



Handout 2

Inclusive Teaching Glossary terms

This is a living document of terms pertinent to discussion of inclusive teaching practices, along with a few targeted suggestions for learning more. A fuller and revised version of this glossary will be part of CTL's Guide to Inclusive Teaching and Learning at Columbia. Online references are linked on the digital version of this glossary, at ctl.columbia.edu/ITFglossary. Please use an index card at your table to suggest revisions or the addition of a term, definition, or resource to this glossary – or email us at ColumbiaCTL@columbia.edu.

Accessibility

Consideration of various barriers to full participation in teaching and learning activities. Can include physical disabilities, family or work-related obligations, and access to resources and technologies. Components of accessibility could include: accommodations, adjustments in physical space, and meeting individual needs.

More: [Accessibility and Policy Information \(Center for Applied Special Technology\)](#).

Cultural learning assumptions

Often unspoken expectations shaped by affiliation with a broadly stable set of attitudes and beliefs shared by a group of people. Could give rise to habits of learning and assumptions about the ways teaching and learning are practiced.

More: *Getting Culture: Incorporating Diversity Across the Curriculum* (Gurung and Prieto, eds., 2009)

Implicit bias

Presumptions about motivation and performance brought to learning environments by instructors and students based on stereotyping. Often unexplored and unconscious.

More: Project Implicit, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/faqs.html>

Imposter syndrome

A collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist even in face of information that indicates that the opposite is true. It is experienced internally as chronic self-doubt and feelings of intellectual fraudulence. Imposter feelings can be categorized in three ways: 1) feeling like a fake, 2) attributing success to luck, and 3) discounting / downplaying success.

More: [Understanding and Responding to the Emotions of Learning](#), in *The Skillful Teacher: On Trust, Technique and Responsiveness in the Classroom* (Brookfield, 2006).

Inclusive spaces

A term often used to refer to academic environments where diverse perspectives can be fully shared and honored. Sometimes formalized into training and designation of networks of support on a university campus.

More: [Creating an 'identify safe' classroom](#) (University of Michigan CRLT); [Difficult conversations guidelines](#) (University of Michigan CRLT)

Intersectionality

Concept used in critical theory to highlight the interconnected nature of socially constructed categories (such as race, class, and gender) as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

More: [Intersectionality & Higher Education: Theory, Research, & Praxis](#) (Mitchell, Simmons, & Greyerbiehl, 2014)



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Microaggression

A term coined in the 1970s and more recently used by Derald Wing Sue, a Columbia University professor, to describe the “brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities—whether intentional or unintentional—which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to people from marginalized groups.”

More: [Microaggressions in the Classroom](#) (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis CTL)

Non-traditional student

A member of a population type that may differ from a common assumption of a college learner. Could include older students, students with military experience, and part-time or transfer students.

More: [Nontraditional Student Definitions and Data](#) (National Center for Education Statistics); [Research on Adult Learners: Supporting the Needs of a Student Population that Is No Longer Traditional](#) (Ross-Gordon, 2011)

Stereotype threat

Evidence that learning is diminished if a student is “at risk of confirming as, self-characteristic, a negative characteristic about one’s social group” (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Includes often unintentional triggering of stereotypes about race, gender, class, age, and social affiliations.

More: [Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do](#) (Steele, 2011); [Improving Minority Academic Performance: How a Values-Affirmation Intervention Works](#) (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2009); [reducingstereotypethreat.org](#)

Tokenism

The practice of making a cursory effort or gesture to prevent criticism and give the appearance that you are being fair and including all types of people and issues, when this is not really true. In the classroom, this could involve an instructor asking a student to act as spokesperson for a certain identity group.

Underrepresented student

A subpopulation that is disproportionately lower in number relative to their number in the general population. The definition of this population depends on an institution’s history and may vary by discipline.

Universal design for learning

A curricular design framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. Includes considerations of student motivation, learning habits and preferences, and variation of assessment.

More: [Introduction to UDL \(Center for Applied Special Technology\)](#); [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#)

Is there a term you would like to see added to this glossary? Inclusive Teaching Forum participants are invited to write suggestions for changes or additions on index cards available from table facilitators, or email suggestions to ColumbiaCTL@columbia.edu.