

English Department – Best Practices for Classroom Equity

Classroom Practices/Pedagogical Mindset for “At Risk” Population Groups

These strategies will be shared with contract and adjunct English faculty via email, department meetings, flex activities, and other professional development activities.

I. Community

- Creating community of learners within the classroom. This might include instructor-selected groups and/or randomly selected groups for activities, worksheets, and/or peer reviews
- Asking students to share contact information with each other, and ask them to rely on each other for when they miss, but also to contact each other when someone in the group is missing. This is only effective if students trust each other and have working relationships with each other.
- Encouraging students to connect with the Chaffey world beyond the classroom.
 - This could be making announcements about upcoming Chaffey events, asking student athletes to share highlights of past games or invitations to attend games, or inviting club officers into the classroom and personally inviting students to attend meeting.
 - Encourage students to attend panels, workshops, the Wignall Museum, Club Rush
 - Promote student resources that would also help provide students with community: Veterans’ Resource Center, Honors, Career Center

II. Curriculum

- Personalized writing topics that allow a student to reflect on their personal life, empowered by writing about the self
- Use at least 12 point font for handouts
- Change activities often (every 15-20 minutes)
- Work to create a team/collaborative environment that is inclusive of all demographics
 - During group work, clearly defining roles within the groups for accountability
- Provide a template or skeleton outline for writing assignments, especially in lower level classes
- Frequently utilize low stakes classroom assessment techniques to monitor student comprehension and engagement (like pop quizzes).
- Explore the relevance of the subject matter and its relationship to the learners’ personal experiences and contemporary situations (in other words: explain why this lesson is important)

- Employ forms of assessment that are based on multiple intelligences (our CORs are rich with options other than the traditional essays)
- Increase the points of contact with students such as individual conferences, non-academic related conversations before and after class, comments on work, and physical or virtual meetings.
- Include diversity of writers and experiences that address culture and identity
 - Possibly incorporate quotations from diverse writers about their writing processes when discussing writing as a process
- Include assignments that ask students to connect to their hopes, aspirations, mentors, and resources, and that provoke students to connect with someone/something beyond themselves that inspires them
 - Examples may include reading/writing a profile/interview/observation that is specifically about their career field
 - For example, students in English 1B may complete policy claims related to ethics and professional fields of interests
- Include assignments that ask students to connect to their community
 - For example, English 575 students might complete career development projects where they incorporate campus resources, such as the Transfer Center and the Career Center as instructor interviews/potential peer mentors
 - Another example for students in English 475 might include writing an observational essay in which students must attend a Chaffey-sponsored event (OBOC event, a panel discussion, or the Wignall Museum) and write about what they observed and how they connected with that event
 - Using an assignment (small group scavenger hunt, paragraph, essay, presentation, etc.) that familiarizes students with each other and with the campus by asking them to visit places like Student Activities, the Transfer Center, the Honors Program, the Student Health Center, the Wignall Museum, etc.

III. Instructor Practices

- Encourage students to stay in class
- Email students who have not been showing up
- Office/Advice Hours
 - Extend personal invitations to students to come to office hours
 - Regularly remind students of advice hours times and additional availability by appointment
 - Without sharing student's names, comment on sample advice hour sessions, such as, "Met with a student and discussed essay topics yesterday. Good chat!" or "Remember, that I'm here to help all of you"

- Create a helpful/willing presence during office hours
- Listen and be willing to mitigate specific student situations if the student has extenuating circumstances. Students are more likely to stay in class and persevere is they feel like they are understood by their instructors
- Help students to participate ethically in academic communities
 - Criminalization of plagiarists vs. our roles as educators
- Be encouraging to students during class—remind them of their goals and how they can get there. Show them how this class directly connects with those goals. Offer them hope.
- Don't assume all students desire to transfer
- Don't assume knowledge on popular culture
- Instructors should be informed (FSC workshops/seminars/summer institute) about what stereotypes they or others may unconsciously be bringing into the classroom. This awareness should inform instructor practices in/out of the classroom.
- Consider Presentation of Feedback
 - Standard Written English = Right vs. Informal Language Choices = Wrong
 - Example: “You need to stop writing/talking/communicating like that now; you are in college” vs. Example: “Dress your language for various occasions.” (Audience/Purpose/Genre)
- Continue Development of Instructor Practices
 - CETI: Chaffey English Teaching Ideas

IV. Mentoring

- Formal Mentoring
 - Instructor mentoring: Providing students pathways and resources as necessary to add to their academic/career needs
 - Curriculum: Providing opportunities for students to seek-out mentors in their fields of interests
 - Peer Mentoring: Establishing classroom that is community will avail itself to creating peer-to-peer mentorship
 - Academic Mentoring: Faculty advisors and counselors
 - Personal Guidance: Student Health Services
- Informal Mentoring: Naturally occurring instances that are either short/long term
 - These are moments to promote students' sense of well-being by providing them access, support and pathways