

Question 6:
How do you re-examine taken-for-granted assumptions of student success and performance through the lens of inclusiveness and diversity?

“When people ask me why I do what I do, I refer to my own career mission statement: *to help students grow and mature in order to impact their world*. This statement helps me to reframe to *myself* the ultimate goal of classroom instruction. As a result, over the years I have learned to try to rethink what counts as student success. Given that many of the old standards for performance don’t seem to be working widely for people across the continua of difference, I think it becomes important to allow students to demonstrate their learning according to the areas of their own strength. This can mean allowing for more open-ended assignments (and even having multiple rubrics for the same assignment depending on the path that students take). I’m also trying to rethink what examinations look like in general, but admittedly I’m still figuring out that one; for now, I use multiple methods of assessment within the same examination to better account for the variety of learning styles. Regardless, over the course of the semester I’m finding it helpful to use multiple methods of assessment, important because I’m no longer trying to simply reach a “minimum knowledge set” for students. Instead, I’m trying to equip them to think more deeply, to apply concepts, and to be open to critiquing taken-for-granted systems (even if that means challenging something about my own syllabus.) This willingness to address systems and institutions also means that many of my classes need to more comprehensively address issues like power and privilege, even if the topic doesn’t necessarily seem relevant at first glance (e.g., research methods). As a result, I need to express my own markers of identity and welcome students to speak from their own identity. I also need to address those areas of my own privilege that leave me lacking in some understanding, and to explicitly acknowledge my own areas of growth that may emerge across a variety of areas. Students seem surprised but relieved that I can acknowledge that faculty expertise is *necessarily* limited, and it allows for a more collaborative discussion of a variety of topics.”

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2014 Donald H. Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teaching in Higher Education

2014 Western States Communication Association’s Distinguished Teaching Award
