

Teaching Tip Tuesday

Improving Classroom Climate

The learning environment provided within the classroom can either facilitate or impede student learning. Here are some strategies to promote a positive classroom climate geared toward student success.

Make Learning Social and Inclusive

- Don't assume you know your students and their challenges—use introductory surveys with open-ended questions to get a feel for their contexts and concerns.
- Remember that each student has a unique context, and one size does not fit all.
- Use multiple examples for illustration to include diverse learners.
- Use classroom conflicts as learning opportunities.
- Look for warning signs of low comprehension or ability, and reach out to students at risk of failing. Provide non-judgmental support.

Make Expectations Explicit

- Explicitly state your expectations of students with regard to course work.
- Be explicit about expected tone in interactions with others in the course community.
- Use evidence-based criteria in grading rubrics.
- Model the inclusive language and behaviors you want students to exhibit.
- Establish respect for feedback by asking for student feedback on the aspects of the course that work/don't work for them.