

# Inclusive Practices in Teacher Preparation Courses

Dr. Dwight C. Watson

University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

## Overview

The course that was chosen to fulfil the LEARN Center grant is the *Foundation of Literacy* course. I will be teaching three sections of this course. Incorporated in this course will be discussion about how to:

- build a sense of belonging,
- support classroom conversations on diversity,
- incorporate diverse perspectives into curricula,
- and broaden the participation and success of all students.

## Inclusion Practices in the Classroom

**Building a Sense of Belonging:** Build a sense of belonging through intentionally constructing a safe and open classroom community.

- Conduct personal interviews
- Have partner interviews so students get to know each other before forming groups
- Discuss learning styles and how to accommodate different types of learning
- Launch interactive discussion circles

**Supporting Classroom Conversations:** Support classroom conversations about diversity using student-created reflective writing assignments to identify supportive course design features, uncover potential issues, and nudge students toward campus support services.

**Incorporating Diverse Perspectives:** Engage diverse perspectives by bringing content experts to the classroom.

- Have BIPOC teachers discuss culturally-congruent pedagogy
- Spotlight LGBTQ teachers who use QUILTBAG+ literature to enhance the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum
- Use immigrant voices books to better understand how learners adapt to new environments
- Incorporate text set group assignments in which students build a text set unit around justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) topics
- Use a windows, mirrors, and sliding door perspective in classroom instruction

**Broadening Participation and Success:** Evaluate the demographics of the class, asking “who is missing?” and take steps to increase inclusivity by:

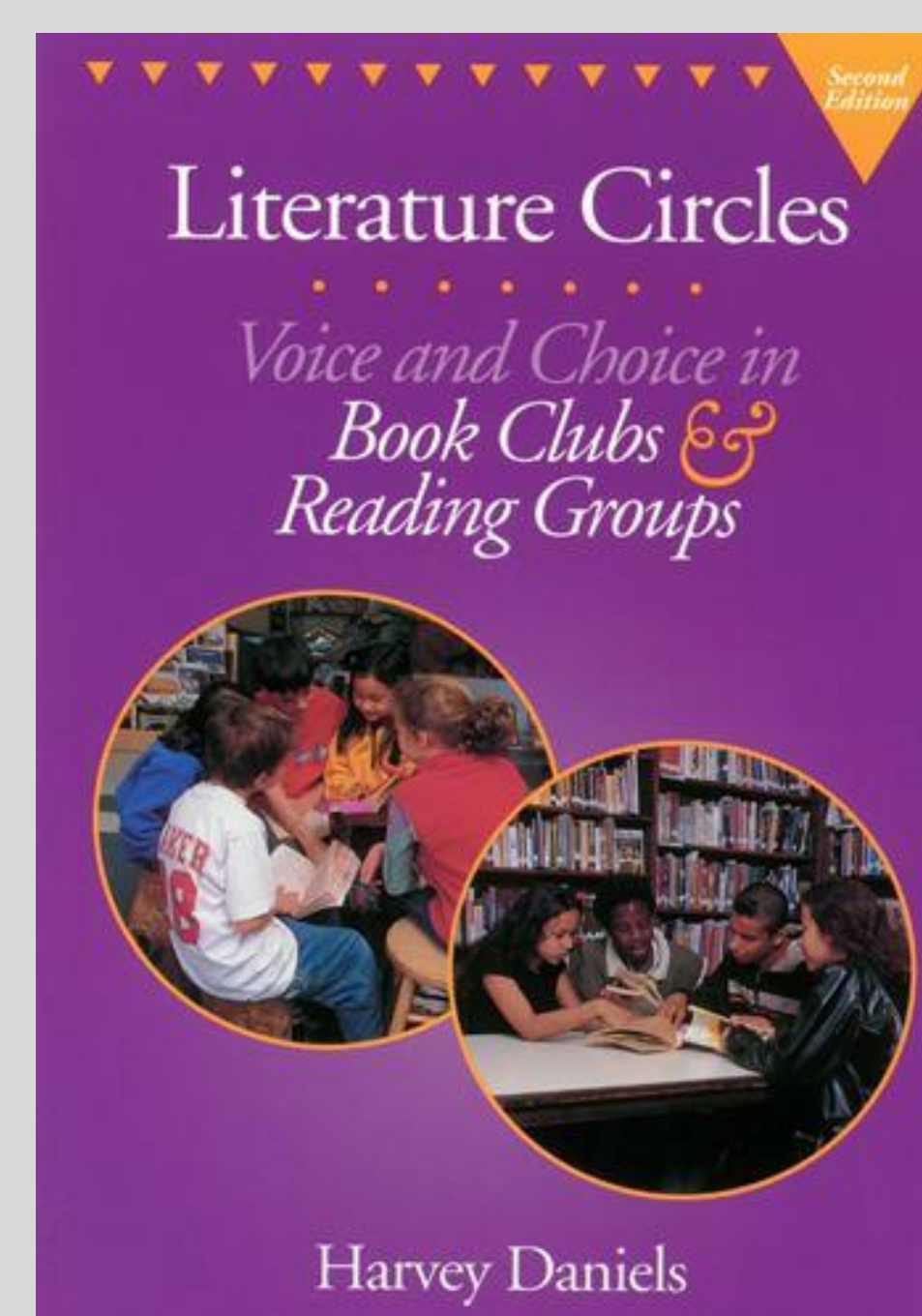
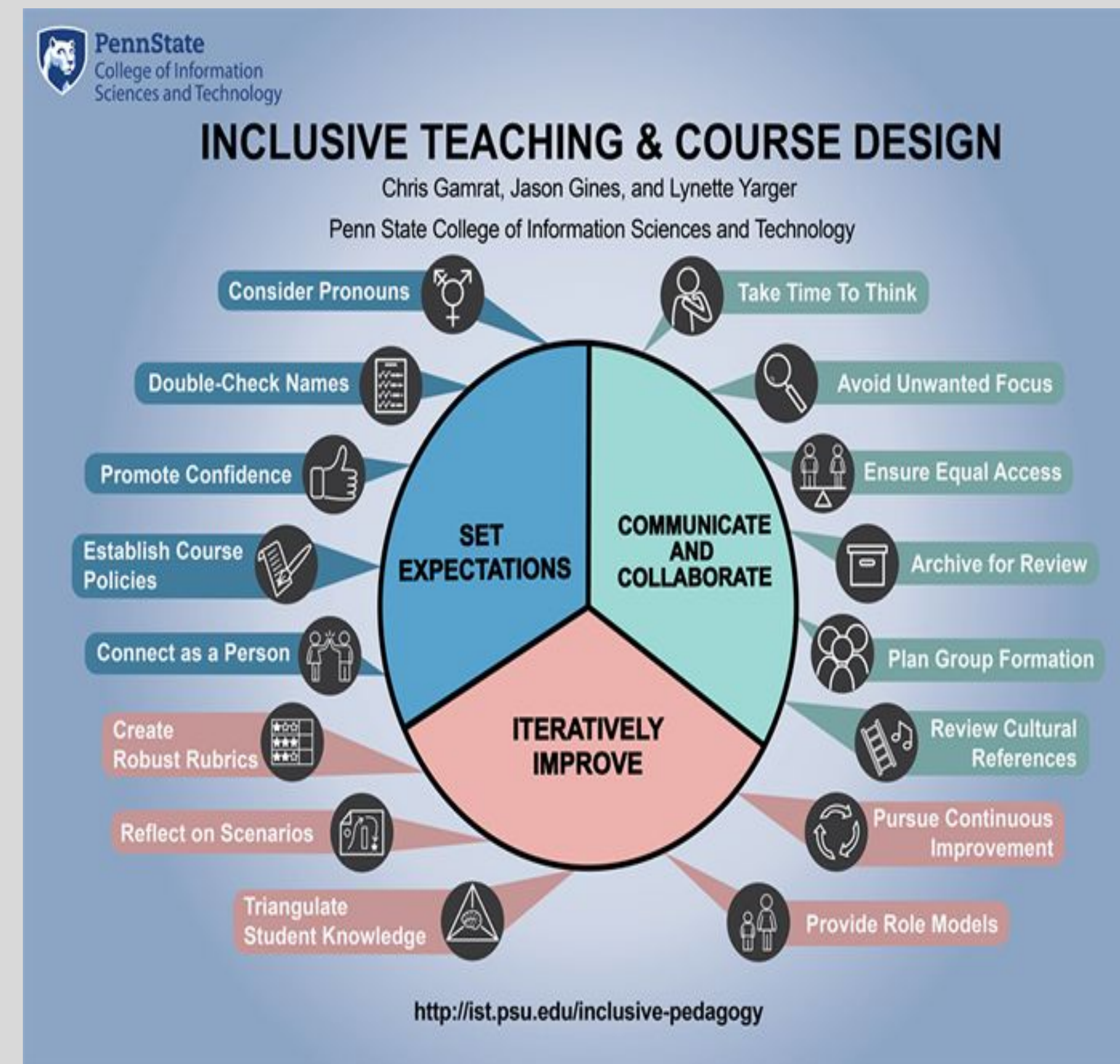
- setting expectations,
- creating classroom communication and collaboration,
- and situating iterative improvements through personalized evaluations, assessments, and progress monitoring.

“Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice heard” (Fosslien & Duffy, 2019, p. 185).

## Course Requirements

The purpose of this course is to teach the *Foundations of Literacy* which includes curriculum, instruction, and assessment of the teaching of reading as well as enhancing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the students so that they can become effective elementary and middle school teachers of English Language Arts. The main course standards are:

1. Acquaint the students with the reading process and its components and subsequently help students to define and delineate their beliefs about the reading process.
2. Acquaint the students with the various approaches to teaching reading.
3. Acquaint the students with the principles and strategies of beginning reading instruction.
4. Acquaint the student with the principles and teaching strategies of vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, phonics, and phonemic awareness.
5. Acquaint the students with informal assessment strategies that inform the teacher about children’s literacy knowledge.

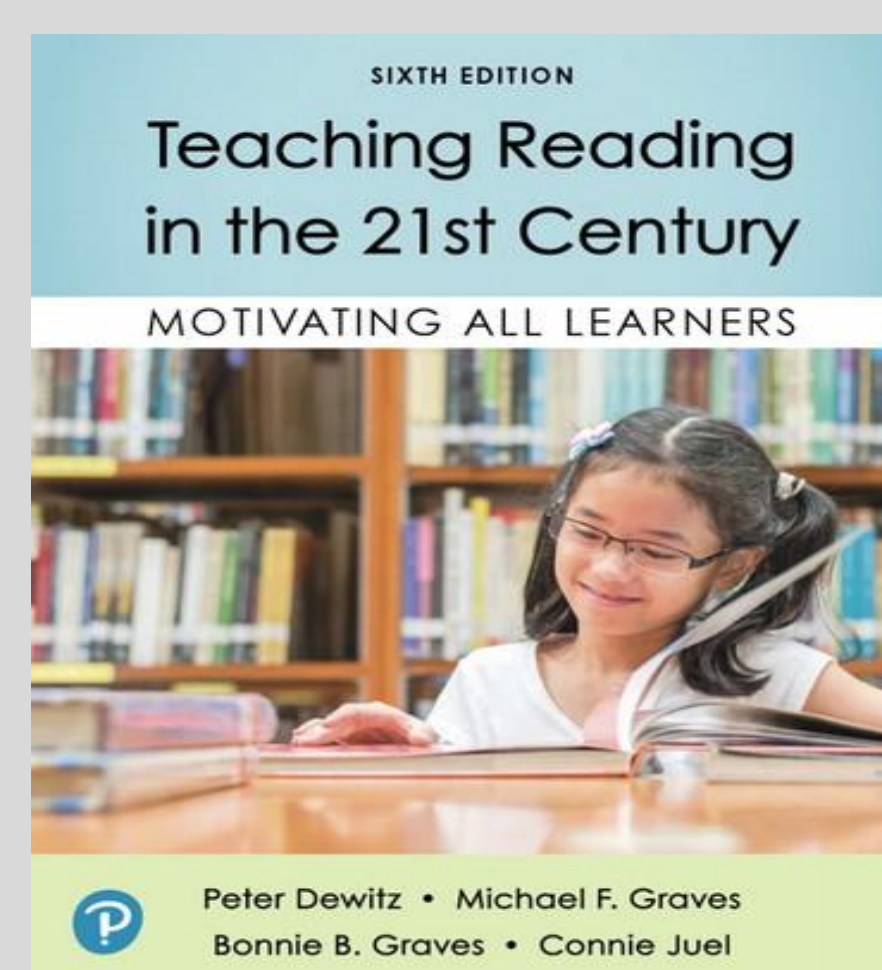


What do we know about literature circles now that we didn't understand eight or ten years ago? What new resources and procedures can help teachers organize their classroom book clubs better? What are the most common pitfalls in implementing student-led discussion groups? And getting beyond the basics, what do mature or "advanced" literature circles look like? In this thoroughly revised and expanded guide, you will find new strategies, structures, tools, and stories that show you how to launch and manage literature circles effectively. Advanced variations are explored and include alternatives to role sheets and flexible new guidelines for their use.

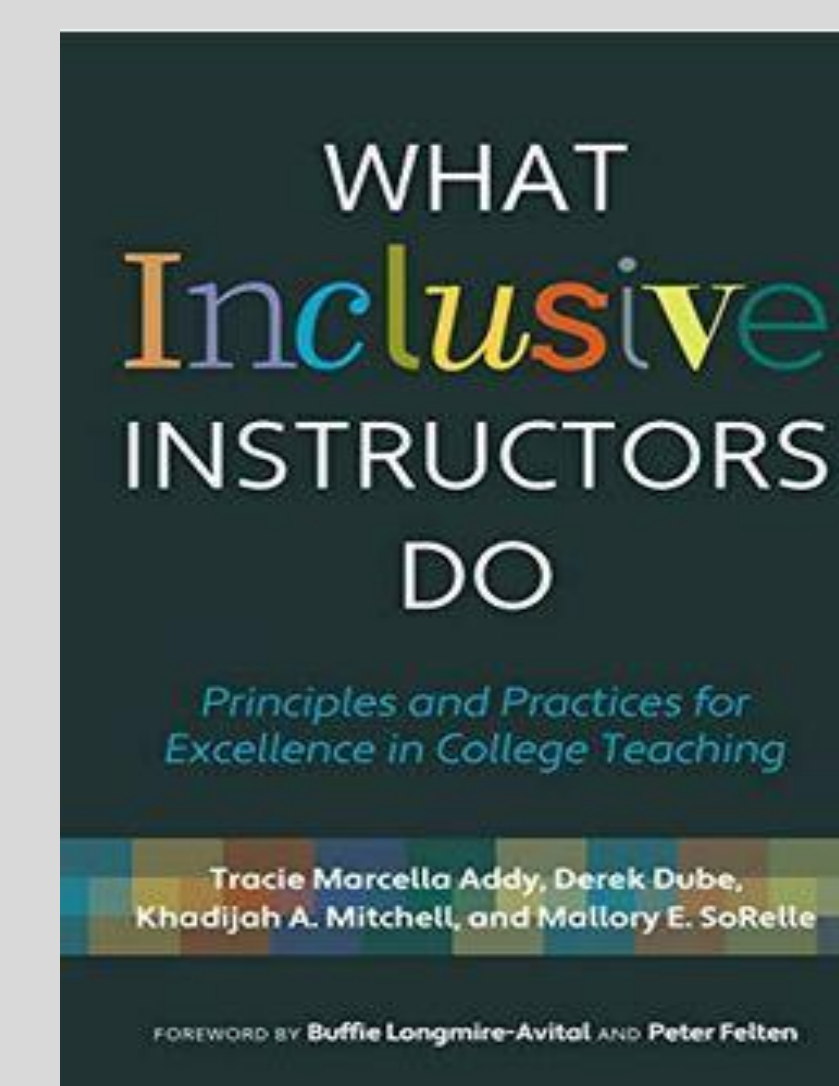
In a literature circle group, there are a series of rotating roles that are assigned to each participant. The participant shares the pages read through the role that was assigned to that participant.

### The most common roles are:

- Discussion Director – guides the discussion
- Literary Luminary – explores literary elements
- Vocabulary Enricher – discusses key words
- Summarizer – identifies main points
- Illustrator – draws or creatively displays the text
- Connector – connects with self, world, and other texts



These two books will be used in the course. *The Teaching of Reading in the 21st Century* will be the main textbook for the course. *What Inclusive Instructors Do* will be used as a guidebook to enhance instruction.



## Inclusive Classroom Teachers: What They Do?

- They take responsibility for making their teaching and their curriculum inclusive.
- They continue to learn about their students and their teaching.
- They care about and for each and every student they teach.
- They change their teaching based on evidence about the practices that support and challenge all their students to strive.



Inclusive instruction recognizes and affirms a student's social identity as an important influence on teaching and learning processes, and works to create an environment in which students are able to learn from the course, their peers, and the teacher while being their authentic selves. It works to disrupt traditional notions of who succeeds and the systemic inequities inherent in traditional educational practices

Inclusive teaching involves practices that help learners perceive and/or increase their perception that they “belong” and that their cultural and life experiences are valued in their current learning context. It involves the examining the content and language of the course from a stance of equity, diversity, and social justice.



## References

- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, Catalano, D.C. J., DeJong, K. S., Hackman, H., Hopkins, L.E., Love, B. J., Peters, M. L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (2013). *Readings for diversity and social justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Addy, T. M., Dube, D., Mitchell, K. A., & SoRelle, M. E. (2021). *What inclusive instructors do: Principles and practices for excellence in college teaching* (First edition). Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Faulkner, S. L., Watson, W. K., Pollino, M. A., & Shetterly, J. R. (2021). Treat me like a person, rather than another number: University student perceptions of inclusive classroom practices *Communication Education*, 70(1), 92–111.
- Goering, A., Resnick, C. E., Bradford, K. D., & Othus-Gault, S. M. (2022). Diversity by design: Broadening participation through inclusive teaching. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2022(199), 77–91.
- Martin, & Strom, K. J. (Ed.). (2019). *Exploring gender and LGBTQ issues in K-12 and teacher education: A rainbow assemblage*. Information Age Publishing, Inc.
- Mihalick, J. E., Mogi-Hein, Y. R., Penick-Parks, M. W., & Van Auken, P. M. (2014). Who am I to bring diversity into the classroom? Learning communities wrestle with creating inclusive college classrooms. *The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 14(4), 18–30.
- Ryan C. L., & Hermann-Wilmarth, J. M. (2018). *Reading the rainbow: LGBTQ-inclusive literacy instruction in the elementary classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

## Acknowledgement

Thank you to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater's *Teaching and Learning Center* for the grant funding used to modify, enhance, and enrich this course's curriculum, instruction, and assessment.