

**How difference affects the classroom:
possible effects and ideas for addressing each category**

Type of difference	effects	methods of addressing
race-ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * perception of not fitting in = underperformance * comments in class may be insensitive/off putting on issues of race * dangers of tokenism for minority students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * acknowledge all students' contributions as having value * encourage devil's advocate position on controversial topics * encourage students to look beyond own point of view * NEVER single out students as the "representative" of their ascriptive group
economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * disadvantage based on educational background/lack of prior knowledge * lack of monetary resources for education expenses (ie books) * cultural disconnects, esp with whats expected from an "elite student" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * make resources available online * don't assume all students have a base level of goods/resources * resist the temptation of assuming that all students are privileged even if they go to a "top school"
sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * overt claims about sexuality can be offputting * heteronormative assumptions can bias discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * encourage students to look beyond personal prejudices and see from other points of view * encourage environment of equal respect/ common norms
language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * students may perceive teacher as difficult to understand * ESL students may have issues in terms of confidence, fluency in terms of speaking in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * work on public speaking skills, esp voice variation * energy and enthusiasm can go a long way in accounting for fluency errors * use text and visuals in order to facilitate adequate communication
learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * people learn different ways so they may not get the material because they need a new way of having it explained * can lead to misdiagnosis of poor performance * students may not know how they learn best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * encourage students to do tests, etc. to find out how they best process information * use multiple modes of presentation to get at material i.e. visual and aural, written and kinesthetic * brainstorm ways to present material in other methods even if it's unusual (i.e. there can be "kinesthetic" ways to learn math)

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Difference and its classroom effects handout.

Created by Anthony Berryhill (Graduate Teaching Center) and Office for Diversity and Equal Opportunity, 2008.

Type of difference	effects	methods of addressing
international status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * may have students who are unfamiliar with idioms, common phrases etc used in colloquial english * may have cultural gaps in terms of popular references, or even about how an American classroom works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * get info on students in advance so you can tailor your material, examples, etc. accordingly * always explain context behind cultural references or other things we assume in the US (i.e. movies, music awareness, etc.) * be transparent about your willingness to explain things, i.e. students aren't "dumb" if they ask you what you mean by something
gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * has particular effects in specific fields like math and science where there is gender underrepresentation * sometimes students may feel uncomfortable expression a controversial point of view on gender issues * sometimes there is inadvertent bias, i.e. willingness to call on people, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * make all students leaders for a day or so, that way all people get a voice no matter what (this is generally a good idea anyway) * be certain that students have a safe space to voice concerns if needed, both academically and other wise * when possible, acknowledge contributions of the opposite gender in the field if gender bias is an issue (i.e. women's contribution to science, men's contributions to feminism, etc.)

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