10 Inclusive teaching tips for teachers

These tips were developed from our research into gender and behaviour patterns. We recognise that there are variants and these behaviours are not the experience of all individuals. Inclusive teaching is therefore intended to support all students.

1. Use everyday language
Low confidence learners can be intimidated by technical jargon. Avoid it and make sure that you only introduce technical language or equations once the context is understood.

2. Avoid asking for volunteers
Some groups may be more likely to raise their hands, call out answers and volunteer to take part in activities. Other techniques, such as individual whiteboards or selecting students at random, can broaden the range of students participating.

3. Assign roles for practical work
Certain students are more likely to dominate the active roles while others may take on more passive roles, like writing. To avoid this, you can assign roles or use single-sex groups for practical and group activities.

4. Use examples that show how your subject links to their experience
This is useful for all students, but research shows that girls in particular tend to appreciate context and seeing the bigger picture.

5. Use gender-neutral contexts whenever possible
Try to avoid using examples that focus on stereotypically male or female hobbies or interests.

6. Allow time for pair or group discussions
Give time for students to discuss answers to challenging questions before asking them to share ideas with the class.

7. Challenge discriminatory language
School should be welcoming to everyone. Always treat sexist language as unacceptable, and tackle the attitudes behind it.

8. Monitor your interactions with different genders
You might be surprised at the ratio of different genders asking or answering questions in your class. Keep a note yourself or ask a colleague or student to observe one of your lessons and keep count.

9. Regularly refer to a range of careers that use skills from your subject
Girls are more likely to consider their future career when choosing their options. Emphasise the transferable skills that studying your subject helps to develop.

10. Ensure that your students are exposed to a diverse range of role models in your subject
Be wary of giving your students the impression that only some people can do your subject. Emphasise that everyone can do it, irrespective of their background.

Find out more at iop.org/genderbalance

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and SCO40092 (Scotland)