing to learn from students

Pedagogy

- Challenge assumptions and foster critical thinking
- Develop student awareness of social position
- Decenter authority in the classroom
- Apply theory to practice – empower students
- Create community in the classroom through collaborative learning

Climate

- Expect the unexpected – be flexible and embrace difficulty and discomfort
- Foster brave spaces in the classroom where students feel they can express their perspectives despite discomfort

Feedback for this Docuguide

Thank you for using this guide, we hope that it served as a resource for you. We want this to be a living document that adapts to how these pedagogies are practiced at Colorado College. Please contact Professor Ryan Bañagale, rbanagale@coloradocollege.edu, to share additional practices you think should be incorporated in this guide. We appreciate your feedback!

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