

# Strategies of creating inclusive teaching environments in online courses in the economics and finance curriculum



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## DESCRIPTION

- Original solutions for creating inclusive teaching environments in economics and finance curriculum for diverse student populations.
- Designed for graduate courses in Managerial Economics; Money, Banking and Financial Institutions; Investment Analysis; and Global Financial Strategy.
- Suitable for students in the programs of MBA and MSF, offered in face-to-face and online delivery mode.
- Expanding on practical and applied experiential learning opportunity in the economics and finance curriculum facilitating diversity and inclusivity.
- Incorporating individual experiences and research, diversity, equity, inclusion, and various perspectives in purposeful and highly appreciated individual contribution to the merits of the courses and encouraging collaboration among students.



## RATIONALE

The design of these inclusive teaching course environments was motivated by the following objectives:

- To create critical engagement of difference;
- To engage through academic belonging;
- To ensure transparency;
- To build structured interactions;
- To provide flexibility.

## DESIGN

The examples of the presented solutions refer to various course elements:

- Syllabus,
- Course policies,
- Grading rubrics,
- Discussions,
- Assignments,
- Projects,
- Supporting resources.

## SYLLABUS



- **Structure, respect for deadlines, and transparency for course contents, rules, grading, and resources.**
- **Clear and explicit expectations with differentiated instruction and focus on commonalities.**
- **Encourage questions and offer help within the Culture of Caring and to receive students' feedback.**
- **Scaffold knowledge and provide individual and frequent feedback to keep everyone on board.**

"The project will be divided in three parts reflecting the investment process of managing stock portfolios. The project will be facilitated by discussion and assignments. The project needs to be submitted in the stipulated parts in order to capitalize on the feedback from the instructor."

- **E-communication policy with empathy and trust.**

"Please check your e-mail account and announcements forum in the course frequently."

"Please alert your instructor immediately in case of any challenges faced."

"Students are encouraged to contact the instructor immediately from easily identifiable and available for reply e-mail address if they experience any challenges or if you need any assistance."

"Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor with any questions you might have."

- **Create a warm welcome message with contact information.**
- "I check the course site each day. I will respond to your e-mails within 24 hours."

## COURSE POLICIES



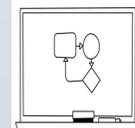
- **Create welcoming, engaging, and safe learning environment for students.**
- **Encourage student interactions and collaboration during course engagement.**
- **Introduce the understanding and value of students' diversity in the class.**
- **Emphasize that effective teaching is inclusive teaching.**
- **Foster freedom of speech and civility.**
- **Promote inclusive language.**

"Respect all individuals in the class. Seek to understand and respect cultural/religious differences.

Cooperate with group members when working in groups or with your classmates.

Complete your fair share of the group assignment(s)."

## GRADING RUBRICS



- **Create detailed instructions and grading rubrics with hints and assisting reference to key concepts to be addressed for better understanding and student satisfaction.**
- **Refer to learning outcomes as course objectives and underlying learning goals.**
- **Include coherent, objective, and measurable expectation to eliminate grading bias.**
- **Grading rubrics are a great tool for students' self-evaluation if thoroughly prepared.**

"Student's work will be assessed by course deliverable's **grading rubrics** for each course deliverable, specifying the breakdown of maximum points for the desired assessed components in each assignment/discussion. Each of these components corresponds to the indicated relevant Learning Outcome (LO) included in the program Learning Outcomes/Goals, declared as addressed in the course, and to the course learning outcomes as well. Course deliverable's grading rubric for each course deliverable is included in the course contents, corresponding to detailed instructions in each learning activity, expected to be at graduate level."

- **Reward students for positive engagement and collaboration during discussions by clearly assigning points for Q&A.**

"Provide support for each other and to explain the core and complex and often conflicting issues under consideration with economic reasoning, refer to data and debate with responses received from other students during the discussions."

## COURSE ACTIVITIES



### Creating Discussions, Assignments, and Projects

- **Exhibit the value and the benefit of diverse Q&A among students.**  
"Discussions are a great way to interact with other students, ask questions and learn from each other if you read all posts as expected. Discussions are meant to be a meaningful learning experience for students evidenced by contribution and interaction with other students. Discussions prepare students well for individual assignments."
- **Value differences, international comparisons, and global perspectives.**
- **Expand intellectual accent with broader views.**  
"The discussions are planned to be an exchange of opinions between students supported with theory and economic models, involving posts and replies to posts. It is great when everyone adds some more, expands the topic, adds new perspective."
- **Encourage personal and professional examples and experiences to be included and shared by students.**  
"Students should provide examples from their own experience and to apply them to the extent possible."
- **Build-in flexibility in course deliverables to individualize topics, examples, and applications allowing students to relate to themselves, reflect diverse communities, and to let students see themselves in the course material.**  
"Students will work on individual projects throughout the course."
- **Offer additional guidance in form of outlines to add clarity and focus.**  
"Students should follow the provided outline of the project for inclusion of all components required!"

## SUPPORTING RESOURCES



- **Recognize various student's needs by providing a variety of supporting resources at different levels, various perspectives in different formats, and with differentiated approaches.**
- **Assist with academic belonging by extra resources, creating opportunities for growth mindset and individual support.**
- **Select resource to create connections to relevant professional organizations to support formation of discipline identity defined as one's connection to their field.**
- **Ensure course media are accessible.**

## CONCLUSIONS

- Creating inclusive teaching environments in online courses in the economics and finance curriculum is an ongoing conscious effort requiring training and resources.
- The commitment to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion is highly rewarding for faculty.
- Applying various strategies of creating inclusive teaching environments enhances student understanding and appreciation of challenging courses in the economics and finance curriculum.
- Inclusive teaching environment supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion creates new collaboration opportunities among students, improves learning outcomes, and increases student's satisfaction.

## DEI STRATEGIES IN LITERATURE & EDUCATION

- It is essential for faculty to humanize teaching by focusing on students and not just course content to promote **inclusive classroom** environments (Hengesteg et al., 2021).
- Instructors are most likely to include content about course expectations and least likely to include content about **creating positive classroom** climate in their course syllabi (Gin et al., 2021).
- "**Respect** is a huge factor in creating a more inclusive classroom. Teaching students to discover and support each others' areas of strength goes a long way to creating inclusivity. **Collaboration and teamwork** are critical pieces here, as well." (Rust, 2019)
- "Developing skills and attitudes that bridge cultural differences such as empathy, flexibility, listening without judgement, appreciation for multiple cultural perspectives and **cross-cultural communication** is crucial... Commitments to **cultural competency** and building inclusive classroom require ongoing effort, reflection and personal humility." (Iheduru-Anderson, 2015)
- It is critical that professors establish and maintain a multiculturally aware and inclusive course, especially with asynchronous courses. The initial greeting and welcome to class creates a strong and solid foundation, especially with a description where one is "rooted". Faculty should be aware and cognizant of **multiculturalism** to incorporate appropriate **language** into class, so the awareness of up-to-date language will promote an inclusive classroom and encourage students in class to use that same language also while incorporating present-day issues. **Microaggressions** require education by promoting empathy and differentiating between the students' intent and the impact of their statements. Regardless of the course subject, cultural knowledge, awareness, and skills should and can be incorporated into course material (Maslowski, 2020).

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