

Fostering a sense of belonging in the classroom

A to-go workshop with academic references, practical examples, and assessment methods

Members that participated in alphabetical order by their first name:

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Introduction for Facilitators

These modules are meant to start and advance discussions on fostering a sense of belonging in the classroom. They can work as a series of connected workshops or as independent ones. Each one stands alone. We aim to provide you with the materials you need to adapt and implement workshops relevant to your campus community.

The first module, *“What is exclusion? What is belonging?”* opens the conversation on what it means to belong (on campus, in the classroom) and helps participants develop definitions for what diversity, inclusion, and inclusive teaching would look like at their campus. Module 2, *“Preparing your inclusive classroom,”* is meant to help participants as they prepare a course. It contains material on putting together an effective syllabus, setting a warm climate in the classroom, planning for inclusive content, and thinking about grading practices. Module 3, *“Fostering belonging in the classroom,”* focuses on inclusive pedagogy and creating a community for all students. The last module, *“Self-assessment/assessing belonging,”* is an opportunity for participants to reflect on their steps towards fostering belongingness, what has worked, and what needs to be modified or changed.

Facilitators can use these modules with large or small groups. If you are working with a large group, consider breaking down activities to be done by small groups (either by having participants choose what activity they want to do or by rotating the groups among activities) and then allowing time to share in the large group.

You do not need to have the answers. Your job is to facilitate and guide. Trust that participants can brainstorm ideas and are probably already using some techniques that promote belongingness. Let participants share. Consider doing a [gallery walk](#) of the groups’ discussion

and make these available to participants after the workshop. You will find a list of resources that can be useful to you as you prepare to facilitate. Also, consider sharing the list of resources with participants.

In each of the modules, we suggest readings that you can have participants read ahead of time. You will also find suggested activities such as discussion questions, reflections, and practical applications that participants can implement in their courses.

Some practical tips:

- Setting rules of engagement or community guidelines will help set a respectful environment for discussion. It will also give the participants a practical tool to implement in their classrooms to create an inclusive community. Our suggestion is to start with two or three guidelines and have the group generate the rest.
- Consider having a fun ice-breaker at the beginning and integrating at least one or two other activities that will help the group generate energy and release tension. These are activities that participants can then take away and use in their classrooms/work with students.
 - For ideas on activities to use, please see
 - [“Ice Breakers”](#) (LSA Inclusive Teaching at the University of Michigan)
 - [“Icebreakers, Team Building Activities, and Energizers”](#) (Sixth College, UC San Diego)
 - There are physical ones that can even be done online - counting down/up all together but having to start over when someone makes a mistake, throwing balls, etc. These are silly, and everyone feels equally awkward but energized by the end of the 3-5 minutes.
- Encourage participants to leave the workshop with one or two practices that they will implement in their courses.

Resources on why it is useful to create community

University of Michigan Center for Research on Teaching and Learning (n.d). *Guidelines for Classroom Interactions*. <https://crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines>

Bettez, S.C. (2020) “Creating Community Commitments in the Higher Education Classroom.” *In Practice*, v25, n1, _page(s): 14-18.

McKinney, J.P., & K.G. McKinney, R. Franiuk, J. Schweitzer. (2006) “ The College Classroom as a Community: Impact on Student Attitudes and Learning.” *College Teaching*, v54, n3.

Nieto, J. & S. Valery. (2006). “Creating a Sense of Community in the Classroom.” *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*, v3, n5.

Savonick, D. (2017, August 28) *Community Guidelines: Fostering Inclusive Discussions of Difference*. HASTAC.

<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/danicasavonick/2017/08/28/community-guidelines-fostering-inclusive-discussions-difference>

Sochacki, J. (2020, March 23) *A Checklist for Building Community in the College Classroom*. Faculty Focus. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/a-checklist-for-building-community-in-the-college-classroom/>

Module 1: What is exclusion? What is belonging?

Content

Choose a list of articles or other mediums that could be pre-circulated (videos, podcasts, etc.) to workshop participants. These readings may be curated by the facilitator and tailored to the institution, academic program, and/or participant interests.

Here are specific reading recommendations:

1. Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.
2. Nunn, L. M. (2021). *College belonging: How first-year and first-generation students navigate campus life*. Rutgers University Press.
3. Verschelden, C. (2017). *Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Activities

Choose an activity or mix-and-match several activities related to your goals for the session. Below we offer suggestions for activities that are discussion-based, that are oriented around reflection, and that are focused on practical application.

Discussion:

- Drawing on Verschelden (2017), ask participants to look at the space where the workshop is being held — what belonging cues can you identify? (room setup, Portraits, and other artwork, posters, etc.)
- Using the Classroom Climate Continuum from Ambrose, et al. (2010), use the "[Classroom Climate: A Continuum](#)" handout (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan) to guide your discussion

Reflection

- Ask participants to identify a time when they felt they belonged to a group.
 - Split the group into pairs or small groups to answer the following questions:
 - In two or three words, how did it feel?
 - One or two ways in which you were made to feel like you belonged?
 - Mention an instance in which belonging helped you?
- Reflect on your course as a whole -- what are some areas within your course content or teaching context where students may experience a lack of belonging?
- Reflect on your discipline -- Think about how your discipline could historically feel exclusionary to certain groups of people.
- Reflect on our campus community — what does belonging look like at our institution (for students, for staff, for faculty); what are the physical belonging cues on our campus/in the space where we're meeting (art, photographs, posters)

Practical Application

- Provide short scenarios or examples of teaching materials for participants to discuss experiences of belonging or lack of belonging within college classrooms
- Ask the participants to define in their words Diversity, Inclusion, and Inclusive Teaching. Then, contrast the definition of participants with the definition in your institution.

Module 2: Preparing Your Inclusive Classroom

Content

Choose a list of articles (2-3 articles) or other artifacts that could be pre-circulated (inside higher ed articles, videos, podcasts, etc.) to workshop participants. These readings may be curated by the facilitator and tailored to the institution, academic program, and/or participant interests.

Here are a few specific reading recommendations:

1. Barkley, E. F., & Major, C. H. (2020). Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty. John Wiley & Sons.
2. Bayer, A., Bhanot, S. P., Bronchetti, E. T., & O'Connell, S. A. (2020, May). Diagnosing the learning environment for diverse students in introductory economics: An analysis of relevance, belonging, and growth mindsets. In *AEA Papers and Proceedings* (Vol. 110, pp. 294-98). <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pandp.20201051>
3. Binning, K. R., Kaufmann, N., McGreevy, E. M., Fotuhi, O., Chen, S., Marshman, E., Kalender, Z., Limeri, L., Betancur, L., & Singh, C. (2020). Changing social contexts to foster equity in college science courses: An ecological-belonging intervention. *Psychological Science*, 31(9), 1059-1070.

4. Fuentes, M. A., Zelaya, D. G., & Madsen, J. W. (2021). Rethinking the course syllabus: Considerations for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. *Teaching of Psychology*, 48(1), 69-79.
5. Gurung, R. A., & Galardi, N. R. (2021). Syllabus Tone, More Than Mental Health Statements, Influence Intentions to Seek Help. *Teaching of Psychology*, 0098628321994632.
6. Harnish, R. J., McElwee, R. O. B., Slattery, J. M., Frantz, S., Haney, M. R., Shore, C. M., & Penley, J. (2011). Creating the foundation for a warm classroom climate. *APS Observer*, 24(1).
7. Harnish, R. J., & Bridges, K. R. (2011). Effect of syllabus tone: Students' perceptions of instructor and course. *Social Psychology of Education*, 14(3), 319-330.
8. Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity Safety Cues Predict Instructor Impressions, Belonging, and Absences in the Psychology Classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, 0098628321990362.
9. Nilson, L. B. (2015). *Specifications grading: Restoring rigor, motivating students, and saving faculty time*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
10. Shapiro, S. (2020). Inclusive pedagogy in the academic writing classroom: Cultivating communities of belonging. *Journal of Academic Writing*, 10(1), 154-164.
11. Trujillo, G., & Tanner, K. D. (2014). Considering the role of affect in learning: Monitoring students' self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and science identity. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 13(1), 6-15.
12. Verschelden, C. (2017). *Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
13. Walton, G. M. & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A Brief Social-Belonging Intervention Improves Academic and Health Outcomes of Minority Students. *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)*, 331(6023), 1447–1451.

Here are some videos, newspaper articles, and blog entrances:

1. [Inclusive Syllabus Design](#) (UMass - Amherst)
2. [Yes, Virginia, There's a Better Way to Grade](#) (Nilson, 2016)
3. [The Syllabus: Setting a Tone for Learning and Engaging](#) (Hubert 2016)
4. [Tip: Specs Grading](#) (Bayraktar 2020)

Activities

Choose an activity or mix-and-match several activities related to your goals for the session. Below we offer suggestions for activities that are discussion-based, that are oriented around reflection, and that are focused on practical application.

Discussion:

We offer three different categories of prompts to consider for a discussion-based activity: 1) General prompts that do not rely on a specific reading; 2) Prompts that relate to readings about belonging; 3) Prompts that engage directly with specific readings or videos.

1. General (not reading specific)

- Begin by asking participants how they attempt to build a welcoming environment during the first weeks of class.
 - Question: Where does your syllabus fit into this plan? What is the purpose of the syllabus in your course?
 - Go over how syllabi are important in establishing a strong, welcoming first impression on students.
- Using the reflection questions from Shapiro (2020, pp. 156-157), ask participants to choose a question and spend about 5 minutes writing a response. Then open up to discussion.
 - How can I build a sense of community in my class throughout the term?
 - How can my class assignments and/or activities invite students to draw on their lived experiences?
 - How can I help my students prepare for and navigate the discomfort that may arise when we engage diverse perspectives?
 - How can I demonstrate (and make transparent to students) my commitment to equity?

2. Readings about belonging

- Begin with a 5-minute summary of the paper by Howansky, Maimon, and Sanchez (2021).
 - Question: Have you previously considered the importance of identity safety cues in your pedagogy?
- Reflection and discussion (any readings): Begin with a 5-minute summary of the readings and consider how they related to the following prompts:
 - Prompt 1: how do we turn off students before the semester has begun?
 - Prompt 2: what are ways – both subtle and not-so-subtle - to communicate a sense of belonging before meeting your students?
 - Prompt 3: context is important – what are some differences in course design between intro and advanced courses? Between majors and non-majors courses? At different institutions where participants have trained/taught?

3. Specific prompts

- Pre-circulate the article by Trujillo and Tanner (2014) and ask participants to focus their reading on the section titled “Sense of Belonging: Acquiring a feeling of being part of a community.” Consider the following questions:
 - Trujillo and Tanner (2014) offer a synthesis of the social and academic belonging of college students. What stands out to you as significant about this research? How might these research findings impact or inform your approach to teaching?
 - Consider the distinctions Trujillo and Tanner make between “social belonging” and “academic belonging.” In what ways do these two distinct

but related notions of belonging make an appearance within college classrooms? What pedagogical interventions might instructors employ to promote one or both of these types of belonging within their courses?

- Pre-circulate the following video: [The Biggest Myth In Education](#). Discuss in small groups the points made in the video. Can you implement multimodal learning approaches in your course?
- The syllabus is one of our first introductions to our students and helps us set the tone for the semester, which is why it is important for us to consider what we want to convey and how best to do so. Take a look at “The Syllabus: Setting a Tone for Learning and Engagement.” The section on syllabus expression lists 4 questions that provide a starting point in designing a syllabus. Discuss in your group how you would answer these questions and what you see as the role of the syllabus in your courses. How does the syllabus help convey inclusivity in a classroom? Should it do so?
- There are six traits of a syllabus that have been identified as setting a tone for engagement. You can read a brief description of them in both “The Syllabus: Setting a Tone for Learning and Engagement” and “Creating the Foundation for a Warm Classroom Climate.” Discuss in your group whether you take any of these into consideration when developing your own syllabi. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of warm syllabi?
- Take a look at Table 1 of “Creating the Foundation for a Warm Classroom Climate” or Table 1 of “Effect of Syllabus Tone: Students’ Perceptions of Instructor and Tone.” When reading the two versions (with warm and cold language) of the syllabus, what were your feelings? How might a student react to each of these versions? Considering the student population at your institution, what additional components would you add to make a syllabus more welcoming to all of your students?

Reflection

We offer three different categories of prompts to consider for an activity oriented around reflection: 1) General prompts related to personal experience; 2) Prompts that relate to the syllabi; 3) Prompts that ask participants to reflect on their teaching methods.

1. Personal Experience

- Reflect on an assignment that was most important/memorable to you in your education — how did that assignment foster your sense of belonging or shape how you thought about your academic self?
- Ask participants to reflect on learning experiences they were excited about and those they were less excited about (1 to 5 minutes writing assignment). What cues did people pick up on prior to the experience? What biases did they bring to the experience and where did these biases come from?

- Consider the opening paragraph of the article by Trujillo and Tanner (2014). While these reflection questions were written with biologists in mind, think about these questions in relation to your own disciplinary context:
 - As an undergraduate, what was your relationship to your discipline or field of study? At what moments in your academic training did you feel that you belonged? What were the conditions/characteristics/circumstances that supported your sense of belongingness?
 - Were there times when you experienced a lack of belongingness? If so, what could your instructors/colleagues/classmates have done to better support you in those moments?

2. Syllabi

- In groups, answer the following questions: Do I set a norm of inclusion on the first day of class? Does my syllabus include a diversity statement and a non-discrimination policy? If so, do I take class time to discuss them?
- Participants bring their own syllabi.
 - When writing this syllabus, what do you want it to communicate about your course, you as a professor, and the type of environment you want to create?
 - Why are these elements important to you and to your students?
- Evaluate a syllabus and/or course description (participant-submitted or from a bank of syllabi) and identify cues related to belonging and equity.
- Discuss the following strategies to make syllabus, course, and communication about those more inclusive.
 - Type of information included and language used
 - Syllabus statements
 - Assignments and grading choices
- Ask the participants to share the syllabus of one of their classes. In small groups, examine at least one syllabus. Try to find ways to improve the syllabus. For example, does the syllabus include policies or language that could be modified to convey a more welcoming tone?

3. Teaching Methods

- Reflect on your current course goals, design, and structure.
 - What are the goals of your course—what do you want students to emerge from the course learning in terms of content, and being able to do in terms of skills?
 - Is your course as inclusive as possible—in other words, does your course design (types of assignments, means of assessment, etc.) give opportunity for all students, who may excel in different areas and come from different backgrounds, to feel comfortable in your classroom, to succeed, and to thrive?
 - List two specific parts of your course that exemplify this. List two specific areas that you are grappling with/ may be in need of improvement to be made more inclusive?

- How do I ensure that individual students are included in the classroom community? Are there ways of assigning group work or assignments that would help foster a sense of inclusion?
- How do I make sure when it comes to assessing students that all students have a chance to do well in the class?

Practical Application

We focus on the syllabi for practical applications

- If your institution/faculty development center/department provides sample syllabi, look at the samples for opportunities to shift the tone in order to foster belonging.
- Look at the sample syllabus statements [here](#) and discuss how you could adapt them for your syllabus
- Look at examples of 2-3 syllabi from a variety of disciplines.
 - What elements stick out to participants:
 - Information included? Language?
 - Document structure?
 - Course structure?
 - Assignments, grading, late policies, etc.?
- Revisit participants' syllabi
 - Find 3 areas that could be more inclusive. Why did you choose these areas? How can you revise them?
- Stemming from the syllabus discussion, generate an open-ended set of ideas related to course design. Ideally, participants will discuss multiple aspects of course design including syllabus, grading, content, and assignments. The set of ideas is not meant to be a list of recommendations, but rather should reflect the thoughtful discussion of key components of course design. For example, exams may be useful diagnostics in some courses but not others. How might exams be used to the greatest effect/ How can instructors accommodate multiple modes of learning and levels of understanding in exams? Are there alternatives to exams that should be considered in some contexts?
- Draft an Open Revision policy for your course — what would the key terms/phrases be?
- Exchange course syllabi with one of the workshop participants and find ways in which your partner's syllabus shows any of the following characteristics: personable/friendly, compassionate, welcoming to students, enthusiastic about the course ... Highlight the positives and offer one suggestion on how to make the tone more inclusive.
- Consider your own syllabus and how it represents you as an instructor. What do you want to convey to your students about yourself as a teacher? As a person? How can you motivate your students to be excited about your course? Find one or two ways in which your syllabus can invite students to be part of your learning community.
- Look at your course materials and consider the following:
 - What cues do I use in my syllabus to signal the importance of a sense of belonging in my class?

- Do my syllabus and course materials convey a welcoming tone? Do my course policies, language, and assessment criteria communicate my belief that all students can succeed in my course?
- Do I consider diverse perspectives in the content I teach? Are there ways that I could include more diverse voices and perspectives into my course readings?
- Take a look at your syllabus and pay a visit to the space in which you will be teaching this semester, and read the list of guidelines regarding identity safety cues at the end of Howansky et al. (2021).
 - In what ways does your course/ space implement some of the identity safety cues mentioned in Howansky et al. (2021). There are several types of identity safety cues mentioned in Howansky et al. Choose two of them and describe how you might implement them in your course (e.g., specifically annotating them in your syllabus, making note of the exact time in your course where you might add an identity safety cue, etc.).

Module 3: Fostering Belonging in the Classroom

Content

Choose a list of articles (2-3 articles) or other artifacts that could be pre-circulated (inside higher ed articles, videos, podcasts, etc.) to workshop participants. These readings may be curated by the facilitator and tailored to the institution, academic program, and/or participant interests.

Here are a few specific reading recommendations:

1. Binning, K. R., Kaufmann, N., McGreevy, E. M., Fotuhi, O., Chen, S., Marshman, E., Kalender, Z., Limeri, L., Betancur, L., & Singh, C. (2020). Changing social contexts to foster equity in college science courses: An ecological-belonging intervention. *Psychological Science*, 31(9), 1059-1070.
2. Lee, J. J., & McCabe, J. M. (2021). Who Speaks and Who Listens: Revisiting the Chilly Climate in College Classrooms. *Gender & Society*, 35(1), 32-60.
3. Shapiro, S. (2020). Inclusive pedagogy in the academic writing classroom: Cultivating communities of belonging. *Journal of Academic Writing*, 10(1), 154-164.
4. Tanner, K. D. (2013). Structure matters: twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 12(3), 322-331.
5. Verschelden, C. (2017). *Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Activities

Choose an activity or mix-and-match several activities related to your goals for the session. Below we offer suggestions for activities that are discussion-based, that are oriented around reflection, and that are focused on practical application.

Discussion:

We offer three different categories of prompts to consider for a discussion-based activity: 1) General prompts that do not rely on a specific reading; 2) Prompts that relate to readings about belonging interventions and teaching strategies; 3) Prompts that engage directly with a specific reading.

1. General (not reading specific)

- Ask participants to write, then share: What were the challenges you faced in your first year or two in college? How did you overcome them? What would you tell your first-year self if you could?
- Student guests to start the convo? Briefly have them discuss what makes a classroom feel inclusive and welcoming.
- Reflection and discussion (any readings): Begin with a 5-minute summary of the readings and consider how they related to the following prompts:
 - Prompt 1: Some scholars of pedagogy insist that initial impressions of a course and instructor set the student's experience – to what extent might this be true?
 - Prompt 2: How have participants been turned on or turned off by a particular instructor? Did this experience depend on the course material/topic?
 - Prompt 3: What teaching styles have been effective and ineffective for each participant?
 - Prompt 4: What is the promise and peril of integrating technology into our classrooms? Are there common denominators, or is the successful use of technology situationally-dependent?
 - Prompt 5: Teaching to the edges – what are some participants' successes and failures?
- The reading for this module offers a variety of assignments, teaching strategies, and pedagogical approaches that instructors have used to promote belonging in their courses (Possible readings: Binning et al., 2020, Verschelden, 2017, & Shapiro, 2020). **Question:** Which approaches resonated with you? Which suggestions might translate into your course context? Which ones might be less easy to adapt within your discipline?

2. Readings about belonging interventions and/or teaching strategies

- Choose a reading that describes a belonging intervention (e.g. (Binning et al., 2002)) How might a similar exercise or intervention function in your class(es)? E.g. ask students to write about challenges they have encountered so far and how they might overcome them/ how those challenges might improve over time
 - (This can be used to transition to practical application.)
- Pre-circulate a paper focused on teaching strategies that promote belonging. (e.g. Tanner, 2013). In small groups, discuss possible uses for each type of teaching strategy. Answer the following question: If you have to pick only one of

the strategies within each class of teaching strategies, which one would you choose and why?

3. Reading-specific prompts

- How are the main findings and conclusions from Lee and McCabe (2021) relevant to your pedagogy and how you conduct your classroom? Had you been previously aware of the “chilly climate” before reading this article?

Reflection

We offer three different categories of prompts to consider for an activity oriented around reflection: 1) General prompts related to individual beliefs around teaching; 2) Prompts that relate to readings about specific teaching practices; 3) Prompts that ask participants to reflect together on a specific teaching scenario.

1. General (beliefs about teaching)

- Participants write down 3-5 words they would use to describe their teaching philosophy.
 - How is this philosophy reflected in their courses? What specific practices do they implement to reach these goals?

2. Specific Teaching Practice

- Reflect on the way classroom discussion is handled in your classroom and your most recent class discussion. Is participation in class graded? Do you give all students an opportunity to participate, and more importantly, do all students participate (or are there several students who consistently participate in every class, while others say nothing)? What are 3 specific steps you take to ensure that students feel accepted and welcome in your classroom?
- *Group Reflection:* Ask participants to reflect individually about the following questions and then ask them to share in small groups:
 - Do I consider diverse perspectives in the content I teach? Am I representing the work and experiences of people with marginalized identities in the research I present?
 - How do I make sure that students feel comfortable speaking up in class and that the classroom environment is as welcoming and respectful as possible?
- *Individual Reflection:* Consider the following reflection questions in relation to your own teaching practices:
 - How do I encourage a sense of belonging for students in my class on the first day of class? In the first week? Throughout the semester?
 - How do I ensure that individual students are included in the classroom community on a day-to-day basis within my courses? Are there ways that I could assign group work, facilitate class discussion, or create new opportunities for participation that would support student belonging?

3. Teaching Scenario

- Think about a time when a student's sense of belonging may have been called into question in your classroom—how did you respond? How might you respond

similarly or differently if you could revisit that moment? What kinds of things could have mitigated that experience for the student?

Practical Application

We offer four different categories of prompts to consider for an activity focused on practical application: 1) General prompts related to more collaborative or peer-to-peer learning into courses; 2) Prompts that help participants revise their current assignments, course materials, or teaching practices; 3) Prompts that ask participants to reflect together on a specific teaching scenario; 4) Prompts that encourage participants to develop practical applications from their reflective exercises

1. Incorporating more collaborative or peer learning

- Identify one area of your course that could accommodate a peer-to-peer research activity (See Shapiro, 2020).
- How might your course incorporate peer mentorship structures?
 - Identify three of your former students who may be willing to offer testimonials to your incoming/current students about how they overcame adversity at the beginning of their postsecondary education.

2. Revising current course assignments/materials/practices

- Bring back definitions of “belonging,” “exclusion,” and “inclusion” from the first session.
 - How can we bring these ideas into our lectures, labs, discussions, etc.?
- After completing the reading: Take out your syllabus, discussion/participation guidelines/rubric, etc. What are two specific things you can implement in your classroom discussions? Specifically, write down two things you may consider improving/ amending to make your classroom environment even better than it is now?

3. Creating new course assignments/materials/practices

- Select one of the class activities from the provided resources and add it to a current lesson plan. How could this activity reinforce/align with the desired outcomes for your course/the specific lesson?
- Develop one new course assignment, activity, or teaching practice that you will implement next semester to promote a sense of belonging in one of your courses. Write a description of the new assignment/activity and develop a method to assess whether or not the intervention positively impacts student belonging.

4. Practical Reflection:

- Participants will generate a document that will describe the collective challenges they have experienced – both as students and as instructors - in developing and maintaining an inclusive learning environment. Whereas the content of this document will depend on the participants’ backgrounds, interests, and experiences, it will serve as a report of the open discussion of course development generated earlier in the execution of this module. The participants may develop a list of loose recommendations for improving belonging in their

classrooms, or if they may simply generate a record to their discussions to serve as a resource for others who were not able to participate.

Module 4: Self-assessment/Assessing Belonging

Content

Choose a list of articles (2-3 articles) or other artifacts that could be pre-circulated (inside higher ed articles, videos, podcasts, etc.) to workshop participants. These readings may be curated by the facilitator and tailored to the institution, academic program, and/or participant interests.

Here are a few specific reading recommendations:

1. Walton, G. M. & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A Brief Social-Belonging Intervention Improves Academic and Health Outcomes of Minority Students. *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)*, 331(6023), 1447–1451.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1198364>
2. Binning, K. R., Kaufmann, N., McGreevy, E. M., Fotuhi, O., Chen, S., Marshman, E., ... & Singh, C. (2020). Changing social contexts to foster equity in college science courses: An ecological-belonging intervention. *Psychological Science*, 31(9), 1059-1070.
3. Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity Safety Cues Predict Instructor Impressions, Belonging, and Absences in the Psychology Classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, 0098628321990362.

Activities

Choose an activity or mix-and-match several activities related to your goals for the session. Below we offer suggestions for activities that are discussion-based, that are oriented around reflection, and that are focused on practical application.

Discussion

We offer two prompts to consider for a discussion-based activity: 1) A general prompt that does not rely on a specific reading; and 2) a prompt that engages directly with a specific reading.

1. General prompt

- Pre-circulate 1-2 articles that describe belonging interventions. After a brief summary of the research intervention described in the articles, facilitate a discussion around the following question with your group:
 - What types of belonging interventions might be possible within our specific institutional, academic, disciplinary, or teaching contexts?

- Where in our institution/curriculum/courses might this intervention have the potential to make the most impact for student belonging?
- What mechanisms do we already have in place that we could use to assess the effectiveness of a belonging intervention?
- What new instruments or tools might we need to implement to assess a belonging intervention within our specific context?

2. Reading-specific prompt

- Think back to, or perhaps even re-read, the Howansky et al. (2021) article on the importance of identity safety cues in fostering belonging. Look to the end of the paper for the list of guiding questions they pose to readers. Which identity safety cues did you implement for your class (that was different from previous semesters). Were they easy or hard to implement, or easier to harder to implement than you envisioned? Did students notice them?

Reflection:

We offer two prompts to consider for an activity oriented around reflection: 1) A prompt to help you develop assessment protocols for your course; and 2) a series of prompts to help you assess a particular change that you made to your course/teaching.

1. Developing Assessment Protocols

- Consider all the different ways (both formal and informal) that you assess student learning in your courses throughout the semester. Make a list. For each item on your list, how might you redesign that assessment so that it measures student belonging instead? Choose 1-2 that seem the most feasible within the specific context of your teaching, and brainstorm ways to develop those ideas into a more detailed plan for assessing student belonging in your class next semester.

2. Protocols for assessing a specific pedagogical intervention or change to your teaching

- Take a step back and think back over the past semester (which presumably differed from prior semesters, given the changes you made to your syllabus/course design/ etc. in the service of fostering belonging): What changes did you notice in your students? Did you notice any changes, for instance, in classroom cohesion or the quality of assignments students turned in?
 - Qualitative: Did any students express any feedback, positive or negative, about the class, whether verbally to you or through their course evaluations (**feel free to review what the students wrote in their mid-semester evaluations, end-of-semester evaluations, etc. as you reflect**)?
 - Quantitative: Take a look at the quantitative information on your student evaluations (mid-semester, end-of-semester, or both) from this past semester where you implemented some belonging-related changes and compare them to your evaluations from the previous two semesters-- particularly for questions that assess aspects of the student experience

(their engagement, their perceptions of class being welcoming, etc.). Do you notice an improvement from this semester compared to previous ones?

Practical Application

We offer four different categories of prompts to consider for an activity focused on practical application: 1) general prompts to help you develop a belonging intervention and a method of assessment based on practices that you already do within your teaching; 2) An idea for gaining peer feedback on your teaching; 3) Prompts that offer mechanisms for gathering student feedback; 4) a prompt to encourage participants to self-assess their own teaching practices

1. Developing a Belonging Intervention and Assessment

- Develop one belonging intervention that you will implement next semester. Write a description of the intervention and how you will assess it. **Here are some ideas for how to assess your intervention based on what you may already be doing in your courses:**
 - Do you typically circulate a pre-course survey to your students within the first of the semester? If so, could you add a question about belonging to that survey? Consider inviting students to answer the same question during the last week of the semester or on your course evaluations (if you are able to add questions) and compare their responses.
 - Do you typically give your students a pre-test early in the semester to assess their prior knowledge of course content? If so, could you add a question related to belonging to that survey? Consider inviting students to answer the same question during the last week of the semester or on your course evaluations (if you are able to add questions) and compare their responses.
 - Do you typically collect a writing sample or incorporate an in-class, informal writing assignment into your first week of the semester so as to begin to get to know your students? If so, could you integrate something about belonging into the writing prompt for that assignment? Consider inviting students to answer the same (or similar prompt) during the last week of the semester and compare their responses.
 - Do you typically gather feedback from students at the mid-point of the semester? If so, could you add a question about belonging to your mid-course feedback survey? If not, would adding a mid-semester feedback process work within your course/teaching context?
 - Do you plan to have a peer visit your classroom to conduct an observation at some point during the semester? If so, you could specifically ask that colleague to look for and assess your class through the lens of belonging. If not, find out if your department or your university teaching center offers classroom observations or a structure for formative, peer observation.

2. Peer Feedback

- Arrange to have a peer colleague come to your class to observe your teaching. You could arrange this on your own, through your department, or through your center for teaching. Work with your observation partner to create questions and observations guidelines that allow you to focus your attention on assessing your inclusive teaching strategies or newly implemented belonging interventions.

3. Student Feedback

- Consider creating space within the first week of your course to co-create community discussion guidelines for your course and throughout the co-creation process, emphasize/direct students to consider measures that will promote student belonging.
- Create a student feedback survey to gather informal, anonymous feedback from your students. Within this survey, include a few questions that will provide insight into student sense of belonging and inclusion within your class. Decide whether to give this survey as a pre-, mid-, or end-of-semester survey.
- Talk with your students! If you feel comfortable facilitating a conversation at the end of the semester, find time to gather feedback (either through an anonymous survey or through an in-class discussion) from your students about their experience within the course. Another option would be to choose 1-2 students who have taken your class in the past and ask them if they would be willing to talk with you about their experience in your class. Within those conversations, find out what aspects of the course most supported their learning and what changes they would suggest for future versions of the course.

4. Self-Assessment

- Take out your syllabus/ notebook and explicitly write down two changes you made that you will keep for next semester. If some of the changes you made did not work out as you expected, write down how you will tweak them for next semester.. After re-reviewing the Howansky et al. (2021) article, write down two additional changes you will make to your course for next semester.

Annotated Bibliography

*Summaries provided have been written by the members of this working group unless otherwise noted (i.e. as “summary provided by publisher” or “published abstract”).

Aloia, L.S. (2021). Student learning: The influence of instructor and student confirmation, classroom connectedness, and self-efficacy. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 76(2), 202-215.

Summary: Aloia examines the impact of instructor and student (peer) confirmation on two variables related to students' experiences in a classroom: classroom connectedness and learning. They measure instructor confirmation using three separate items:

instructor's responses to student questions, perceived instructor interest in students' inputs, and overall teaching style in relation to communication with students. They measure student confirmation using three separate items: peer acknowledgment and recognition, perceived feelings toward assistance from peers, and individual attention earned from other peers not related to course material (e.g. getting to know one another). Self-efficacy was also measured. From the findings, Aloia found that there was a positive relationship formed from instructor and student confirmation on perceived classroom connectedness and student learning. Overall, they concluded that instructors' outward and intentional care and concern is as important for student's perceived success as confirmation from peers. When students feel welcome, heard, and respected in the classroom setting, they may feel more connected to the classroom atmosphere and feel they have learned more from the course.

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

Table of Contents:

1. How Does Students' Prior Knowledge Affect Their Learning?
2. How Does the Way Students Organize Knowledge Affect Their Learning?
3. What Factors Motivate Students to Learn?
4. How Do Students Develop Mastery?
5. What Kinds of Practice and Feedback Enhance Learning?
6. Why Do Student Development and Course Climate Matter for Student Learning?
7. How Do Students Become Self-Directed Learners?

Barkley, E. F., & Major, C. H. (2020). *Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. John Wiley & Sons.

Summary from publisher: "The revised and updated second edition of Student Engagement Techniques is a much-needed guide to engaging today's information-overloaded students. The book is a comprehensive resource that offers college teachers a dynamic model for engaging students and includes over one hundred tips, strategies, and techniques that have been proven to help teachers across all disciplines motivate and connect with their students. This edition will provide a deeper understanding of what student engagement is, demonstrate new strategies for engaging students, uncover implementation strategies for engaging students in online learning environments, and provide new examples on how to implement these techniques into STEM fields."

Bayer, A., Bhanot, S. P., Bronchetti, E. T., & O'Connell, S. A. (2020). Diagnosing the learning environment for diverse students in introductory economics: An analysis of relevance, belonging, and growth mindsets. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 110, 294-98.
10.1257/pandp.20201051

Summary: Three topics: relevance, belonging, and growth mindset -- what is the relationship between these three concerning student achievement in economics? The study focuses on women and underrepresented minority students in economics; The authors create a student mentorship model (“the visible hand in economics”) -- study hall with a diverse group of upper-level students -- group of senior students was a diverse group, which was vital for representation of diverse identities in economics; result: increased perceived relevance of economics for women and underrepresented minority students and an increased sense of belonging in economics (“people like me can become an economist”) for women and underrepresented minority students; caveats: the paper uses a sample of 102 & 112 student cohorts for a single university.

Bettez, S.C. (2020). Creating community commitments in the higher education classroom. *In Practice*, 25(1), 14-18.

Summary: Bettez advocates for implementing “community commitments” in the college classroom in order to create an environment that is conducive of critical inquiry. These commitments are created collaboratively and are continually revised and refined over the semester. Bettez argues, “Ultimately, the goal is to create an engaged, dialogical learning environment in which each student feels supported and valued in their learning process. Creating community commitments can enhance this goal” (pp. 17).

Binning, K. R., Kaufmann, N., McGreevy, E. M., Fotuhi, O., Chen, S., Marshman, E., Kalendar, Z., Limeri, L., Betancour, L., & Singh, C. (2020). Changing social contexts to foster equity in college science courses: An ecological-belonging intervention. *Psychological Science*, 31(9), 1059-1070.

Summary: Binning, et al. build on Walton & Cohen (2011) by examining the effects of normalizing adversity on students’ feelings of belonging. The article discusses two studies in science classrooms, both first-year/foundational courses—though the strategies they describe are cross-disciplinary. These interventions are also designed to shift the classroom ecology/community so that struggle is perceived as normal (rather than as a threat to belonging). The interventions are (p. 1062):

- A reflective writing exercise: students wrote about the challenges they had encountered so far and how those challenges may improve over time
- Sharing student testimonials from more advanced students - 3 written stories
- Semi-structured group discussion (same group throughout the term)

The results were very promising— “intervention students had higher attendance, course grades, and 1-year college persistence” (p. 1059).

Friess, E., & Lam, C. (2018). Cultivating a sense of belonging: Using Twitter to establish a community in an introductory technical communication classroom. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24(4), 328-346.

Summary: Friess and Lam sought to examine the potential positive influence of social

media usage in the classroom on belonging through an intervention in five traditionally first-year courses. Students were asked to post nine Twitter statuses with a class hashtag throughout the semester as part of predetermined microcampaigns created by the authors. Because the microcampaigns were assignments, each status was graded. After gathering survey data, students reported a stronger sense of belonging and connectedness in the technical communication classroom relative to their prior classroom experiences. The authors also found that “student engagement with microcampaigns varied greatly” suggesting that the type of assignment mattered when it came to getting students involved beyond the minimum posting requirements. Another detail to consider when implementing social media into the classroom is students’ need to maintain separate identities, as students created different profiles from their own personal account to use for the course assignments.

Fuentes, M. A., Zelaya, D. G., & Madsen, J. W. (2021). Rethinking the course syllabus: Considerations for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. *Teaching of Psychology*, 48(1), 69-79.

Published Abstract: “**Introduction:** Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are receiving considerable attention in higher education. Within psychology, the American Psychological Association has highlighted the importance of cultural diversity in both undergraduate and graduate curricula and charged educators with facilitating the development of cultural competence among learners. **Statement of the Problem:** Many resources have been developed to help promote EDI within higher education. The resources developed have mainly focused on the curricula and pedagogical approaches, yet the syllabus remains overlooked with few guidelines available to educators. **Literature Review:** We offer several considerations informed by theoretical frameworks and best practices in the discipline and suggestions for the successful implementation of EDI in the syllabus. **Teaching Implications:** This article provides a comprehensive and useful guide for developing a syllabus that assists with the integration of EDI, as the syllabus is the first opportunity for faculty to communicate their philosophy, expectations, requirements, and other course information. **Conclusion:** Infusing EDI in the syllabus is essential for promoting an inclusive learning environment and is conducive to establishing goals related to cultural competence.”

Gurung, R. A., & Galardi, N. R. (2021). Syllabus tone, more than mental health statements, influence intentions to seek help. *Teaching of Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321994632>.

Published Abstract: “**Background:** Mental health issues are increasing in higher education and finding ways for students to get help when needed is important. **Objective:** We tested if the tone of a short syllabus and the presence of a special statement addressing mental health would increase intentions to approach instructors for help. **Method:** We used a 2(Tone: warm vs. cold) X 2(Statement: present vs. absent) experimental design. Participants (N = 257) read one of four, two-page syllabi, and rated

intentions to reach out for help and the instructor. **Results:** We found a main effect for tone on three Reach Out statements and ratings of the instructor. Presence of the statement influenced likelihood to reach out for help with personal problems.

Conclusions: Both the tone of a short syllabus and the presence of statements normalizing reaching out for help can influence student intentions to contact instructors for help. Teaching Implications: Writing a warm toned syllabus and addressing stress and mental health with a university statement may increase student's intentions to ask for help."

Harnish, R. J., & Bridges, K. R. (2011). Effect of syllabus tone: Students' perceptions of instructor and course. *Social Psychology of Education, 14*(3), 319-330.

Published Abstract: "It is not uncommon for students to complain that faculty are unapproachable, while faculty complain that students are not engaged. Such perceptions, especially when formed at the start of a semester, can impact what students learn and how instructors teach; therefore, it is critical that these perceptions are prevented if a course is to be successful. A good starting point is the syllabus, which not only informs students about a course and its requirements, but creates a first impression about the instructor and his or her attitudes toward teaching. We conducted an experiment in which the course syllabus was manipulated to reflect a friendly or an unfriendly tone so that we could explore the perceptions students formed of the instructor and class. Results supported the hypothesis that a syllabus written in a friendly, rather than unfriendly, tone evoked perceptions of the instructor being more warm, more approachable, and more motivated to teach the course."

Harnish, R. J., McElwee, R. O. B., Slattery, J. M., Frantz, S., Haney, M. R., Shore, C. M., & Penley, J. (2011). Creating the foundation for a warm classroom climate. *APS Observer, 24*(1). <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/creating-the-foundation-for-a-warm-classroom-climate>

Summary: Harnish, et al. identify six characteristics of a "warm" syllabus: positive or friendly language, rationale for assignments, self-disclosure, humor, compassion, and enthusiasm. They also provide examples of cold and warm language for each characteristic.

Howansky, K., Maimon, M., & Sanchez, D. (2021). Identity safety cues Predict Instructor Impressions, Belonging, and Absences in the Psychology Classroom. *Teaching of Psychology. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628321990362>*.

Summary: Howansky and colleagues (2021) in this paper show that identity safety cues (e.g., signals that one's identity is accepted and valued, as communicated through the syllabus, course design, and course materials) were associated with belonging and academic outcomes for students in an undergraduate psychology course. More importantly, Howansky et al. end the paper with a list of guiding questions for instructors

to ask themselves regarding whether or not their practices engender a sense of identity safety. A lot of these practices are low-cost and not too harrowing to implement, and may make a difference, as their data show.

Inzlicht, M. and Good, C (2006). How environments can threaten academic performance, self-knowledge, and sense of belonging. In S. Levin & C. van Laar (Eds.) *Stigma and group inequality: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 129-150). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Published Abstract: “For the past few years, our research has focused on the burdens of being immersed in environments that compel us to count our social identity--borne not only by African Americans, but by anyone who is the target of stereotypes based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. Much of this research has focused on what we call threatening environments, which are environments that can activate social identities and the relevant negative stereotypes about them. The aim of this chapter is to describe this research, and in so doing, illustrate what it means to belong to a group with a "spoiled identity" (Goffman, 1963). In this chapter, we explore how social factors can create threatening environments and come to affect intellectual performance, academic self-concept, and feelings of belonging. First, we review research showing how being in the numerical minority can impact intellectual performance. We describe, for example, how being outnumbered by Whites can activate negative race stereotypes and undermine African Americans' standardized test performance through a psychological process known as stereotype threat. Second, we explore how specific environments can make people apprehensive about being the targets of prejudice, which in turn can pose problems for their academic self-concepts. That is, we show how viewing the world through the lens of social identity--or being in environments that compel one to do so--can rob people of valuable self-relevant information and so foster inaccurate self-knowledge and an unstable self-concept. Third, we examine how threatening environments convey exclusionary messages by signaling that certain groups have only marginal status in the setting and so are not as valued as other groups. In so doing, these settings can hamper feelings of belonging, acceptance, and comfort, especially when they communicate that ability and intelligence are fixed qualities. Finally, we discuss what we can do to disarm these harmful environments so that people can succeed and prosper in them. Specifically, we suggest that we can inure people against the threatening features of an environment by convincing them that ability and intelligence are malleable. We begin by introducing the concept of threatening environments. Following this introduction, the chapter addresses what can be done to help people overcome these threats. How can we neutralize threats present in the environment? The good news that we hope has come through in this chapter is that the effects of threatening environments can be mitigated and that there is much that educators and policy makers can do to help. Once this is done, "counting one's social identity" will no longer have the same negative repercussions. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved)”

Lee, J. J., & McCabe, J. M. (2021). Who speaks and who listens: Revisiting the chilly climate in college classrooms. *Gender & Society*, 35(1), 32-60.

Published Abstract: “Almost 40 years ago, scholars identified a ‘chilly climate’ for women in college classrooms. To examine whether contemporary college classrooms remain ‘chilly,’ we conducted quantitative and qualitative observations in nine classrooms across multiple disciplines at one elite institution. Based on these 95 hours of observation, we discuss three gendered classroom participation patterns. First, on average, men students occupy classroom sonic space 1.6 times as often as women. Men also speak out without raising hands, interrupt, and engage in prolonged conversations during class more than women students. Second, style and tone also differ. Men’s language is assertive, whereas women’s is hesitant and apologetic. Third, professors’ interventions and different structures of classrooms can alter existing gender status hierarchies. Extending Ridgeway’s gender system framework to college classrooms, we discuss how these gendered classroom participation patterns perpetuate gender status hierarchies. We thus argue that the chilly climate is an underexplored mechanism for the stalled gender revolution.”

Gannon, K. (2020). *Radical hope: A teaching manifesto*. West Virginia Press.

Summary from publisher: “Higher education has seen better days. Harsh budget cuts, the precarious nature of employment in college teaching, and political hostility to the entire enterprise of education have made for an increasingly fraught landscape. Radical Hope is an ambitious response to this state of affairs, at once political and practical—the work of an activist, teacher, and public intellectual grappling with some of the most pressing topics at the intersection of higher education and social justice. Kevin Gannon asks that the contemporary university’s manifold problems be approached as opportunities for critical engagement, arguing that, when done effectively, teaching is by definition emancipatory and hopeful. Considering individual pedagogical practice, the students who are the primary audience and beneficiaries of teaching, and the institutions and systems within which teaching occurs, Radical Hope surveys the field, tackling everything from impostor syndrome to cell phones in class to allegations of a campus “free speech crisis.” Throughout, Gannon translates ideals into tangible strategies and practices (including key takeaways at the conclusion of each chapter), with the goal of reclaiming teachers’ essential role in the discourse of higher education.”

McKinney, J.P., McKinney, K. G., Franiuk, R., & Schweitzer, J. (2006) The college classroom as a community: Impact on student attitudes and learning. *College Teaching*, 54(3), 281-284.

Published Abstract: “This study is an exploration of the “sense of community” in a college classroom. The construct was successfully developed by incorporating six variables borrowed from neighborhood community research. Sense of community scores

significantly predicted students' classroom attitudes, perception of learning, and actual performance on course exams.”

Murphy, M. C., Gopalan, M., Carter, E. R., Emerson, K. T. U., Bottoms, B. L., & Walton, G. M. (2020). A customized belonging intervention improves retention of socially disadvantaged students at a broad-access university. *Science Advances*, 6(29). <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aba4677>

Summary: Researchers examined the impact of a randomized intervention on sense of belonging in first-year college students. The intervention consisted of a reading and writing exercise that was deployed in required first-year writing courses that asked students to reflect on their own experiences with belonging and read about other students who experienced challenges to academic and social belonging in college. Researchers followed student participants for two years after the intervention and found that the belonging intervention increased “college persistence” (likelihood that students would maintain continuous enrollment over the next two academic years) for “historically disadvantaged students” (racial-ethnic minority and first-generation students). This study replicates the findings of other research on belonging interventions and demonstrates how a small exercise can have a positive impact on student sense of belonging.

Nieto, J. & Valery, S. (2006). Creating a sense of community in the classroom. *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*, 3(3). <https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/jppp>.

Published Abstract: “Current national influences on education such as ever-increasing cultural diversity of students, high-stakes testing and national debates regarding immigration policy present unique challenges and opportunities for higher education faculty and students. It is critical that both students and faculty be able to shape and participate in educational structures and activities that emphasize cooperation rather than competition and promote holistic learning. Additionally, an influx of first-generation students means that some incoming students are not well versed in the workings of higher education environments. Pedagogies such as learning communities and cohort models help address these concerns. An example of an ideal learning community is presented, along with strategies for creating a stronger sense of community in any classroom.”

Nilson, L. B. (2015). *Specifications grading: Restoring rigor, motivating students, and saving faculty time*. Stylus Publishing.

Partial Summary from Publisher: “This new specifications grading paradigm restructures assessments to streamline the grading process and greatly reduce grading time, empower students to choose the level of attainment they want to achieve, reduce antagonism between the evaluator and the evaluated, and increase student receptivity to meaningful feedback, thus facilitating the learning process – all while upholding rigor. In addition, specs grading increases students’ motivation to do well by making expectations clear, lowering their stress and giving them agency in determining their course goals.

Among the unique characteristics of the schema, all of which simplify faculty decision making, are the elimination of partial credit, the reliance on a one-level grading rubric and the 'bundling' of assignments and tests around learning outcomes. Successfully completing more challenging bundles (or modules) earns a student a higher course grade. Specs grading works equally well in small and large class settings and encourages 'authentic assessment.' Used consistently over time, it can restore credibility to grades by demonstrating and making transparent to all stakeholders the learning outcomes that students achieve."

Nunn, L. M. (2021). *College belonging: How first-year and first-generation students navigate campus life*. Rutgers University Press.

Summary from Publisher: "College Belonging reveals how colleges' and universities' efforts to foster a sense of belonging in their students are misguided. Colleges bombard new students with the message to 'get out there!' and 'find your place' by joining student organizations, sports teams, clubs and the like. Nunn shows that this reflects a flawed understanding of what belonging is and how it works. Drawing on the sociological theories of Emile Durkheim, *College Belonging* shows that belonging is something that members of a community offer to each other. It is something that must be given, like a gift. Individuals cannot simply walk up to a group or community and demand belonging. That's not how it works. The group must extend a sense of belonging to each and every member. It happens by making a person feel welcome, to feel that their presence matters to the group, that they would be missed if they were gone. This critical insight helps us understand why colleges' push for students simply to 'get out there!' does not always work."

Savonick, D. (2017, August 28.) Community guidelines: Fostering inclusive discussions of difference. *HASTAC*.

<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/danicasavonick/2017/08/28/community-guidelines-fostering-inclusive-discussions-difference>

Published summary: "In this blog, I describe how my class co-authored a set of community guidelines in order to create a supportive environment for discussing issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality."

Shapiro, S. (2020). Inclusive pedagogy in the academic writing classroom: Cultivating communities of belonging. *Journal of Academic Writing*, 10(1), 154-164.

Summary: Shapiro focuses on belonging in the writing classroom specifically. She asks educators to consider and prioritize the emotional experiences created in our classrooms, and describes factors such as the physical/material space of our classroom as belonging cues. She includes a set of reflection questions that we can ask about our own course designs while they are in process, and recommends a range of assignments for fostering belonging, including:

A thematic autobiographical essay
A writer's memo that is included with the submission of each final draft
Peer-to-peer research during class

Sochacki, J. (2020, March 23.) A checklist for building community in the college classroom. *Faculty Focus*. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/a-checklist-for-building-community-in-the-college-classroom/>

Summary: Sochacki offers eight strategies for building community in the classroom: make connections with students; be enthusiastic and passionate about the content; build trust; model empathy, kindness, and compassion; empower students through their strengths; consider how students best learn; expect a growth mindset; and welcome mistakes as part of the learning process.

Solomon, Y. (2007). Not belonging? What makes a functional learner identity in undergraduate mathematics?. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(1), 79-96.

Summary: This study analyzes 12 interviews by first-year undergraduate students in mathematics classrooms. Even though some students identify themselves as “being good at math”, they do not necessarily feel that they belong to the mathematics community. In this study, students describe themselves as “marginalized” in the math classroom because they are not able to contribute to the learning process. They observe the instructor and play “catch up” in the learning process. The article emphasizes the importance of making mathematics learning accessible to all without providing too many ideas of how.

Tanner, K. D. (2013). Structure matters: twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 12(3), 322-331.

Summary: Tanner describes a variety of methods for instructors to consider when addressing the “whom” of teaching, in addition to the “what” and “how” of teaching. Tanner stresses student experience and attitude strongly affect their ability to learn and it is thus critical to consider individual backgrounds when designing a learning environment and plan. Tanner identifies 21 strategies to facilitate teaching to all students in the classroom (ie teaching to the edges, inclusive teaching) and these strategies are broken down into the following categories: giving students time to think; encouraging participation of all students; building an inclusive and fair learning environment; monitoring behavior to cultivate divergent thinking; and teaching all of the students in the classroom. Tanner addresses and explores each strategy in depth, and concludes by saying that these strategies are starting points for developing inclusive teaching and that instructors are encouraged to go beyond these strategies to promote equitable access to learning.

Trujillo, G., & Tanner, K. D. (2014). Considering the role of affect in learning: Monitoring students' self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and science identity. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 13(1), 6-15.

Summary: Trujillo and Tanner suggest that students' attitudes and overall affect, in addition to cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning, influence the impact of teaching and learning. The authors further advocate for a shift from a deficit model of teaching to a dynamic instructional model where student experience and individual characteristics are accounted for. The authors break down affect into three categories, self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and science identity and review the literature to explore the impact of each component on learning in science courses. They also explore and review ways to assess and measure student attitudes with respect to each component of affect. The authors conclude by emphasizing the importance of student attitudes and emotions in shaping learning outcomes and encourage instructors to consider affect along with cognitive and metacognitive components of instruction when designing and delivering courses.

Verschelden, C. (2017). *Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*. Stylus Publishing.

Summary: Verschelden frames belongingness uncertainty as something that steals students' mental bandwidth. There are material cues for belonging that include how campus spaces/classrooms are decorated and whose work is included in our syllabi. Specific recommendations of activities and classroom exercises include:

- A values affirmation activity
- Scaffolding class discussion by asking students to come to class with specific things prepared (draws on their funds of knowledge)
- Encourage students' identification with their academic selves (e.g. in how we give feedback on assignments: "I'm giving you this feedback because I have high expectations of your work and I know you can do it.")
- Assigning brief Life Reports at the beginning of the semester
- Relationship-building
 - Opportunities for peer instruction, warmth of the instructor

Walton, G. M. & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*, 331(6023), 1447–1451. DOI: 10.1126/science.1198364

Summary: Walton and Cohen tested the hypothesis that uncertainty about belonging in first-year college students has stronger negative impacts on "socially stigmatized" groups than on non-marginalized groups. They developed an intervention consisting of a narrative describing social adversity as shared and short-lived, and administered the intervention (complete with daily surveys and a 3-year follow-up assessment) to randomly-assigned African-American and European-American students. African-American

students - but not European-American students - in the intervention group reported significantly less belonging uncertainty, fewer doctor visits, and greater subjective happiness than students in the control group three years following the intervention. The authors suggest that social belonging can be affected through targeted intervention and has broad-ranging impacts on academic performance and overall health.

Won, Sungjun, Wolters, C, & Mueller, S. (2018). Sense of belonging and self-regulated learning: Testing achievement goals as mediators. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 84(3), 402-418.

Summary: This study of 385 college students examined the relationship between a perceived sense of belonging to the school and peer groups with the students' self-reported ability to plan, implement, and reflect on their academic goals. The context for this work includes previous work that confirms the importance of a sense of belonging to a college student's engagement in academic work and their willingness to persevere to achieve academic goals. The study focuses on the mechanisms. How does a sense of belonging correlate with a student's employment of metacognitive strategies ("planning, monitoring, and regulating their use of learning strategies")? How does it correlate with their use of time management strategies and their engagement with peer learning?

- Won et al.'s results highlight the importance of distinguishing between a sense of belonging to a school and a sense of belonging to peer groups, confirm their hypothesis that a sense of belonging positively correlates with a student's self-regulated learning strategies, and provide empirical evidence for achievement goals as a motivational pathway.
- Sense of belonging to a school positively correlates with use of metacognitive and time management strategies.
- Sense of belonging to peer groups positively correlates with use of study groups and other peer learning strategies.