Diversity & Inclusion

in Curriculum and Classroom

A Community Resource for Yale-NUS Faculty
& International Liberal Arts Educators

Yale NUS College | CENTRE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

Prepared by the

The Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) fosters, recognises, and promotes excellence and innovation in teaching and learning at Yale-NUS College. Our mission is to help build a community of teaching practice that is open, friendly, and collaborative. We seek to help faculty refine and achieve their pedagogical goals and to promote intentionality in our shared practices. The CTL also directly supports student learning on campus by managing the Peer Tutoring programme and coordinating Yale-NUS' learning accommodations for students with certified learning disabilities and special needs.

We connect people and ideas, both within our living-learning community and by as serving as a conduit to higher education collaborators across Singapore and the world. The CTL adapts global expertise on best teaching practice to our local, liberal arts context. We produce knowledge and conduct research drawn from Yale-NUS' innovative curriculum and dedicated faculty.

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This electronic version includes chapters not available in the print version. Click on the titles below to read them.

Available from https://teaching.yale-nus.edu.sg/resources/inclusion

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Acknowledgements

This book is about the differences that make up our wonderfully diverse community, and how to develop curriculum, syllabi, and pedagogy that harnesses the best of that diversity.

The purpose of this source guide is to contribute to the success of teaching and learning within our specific academic context of a liberal arts college in Singapore. It is developed as a resource to support those new to our campus, as well as those wanting to gain insights and practical strategies that respond to the distinctive diversity of Yale-NUS learners. This document is the result of nearly three years of effort by many contributors to provide an understanding of key distinctive characteristics of our student body and offers support for faculty members seeking deeper understanding of our students' backgrounds and learning needs.

The journey of writing this source guide brought many challenging and worthwhile conversations. The process of preparing it contributed to the discussions that have occurred around how best to serve our community for inclusive learning. Dialogue with students and faculty in all corners of our work helped to clarify where additional resources might be helpful.

Thank you to the many community members who contributed their time and ideas to read drafts, make edits, share feedback and relevant resources. Several contributed chapters and ideas that enhance the inclusive nature of the content. With gratitude we thank them each and acknowledge them in the credits of this document. The leadership of Executive Vice President and acting Dean of Students (2018) Joanne Roberts, as well as Dean of Admissions Laura Severin, has been instrumental in supporting the participation of many different voices through the life of this project. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is particularly thankful to those staff, students and faculty who provided comments on earlier drafts of this document.

Executive Summary

This project was developed because of the priority that inclusion holds in the Yale-NUS College living and learning community. At Yale-NUS College, many of us feel that our diversity is our biggest strength. Greater awareness of our multiple perspectives as educators and students enhances learning. This source guide has been developed to shed light on our many wonderful differences and to provide practical pedagogical strategies for ensuring that all the participants in a given classroom are deliberately included in learning.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning places high value on properly locating inclusion in pedagogy. This is a resource for faculty to apply as best suits their teaching style and students' learning needs. It is informative and practical. This executive summary extracts three key takeaways from the source guide: (1) Information on Singapore's pre-tertiary educational context; (2) Six distinctive features of Yale-NUS College students and corresponding implications for pedagogy; and (3) Ten strategies for inclusive teaching in our distinctive context.

Singaporean Educational Context

There are a wide variety of educational pathways that students take to get to Yale-NUS. Over 50% of Yale-NUS College students are Singaporean. It is therefore valuable for Yale-NUS educators not familiar with Singapore to understand the educational context of our local students. Singapore's education system is highly relevant to our students' learning context, grade expectations, and academic aspirations.

The values and priorities of education in Singapore have been connected to a larger social project aimed primarily at centralised and cohesive nation-building. Education in Singapore is typically described in three stages: Primary (6 years of schooling, roughly age 6 to 12), Secondary (4-5 years, from age 13-16/17), and an optional Post-Secondary stage which includes a variety of pathways. For the majority of Singaporean students, streaming and national examinations scores combine to shape their educational journey and options.

After Secondary 4 or 5, most students enter one of the following post-secondary education institutions, depending on their 'O' Level scores. There are Junior Colleges (2 years) or Centralised Institutes (3 years) which lead to the GCE A-Level Exam. There are Polytechnics (Polys) which offer a wide range of courses that equip students with industry-relevant skills. And there is the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), which leads to the National ITE Certificate (Nitec) or Higher Nitec qualifications for skills-based training in support roles in engineering, accounting, business administration, nursing, medicine, architecture, and law. Most Yale-NUS students from Singapore have attended Junior College or Centralized Institute education prior to joining the College, though a number come to Yale-NUS from Polytechnic programmes. Yale-NUS students also come from international schools in Singapore. International schools include the United World College of Southeast Asia, Global Indian International School Singapore, Overseas Family School, Canadian International School, and others. Many of these schools offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), which is generally interdisciplinary and emphasises communication and creative thinking.

There are two special features of the Singaporean education landscape worth noting.

First, if you are not from or familiar with Singapore, then it is important to be aware that at around the age of 17 to 19, all male Singaporean citizens and permanent residents (PRs) are mandated by the Enlistment Act to undergo a roughly two-year period of military training called National Service (NS). This is typically fulfilled after students finish junior college, polytechnic, or vocational school, and before they attend university. As a result, male Singaporean and PR students at Yale-NUS are two years older on average than their female Singaporean/PR and international counterparts and may have a different experience transitioning back to a schooling environment.

The other feature worth noting is what is called "Tuition", or tutoring. This involves individualised coaching in the pre-college years. Tutoring is used to help students improve their grades and standardised test scores,

and thus, students who have undertaken tuition can become very grade-focused and test-driven by these experiences. This is different from the "how to learn, not what to learn" approach of liberal arts education, and the Yale-NUS College Common Curriculum in particular. Being aware of this can help faculty be sensitive to the learning transitions these students might experience.

Six Distinctive Features of Yale-NUS Students

1. ***They come from tremendously diverse educational systems.*** Among Singaporean and international students, there is a huge variety of prior educational experience in terms of type of curriculum, pedagogy, cultural context, and norms of classroom engagement.

   Implication for Pedagogy: Students may not understand why you are assigning a certain activity, or what you expect from essays, problem sets, or presentations. They may have never been asked to speak in class before, or to write an essay in English longer than a few paragraphs. Asking about their prior educational experiences and being as explicit as possible about your goals and expectations, will help them learn.

2. ***Many are effectively 'first-generation' students.*** Some of our students are the first in their family to attend any kind of college or university. Moreover, the majority of our students are from countries where small, residential, seminar-driven liberal arts colleges are rare. In this sense, even many of our students who come from highly educated families have some of the traits of 'first-generation' students. They have not been raised with the expectation that they would 'go away to school.' Some had to convince their families to attend a liberal arts college rather than enrol in a more 'practical' pre-professional programme like Accounting. For some, their relatives may not be able to help them prepare for and navigate their Yale-NUS experiences.

   Implications for Pedagogy: This makes it important for faculty to coach students in strategies for getting the most out of their college experience. Success in college requires effort but knowing where to focus that effort is not intuitive to all students. Being explicit with students about academic success strategies like closely reading the syllabus, doing outlines and drafts of essays, and clarifying assignments with faculty during office hours can help.

3. ***Grades and exams can be a significant source of stress.*** Many students are used to being graded on a curve and having their future educational opportunities determined by standardised, high pressure, national exams. This can lead to intense grade consciousness and testing anxiety.

   Implications for Pedagogy: You are likely to receive questions about grading and assessment. Explain what grades mean, be explicit about whether you are grading on a curve or not. If you assign group work, structure the activity so that students collaborate rather than compete. Some students are socialised by curved grading systems to see peers as rivals.

4. ***Many have been out of school for several years before attending Yale-NUS.*** Singaporean men, who make up roughly 25% of our student body, typically complete two years of national service before pursuing

higher education. Korean men often perform two years of national service between their sophomore and junior years. Additionally, students come from education systems on different calendars that do not always align with the Yale-NUS school year. Many students have therefore taken a gap year prior to college.

Implication for Pedagogy: Many students in first year classes may feel out of practice and lack confidence in the classroom. Acknowledging this and helping them ease back into academic habits with explicit guidance will help.

5. ***Students 'overcommit' to extra-curriculars, but there may be a reason.*** A relatively common complaint or concern among faculty is that students 'overcommit' to extra-curricular activities, especially in the first year. There may be a reason for this beyond the inherent appeal of these activities. For many students, participating in CCAs (co-curricular activities) has been a strongly encouraged, quasi mandatory and important part of their educational history.

Implications for Pedagogy: If you find that particular students seem to be suffering academically due to CCA involvement, you can talk to them about possible trade-offs and prompt them to think through their priorities. Showing you understand that CCAs might have been very important to their identity and academic trajectory in the past may make students more receptive to faculty advice in managing time and balancing academic with non-academic commitments.

6. ***Families and communities are often nearby.*** Faculty who are accustomed to working at colleges or universities in North America had relatively few students who grew up within a short drive of the College. By contrast, the majority of our students have parents, grandparents, friends, religious communities, and other close ties a short distance from campus. Students may have emotional and financial obligations to family, and that can influence their academic studies.

Implications for Pedagogy: Being aware of this context can send a valuable signal to students that you understand they have identities and responsibilities beyond your class. Faculty may want to take this context into account when responding to student requests for extensions. Proximity matters when a grandparent is in the hospital or a sister suffers due to a personal crisis.

10 Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

1. **Teach and assess students using different activities and formats.** This will give students with diverse backgrounds and abilities opportunities to learn and grow. When designing lessons, ask yourself how would students with less familiarity with English, low vision, or attention deficit issues encounter your class? Similarly, use a range of assessment techniques, including verbal, written, and visual formats and diverse methods of participation. This will give students with different prior knowledge and communication styles opportunities to share their knowledge with you and their peers. For example, consider allowing students to either do an in-class presentation or create a pre-recorded video to show in class.

2. **Be explicit about your expectations and provide advice to fulfil those expectations.** Tell students What you are asking them to do, Why you are asking them to do it (e.g. what will they learn from it), and How you will evaluate their work[1]. Provide examples of what you consider to be high quality or exemplary work and the process they might use for achieving those results. Be explicit about what constitutes good participation in the classroom and offer students specific tools to participate and improve participation. Signal your confidence in the potential of each student. Communicating high standards, along with a clear commitment to helping students achieve those standards, signals that all students belong and have the capacity for growth in your class.

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[1] Dan Berrett, "The Unwritten Rules of College," The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 21, 2015, https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Unwritten-Rules-of/233245; Ben Galina, "Teaching First-Generation College Students," accessed December 18, 2018, https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-first-generation-college-students/.

3. **Give honest, constructive, and prompt feedback.** Give feedback with concrete steps to improve. Providing feedback in a timely manner helps students improve across assignments, which will encourage them to keep putting in hard work and learning. When possible, direct students to resources such as the Writers' Centre or Library, rather than just saying 'this needs improvement.' Consider your tone and how students from different cultures might receive feedback. For example, faculty members from more conflict-tolerant cultures might be accustomed to directly challenging students during a classroom exchange. For students who are unaccustomed to direct disagreement, they may interpret a professor's remark as 'my professor hates me' or 'I must be really stupid.' Explaining your cultural context and feedback style can help students accurately interpret your language and learn from your feedback.

4. **Avoid assuming that students share your educational background or learning style.** What worked for you during college is not necessarily helpful for your students. University professors are probably not representative in their interests and intellectual habits of most college students, even Yale-NUS College students. Rather than projecting your own experience on students, inquire about how your course fits into their larger educational path and development goals. Ask them about what has worked best for them in terms of teaching technique and learning style in the past. Reflect on whether you have historically rewarded and favoured students who think like you, who share your learning or expression styles, and whether your pedagogy assumes students learn best the same way you do. These unconscious tendencies can unintentionally disadvantage students with different learning styles, strengths, and educational backgrounds.

5. **Acknowledge and respect students' background and identities.** You can give students an opportunity to share relevant personal information without forcing them to reveal information they want to keep private. For example, you can invite information but give students choice by asking students "Please share with me and your peers anything you would like us to know about your name, gender pronouns, educational background, learning needs, and learning goals." Inviting students

to share from their own experience can enhance class discussion but expecting students to speak for 'their people' can make them feel isolated, tokenised, and unfairly reduced to one identity characteristic.

6. **Show students they belong by developing a syllabus that reflects diversity and acknowledging obstacles to diversity in your field.** For example, include authors of different gender identities and case studies across different geographies. Consider perspectives that might be underrepresented in your syllabus and discipline and take corrective measures. Use diverse examples, case studies, and regional references in seminars and lectures. If broad representation is not an option in your topic or discipline, acknowledge these imbalances to your students and invite critique. If a textbook only uses male pronouns, or if a historic text uses language which is now understood to be derogatory and hateful, acknowledge this and give students an opportunity to discuss and process. If possible, show examples of scholars or other figures who could serve as role models to students from historically marginalised groups. The goal of inclusive pedagogy is to centre multiple view points and identities in your course. This will help students see themselves as belonging, which in turn will help them learn.

7. **Explain references based on particular national contexts.** For example, if referencing the distance between Washington DC and Los Angeles, or between Beijing and Xi'an, faculty should try to explain what those distances are rather than assuming all students are familiar with their home country's geography. If you are using an example that not everyone in the room may understand, explain the context. Alternatively, make it clear at the beginning of the course that you will intentionally use references students may not understand in the moment and how you expect students to respond. Explain why you think this is pedagogically valuable.

8. **Appreciate the leadership role you have in class.** Students will look to you for leadership in difficult moments or when they feel offended. You can show you care and help maintain a productive learning environment by acknowledging difficult comments or moments and following up with impacted students outside of class when necessary. (See the chapter on "Difficult Classroom Situations" in Part III for ideas.)

9. **Recognise that many (or most) students do not share your career goals.** The Yale-NUS faculty is extremely diverse in all ways, except one: almost all Yale-NUS faculty members have attended graduate school, earned a doctorate, and taken up careers as university educators. Our students will pursue a much more diverse set of careers and post-graduate opportunities. Consider whether your teaching is designed for students with varied life goals and career aims, or whether you are teaching primarily for future academics like yourself. Consider how you can design your courses in ways that will benefit students with diverse career paths ahead.

10. **Reflect, Learn, Listen.** Solicit student input and feedback using beginning-of-term surveys, office hours, in-class conversations, mid-semester evaluations, and anonymous student feedback via Canvas. You can stay in touch with community ideas about teaching and learning in a variety of ways such as reading the student newspaper The Octant, attending Town Halls, following the education section of your favourite journals and newspapers, participating in webinars through the Chronicle of Higher Education or Times Higher Education, accessing discipline-specific teaching resources, or attending workshops organised by the Centre for Teaching & Learning or the National University of Singapore (NUS)'s Centre for Development of Teaching & Learning (CDTL). Knowing the popular discourses can help you to anticipate students' expectations and perceived needs.

Introduction

Diversity is intentionally cultivated and celebrated at Yale-NUS College. The diversity of our student body, staff, and faculty is one of the most exciting features of the College. Diversity involves all aspects of an individual's identity, including nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, socio-economic background, age, and ability. In the context of higher education, diversity also relates to students' varied educational background and learning needs. Diversity is also found in the identities and teaching approaches of individual faculty members.

Yale-NUS values diversity because it enhances student learning and personal growth in important ways. First, diversity in the classroom expands students' interpretive capacity, showing how particular content can be approached from multiple angles. Students learn to see the world through multiple points-of-view. Second, diverse classrooms promote listening and communication skills, as students engage in discussion and analysis across different cultural contexts. Third, learning with diverse peers and professors inculcates critical thinking abilities by prompting students to challenge their own received wisdom and culturally-bounded assumptions. Fourth, diverse classrooms promote problem-solving, and cooperation skills as students engage in group work and team-based learning, accomplishing complex tasks across different communication and cultural styles. In sum, diversity greatly enhances students' intellectual capabilities (interpretation, communication, argumentation, problem-solving, synthesising multiple points-of-view) and their emotional intelligence (compassion, empathy, listening) in ways that prepare them to thrive personally and professionally.

Student diversity also contributes to professional growth and satisfaction for faculty. Faculty learn new things about the world, about teaching, and about their own areas of expertise by seeing it through their students' many and diverse lenses. Teaching students from diverse backgrounds and learning styles keeps the teaching experience fresh and invigorating and creates opportunities for faculty to develop new pedagogical approaches and avenues for research.

At the same time, differences between the backgrounds and identities of faculty and students can pose challenges to learning for students. When students feel isolated and alienated in class or when they feel they do not belong, it impedes engagement and learning. In other words, for diversity to enhance learning, it needs to go hand-in-hand with inclusion.

Our community's diversity can give rise to misunderstandings and inadvertent disagreements. The significant differences that often exist between the life experiences of faculty members and their students mean that faculty may be confronted by expectations and sensitivities to which they are unaccustomed. Teaching in such a diverse context may prompt faculty to rethink their established pedagogy. For example, some faculty have learned through difficult encounters that off-hand comments, which might not be disruptive in their native cultural context, can be been detrimental to learning in the Yale-NUS context. In other instances, faculty have had to mediate conflict among students regarding inadvertently offensive comments and inter-cultural friction. Pejorative or offensive words in one country might not be so taboo in another, giving rise to tense classroom moments.

By being cognisant of students' diverse experiences and backgrounds, and designing courses with that diversity in mind, faculty can maximise student learning and minimise the risk of potentially painful incidents. Students will look to faculty for leadership – intellectual and moral – in difficult and uncomfortable situations. The more Yale-NUS instructors know about their students and their educational background the better they may be able to anticipate challenges that will arise and respond in ways that achieve deeper learning.

But being inclusive in the classroom takes work, and not all faculty have a clear sense of where to start or where to expand their efforts. We know that students learn more when they feel included in the classroom. This book is designed to help. It is intended for new and veteran Yale-NUS faculty to understand our students' diversity and to consider strategies for harnessing that diversity most effectively in the classroom.

Core Objectives of the Book

This book is animated by three core objectives.

First, to introduce new Yale-NUS faculty to the diversity of our students. Faculty who were not with Yale-NUS during its founding years will find this book useful for understanding institutional context and discourse around diversity, curriculum, and pedagogy in the College. Part I and Part II of the book are focused at this goal.

Second, this book serves as a form of institutional memory for a new, distinctive, and dynamic college. This is the emphasis in Part II. In Yale-NUS' founding years, the faculty was small and engaged in frequent conversation about our curriculum, pedagogy, and diversity. As the College grows and stabilises, this kind of community-wide reflection is important. This book describes the aspirations and achievements of the College in its early years, as well as some concerns that have emerged. Some of these concerns have since been addressed, but this book takes the view that memory is important for progress.

Third, Part III of the book offers practical strategies for enhancing inclusion in the classroom. There is extensive literature on inclusive pedagogy and diversity in higher education, from which we have curated specific strategies that are most applicable for our student body and educational context.

Organisation and How to Read the Book

Although this book can be read cover-to-cover, we recognise time is limited and interests and needs will vary. Individual chapters can be appreciated independently, without reading previous ones.

Part I, "Diversity and Cultural Context at Yale-NUS" is designed to give faculty a fuller understanding of the diversity of their students and highlight some implications for student learning and the transition to Yale-NUS academics.

Chapter 1, "Dimensions of Diversity at Yale-NUS" describes six key dimensions of diversity among our students, faculty, curriculum, and pedagogy. The chapter describes ways in which diversity enhances learning but can also create feelings of isolation and anxiety for some students as they transition to the College. This chapter will be particularly useful for faculty who are new to the College.

Chapter 2, "An Overview of Education in Singapore" describes the education system that over 50% of Yale-NUS students travel through before joining the College. The chapter highlights some distinctive qualities of the Singapore education landscape such as high stakes national exams, streaming systems, national service, tuition, and the diversity of pathways that students took before they enter Yale-NUS.

Part II, "Lessons from the Early Years" describes some of the achievements and challenges the College faced as it worked towards ambitious goals around diversity and inclusion. These chapters will be of interest to faculty who want historical and institutional context for understanding student concerns around diversity and inclusion at the College.

Chapter 3, "Institutional Development Efforts around Diversity and Inclusion" describes steps that were taken to enhance inclusivity and diversity.

Chapter 4, "Early Experiences of Diversity in the Yale-NUS Classroom" presents the results of CTL-sponsored research into student experiences with cultural diversity during the College's founding years.

Part III of the book, "Practical Strategies for an Inclusive Classroom" is designed for faculty who are interested in tangible inclusive teaching strategies. Some of these chapters emphasise tools for supporting specific groups of students, while other chapters discuss specific pedagogical practices like managing discussion, designing assignments, or grading and assessment.

PART I: Diversity and Cultural Context at Yale-NUS

Section Overview: Part I is designed to illuminate the multifaceted and intersecting dimensions of diversity in our student body, faculty, and curriculum. This section pays particular attention to the ways in which students' varied educational backgrounds and cultural contexts may impact their transition to Yale-NUS College. The first chapter, "dimensions of diversity", describes the rich variety of our students in terms of culture, identity, and educational background. The second chapter, "an overview of education in Singapore", introduces faculty to the institutions, curricula, and pedagogies most of our Singapore-educated students have grown up with prior to joining Yale-NUS. Together, these chapters are designed to help faculty understand their students better, and consider ways in which diverse backgrounds, academic expectations, and anxieties shape our students' experience and learning needs in the Yale-NUS classroom.

Dimensions of Diversity at Yale-NUS

Chapter Overview: This chapter is designed to familiarise faculty with the dimensions of diversity in our student body, as well as provide information about some of the challenges students face during the transition to Yale-NUS. The chapter then briefly addresses the diverse identities and experiences of Yale-NUS faculty and ways in which Yale-NUS' curriculum and pedagogy were intentionally designed to harness diversity inside the classroom and beyond. The chapter provides readers with institutional and cultural context for understanding Yale-NUS students, prevalent discourses within our community, and the rationale for explicitly considering diversity in curriculum design and pedagogy.

Diversity is at the heart of Yale-NUS' vision and mandate. In our mission statement, we proudly emphasise these integrated forms of diversity.[2]

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[2] "Our Mission," Yale-NUS College, accessed December 18, 2018, from https://www.yale-nus.edu.sg/about/vision-and-mission/.

Yale-NUS College Vision and Mission

A community of learning

> **We are a diverse group of students, faculty, staff, and supporters,** *dedicated to building a community in which living and learning are intertwined and habits of creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking are encouraged. Our innovative* **curriculum integrates knowledge from across the disciplines and around the world.**

Founded by two great universities

> *An intimate liberal arts college, dedicated to undergraduate education, Yale-NUS draws on the resources and traditions of two great universities. We pursue excellence through innovative teaching and research, and we provide global opportunities for our students.*

In Asia

> *Our* **location at the crossroads of Asia informs our pedagogy.** *Drawing on active modes of learning associated with American liberal arts education, we introduce our students to the* **diverse intellectual traditions and cultures** *of Asia and the world.*

For the world

> *We educate citizens of the world and uphold the principles of* **free exchange of ideas, pluralism, and respect for diversity.** *Our extra-curricular and residential programmes support student learning and encourage an ethic of service. By our example, we seek to spur innovation in higher education across the globe.*

True to our vision, diversity at Yale-NUS takes on many exciting forms, enhancing the student and faculty experience.

This chapter is organised in four parts. First, it describes diversity in the Yale-NUS student body in terms of culture and identities like nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, and family structure. Second, it

describes diversity in the student body in terms of educational and socio-economic background, pointing out ways these different backgrounds impact student learning and the transition to Yale-NUS. Third, the chapter briefly describes salient forms of diversity among our faculty and how that can impact their experience in the Yale-NUS classroom. Lastly, the chapter describes how Yale-NUS' curriculum and pedagogy is intentionally designed to promote diversity.

1. Cultural and Identity-Based Dimensions of Student Diversity

1a. *Diversity of Nationality, Ethnicity, and Race*

With students and faculty from over 60 countries as of 2018, Yale-NUS is an exceptionally culturally diverse institution. In addition to this quantifiable diversity of nationality, Yale-NUS also attracts many students who cannot be easily labelled within a particular ethnicity, nationality, or culture. Many of our students identify as mixed-race, multi-ethnic, and transnational. Many students identify as Third Culture Kids, meaning youths who have parents of one or more nationalities but who have been raised in a different country or culture from their parents. For some students who have moved frequently with their families, Yale-NUS is as much their home as anywhere else they have lived. The seemingly innocent question "where are you from" is not easily answered for many Yale-NUS students who have complex cultural identities and backgrounds.[3]

While tremendous diversity of nationality and ethnicity exists, it is also true that some nationalities and races are less represented in the student body than others. The majority of our students come from Singapore and elsewhere in East, South-East, and South Asia. A large minority of our students are North American and European, and of European descent. Students from Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East have sometimes felt isolated on campus and in their classes, and pointed out that not only are they minorities among their peers but also that there are very few Yale-NUS faculty who come from those regions. Across Singapore, Malays

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[3] Swarnima Sircar, "How Meaningful is Having 38 Different Passports?," The Octant, November 17, 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iv-12/features/how-meaningful-is-having-38-different-passports/.

tend to be underrepresented at the university level.[4] Minority students may experience discomfort more than peers from majority or traditionally privileged identity groups.

International students are adjusting to Singapore at the same time as they are adjusting to Yale-NUS. While we are located in Singapore, Yale-NUS operates quite differently from many Singaporean schools, and some of our local students experience as much culture shock coming to the College as students from thousands of miles away. In this sense, almost all our students will experience significant cultural adjustment and opportunity for personal growth, as they transition to Yale-NUS. In Part III of this book, the chapter on "National, Ethnic, and Linguistic Inclusivity" discusses implications and presents some suggestions for curriculum design and pedagogy in the context of this diversity.

1b. *Linguistic Diversity and Variations of English*

There is also a considerable variety in students' linguistic backgrounds, and prior experience with English in the classroom setting. As a part of the admission process, all Yale-NUS students must demonstrate advanced ability to communicate in English and many of our students are also multilingual.[5] This creates opportunities for us to learn from each other's distinctive linguistic backgrounds.

At the same time, linguistic diversity can also create adjustment difficulties and pedagogical challenges. Some students may be very conversant in day-to-day English but have never formally studied in an English-speaking classroom. Some students in this situation find it intimidating speaking and keeping up in fast-paced first year classes. The transition to Yale-NUS therefore requires they learn new discipline-specific terminology.

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[4] Singapore Department of Statistics, Census of Population 2010, Stats Release 1, Demographic Characteristics, Language and Religion, January 2011, https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/cop2010/census_2010_release1/cop2010sr1.pdf. A university degree was the highest qualification attained by 30% of the total population in 2010 but only 5% of Malays had that level of educational attainment compared to 30% for Chinese and 35% for Indian Singaporeans.

[5] Singapore Department of Statistics, Infographic - General Household Survey 2015, accessed December 18, 2018, https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/visualising_data/infographics/ghs/highlights-of-ghs2015.pdf. In Singapore, over 70% of the population has multi-language literacy.

Not only do Yale-NUS students speak many different languages, but they speak and write in many different variants of the English language. Students and professors come from different English-speaking countries and adhere to different grammatical, spelling, and punctuation conventions. Most Singaporean students were trained to write academic essays in British-style English, for example, while many of our US-educated faculty are accustomed to different norms. And while our Singaporean students were almost all educated in English-language primary and secondary schools, they may speak in a Singlish vernacular that has a distinctive syntax, cadence, and often incorporates Malay, Mandarin, Hokkien, and Tamil words that are unfamiliar to their non-Singaporean peers and professors.

Over time, these linguistic differences serve to enrich our individual and collective experiences, but they can pose challenges as students adjust to the College. This dimension of diversity also raises interesting questions for faculty in deciding how to be inclusive of different linguistic traditions in their assignments and assessments.

These considerations are addressed below.

1c. Diverse Religions, Value Systems, and Traditions

Our students' diversity extends to their belief systems and religious commitments. National-level data may not perfectly capture our student body but it offers some context. Singapore is very diverse in religious makeup, with roughly 43 percent identifying as Buddhist or Taoist, 19 percent Christian, 14 percent Muslim, 5 percent Hindu, and 19 percent stating they have no religious affiliation. However, Singaporeans of university age and those with university degrees are even more likely to identify as non-religious (23-24 percent).[6] Among Malay Singaporeans, 99 percent are Muslim and among Indian Singaporeans 22 percent are Muslim, 59 percent are Hindu, and 13 percent are Christian. Among ethnic Chinese Singaporeans, 57 percent identify as Buddhist or Taoist and 20 percent identify as Christian.[7]

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[6] Singapore Department of Statistics, Infographic - General Household Survey 2015.
[7] Singapore Department of Statistics, Census of Population 2010.

It is worth noting that Christian Singaporeans are statistically overrepresented at the university level, 32 percent of university graduates in 2010. Muslim Singaporeans, who are mostly Malay, are underrepresented in university, making up 14 percent of the national population but only 4 percent of university graduates in 2010.[8]

Although we do not have data about the Yale-NUS student population on these identity markers, these trends are likely to be somewhat reflective of our Singaporean students. At a minimum, it may be helpful for faculty to be cognisant of this intersection of ethnicity, religion, and education in the Singaporean context. The diversity and complexity of local students' identities is of course magnified when we consider our international students who bring with them additional and intersecting religious beliefs and practices.

Our residential model is designed to encourage students to express all facets of their identities, including religion, fully on campus. At Yale-NUS, religion is central to many students' lives. For example, Christian Fellowship is one of the largest student organisations at the College, with members who meet regularly for bible study, open mic events, and discussion forums. Many students spend much of Sunday at church with their families and leading prayer groups for younger people. And although

[8] Singapore Department of Statistics, Census of Population 2010.

Muslim students are a minority at the College, there is a newly formed Muslim Students Association and institutional structures in place to support Muslim students to live according to their religious principles. For example, the College has a Quiet Room for interfaith prayer and our dining programme is halal compliant.

Although the centrality of religion for many students is widely understood, it is important to note that some students have reported feeling the need to conceal their religious convictions from their peers or even from their professors.[9] Some students have voiced discomfort about the academic treatment of religious texts or ideas, for example the inclusion of the Ramayana in Literature and Humanities. Other students have felt excluded and their beliefs demeaned when, from their perspective, peers or professors trivialise religious documents or ideas.[10]

Respect for students' religious commitments takes on additional importance in the context of Singapore's emphasis on harmony and respect for religious diversity, and the criminalisation by Penal Code Section 298 of "uttering words, etc. with deliberate intent to wound the religious or racial feelings of any person." Yale-NUS faculty should be aware of this legal context while also being empowered by the foundational Yale-NUS Faculty Statement on Freedom of Expression: "We are firmly committed to the free expression of ideas in all forms – a central tenet of liberal arts education. There are no questions that cannot be asked, no answers that cannot be discussed and debated. This principle is a cornerstone of our institution."

Faculty may want to take the centrality of religion – and its intersection with other identities like ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background –

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[9] Daryl Yang, "Addressing the Pink Elephant in the Room," The Octant, September 3, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/vii-2/opinion/addressing-pink-elephants-room/; Wisha Jamal, "What Happens If You Don't Fit the Yale-NUS 'Mold'?," The Octant, September 9, 2018, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/what-happens-if-you-dont-fit-the-yale-nus-mold/; Justin Ong, "Religious and Silent: Why Some Don't Want to Voice Opinions on 377A" The Octant, October 24, 2018, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/religious-and-silent-why-some-dont-want-to-voice-opinions-on-377a/.

[10] Ambika Madan, "The Ramayana: Through Religious or Literary Lenses?," The Octant, September 16, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/uncategorized/ramayana-religious-literary-lenses/; Nicholas Lua, "Evolution, Creationism, and the (Liberal) Art of Grace," The Octant, September 8, 2015; https://theoctant.org/edition/iv-4/opinion/evolution-creationism-and-the-liberal-art-of-grace/.

into account when selecting readings, considering how to schedule exams and assignments around religious holidays, and fostering an inclusive classroom environment. These themes are addressed in Part III chapters on "Culturally-Attuned Participation Expectations," "Discussion Guidelines," and "Responding to Difficult Classroom Situations".

1d. Diversity in Gender and Sexuality

For some students, their arrival to Yale-NUS is a long-awaited opportunity to live free from societal, parental, familial pressure to conform. For example, in a time when traditional definitions of gender and sexuality are being reconsidered, our students embody a range of gender and sexual identities.

Yale-NUS is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for our students. Our residential colleges promote meaningful learning and diverse interactions in a collegiate atmosphere. To facilitate such interactions, our open housing policies give our students a wide range of housing options to cater to their different needs. Students can choose from same gender suites as well as mixed gender suites. These policies help to set an inclusive tone for students who do not identify as strictly male or female. For students who identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, fluid, or non-binary, our residential requirement might represent an opportunity to live their gender identity and sexuality more openly than would be possible at home or elsewhere.

Being aware of the variety of gender identities, and appreciating that they may change for a given student during the time you know them on campus, can help faculty foster an inclusive classroom. Feeling alienated or ostracised is likely to silence students and diminish their learning. In contrast, the more fully students feel accepted for who they are, the more willing they will be to share what they think and take intellectual risks. Specific strategies of inclusion are available in Part III in the "LGBTQ and Gender Inclusivity" chapter.

1e. *Diverse Family Structures*

Our students come from families with very diverse structures. What is considered a 'normal' family structure varies substantially in our student population across many dimensions including number of parents, whether parents live together, whether all parents work, number of siblings, and living together with grandparents.

Example 1 – Divorce: Students from Spain, France, England, Germany, Russia, the US, Canada, and New Zealand come from countries where divorce and two-household families is relatively common, as noted in research by the OECD.[11] By contrast, students from India, much of South America, the Middle East, and many countries in Asia come from environments where divorce is less likely to occur and could possibly be stigmatised. Divorce has different social connotations across different cultures.

Understanding this variety has implications for how we approach these issues in our classes. For example, casually asking a class how many have divorced parents might, in the Yale-NUS context, be a more sensitive question than in a context where divorce is very common, and produce negative feelings that are not productive for learning.

Example 2 – Multigenerational Contact: When a student asks for an extension because their grandmother is very ill, that might have different context for Singaporean students than it would for most North American students. Many local students have as much contact with their grandparents as their parents. In the US, only 1% of children under 18 living with 2 parents also live with grandparents.[12] In Singapore, almost 10% of all households are "three generation households" where children, parents,

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[11] OECD Family Database, SF3.1: Marriage and divorce rates, July 25, 2018, https://www.oecd.org/els/family/SF_3_1_Marriage_and_divorce_rates.pdf; Pamela Engel, MAP: Divorce Rates Around The World, May 25, 2014, https://www.businessinsider.com/map-divorce-rates-around-the-world-2014-5/?IR=T; Unified Lawyers, Divorced Nations, September 29, 2017, https://www.unifiedlawyers.com.au/blog/global-divorce-rates-statistics/
[12] United States Census Bureau, Living Arrangements of Children Under Age 18, November 17, 2016, https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2016/comm/cb16-192_living_arrangements.html.

and grandparents live together. Additionally, in Singapore, over 65% of married adults visit their elderly parents at least once a week and 25% do so daily even when they do not live together.[13]

For faculty who come from backgrounds where grandparents rarely live with their grandchildren and may be visited only a few times a year, local context is quite different. In considering how to respond to student requests vis-à-vis family commitments, it may be helpful to take these differences into account.

2. Educational and Socio-Economic Diversity

The previous section shows how our students come from very different cultural, linguistic, and familial contexts, and embody diverse identities around religion, sexuality, and gender. The following section introduces dimensions of diversity that more directly or explicitly impact students' educational background and the kind of transition they are likely to have when joining Yale-NUS.

2a. Diverse Socio-Economic Background

Over 50% of Yale-NUS students receive some financial aid, and our holistic admissions process means that our students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and prior educational experiences. Some of our students come from well-resourced primary and secondary schools, and will feel at home with the rigours and implicit expectations of a Yale-NUS education. For students from less affluent backgrounds across the world, the adjustment to residential College life, both academically and socially may be challenging. Living alongside peers from more affluent backgrounds can be difficult when your peers can afford things you cannot. For example, the transition to college can be socially alienating for a student who does not have a lot of disposable money, and who for the first time is living alongside peers who regularly eat out on the weekend.

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[13] Matthew Matthews and Paulin Tay Straughan, "Overview of Familes," Social Service Partners Conference 2015; Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development, "Families and Households in Singapore 2000-2014," accessed December 18, 2018, from https://www.msf.gov.sg/research-and-data/Research-and-Statistics/Pages/Families-and-Households-in-Singapore-2000-2014.aspx.

On a practical level, many of our students work, both on and off campus, to help pay for their education. Some of our students must work during college to support themselves or as a requirement of their financial aid package. Additionally, some students work in order to contribute money to their family finances, either out of family necessity or a sense of duty or filial piety. Additionally, some students choose not to apply for aid, even if they are from low income backgrounds and would qualify for aid.

Working during college can bring many benefits, beyond the obvious financial ones, in terms of job experience, time management skills, and a broader perspective. However, for students who must work many hours each week, this can also detract from the time that would otherwise be spent on their academics, and on creating a social support system in the College. While we rightly expect all students to dedicate themselves to their studies, some students have very pressing demands on their time stemming from family responsibilities and financial need. Specific strategies for supporting students from less affluent backgrounds are described in the chapter on "Socio-Economic Inclusivity" in Part III.

2b. Family Educational Background and 'First Generation' Students

Some Yale-NUS students come from a long line of highly and prestigiously educated family members, and may feel the pressure to 'measure up'

with high achieving parents and siblings. At the same time, some of our students are the very first in their family to attend college or university, and feel a different set of pressures to assimilate into a new educational environment.[14]

Even for those whose parents attended university, many of our students are the first in their families to go to a college like Yale-NUS and may find the expectations and implicit customs disorienting.[15] The majority of our students come from countries and regions where Yale-NUS' model of liberal arts, fully-residential, small seminar-driven higher education is not very common. This is true of our Singaporean students as well. In this sense, the majority of our students have at least some of the qualities typically associated with 'first-generation college students' in a US education context.

Unfamiliarity with the subtle, 'unwritten rules' of competitive higher education is a common constraint on first- generation college students. For example, a parent who attended a small liberal arts college would advise their struggling child to go to faculty office hours when they are having trouble. But a parent who attended university in a very large, less intimate setting, might not encourage their kids to seek out such individualised support. Expectations around speaking up during class discussions and publicly asking questions, attending faculty office hours, and admitting to uncertainty may be particularly challenging to these students.

Many first-generation students enter college suffering from imposter syndrome – they feel they got into Yale-NUS through luck or accident, and that they do not actually deserve to be here. They may also feel guilt at having access to an education and experiences like international travel that may never be available to their family members and friends from home.

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[14] Abdul Hamid, "Border-Crossers: Being a First-Generation College Student at Yale-NUS," The Octant, October 13, 2016, https://theoctant.org/edition/v-%opinion/border-crossers-first-generation-college-student-yale-nus/.

[15] In Singapore, roughly half of the adult population holds post-secondary degrees or diplomas, but over 85% of Singaporeans aged 25-34 hold post-secondary qualifications of some kind. This suggests that many of our local students may have older siblings and cousins who have university or polytechnic experience, but their parents may not. And even if your students have parents who attended university, it was unlikely to be a residential, liberal arts college like Yale-NUS.

This combination of unfamiliarity, self-doubt, and guilt can combine to make first-generation students less likely to take full advantage of academic and emotional support resources such as faculty office hours, tutoring programmes, counselling services, and residential support. Faculty members may want to speak directly to their students about the importance of taking advantage of these resources, and stress that asking questions and revealing vulnerabilities is not a sign of weakness, and in fact is a critical factor for success.[16]

There is even greater value in faculty being explicit about their expectations, to coach students in strategies for academic success, and to be understanding that the transition to college will be a bumpy one for many. We will discuss several steps you can take to support students in the chapters on "Socio-Economic Inclusivity" and "First-Generation Students."

2c. Diverse Educational Backgrounds

Coming to Yale-NUS from across the world, our students bring with them academic expectations and habits reflecting a wide range of secondary and pre-university educational systems. These systems cannot be neatly delineated as 'international' and 'Singaporean.' Our international students hail from a variety of educational backgrounds, and two students from the same country might have experienced very different educations. And because Singapore is an education and economic hub in the region, many of our 'international' students from China, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and elsewhere attended secondary school in Singapore. Some are recipients of prestigious ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Scholarships funded by the Singapore's Ministry of Education to attract bright students from the region to Singapore for pre-university studies.

Moreover, as will be discussed in greater depth in the chapter on "Education in Singapore", even our Singapore-educated students reflect a wide variety of educational environments. Some have been in streamed systems, meaning they have spent the last few years studying almost exclusively in

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[16] For a more detailed and practical discussion of some of the obstacles to success facing first generation college students see Galina, "Teaching First-Generation College Students."

the arts/humanities, social sciences, or math/sciences. Some students in Literature and Humanities will not have written an essay in several years, while some students in Quantitative Reasoning will not have had to do mathematical problems in several years.[17]

Students from international baccalaureate programmes have often spent the last three or four years doing advanced coursework in a wide range of subjects and had the option to pick electives, similar to liberal arts curriculum. These students will likely find the Yale-NUS curriculum in general more familiar. Some students come from polytechnics and other pre-professional programmes, and were previously being trained for a specific career path. For these students, the holistic educational mission of Yale-NUS is a change of pace and they may initially lack confidence in the classroom.

2d. Diverse Expectations Around Grading and Assessment

This variety of educational backgrounds, combined with the diversity amongst our faculty members themselves, means students and faculty come to Yale-NUS with very diverse expectations in terms of grading and assessment. Some faculty have been surprised, and dismayed, by how grade-oriented many Yale-NUS students are. Part of this grade-focused anxiety stems from the uncertainty students experience when confronted by the Yale-NUS grading culture. At Yale-NUS, faculty have autonomy to assign grades, to decide whether to grade their classes on a curve or more individually, to use rubrics or not. Some faculty members give grades with several pages of explanation and justification, while others offer relatively little context. This variety of grading practice is fairly common in a North American liberal arts context, where small class sizes and an emphasis on disciplinary diversity and faculty freedom stands opposed to top-down, university-mandated grading practices.

By contrast, many of our students come from educational backgrounds where all meaningful grades come from standardised testing like the

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[17] Rhyhan Astha, "A Not So Common Curriculum," The Octant, October 29, 2018, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/a-not-so-common-curriculum/.

United Kingdom's GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and Singapore's PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination) and Singapore-Cambridge GCE "O" Level Examination. Individual assignments within secondary schools are also often graded on a curve, so that one students' grade is determined relative to their peer's performance. For students from these backgrounds, it can be unsettling to not know exactly what a B+ means in terms of their relative performance. It is also unsettling if a B+ in one class is considered a high achievement, while in another it is average.

Students do benefit from being exposed to a variety of grading standards across different faculty members and classes at Yale-NUS. Once students leave college they will need to learn and adapt to different kinds of bosses, professional environments, and reward systems. However, the lack of uniform structure around grading can be difficult for students who are accustomed to high-stakes testing, fixed performance bands, and curved grading systems. As we discuss in more detail in the chapter on "Inclusive Grading and Assessment Practices" being as explicit as possible about what your grades mean and offering ample feedback beyond a simple letter or numerical grade can help students learn to improve, help them focus on learning, and become less fixated on grading.

2e. Diversity of Physical, Psychological, and Cognitive Traits

Because of our relative institutional youth and our small size, Yale-NUS has not had a significant population of students with visible disabilities. However, we have many students with unseen, or invisible health conditions. Depression and anxiety are common ailments for college students everywhere, and this is also the case for Yale-NUS students. We have students with established and with newly-diagnosed learning conditions such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, and working memory impairments. Many of our students come from cultures or educational backgrounds where such conditions can be stigmatised. It may be particularly difficult for students from less affluent or educated communities to get properly diagnosed and treated. This means that it is during their time at Yale-NUS that they may first learn to manage their psychological and cognitive conditions. This can involve some trial-

and-error in terms of study strategies, health protocols, medication, and other interventions. The chapter on "Student Heath and Special Learning Needs" offers some concrete strategies for supporting these learners.

3. Diversity in the Faculty and Implications for Teaching

This chapter is primarily designed to describe student diversity and implications for learning in the Yale-NUS context. However, we would be remiss to overlook faculty diversity, which enhances the quality of our community and curriculum. Faculty diversity makes for a more culturally responsive community and gives students a range of adult professionals to approach for advice and mentorship. Diversity among the faculty can also leave some individuals feeling professionally and socially isolated, institutionally taxed, or slightly out-of-step with their colleagues. Although it is not the focus of this book, a document on diversity in the Yale-NUS classroom should recognise faculty perspectives and experiences.

3a. Cultural Diversity of the Faculty

The Yale-NUS faculty is a tremendously diverse group. Beyond the obvious diversity of academic discipline, expertise, and methodology, our

roughly 140 faculty members hold different nationalities and have lived in countries all over the world. Yale-NUS faculty have roots truly worldwide including in Kenya, South Africa, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, England, Russia, Bulgaria, Canada, the United States, Australia, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and beyond. As with our students, there are many faculty members who are 'third culture kids' who may have grown up in different cultures from their parents and moved across cultures during their formative years. Additionally, many faculty members have built multi-cultural, multi-ethnic families and partnerships. And cultural diversity is not limited to countries of origin.

Because so many Yale-NUS faculty work and live in close proximity to each other, it is a sociable community. However, some cultures, races, religions, gender identities, and sexualities are better represented in the faculty than others. For example, we have relatively few faculty of African descent, or who openly identify as transgender or genderqueer. Faculty members who do not see their own identities reflected among their colleagues may feel less socially supported than those with many colleagues from similar cultural backgrounds and identities.

In the classroom, faculty members from ethnic groups and genders which are traditionally underrepresented in academia may feel special pressure to earn students' respect. Research on implicit bias among college students conducted across many countries shows that women and people of colour are often given lower student evaluations than male professors of European descent. This knowledge weighs heavy on some faculty members when they step into the classroom. Faculty members who represent certain minorities may also feel unduly burdened with committee and service work and to serve as ambassadors of underrepresented groups.

3b. *Diversity in Communication Styles*

Faculty also come to Yale-NUS with a diversity of communication styles and approaches to team work and problem-solving. Professional disputes can sometimes become layered over or intensified by differences in cultural

communication style. What one faculty member might mean to be a direct expression of opinion, another might experience as bullying. Because so many faculty teach in teams and serve on committees, there is high potential for inter-cultural learning among faculty but also some risk of inter-cultural miscommunication and conflict.

3c. Diversity of Professional Background and Rank

Some faculty had extensive prior experience living and working in Singapore before joining Yale-NUS, but others have come to Singapore in order to work at Yale-NUS. These colleagues are adjusting to the diversity and complexity of a new country and a new employer at the same time.

Faculty also differ from each other in age and professional experience. Some faculty join Yale-NUS straight from their PhD programmes, and do not come with much teaching or professional experience. Others were previously employed at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Yale University, or any number of international universities. The majority of our faculty are 'junior' or mid-career. Relatively few of our faculty have attained full professor status, and older faculty may feel they are a minority in this context.

Faculty members' rank and nationality also impact their residential options, which can in turn impact their professional experience. Non-Singaporean faculty who are new to NUS are able to live in subsidised faculty housing, while Singaporean faculty and those who have already had long appointments with NUS do not have access to subsidised faculty housing. This can create a somewhat bifurcated social experience for faculty, with a large group working and living in close proximity to each other, and a minority living apart.

3d. Diversity of Educational Background

One subset of faculty that can sometimes feel minoritised are those who have never studied or taught in the US. Though our faculty hail from all over the world, many, if not most, either attended undergraduate or graduate school in the US, or have previously taught there. This creates a

common reference-point and vernacular for faculty with experience in US colleges and universities, and who may implicitly feel more comfortable teaching in Yale-NUS' liberal arts, residential, and seminar-based setting. Casual references during faculty meetings to peer institutions like Barnard, Swarthmore, or Pomona (all US-based small liberal arts colleges) or "the Chronicle" (a popular US-based journal called The Chronicle of Higher Education) may be more accessible to faculty with experience in the US education context. Given our strong curricular and pedagogical roots in the US, this may make faculty without experience in the US feel isolated when they first join the College.

3e. *Implications for Teaching and Learning*

All faculty members are adjusting to something as they join a new college, whether it is a new country, a new apartment, a new curriculum, a new teaching environment, or new colleagues. This volume invites faculty to think about the diversity of their students, and what that means for learning. We also recognise that faculty bring tremendous diversity too, and that has implications for teaching and for professional-personal satisfaction. Sharing this diversity with colleagues and students, and supporting colleagues as they adjust to a new teaching environment, enriches everyone's experience.

4. Intentional Diversity in Yale-NUS Curriculum Design and Classroom Experience

Whereas the previous sections have described diversity in the student body and faculty, it is also worthwhile to remember the intellectual diversity embedded in Yale-NUS' curriculum design and pedagogy.

4a. Curricular Diversity

An emphasis on diverse traditions and perspectives is intentionally woven into the Yale-NUS curriculum. When designing the curriculum, the inaugural faculty did so with a core question in mind: "What must a young person learn in order to lead a responsible life in this century?" Yale-NUS' answer to this question is a curriculum that purposely requires all students to engage with different academic disciplines, and multiple traditions and ways of knowing. In Literature and Humanities, for example, students are exposed to visual, oral, and written work from across eras and regions, and in Philosophy and Political Thought, they similarly engage with great thinkers and great debates from across space and time. Comparative Social Inquiry lays bare the many unseen social structures that influence, and even inhibit, our day-to-day existence. In so doing, it challenges students to confront venerated accepted wisdom and put 'common sense' ideas up for debate.[18] And by emphasising small classes, student-led discussion, and articulate communication as central to Yale-NUS pedagogy, we seek to ensure that students' own diversity of experience and perspectives combine with curricular diversity to produce rich, challenging learning experiences.

While there is certainly an emphasis on student engagement with different authors and cultural touch-points across Eastern and Western traditions, the inaugural faculty was mindful of the risks of reducing culture to narrow conceptions of geography and race. At the same time, they sought to give students broad exposure to different traditions, and to engage directly with the impact of tradition on contemporary issues. As described in the first major report by the inaugural curriculum committee, colloquially termed

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[18] Bryson Ng, "The Disruptive Good?," The Octant, September 9, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/vii-2/opinion/the-disruptive-good/.

The Garsten Report, "In the end, we hope our students will move beyond thoughts of a simple East-West axis to appreciate the whole 'kaleidoscope' of intersecting influence and readings that make up any real experience of reading broadly and reflectively."[19]

The curriculum was designed to leverage diversity, without reducing diversity to overly tidy and reductive categories. Specific language of the Garsten Report addressing this goal are worth highlighting:

> "There is a danger of reifying a particular understanding of a culture or tradition, but there is also a danger of denying our own historicity, of ignoring the fact that we live among institutions, cultures, and norms that have emerged in a particular way."[20]
>
> "An education that aims to succeed in linking students from all over the globe… should aim to give them the experience of coming to know a small number of particular perspectives well [and]… then it should provide space for students to begin to bring these different perspectives into contact with one another… Giving students a taste for the difficult and worthwhile task of genuine interpretive engagement is a demanding but plausible goal, and one that will help to bring a diverse international body of students and faculty together into one community of learning."[21]

The Common Curriculum and our entire curricular structure will likely change and evolve with time. But it is premised on the value of learning about diverse cultures, genres, disciplines, and traditions. In this sense, diversity has always been a central pillar of the Yale-NUS educational project.

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[19] Bryan Garsten et. al, Yale-NUS College: A New Community of Learning (New Haven: Yale University, 2013), 45.

[20] Bryan Garsten et. al, Yale-NUS College: A New Community of Learning (New Haven: Yale University, 2013), 44.

[21] Bryan Garsten et. al, Yale-NUS College: A New Community of Learning (New Haven: Yale University, 2013), 47.

4b. Pedagogical Diversity

Just as our curriculum has diversity intentionally built-in, so too does our pedagogy. Yale-NUS students are guaranteed to experience a range of different pedagogies and learning contexts because of the intentional incorporation of diverse pedagogies across the curriculum. This enhances the learning experience as students develop a wider range of skills and offers students with different learning styles various settings in which to excel.

Pedagogical diversity is evident in a number of institutional features. First, the Common Curriculum incorporates both weekly lectures and seminars, exposing students to very different ways of learning, and enabling faculty to practise two very different ways of teaching. Second, beyond the Common Curriculum, students have considerable choice in courses, and can take a mix of small Yale-NUS seminars, large NUS lecture courses, and even highly individualised Independent Studies. Students are expected to direct their own learning in Independent Studies, working with faculty to design a reading list and deliverables. In any given week, a student might attend a large NUS Finance lecture, a 12-person Yale-NUS Anthropology seminar, and an independent study with a tutorial-style pedagogy of direct student-to-professor engagement. The integration of experiential learning opportunities in the form of Learning Across Boundaries (LABs) and Week 7 classes exposes students and faculty to yet another learning environment. Third, the Capstone, required of all Yale-NUS students, provides even more independent inquiry and student-directed intellectual growth.

Conclusion

This chapter has described many of the most salient dimensions of diversity in the Yale-NUS student body, faculty, and curriculum. This is not an exhaustive discussion, and it does not give adequate attention to the ways in which these identities and backgrounds interact and intersect. Despite those limitations, the chapter hopefully serves to give new and veteran faculty a fuller picture of the diversity in their classrooms. In Part III, we offer a number of practical chapters with strategies for achieving inclusivity

across the many dimensions of diversity that have been described.

All these forms of diversity, and many more, intersect at Yale-NUS, both in the residential experience and in the classroom.[22] As Associate Professor Anju Paul said so eloquently during her First Year Assembly Address in 2016, "We are Yale-NUS and we are more than comfortable in our liberal-arts-college-in-Singapore skin. In fact, we relish being different. Not better (necessarily), but certainly one-of-a-kind. In our difference and diversity, we find freedom and richness. In our intimacy, we find the opportunity to learn from one another."[23] By knowing more about the diversity of our students, and the potential barriers they face to learning, we can fulfil this opportunity and help all our students thrive academically.

Building on the foundation laid in this chapter, the following chapter, "An Overview of Education in Singapore," delves more deeply into the various pathways of the Singapore education system.

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[22] Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different identities interact in distinctive ways, and the fact that people will experience certain identity traits differently depending on their other characteristics and position in different social structures. For example, skin colour and nationality intersect such that a black American, a black South African, and a black Ugandan will all experience their blackness differently. Similarly, a female Singaporean might experience being physically disabled very differently than a Singaporean male, because of the implications of physical disability on National Service requirements. The logic of intersectionality reminds us not to reduce people to a single identity characteristic.

[23] Daryl Yang, "Dr Anju Paul on why there is no place like Yale-NUS College," January 3, 2017, https://www.yale-nus.edu.sg/newsroom/3-january-2017-dr-anju-paul-no-place-like-yale-nus-college/.

An Overview of Education in Singapore

Contextualising the Educational Background of Yale-NUS College students educated in Singapore

Rachel Tan Wei Fen, Dean's Fellow, Elm College, Dean of Students Office, Yale-NUS College

> **Chapter Overview:** *Over 50% of our students pass through the Singapore education system before enrolling at Yale-NUS. The chapter highlights the tremendous variety in different primary and secondary school pathways as well as the influence of subject- and merit-based streaming systems. Readers will gain a more nuanced understanding of the objectives of the Singaporean education system, the influence of high-stakes national examinations, national service, and the tuition industry. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how those systems collectively influence Yale-NUS students' academic expectations and anxieties. The main takeaway for faculty is that they should not assume all Singaporean students have similar academic backgrounds, comfort zones, and learning needs. At the same time, faculty can be mindful that for many students, there is a vast difference between their past educational context and Yale-NUS.[24]*

Over half of Yale-NUS College students were educated in Singapore, while most of their professors come from other educational and cultural contexts. This chapter provides an overview of the Singapore educational system to contextualise the academic backgrounds that are most prevalent in Yale-NUS College classrooms. First, it explains how the system has evolved over time alongside the shifting needs of the Singaporean state and economy. Second, this chapter breaks down the different pathways and options available in primary and secondary education. Special emphasis is given to the importance of streaming and national examinations in shaping students' educational opportunities. Third, the chapter describes how nation building priorities influence how Singapore-educated students

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[24] Special thank you to Yale-NUS College students Lai Ern Chuen (2019), Hazirah Binte Mohamad Helmy (2019), Chua Kang En Asher (2019), and Hie Guan Jie Phil (2021), and Assistant Manager of Residential Education Lee Suwen Joanna for reviewing this chapter and sharing your thoughts and knowledge.

are accustomed to learning, processing, and demonstrating knowledge. The chapter concludes with insights on how Singaporean students bring their educational context to the Yale-NUS College classroom.

1. The Historical Development of Education in Singapore

The values and priorities of education in Singapore have been connected to a larger social project aimed primarily at centralised, cohesive, and controlled nation-building. Four phases have been identified by several scholars.

The first *survival-driven phase* (1965–1978) was driven by the needs of a new nation and industrialising economy. The goal was to "educate the population swiftly and build a disciplined and cohesive society" with a uniform, Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum that emphasised Bilingual Education (English and Mother Tongue), Science, Mathematics, vocational and technical education.[25]

The second *efficiency-driven phase* (1978–1997) was designed to nurture a high-quality workforce in support of a capital-intensive, high value-added manufacturing industry.[26] Vocational and technical education expanded and "streaming" mechanisms were introduced, transforming a "one-size-fits-all" to a more differentiated system.

The third *ability-driven phase* (1997–2011) increased autonomy of schools and teachers. During this phase, the government created more flexibility in curricula in order to develop a greater variety of skills in its younger population. These reforms reflected the economy's transition from reliance on manufacturing towards more specialised fields of finance, biomedical

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[25] Jason Tan, "Pulling together amid globalization: National Education in Singapore schools," in Changing Education: Leadership, Innovation and Development in a Globalizing Asia Pacific, edited by M Mason and J. N. Hawkins (Hong Kong: Springer & Comparative Education Research Centre), 183-197; C. Han, "Creating good citizens, or a competitive workforce, or just plain political socialization," in Education as a Political Tool in Asia, edited by M. Lall and E. Vickers (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 102-119; Saravanan Gopinathan, Benjamin Wong, and Nicholas Tang, "The evolution of school leadership policy and practice in Singapore: Responses to changing socio-economic and political contexts ("Insurgents," "Implementers," "Innovators")," Journal of Educational Administration and History 40, no. 3 (2008): 235–249.

[26] Martin Carnoy, Globalization and Educational Reform: What Planners Need to Know (Geneva: UNESCO, 1999).

sciences, healthcare, communications, and other emerging industries. Independent and Autonomous schools emerged with greater autonomy, additional government funding, and a wider range of programmes.[27] As teachers gained some latitude, it opened the way for more creative and flexible pedagogies.

Fourth, the *values-driven phase* (2011–present) reflects the government's response to rising concerns of high stress, competition, and elitism. Since 2011, the MOE has shifted towards education that is student-centric, and focuses on developing character and responsible citizenship. "Every School a Good School" has since become key language used by the MOE in efforts to curtail a sense of elitism that derives from school rankings and streaming. MOE has begun broadening school admissions to reward achievement in a wider range of competencies beyond academics, and to make elite schools more inclusive. At the same time, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) continue to revolve around producing students with good grades and examination scores and Singapore teachers are expected to prioritise delivering content and preparing students to be examination-ready over other aspects of education.

A *Pedagogy of Nation Building*: Alongside these curricular reforms, the role of education as a source of national identity and cohesion remains an important part of the educational system. In 1997, the Ministry of Education launched National Education (NE) to instil a sense of strong national identity among younger Singaporeans.[28] These goals inform pedagogy and curriculum across all subject areas and co-curricular activities.[29]

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[27] Liaw Wy-Cin, "More Funds for Autonomous Schools," AsiaOne, May 27, 2009, http://www.asiaone.com/News/Education/Story/A1Story20090526-143945.html. Introduced in 1994, autonomous schools are one of four types of public secondary schools in Singapore, which include government, government-aided and independent institutions. Government schools typically get upgraded to autonomous status when they have demonstrated a sustained ability to add value to their students' all-round education.

[28] Goh Chok Tong, "Prepare our children for the new century: Teach them well," in Speeches: A bimonthly selection of ministerial speeches, Sept–Oct 1996 (Singapore: Publicity Division, Ministry of Culture, 1996), 1–13.

[29] Aaron Koh, "Singapore Education in "New Times": Global/local imperatives," Discourse 25, no. 3 (2004): 340.

2. Education in Singapore Today: Streaming and Meritocracy in Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

Education in Singapore is typically described in three stages: Primary (6 years of schooling, roughly age 6 to 12), Secondary (4-5 years, from age 13-16/17), and an optional Post-Secondary stage which includes a variety of pathways. As of 2017, there were 328 Primary and Secondary schools, 15 Junior Colleges/Centralised Institutes, 5 Polytechnics, 1 Institute of Technical Education, and 6 public universities.[30] The vast majority of Singaporean students are educated in schools that follow the national curriculum and testing structure, administered by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Students are expected to complete a minimum of 10 years of compulsory education (Primary 1 through Secondary 4, ages 6 to 16), which is provided at relatively low to no cost for most Singaporeans.

MOE-run primary and secondary schools comprise five types — govt, govt-aided, independent, specialised independent, and specialised. A small number of schools have religious affiliation but still follow the national curriculum. For example, in Muslim Madrasahs, religious classes are complementary to secular subjects. There are also several schools that fall under the Special Assistance Plan (SAP), which was introduced in 1979 as a long-term scheme to develop students with strong command of both Chinese and English languages as well as traditional Chinese values, history, and contemporary developments. International students from expatriate families who live in Singapore may be eligible to enrol in public schools based on their performance on a standardised admissions test, but most attend international schools. The MOE also administers a scholarship awarded to students from ASEAN countries to study in Singapore (See "References and Additional Resources" in the Appendix to learn more).

Singapore's education system has been described by many as high performing, tightly controlled, and competitive. For the majority of

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[30] Singapore Ministry of Education, "Education Statistics Digest 2018," October 2018, https://www.moe.gov.sg/docs/default-source/document/publications/education-statistics-digest/esd_2018.pdf. There are also 16 Mixed Level schools comprising both Primary & Secondary Schools (P1-S4/5) and Secondary & Junior College Schools (S1-JC2).

Singaporean students, streaming and national examinations scores combine to shape their educational journey and options, as described below.

3. Tracking, Streaming, Meritocracy

Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary Options

3a. *Primary Education (Primary 1 to 6; age 7 to 12)*

All Singaporean students are required to attend six years of primary education. Core to the primary education curriculum are English Language, Mathematics, and a Mother Tongue Language (i.e. Chinese, Malay, or Tamil). Students also take subjects like Art, Music, Character and Citizenship Education, Social Studies, and Physical Education.[31] Science is introduced from Primary 3 onwards. At Primary 4 (age 10), students are streamed into different academic groups dependent on their academic performance to date. Since 2008, students are sorted according to "Subject-based banding" rather than purely ability-based streams. Students are now offered the option of a combination of standard and foundation subjects, dependent on their scores in the respective subjects at the end of Primary 4. At the far end of the streaming spectrum is the Gifted Education Programme (GEP) for high ability learners, which accepts the top 1% of students who take the GEP screening exam at age 9 (See References and Additional Resources for more information).

3b. *The PSLE*

At the end of Primary 6 (age 12), all students take the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Based on their performance in this national examination, students are streamed into highly differentiated academic and vocational tracks. This high-stakes examination is graded on a curve, with students being compared directly with other students taking it. PSLE exam results determine not only the students' entry into selective secondary schools but also their placement into a particular secondary education track: Express, Normal Academic and Normal Technical. Students who

score below the threshold to qualify for secondary school (typically about 2-3%) may be required to repeat a year of primary school, or, if they are over 14, they may pursue vocational training through the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).[32]

3c. Secondary Education (Secondary 1 – 4/5; age 13 to 16/17)
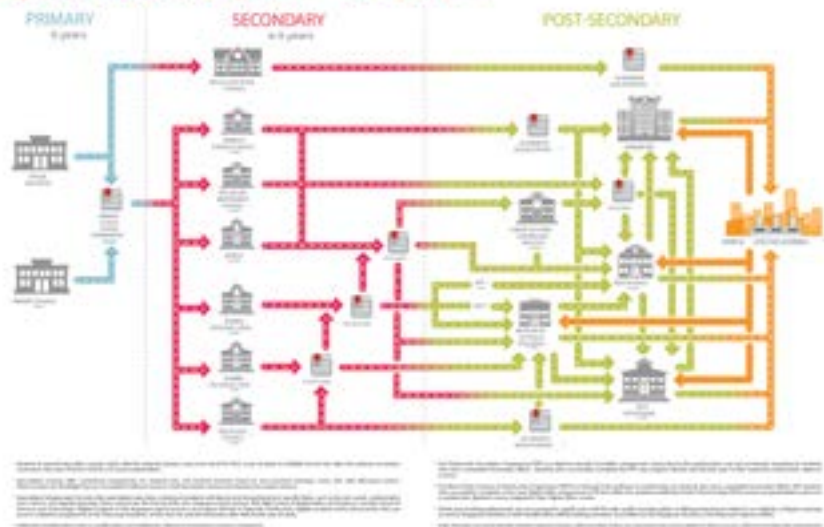
Ministry of Education, Singapore's Education System: An Overview [33]

Students are streamed throughout secondary school, beginning with their initial placement in one of three streams based on their PSLE scores.[34]

The 4-year Express stream (about 67% of students) leads to the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE) O-Level exam. Students learn English and Mother Tongue Languages, as well as Mathematics, the Sciences, and the Humanities.

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[32] Until 2008, students (including current Yale-NUS cohorts) were divided at Primary 5 into the EM1, EM2 and EM3 streams (EM is short for English and Mother Tongue). The academic rigor of EM1 was highest and EM3 at more foundational. While students in the EM1 and EM2 streams studied English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics and Science, EM1 students were offered their Mother Tongue (Chinese/Malay/Tamil) at a higher level, making it a more academically rigorous path. Students in the EM3 stream took Foundation English, basic Mother Tongue and Foundation Mathematics.

[33] Ministry of Education, Singapore's Education System: An Overview, 28 Feb 2018, https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system

[34] Ministry of Education Singapore, "Education Statistics Digest 2017."

The 4 to 5-year Normal Academic (NA) stream (about 20% of students) leads to the GCE N(A)-Level exam. Students learn subjects similar to those in the Express course. There are 3 potential routes for students in the NA stream: Those who do well at the N(A)-Level may qualify to proceed on to their 5th year to prepare for the O-Level exam,[35] or opt for a "through-train" pathway to a polytechnic. Otherwise, they may progress to Higher National ITE Certificate (Higher Nitec) courses at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

The 4-year Normal (Technical) (NT) stream (about 10%) leads to the GCE N(T)-Level exam. Students learn English and Mother Tongue Languages, Mathematics and subjects with technical or practical emphases.[36] Note that there is a 3% margin of error on these percentages as is represented by the "about" next to each percentage noted.

Students take all classes within their stream's cohort and members of each cohort are ranked such that the highest performing students and lowest performing students are grouped together for coursework. Students are able to transfer between streams dependent on grades at the end of any year, though movement upward is very difficult and uncommon.[37] The three separate tracks dictate the curriculum students are offered as well as which Cambridge exams they sit for and, as a result, which post-secondary opportunities they have.[38]

At the end of Secondary 2 (age 14), students from the Express stream are streamed once again to determine which subject examinations they will take in preparation for the GCE 'O' Level exams. Students take between 6 to 10 subjects during Secondary 3 and 4 , depending on academic ability, grades, and interest. The most common subjects are English Language, Mother Tongue, Pure Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology), Pure Humanities (Literature, Geography, History), Combined Science,

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[35] Selected students may sit for the O-Level exam in some subjects at Secondary 4, or bypass the N(A)-Level exam and progress directly to Secondary 5 to take the O-Level exam.

[36] Schools also offer Elective Modules, which cover a wide range of subjects including nursing, hospitality, digital animation and precision engineering.

[37] Anderson, "The Discursive Construction of Lower-Tracked Students."

[38] Anderson, "The Discursive Construction of Lower-Tracked Students."

Combined Humanities, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, and Elective programmes in Drama, Music or Art.

3d. The O-Levels

Just as the PSLE exam determines students' options at the secondary school level, the national O-Level exams taken at the end of secondary school determine students' post-secondary options. Students' O-Level scores, combined with Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) determine whether they have the option to go to Junior College (JC) and which JCs and polytechnics they are eligible to attend. The MOE determines what scores or "cut offs" are required to be eligible for different JCs and polytechnics. (See References and Additional Resources for more information.)

3e. Post-Secondary Education (age 16/17+)

After Secondary 4 or 5, most students enter one of the following post-secondary education institutions, depending on their 'O' Level scores.

<u>Junior Colleges or Centralised Institutes</u>[39]: Junior Colleges (two-year course) or Centralised Institutes (three year course) lead to the GCE A-Level exam.[40] A-level subjects are divided into three tiers – H1, H2 and H3. The breadth and depth of content increases from H1 to H3. Students generally take H1 General Paper,[41] H1 Project Work,[42] Mother Tongue,[43] and 4 content subjects,[44] of which there must be at least 3 at H2 level and 1 subject at H1 level. Three content subjects would be from the student's area

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[39] Amelia Teng, "JC Syllabuses revamped to keep up with the times," The Straits Times, February 4, 2016.
[40] Ministry of Education Singapore, "Education Statistics Digest 2017."
[41] General Paper aims to develop in students the ability to think critically, to construct cogent arguments and to communicate their ideas using clear, accurate and effective language. General Paper encourages students to explore a range of key issues of global and local significance and provides students with a good foundation to thrive in a fast-changing world. At the end of the course, students should have a broader understanding of the world, and be ready to meet the challenges of higher education and the workplace of the future. (SEAB General Paper Syllabus 2018)
[42] Project Work is a group assignment in which students collaborate to synthesise knowledge from various areas of learning, and critically and creatively apply it to real life situations, with four main learning outcomes: knowledge application, communication, collaboration and independent learning.
[43] With the exception of students who have passed GCE 'O' Level Higher Mother Tongue subject.
[44] A wide range of content subjects offered at the GCE 'A' Level are available here: https://www.seab.gov.sg/pages/nationalExaminations/GAL/School_Candidates/syllabus/2018_GCE_A

of specialisation in either the Arts or Science stream, and 1 subject has to be a subject from the other stream.[45] Some students opt to take certain subjects at H3 level. Most JC students go on to apply for university courses.

Polytechnics: The polytechnics offer a wide range of courses that equip students with industry-relevant skills and prepare them for careers in fields such as applied drama, engineering, applied sciences and biotechnology, info-communications, health sciences, early childhood education, business studies, accountancy, mass communications, and digital media. Polytechnic graduates who wish to further their studies may be considered for admission to the universities based on their academic record.[46]

Institute of Technical Education (ITE): Coursework at ITE leads to the National ITE Certificate (Nitec) or Higher Nitec qualifications for skills-based training in support roles in engineering, accountancy, business administration, nursing, medicine, architecture, and law. ITE also offers Technical Diploma programmes in collaboration with foreign partners, in niche areas such as automotive engineering and culinary arts.

4. Integrated Programmes, Independent, and International Schools

The Integrated Programme (IP) schools offer an alternative to the pathways described thus far. IP schools offer a 6-year course leading up to the GCE A-level examination or the International Baccalaureate (IB) examination. Students who earn top PSLE scores oftentimes join the IP offered by 18 highly competitive secondary schools in the country. This programme enables students an exemption from the GCE 'O' Level examination at Secondary 4 and direct entry into a top junior college programme. "These ...schools also have the freedom to design their own curricula (within certain parameters) and, as a result, IP students have greater exposure to a range of courses and topics, including philosophy and scientific research".[47]

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[45] Arts stream in Singapore JCs commonly refers to taking subjects such as History, Literature, Geography, Economics, Art, Music, Drama; Science stream in Singapore JCs commonly refers to taking subjects such as Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics.
[46] Ministry of Education Singapore, "Education Statistics Digest 2017."
[47] Ho Li-Ching, "Sorting Citizens: Differentiated citizenship education in Singapore," Journal of Curriculum Studies 42, no. 3 (2012): 409.

Yale-NUS students also come from international schools in Singapore. International schools include the United World College of Southeast Asia, Global Indian International School Singapore, Overseas Family School, Canadian International School, and others. Many of these schools offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), which is generally interdisciplinary and emphasises communication and creative thinking. Some international school's curriculum aligns with that of their home country, such as the Singapore American School which offers Advanced Placement exams as is common in the US educational system. Singaporean citizens are typically discouraged from attending international schools and can only do so if they receive an exemption. Yale-NUS students who attended international schools here in Singapore are mostly non-Singaporeans who were raised in Singapore, Singaporeans who were raised abroad and then returned to Singapore, or children of multi-national parents.

5. Special Features of the Singapore Education Landscape: Tuition and National Service

5a. Tuition

A notable feature of the Singapore educational context is the prevalence of "tuition" or tutoring, in which students receive individualised or group coaching outside of school hours, especially to help prepare for national placement exams.[48] A 2015 Straits Times-Nexus Link poll found that 70% of Singaporean parents send their children for tuition during primary and secondary school, and roughly 40% of parents get tuition for preschool children. The most common reasons given by parents for using tuition services was to help students improve their grades and to help their children keep up with their peers.[49]

5b. National Service

At around the age of 17 to 19, all male Singaporean citizens and permanent

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[48] Amelia Teng, "Tuition Industry Worth Over $1b A Year," The Straits Times, December 25, 2016.
[49] Sandra Davie, "7 in 10 Parents Send Their Children for Tuition: ST Poll," The Straits Times, July 4, 2015.

residents (PRs) are mandated by the Enlistment Act to undergo a roughly two-year period of military training called National Service (NS). This is typically fulfilled after students finish junior college, polytechnic, or vocational school, before they attend university. As a result, male Singaporean and PR students at Yale-NUS are two years older on average than their female Singaporean/PR and international counterparts and may have a different experience transitioning back to a schooling environment.

NS men have a variety of posts and experiences in the Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore Police Force, Singapore Civil Defence Force, and support counter terrorism efforts and relief missions in the region. Some are placed in physically demanding vocations (e.g. infantry, guards, armour, commando, naval diving unit, etc.) while others perform more administrative support roles (assistants, logisticians, etc.). Dependent on combat fitness status, men get placed in different vocations and ranks, and the same hierarchical rank structure applies across different vocations. Those who have completed NS remain as members of the "Operationally Ready National Service" until the age of 50 for officers or 40 for other ranks, and may be called to active service at any time.

There is also a small percentage of Singaporean/PR men who do not

perform NS due to physical health, mental health, or other exemptions. Their lack of service is sometimes marginalised and stigmatised. NS may be an especially complicated experience for some homosexual and gender non-conforming Singaporeans. During pre-enlistment check-up, for men who choose to "declare" that they identify as homosexual, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) categorises this as a psychological disorder and automatically relegates these individuals to more administrative and desk-bound vocations. Some decide not to openly declare their sexuality or gender identity. They may have a number of different experiences, ranging from facing no exclusion to feeling targeted or vulnerable.[50]

6. How the Singapore Educational Context Influences Learning at Yale-NUS College

Our Singapore-educated students come from a variety of educational contexts, from junior colleges and polytechnics, neighbourhood and international schools. Here are eight key takeaways regarding the implications of the Singapore educational context for students as they transition to Yale-NUS College classrooms.

6a. *Streaming can cause insecurity for students from less prestigious schools and pathways.*

In Singapore, the reputation of a school is important and widely known because the country is relatively small. There is generally a social stigma and prejudice attached to having attended less reputable secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, and higher prestige associated with the elite schools. Many Singaporean students in Yale-NUS come from the most prestigious junior colleges and secondary schools. Upon arrival to Yale-NUS, students from less prestigious schools and streams may question their academic abilities in comparison to peers from more highly-regarded secondary schools. It will be helpful if faculty can signal that they understand students come from different backgrounds and have different levels of familiarity with their subject matter and pedagogical approach.

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[50] Rachel Siege, "LGBTQ Activism Finds Home at Yale-NUS," Yale Daily News, April 8, 2015, https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2015/04/08/lgbtq-activism-finds-home-at-yale-nus/.

6b. *A history of high-stakes national exams can lead to testing anxiety and intense attention to grades.*

Students in Singapore have had their abilities measured since a very young age, and have been streamed at multiple stages. Scores in one-off national examinations determine their academic trajectory and opportunities. Most students are used to receiving report cards with their grades marked to the decimal point, with class rank, and failures marked in red, if any. As a result of these experiences, many students have been socialised to view exam results as highly consequential to their future life options and sense of self-worth. Additionally, due to standardised testing, streaming, and ranking, students compare themselves to and compete with one another. This can give way to testing anxiety and viewing all graded assignments as relatively high stakes.

The variety of teaching approaches and grading styles at Yale-NUS may be frustrating for students used to standardised methods of teaching and assessment. Students may be concerned about how they did relative to peers and want to know their relative course rank.

Additionally, students may overlook mental and physical health because of their own and families' high expectations. There is also a population of Yale-NUS students who are bonded to government scholarships, and are required to meet certain CAP expectations to maintain their scholarships. Faculty members can help by encouraging students to invest in mental and physical health as well as academic achievement. (For more ideas see the chapter titled "Inclusive Grading and Assessment" below).

6c. *Continuous assessment might be unfamiliar, and unsettling.*

Most Yale-NUS courses practise some form of continuous assessment, rather than having students' entire course grades rely on a single end-of-term exam. For many students, having the opportunity to amass and demonstrate knowledge across many different types of assignments will be refreshing and reduce the stress they experienced in previous environments. But continuous assessment can also be unnerving for those students who

have been socialised to expect themselves to excel in every assessed activity, because in the past, every moment of assessment was highly consequential. Continuous assessment might provoke deep anxiety for such students, who will feel the intense need to excel on each individual assignment even if it is not worth many points.

Talking to students about the nature and purpose of continuous assessment, and helping them think through its implications for their study habits may help reduce anxiety and direct attention away from competition and towards individual learning. (For more ideas see the chapter titled "Inclusive Grading and Assessment" below.)

6d. *Students may be more comfortable with memorisation and rote learning than independent analysis and critical thinking.*

As a part of preparing for national PSLE, O-Level, and A-level exams, Singapore students are accustomed to memorising concepts and solutions, and applying textbook answers to all subjects, ranging from Math to Geography. There are currently reforms underway to broaden and diversify the Singaporean curriculum and pedagogy, but current Yale-NUS students who were educated in Singapore likely experienced this approach during their primary and secondary school years.

Close reading and textual analysis are taught in humanities subjects such as Literature and History. However, there is an emphasis placed a formulaic way of writing known as 'PEEL': Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link.[51] In preparation for exams, students read model essays and learn how to apply this formula. This is essential to producing essays quickly during timed 'O' or 'A' level exams. For example, in the 'A' level H2 History exam, students are expected to write 4 essays in 3 hours.

Coming to Yale-NUS, students may be challenged by college-level writing that emphasises the processing of material, drawing connections within

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[51] PEEL Writing Strategy: Making your Point, backing it up by supporting your point with Evidence and Examples, Explain how the evidence supports your point, Link this point to the next point in the following paragraph or back to the main question.

or between scholars' work, and original argumentation and analysis. They may continue to analyse readings mechanically, write using this formulaic method, and expect to do well in their college papers. Professors may need to help students unlearn formulaic writing and guide them to come to their own confident conclusions.

6e. *The transition from subject-specific to interdisciplinary learning can be challenging.*

Yale-NUS' emphasis on breadth of subjects may be daunting or tiring for students. Singaporean students may have spent their pre-university education focusing on their Junior College's Arts or Science stream, or a very specific, pre-professional polytechnic curriculum. Students who took IB courses have typically had more exposure to a wide variety of subjects. Thus, they may be more accustomed to the liberal arts classroom. But for students who have not taken a range of courses in different fields in a relatively long time, the Common Curriculum's interdisciplinary approach will be unfamiliar, and can be cognitively and emotionally draining. When teaching first-years, talking about this transition can help you gauge the needs of your class.

6f. *NS men may need time and support transitioning back to academia.*

NS men have been out of formal school for two to three years. Depending on their vocation and rank, NS men have had vastly different experiences during their years of service. The variety of feelings students have about NS reflects the wide range of postings they may have, the idiosyncrasies of their personal experiences, and their identities. However they view their service, students may feel anxious about returning to school after several years out of the education system. They may be out of practice at reading dense texts, writing academic essays, calculating formulas, and thinking scientifically.

6g. *Many students will have to adjust to discussion-based learning.*

Discussion-based seminars may initially be very daunting for students coming from the Singapore education system. Polytechnic students, for

example, typically spend three years engaging in practical forms of learning such as studying case studies of real life examples, experiential learning through course practicums, and industry attachments. For these students, the Common Curriculum's emphasis on relatively unstructured discussion of dense readings is likely to be a significant shift from their familiar mode of learning.

For some students, it does not come as second nature to continuously participate in class with verbal contributions. Thus, it is helpful to cultivate a conducive classroom environment that takes into account different participation styles.

It may be helpful for professors to integrate different mediums of learning in addition to discussion, such as online discussion forums, films, field trips, peer-teaching and peer-review opportunities, and civic engagement components. (See more ideas in the chapters titled 'The Value of Discussion Guidelines' and 'Inclusive Grading and Assessment' below.)

Conclusion

Understanding the pre-tertiary education of our Singaporean students is very important to impactful teaching. While many Singaporean students come from the same education system,[52] their experiences within it are vastly different. We may have students who have thrived in a rote-learning environment that prioritises high academic performance, and we may have students that have felt burnt out by the system and developed an aversion towards going to school. Faculty can help students adjust to and thrive in the Yale-NUS learning environment by individualising their interactions with students. This process can guide students to develop a love for learning and to share knowledge with one another, as well as encourage students to take ownership of their own learning process in a Yale-NUS class.

While this chapter captures an overview of the various streamed pathways within the Singapore educational system , it has implications for students

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[52] It is also important to note that the MOE is constantly refining and changing its streaming processes, and this overview is only one that is at best of my ability to describe based on current resources.

from other countries. The tracked system and values undergirding Singapore's education system may also be relevant for understanding the educational backgrounds of students' coming from other parts of East, Southeast, and South Asia.

Singapore's education landscape is constantly developing. Recently, MOE teachers have begun to create "flipped classrooms" and more active, discussion-based methods of teaching. In September 2018, MOE announced that examinations at the Primary 1 and 2 level would be discontinued, with teachers shifting to use qualitative descriptors to report on their pupils' learning. Meanwhile, mid-year examinations have been scrapped for Primary 3, 5, Secondary 1 and 3 students. Students' ranks in their class will also no longer be reported in their report books. Subject-based banding has also been introduced in several secondary schools, where classes of 40 are split into two to cater to different learning paces and capacities for each subject. These developments mark a shift from the grade-centred, competitive schooling environment that all our current Yale-NUS Singapore-educated students have gone through. This warrants future research on the changing context of future Yale-NUS students' educational backgrounds, so that faculty may continue to be well equipped to teach and support them.

PART II: Lessons from the Early Years

Section Overview: The two chapters in this section share some of the achievements and challenges the College has faced in the early years. The first chapter 'Institutional Discourse and Developments around Diversity and Inclusion highlights some of the unanticipated complexities we faced in supporting our diverse students during the College's founding years, and the steps we have taken collectively towards even more inclusive learning. The second chapter in this section, 'Early Experiences of Diversity in the Classroom', presents results from CTL-sponsored research into students' experience with diversity in the Yale-NUS classroom context. The chapter presents data from a survey and focus groups that were conducted in AY 2016-2017, but nonetheless serves as a useful window into student expectations, experiences, and needs in the Yale-NUS classroom.

Institutional Discourse and Developments around Diversity and Inclusion

Chapter Overview: *This chapter highlights key areas of institutional development in diversity and inclusion during Yale-NUS' first five years of operation. The chapter provides institutional memory and gives new faculty members some context to understand Yale-NUS discourse on inclusive learning and curriculum design.*

Since its founding, the Yale-NUS community has engaged in ongoing dialogue about how we can achieve our core educational ambitions.[53] Some themes that undergird these conversation are:

1. How do we respect diverse identities while engaging in rigorous inquiry and debate?

2. How can we be inclusive in our teaching practices while respecting faculty autonomy, disciplinary expertise, and preferred pedagogy?

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[53] Pertina Seah, "Insufficient LGBTQ Discourse in Universities," The Octant, September 16, 2016. https://theoctant. org/edition/v-3/features/insufficient-lgbtq-discourse-universities/; Yonatan Gazit, "Academic Freedom Integral to Yale-NUS's Future," The Octant, April 14, 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iii-12/news/academic-freedom-integral-to-yale-nuss-future/; Daryl Yang, "The Promise of Academic Freedom at Yale-NUS," The Octant, March 23, 2018, https://theoctant.org/edition/ix-7/opinion/the-promise-of-academic-freedom-at-yale-nus/; Shawn Hoo, "Designated Parks: Notes on Academic Freedom," The Octant, February 19, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/vi-3/opinion/designated-parks-notes-academic-freedom/; Rhyhan Astha, "A Not so Common Curriculum," The Octant, October 29, 2018, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/a-not-so-common-curriculum/; Yip Jia Qi. "The Common Curriculum Needs to Stay," The Octant, November 20, 2016, https://theoctant.org/edition/v-12/opinion/common-curriculum-needs-stay/; Terence Wang, "The Common Curriculum Needs to Go," The Octant, November 20, 2016, https://theoctant.org/edition/v-12/opinion/common-curriculum-needs-go/; May Tay, "Outside the Common Course," The Octant, January 19, 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iii-1/news/outside-the-common-course/; Amanda Leong. "The Yale-NUS Gray Space," The Octant, December 15, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/viii-12/opinion/yale-nus-gray-space/; Rakesh Prabhakaran. "Why "safe," "inclusive," and "community" Should not be Seen in the Same Sentence." November 3, 2014. https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/why-safe-inclusive-and-community-should-not-be-seen-in-the-same-sentence/; Daryl Yang, "Trigger Warning: Safe Spaces." The Octant, September 14, 2016, https://theoctant.org/edition/v-4/opinion/trigger-warning-safe-spaces/; Nik Carverhill, "A Defense and Delineation of Safe Spaces," The Octant, September 1, 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iv-3/opinion/a-defense-and-delineation-of-safe-spaces/; Raeden Richardson and Kaushik Swaminathan, "To the Infants of Yale-NUS," The Octant, August 26, 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iv-2/opinion/to-the-infants-of-yale-nus/; Spandana Bhattacharya, "Yale-NUS Upholds Free Speech on Campus," The Octant, October 20, 2014, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/news/yale-nus-upholds-free-speech-on-campus/; Natalie Tan, "Less than Uplifting: Art and its Interaction with Public Space," The Octant, March 24, 2017, https://theoctant.org/edition/vi-6/arts/less-uplifting-art-interaction-public-space/; Cheryl Nazik et. al., "Statement on Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment that Promotes Civil and Open Discourse," The Octant, October 13, 2014, https://theoctant.org/edition/issue/opinion/statement-on-creating-a-safe-and-inclusive-environment-that-promotes-civil-and-open-discourse/.

3. How do we achieve adequate depth in our curriculum while also designing it to affirm the diversity of our student body?

4. As a living and learning community, a home as well as a classroom, how can we promote inclusivity on campus while intentionally challenging students to push past their comfort zones in class?

5. How do we respect students' expressed needs while encouraging them to develop beyond their initial understandings and capabilities?

These conversations are not specific to Yale-NUS by any means, but they take on great importance given our rich diversity, distinctive curriculum, residential structure, and small size. Being a relatively young institution, we are still refining our curriculum, our student support structures, and our culture.

In Yale-NUS' fourth and fifth year of operation, in particular, there was an increasing number of faculty- and student-led forums and conversations highlighting the need for more thoughtful reflection on how we think about diversity in our curriculum and classrooms. Specifically, students expressed some disappointment around the following issues.

1. *Insufficient Diversity in the Curriculum:* Some students felt that the Common Curriculum, though it was originally intended to be global, was in some classes predominantly focused on North American, Chinese, Indian, and Western European experiences, texts, and authors. Students in particular asked for more representation of South East Asian, African, and Latin American subject matter in both the Common Curriculum and in elective offerings.[54]

2. *Underrepresentation of Singaporean Voices/Texts:* Students called for greater representation of Singaporean voices in assigned texts and topics discussed in lectures given our location and student body.

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[54] Timothy Lim, "In (What) Asia, For the World," The Octant, November 17 2015, https://theoctant.org/edition/iv-12/opinion/in-what-asia-for-the-world/.

3. ***Faculty Leadership:*** Students expressed a desire for faculty to be more assertive during class in addressing insensitive comments or stereotypes from fellow students. Some students from less-represented racial and ethnic groups expressed that when faculty do not step in to correct offensive statements made by other students in class, these minority students feel the weight of educating their peers about why those statements are offensive. This in turn distracts focus from the lesson at hand and makes them feel alienated in the class. Similarly, students who represent minority gender and sexual identities can feel isolated and devalued when faculty do not step in to address a homophobic or transphobic comment, or do not use inclusive language around gender and sexuality themselves. Most students who voiced these concerns acknowledged that offensive comments were almost always unintentional. With students and faculty of such varied backgrounds and contexts, many do not realise that what they are saying may be offensive or ignorant. Nonetheless, students felt faculty should take responsibility for correcting such comments, rather than expecting students to educate and correct each other in these areas.

4. ***Biased Expectations Around Student Participation:*** The emphasis on 'articulate communication' and active student participation in small classroom discussions, according to some students, was privileging students from more discussion-oriented educational backgrounds, North American students and those from international local schools, over students from educational systems where speaking up in class is less common.

5. ***Insufficient Learning Disability Support:*** The ambiguity of policies regarding learning disabilities and accommodations for cognitive and psychological conditions became clear during these conversations as well.

The College, in part to respond to these concerns, has adapted and continues to work towards even more inclusive and supportive learning for all students. For example, the College:

1. ***Diversified the Common Curriculum:*** Individual Common Curriculum teaching teams have worked to diversify the Common Curriculum, integrating more texts and reference points from more countries, and more discussion of Singaporean literature, art, history, and politics. Additionally, faculty have been more explicit in explaining the sorts of diversity that are intentionally already included in the syllabi. Sometimes the diversity of a course was understood implicitly by the instructor, but students did not notice those dimensions of diversity unless expressly prompted. For example, selected texts may be drawn from a particular geographical region, but represent tremendous diversity in terms of era, format, and genre.

2. ***Expanded the Faculty:*** The faculty has grown, allowing us to offer a wider range of courses. A group of faculty in the Social Science Division also developed a set of protocols to improve the inclusivity of our recruitment efforts and further diversify our faculty. The College also used town halls and other forums to educate students about some of the limitations, given our location, in recruiting area scholars who are primarily interested in Africa and Latin America as opposed to scholars of East Asian and South Asian studies.

3. ***Thought More Critically About Participation:*** Many faculty became even more intentional and thoughtful about how to encourage and measure 'participation' in seminars. Many faculty, whether on their own initiative or as a result of CTL-sponsored or other workshops, have begun integrating more intentional practice activities (or 'scaffolding') around participation in their courses in order to embolden students to participate vocally. Faculty have also experimented more and more with tools like Canvas discussion groups and formal presentations as a means of encouraging student-to-student learning without privileging a particular, perhaps more North American-style, of class participation. At the same time, the College has continued to emphasise 'articulate communication' and to highlight its importance to prospective and incoming students.

4. ***Created Forums for Student-Faculty Dialogue:*** Creating venues for conversation can help faculty better understand student concerns and give faculty an opportunity to explain how diversity features into their pedagogical choices. Such initiatives include a student advisory group to the Dean of Faculty; an Academic Wellness committee composed of students, faculty, and Dean of Students staff; subject-specific forums like one held on Race in Higher Education in 2017; Decolonising Academia in January 2019 and the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Committee with faculty, staff, and student representatives to give these issues focused attention.

5. ***Created a Designated Learning Accommodations Coordinator and Policy:*** Based in the CTL, the Learning Accommodations Coordinator worked with partners across the College to develop a more nuanced and proactive learning accommodations protocol. The CTL has sought to improve student understanding of their options through an information campaign on learning disabilities and accommodations in AY 2017−2018.

6. ***Research:*** The CTL sought to understand how diversity is impacting the student learning experience. To that end, it launched a study led by Former Senior Research Associate Dr. Kristi Lemm and assisted by

Ms. Joanna Lee into the student experience of diversity in the classroom in Yale-NUS' first three years. This study gave us insight into the ways diversity was enhancing learning, and some of the unanticipated challenges it posed for students' experience in the classroom. This study also became the basis of CTL-sponsored workshops for faculty on understanding student perceptions of diversity in the learning environment, and strategies for inclusive pedagogy. Results from this study are presented in the following chapter titled 'Early Experiences of Diversity in the Yale-NUS Classroom'.

These changes have helped the College move in an even more inclusive direction, but they are only a few of many actions that can be taken to improve learning for all students. The Yale-NUS educational mission hinges on the conviction that diversity enhances learning. Cognisant of this, the CTL encourages faculty to continue taking proactive steps to make their classrooms inclusive to all students.

Our efforts to create inclusive courses and classrooms will likely be ongoing, and evolve as the College matures and changes with the times. The chapters in Part III of this volume provide faculty with tangible, practical, and impactful strategies for inclusive teaching. We know many Yale-NUS faculty are deeply committed to issues of equity and inclusivity in teaching. If you identify other useful resources on these subjects, please share them with the CTL so we can make them available to our entire faculty.

Early Experiences of Diversity in the Yale-NUS Classroom

Dr Kristi Lemm, Associate Professor of Social Sciences; Senior Research Associate, Centre for Teaching & Learning (2016−2017)

Ms Joanna Lee, Assistant Manager, Residential Education, Dean of Students Office

Chapter Overview: *This chapter presents results from CTL-sponsored research on Yale-NUS students' experience with diversity in the classroom. The data was collected from a survey and focus groups in AY 2016−2017. Given the number of students surveyed and who participated in the focus groups, findings should not be interpreted as being representative of the student body. (The survey results are based on 104 of 750 students, or a 14% response rate.) Nonetheless, the chapter serves as a useful window into certain students' expectations, experiences, and needs in the Yale-NUS classroom.*

1. Student Experiences of Diversity in the Classroom

The opportunity to learn in a culturally diverse environment is a major draw for students considering attending Yale-NUS College. Students' interest in diversity is well-founded: Educational research has demonstrated that students who attend institutions with policies that promote diversity show improvements in cognitive development, greater satisfaction with the college experience, and stronger leadership abilities.[55] College students who interact with a diverse peer group also tend to show greater engagement in active thinking, increased growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and improved academic skills.[56] However, diversity can have some complicated impacts on student learning as well. A recent study of 2,500 college students in the United States showed that students reported more frequent positive than negative experiences with diversity, however,

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[55] A. Astin, "Diversity and multiculturalism on campus: How are students affected?," Change 25, no. 2 (2013): 44–49.

[56] Patricia Gurin, Eric Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin, "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes," Harvard Educational Review 72, no. 3 (2002): 330–367.

negative experiences with diversity were associated with impaired learning and cognitive development.[57]

What is the student experience with cultural diversity at Yale-NUS College? Through informal conversations, students and faculty at Yale-NUS College have reported many benefits, and also some challenges, dealing with cultural differences in the classroom. For example, in 2016, the Dean of Students Office conducted informal interviews with 18 students, mostly Singaporean, and asked about their experiences with cultural differences in the classroom. Common themes in the responses included concerns about differences in class participation between local and international students, assumptions that a secular academic perspective is shared by everyone, Western-centric references that not everyone understands, and a lack of familiarity with the Singapore educational context and the teaching style in Junior Colleges. In 2017, the CTL followed up on these informal interviews by conducting an anonymous survey and a series of focus groups to identify the types of experiences students have had with cultural diversity (both positive and negative), intercultural learning and growth, as well as intercultural miscommunications or misunderstandings they have experienced.

2. Survey Goals, Participants, and Their Self-Identifications

Students were asked a series of questions about their attitudes regarding diversity at Yale-NUS College. We asked students to focus on experiences in the classroom or other faculty-led settings such as experiential learning excursions (Week 7s, LABs, field trips, etc.). Although diversity can be apparent in many ways, for the current survey, we asked students to focus on experiences of diversity related to nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion.

All Yale-NUS students (approximately 750 at the time of the survey) were invited via a college-wide email and Facebook announcement to participate in an anonymous survey, which resulted in 104 usable, completed surveys.

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[57] Josipa Roska, Cindy Kilgo, Teniell Trolian, Ernest Pascarella, "Engaging with Diversity: How Positive and Negative Experiences Shape Student's Cosnitive Outcomes," The Journal of Higher Education 88, no. 3 (2017): 297–322.

The survey asked students about their identities in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, region, and language. In the sample, 63 identified as women, 36 as men, and five identified as gender queer, non-binary, or chose not to indicate their gender. Half of the students identified as ethnically Chinese. The next-largest ethnic groups were Indian, other Asian ethnicities (e.g. Malay), and Caucasian.

When asked to self-identify their nationality, participants indicated 26 different nationalities spanning six continents. 52.9 percent identified as Singaporean. The largest groups of international students hailed from other countries in Asia (18.2 percent) and North America (11.5 percent). Students generally completed their secondary education in the same country with which they identified their nationality, with 50.9 percent reporting having completed secondary education in Singapore and 49.1 percent elsewhere.

When asked about religious affiliation, 33.7 percent identified as atheist, agnostic, humanist, free-thinker, or some combination of the above, with an additional 16.3 percent saying they had no religious affiliation. 24.0 percent identified as Christian and 8.7 percent identified as Catholic. Other students reported their religion as Buddhist (3.8 percent), Hindu (2.9 percent), Muslim (2.9 percent), Jewish (1 percent), some other answer (3.8 percent), or no answer (2.9 percent).

Students were asked to indicate in which language(s) they felt most comfortable speaking and writing. 60.6 percent of students reported being most comfortable speaking/writing English and 32.7 percent reported being most comfortable speaking/writing English plus one or more additional languages, including Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Arabic, French, Japanese, Spanish, Hindi, German, Malay, Filipino/Tagalog, and others. 6.7 percent of students said they were most comfortable speaking a language other than English. Of the students who said they felt most comfortable speaking a language other than English, the majority (60 percent) were international students.

3. Survey Results: Student Attitudes Regarding Diversity at Yale-NUS College

3a. Is Yale-NUS Diverse?

We began by asking students the extent to which they agreed that the student body and the faculty at Yale-NUS are diverse, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Overall, students indicated that they mostly agreed that the student body at Yale-NUS is diverse.[58] Students also felt that the faculty at Yale-NUS is diverse, but significantly less so compared to the student body.[59] There was no difference between the ratings provided by Singaporean and international students, indicating that Singaporean and international students felt similarly overall that the student body at Yale-NUS is more diverse compared to the faculty.

Students were also asked the extent to which they agreed that the academic culture at Yale-NUS is similar to that of their previous educational institution. Responses indicated that both Singaporean and international students felt that the academic culture at Yale-NUS was very different from their previous educational experience.[60]

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[58] The mean response was 5.7, where 6 = "agree".
[59] The mean response was 4.83, close to "somewhat agree" on the 1-7 scale..
[60] The average rating was 2.63, which lies between "somewhat disagree" and "disagree".

3b. Do Yale-NUS Faculty Members Understand and Respond Well to Diversity?

Students were also asked about the extent to which their professors have a good understanding of diversity in the classroom, and whether they felt that their professors are equipped to address diversity in the classroom. Overall, students somewhat agreed that their professors have a good understanding of diversity in the classroom (mean = 5.40 between "somewhat agree" and "agree") and also that their professors are equipped to address diversity in the classroom (mean = 5.08). Singaporean and international students did not differ in their ratings.

Using the same 1-7 scale, students were asked to rate the extent to which their professors understand their cultural background and also their educational background.[61] Overall, students agreed somewhat that professors understand their cultural background (mean = 4.93 or "somewhat agree") and also their educational background (mean = 4.69). Responses to these two questions did not differ from each other, and there were no differences between Singaporean and international students' ratings.

### 3c. Does Diversity Enhance Yale-NUS Students' Education?

Students were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agree that "It is important to my education to interact with students from diverse backgrounds" and "It is important to my education that my professors come from diverse backgrounds", using the same 1-7 scale where 7 is strongly agree, and 1 is strongly disagree. Overall, students agreed that it was important to them to interact with a diverse student body (mean = 6.36) and also to have professors from diverse backgrounds (mean = 5.96). When asked whether they preferred to take classes from professors who share their cultural background, both Singaporean and international students indicated that they did not (mean of 3.31, where 3 is "somewhat disagree"). There were no significant differences in these ratings between Singaporean and international students. Ratings of the importance of

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[61] A 2 x 2 ANOVA testing responses to these two questions and student nationality indicated no significant main effects or interaction.

student diversity were significantly higher than ratings of the importance of faculty diversity, indicating that students felt that student diversity is more important to their education than faculty diversity.

Students were asked about the extent to which their experiences with specific kinds of diversity at Yale-NUS College have affected their educational experience. Specifically, students rated how differences in language, nationality, ethnicity, and religious beliefs have enhanced their education and also how differences in these four areas have created challenges for their education. Response options were "Have not experienced this difference" (0), "Experienced with no enhancement/challenge" (1), "Very little enhancement/challenge" (2), "Some enhancement/challenge" (3), and "Great enhancement/challenge" (4).
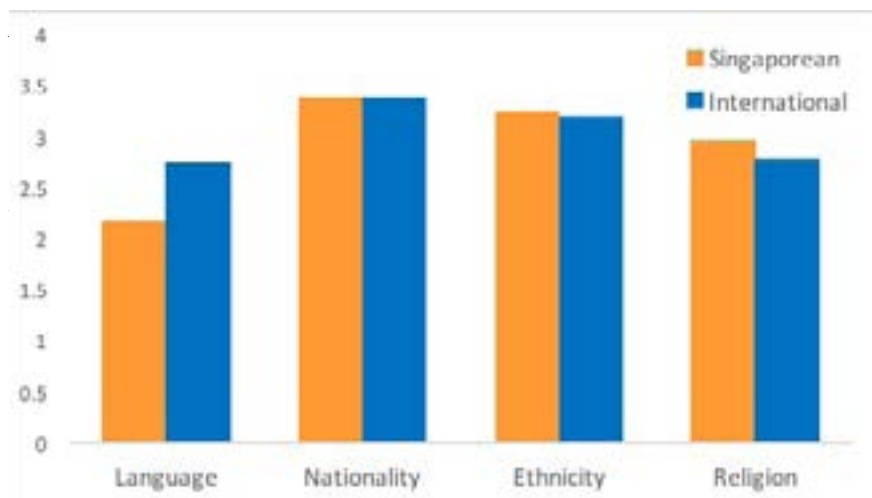
Figure 2. Ratings of how differences due to diversity have enhanced student learning (4 meaning "great enhancement" and 0 "no experience/ enhancement").

Students also reported that differences with respect to all four types of diversity led to some challenges for their educational experience, as shown in Figure 3. International students reported significantly greater challenges due to diversity (across all four types) compared to Singaporean students. The difference between Singaporean and international students was

greatest with respect to language differences, with international students reporting much greater challenges due to language differences compared to Singaporeans; the difference between the two groups regarding other types of diversity was much smaller.
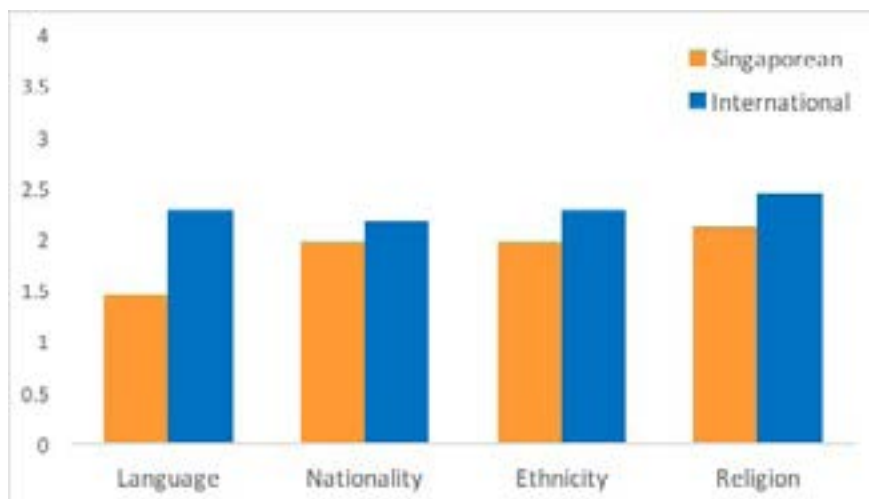
Figure 3. Ratings of how differences due to diversity have created challenges for student learning (4 meaning "great enhancement" and 0 "no experience/ enhancement").

The survey results demonstrate that overall, students reported that experiences with diversity enhanced their educational experience to a much greater extent than they created challenges. Collapsing across student nationality and diversity type, the students rated the enhancement to their educational experience at a mean of 2.98 on the 0-4 scale (near the scale point of "some enhancement"), which is an entire scale point higher than their rating of the challenges to their educational experience, with a mean of 2.09 (close to "very little challenge"), and is a statistically significant difference. Thus, although students reported experiencing some challenges related to diversity, it is clear that they perceive that their educational experience has benefited from diversity in spite of, or perhaps even because of, these challenges. It is particularly interesting to notice that, compared to Singaporean students, international students reported experiencing both

greater enhancement of their learning due to diversity as well as greater challenges. The challenges that some international students experienced with regard to language differences may have ultimately contributed to their enhanced learning.

4. Open-Ended Responses and Focus Group Data

4a. Open-Ended Survey Questions

In addition to the survey's quantitative questions, students were asked to provide open-ended responses to three questions. First, students were asked, "If you have experienced or witnessed misunderstanding in faculty-led educational settings (e.g., in classes, LABs, etc.) arising from differences in nationality, religion, ethnicity, or language, please provide an example of how this took place. You may include as much or as little information as you would like". Students were also asked to describe any examples of instances in which their learning benefited from differences in nationality, religion, ethnicity, or language, and lastly, they were offered an opportunity to indicate if there was "anything else you would like us to know".[62]

4b. Focus-Group Discussions

At the end of the online survey, students were also offered an opportunity to provide additional feedback about their experiences with cultural diversity by participating in a focus group. Additional focus group participants were recruited through signs posted around the Yale-NUS College campus. A total of 19 students participated across three focus groups, ranging in size from four to nine participants. 10 of the students were Singaporean (six women and four men), and nine were international (all women). Two of the focus groups were facilitated by one Singaporean female and one international male facilitator and one was facilitated by one international male facilitator.

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[62] When asked to describe an example of a misunderstanding due to cultural differences, 45.2% of participants provided an answer. A larger group of students, 55.8%, responded to the question about an example of when they experienced a benefit to their learning due to cultural differences. 41.3% responded when asked if there was anything else they wanted the researchers to know about their experience. Across all three questions, a total of 113 usable responses were provided.

The facilitators began the discussion by asking a very broad question, asking students to comment on whether they ever experienced or witnessed any cultural differences in classroom or other faculty-led settings. Students were not specifically directed to provide positive or negative examples. The facilitators occasionally spoke to clarify a student's response or keep the discussion on track, but generally kept quiet and let the students speak freely. No effort was made to focus the discussion on positive or negative topics.

Several themes emerged from student quotes and statements in the open-ended questions and the focus groups. These are presented below by theme.

5. How Diversity Contributes to Learning at Yale-NUS

This section presents statements from the open-ended survey responses and the focus group. In the open-ended survey questions, statements describing examples of enhanced learning due to cultural differences were more frequent than examples of cultural misunderstanding, and represented 42.4 percent of all focus group statements. Enhancement due to differences in nationality was the most frequent sub-category, representing 28.6 percent of enhancement examples. Enhancement due to language differences represented 12.2 percent of all enhancement

examples, followed by enhancement due to religious differences (10.2 percent) and differences in ethnicity (4.1 percent).

Of the statements describing enhanced learning due to diversity, nearly half described examples of enhanced learning due to cultural differences in discussion style or educational background. Many students described how their own discussion styles evolved through their experiences at Yale-NUS College.

Student statements have been organised around the most important and common themes that emerged from the data.[63]

5a. *Deepens Impact and Engagement with Course Content:*

Many students reported that being in class with students from diverse backgrounds and cultural contexts helped to illuminate and add valuable context to classroom discussion. The following quotes are just some examples of this common theme:

"When we're reading texts about other cultures, students that speak the language or are from that culture were able to shed more light to what the text was referring to, and in some cases, provide more clarity and nuance to the discussion."

"I had the opportunity to learn from a Muslim classmate of mine how the teachings of Islam relate to our understanding of the environment. She was able to connect her faith background to many of the readings and concepts in class. I am interested in incorporating these concepts into my capstone project."

"In PPT there are people who challenge the views laid out by some philosophers and often try to incorporate their own religious beliefs into the system that is being learned about. This enhances learning because one realises the harmony that can be achieved among different philosophical theories and/or religions."

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[63] Student quotes have been very lightly edited to ensure anonymity, concision, and improve clarity (for example grammatical corrections).

5b. *Improves Emotional Intelligence, Perspective-Taking, and Self-Awareness Skills:*

Student responses also revealed ways in which exposure to the diversity of our student body enhances perspective-taking and self-awareness. The quotes also showed how diversity has prompted students to explore different approaches to learning and classroom discussion. For example:

"[Diversity among students] pushed me to develop my empathy and self-awareness - I now reflect more on my own values and why I feel in a particular way as I interact with different people, but I also became more mindful of other's different perspectives of things."

"I recall this conversation with an East Asian friend once and she told me 'The Americans talk too much.' It really made me think about the educational background that I came from and the way that I was participating in class. I realised that perhaps by speaking first before I had given so much thought to the idea, and letting things be silent for a while would be good."

5c. *Expands Knowledge and Appreciation of Different Experiences in the World:*

One of the goals of having a diverse student population is that it expands students' knowledge of the world and helps them develop critical thinking skills by contextualising their prior beliefs and experiences. Student responses show that this is happening in practice. For example:

"There have been many instances where the opinions of non-Singaporean students have challenged my world beliefs and some of the things that I took for granted to be universal or fact, when it is actually a peculiarity to my own upbringing within Singapore."

"Understanding that there are things that I take for granted in my country (littering, single political party, for example) and that there are many different systems in the world (global awareness)."

6. Areas for Improvement in How Faculty Harness and Respond to Diversity at Yale-NUS

As mentioned, in response to the survey questions students expressed more positive than negative experiences with diversity and more gain than loss from diversity in terms of learning. Statements describing examples of misunderstanding due to cultural differences represented 33.6 percent of all free-response survey statements. Of the statements describing misunderstanding, the most common sources of misunderstanding were due to differences in nationality (31.6 percent of all misunderstandings) and language (23.7 percent). Misunderstandings due to differences in religious belief contributed to 18.4 percent of all misunderstandings, those due to differences in ethnicity were 10.5 percent of all misunderstandings.

In contrast to the survey results, statements during the focus group describing examples of misunderstanding due to cultural differences were more frequent than statements describing examples of enhanced learning due to cultural differences. Statements describing misunderstanding represented 48.1 percent of all statements, compared to only 21.5 percent of statements that reflected enhanced learning. Although the focus group facilitators did not direct the students to provide negative or positive examples, the setting of the focus group may have been more conducive to providing negative examples, and once a student introduced a negative example, others were very likely to follow in that direction.

Of the focus-group statements describing misunderstanding, the most common sources of misunderstanding were also due to differences in nationality (28.5 percent) and differences in discussion style/educational background (28.5 percent). Less frequent were statements describing misunderstandings due to differences in language (11.5 percent), religious belief (6.2 percent), or ethnicity (3.8 percent).

Many of the examples that students described were related to differences in students' preference for discussion styles, based on their educational and cultural background. Examples of cultural misunderstanding related

to religion focused most often on discomfort that religious students experienced in science classes. Students seemed to understand that learning about evolution is appropriate for the class, but they felt that certain anti-religious statements from some instructors and students went too far. Some students expressed frustration that specific cultures and countries, particularly in Africa, were generalised and inaccurately homogenised. Students also recounted instances when students experienced discomfort in the classroom related to differences in language.

Below we share some specific quotes from students reporting disappointments, misunderstandings, feelings of alienation or offense, and culturally insensitive teaching and classroom dynamics. Again these quotes have been organised around the more important and common themes.

6a. The Student Body Should Be Even More Diverse

Statements noting that Yale-NUS College is not diverse enough represented 6.2% of all open-response statements. Some examples follow:

"I would really appreciate more African and Latino students at Yale-NUS."

"Yale-NUS is plagued by false diversity where a significant proportion of students from supposedly diverse backgrounds have similar outlook and

way of living as they went to international schools and/or live in gentrified regions and many lost touch with the local cultures they are from."

"I noticed on day one that I was the only non-[ethnically] Chinese student in the class. I find this deeply problematic – that some classes can be so dominantly Singaporean Chinese or Chinese that all the benefits of this 'multi-racial multi-national learning' are squandered."

6b. *The Faculty and Curriculum Should Be More Diverse and Attentive to Student Diversity*

During the focus group, statements coded as "the faculty is not diverse enough" represented only 3.0 percent of all statements and all came up in a single focus group, but included strong statements such as:

"I look at the teachers I have and say 'I have four white males, great. They're all from Ivys in the US'. Yeah, I think that's sad. That's not what I thought I signed up for and I don't think that's what we should be signing up for."

"There have been times when the classroom is very American-centric, when professors assume that the students will get the references they use, or that they will know where 'Atlanta' is."

"In a lot of my classes professors regardless of their background, will just refer to Africa as one homogenous unit and for example in one of our classes the professor for example refers to 'In Africa people do this for health care' or 'In Africa incomes are really low' and I'm like, no."

There were also calls for the Common Curriculum in particular to integrate more diverse regions, texts, and reference-points.

"During the common curriculum, when Asia is mentioned, it was primarily China and India, as though the whole of Asia were restricted to these two giants."

"Not once in my experience of the common curriculum did I hear a mention of Singapore."

6c. Faculty Should Avoid 'Tokenising' Students, Especially Those from Minority Cultures/Nationalities

While many students spoke positively about the ability of students from different backgrounds to share their perspectives and experiences in class, others felt singled-out or 'tokenised' when asked to represent their nationality, ethnicity, or region in class. In general, student comments showed that they appreciate invitations to contribute based on their own background and experience, but they do not like being expected to speak on behalf of an entire nation, race, religion, or culture. For example:

"I often have professors direct questions relating to Chinese culture to me, and questions relating to African culture to my [African] friend expecting our views to be representative. I answer the questions but I feel it is wrong to make me essentialise my experiences."

"Very often students were asked to comment on ideas that were related in some way to their nationality. So the… this professor would like turn to a Chinese student to refer to a text from China, would turn to an Indian student to refer to a text from India. This happened in several classes."

By contrast, other students perceived professors asking students to use their nationality to provide context as a positive, particularly when it was framed as an option rather than an expectation. How professors engage students to participate may be an important factor in how such events are perceived. Students who perceive that they are expected to provide their cultural insight may feel uncomfortable, whereas students who perceive that they are doing so by their own initiative may feel more positively about the experience.

"The professor encouraged people to provide context, not to explain things necessarily but just simply to provide context. For example let's say you had Arabian Nights and we were talking about Islam. The Prof asked the question 'would anyone like to provide any context?' So instead of being an imperative it was more like an open-ended sort of suggestion that if you have any thoughts by virtue of having lived in, grown up with that religion, is there anything you can provide to aid the discussion. So I think

that's a better way of dealing with it."

"In my experience, the Professors have handled these differences quite well. When they were unsure about a specific region of the world or country, they always gave people who have lived there or know about them the opportunity to speak up."

6d. Faculty Should Do More to Call Out and Correct Ignorant or Offensive Comments in Class

Some students felt that faculty did not offer enough context or leadership when teaching about certain regions or countries. This puts the burden on students themselves to point out inaccuracies or to call-out unintentionally hurtful comments by their peers. For example:

"We were talking about a text and someone said 'African culture' but there's nothing like African culture. I don't blame [the student] but I will also hold the institution responsible because this is a place where you're supposed to learn about such things. So in that scenario I found myself questioning whether I should point out, by the way, there is nothing like African culture - but I also don't want to find myself always having to explain these things because it takes a toll on me as well."

6e. Faculty Lack Adequate Knowledge about Singapore:

Some students commented that many faculty lack an understanding of local context and especially the nuances of ethnic and religious politics. It can dampen classroom discussions when faculty encourage students to share about their respective local contexts, but fail to address underlying tensions or stigmas.

"It seems that professors often do not know much about the Singaporean setting/context despite having lived here for some time."

"When bringing up issues that are sensitive or taboo topics to broach in Singapore, such as racial discrimination, detention, authoritarianism or students' support for opposition parties, many professors who are not

from Singapore do not understand that students will feel uncomfortable. As a result, students may stay silent when these topics come up, but it is not because they have nothing to say."

"It's mostly instances where professors have assumed that Singaporeans are Chinese or take the Chinese-majority opinion as the default opinion of Singaporeans, without acknowledging that Singaporean minorities of other ethnicities do exist even on campus."

However, several students noted cases where professors had enhanced the entire classes' knowledge by intentionally using the space to learn more about Singapore and local issues.

"I remember in my CSI course the Singaporean students were explaining their education system not only to the professor but also to the rest of the students even drawing on the board like the different tracks. I feel like there was a lot of contribution to understanding but again I think it was because the professor asked for it, saying, 'Oh can you explain how the system works?'"

"Most of our professors try to understand the Singapore context because they are here and whenever we have something about Singapore in class which the professor does not fully understand he will actually ask us and we will try to explain both to professors and also to international students who never lived in Singapore before."

6f. Students Experience Barriers to Communication Due to Linguistic Diversity:

Another theme that emerged in the responses is that some students face barriers to learning or feel uncomfortable in class because of the linguistic diversity among students and faculty.

"The most common one I can think of is when a faculty member is unable to understand a student's accent. This primarily happens with American Faculty and Singaporean Students."

"Key terms in science. I don't know how to say them in English but I know them well in my native language, which makes me very embarrassed as if I know nothing about them."

"A professor who tends to call on students in class tends to avoid calling on students with Asian names due to their difficulty in pronouncing the name."

6g. Insensitivity in Handling Course Material With Religious Overtones or That Spark Religious Debates:

In some Common Curriculum classes, students read religious texts from many different traditions. In some cases, this led to instances of cultural misunderstanding due to differences in religious belief. In Scientific Inquiry, which emphasises evolution, some students felt that framing evolution as juxtaposed with creationism was unnecessary and potentially hurtful.

"Issues arise due to people in the classroom treating certain texts in a different way than people from the culture from whence that text came do (e.g. interpretations of the Ramayana or the Bhagavad Gita). [For

students from that religion, their interpretations] are coloured by religious connotations which one cannot expect classmates or professors to understand right off the bat, but off-hand comments intended as jokes about might be hurtful."

[When learning evolution] "It's not so much that [the professor was wrong] in targeting creationism. It's just that by association you start targeting Christianity as a whole or other religions as a whole which shouldn't happen. You can go against creationism as one tiny aspect of Christianity and maybe say that scientific evidence seems to prove that this is not the way things happen. But you don't say that the rest of Christianity like the Bible is a book of myth."

6h. *Culturally-Specific Teaching Styles and Expectations for Student Participation:*

Many of our inaugural faculty were themselves educated and trained in American higher education contexts. Some students reported that faculty often applied teaching styles and expectations around student participation that did not take adequate account of students' prior experiences and needs.

"Many of the teachers at our school come from a more American or western based educational background and they value the participation of students that speak a lot in class. There's sort of an assumption that class participation is very easy and you should know how to do it, that kind of favours certain students with a certain educational background."

"Yale-NUS generally prioritises a more American way of relating/ expressing/learning. The seminar-style discussions give an unfair advantage to those of us who have been learning in this style for many years."

"I was expected to talk in a classroom and there was no computers or screens allowed but that was in a moment when my English sucked and I actually felt like I'm not intelligent as my classmates because I was not able to express myself as well. And I was told to just keep speaking so that I learn how to do it, but at the same time I was not allowed to use a

dictionary. It felt like I'm being put on a same kind of a benchmark without being supported."

At the same time, students also described several instances of faculty explicitly recognising differences in communication style and creating productive and inclusive learning environments.

"My professor for one of the Common Curriculum classes noticed that some people speak a lot more than others and he was asking whether that is because we come from different educational backgrounds. And the way we went about was to adjust the conversation so instead of asking a question to the entire class at the beginning, we would split into small groups and then discuss and it's easier for people to voice their opinions and not feel judged in that small setting. Then we would all share what came out of that discussion and that helped a lot more people speak up because they had some time to think about it in a small setting."

"I think in high school I was very afraid to challenge things, especially what the teachers would say even if I didn't agree, or challenge my classmates because it felt uncomfortable. I think coming here and talking, it was quite a big difference."

Summary and Conclusion

Yale-NUS College is a diverse place that provides students with opportunities to interact with students and faculty from over 60 countries. This 2016-2017 study provided a wealth of information about the classroom-based experiences of Yale-NUS student with regards to diversity during the first five years of the College. An important take-home message is that students' experiences with diversity provided many opportunities for learning, and, on balance, students reported more frequent positive than negative learning experiences with diversity.

Students' survey responses indicated that they believe that student and faculty diversity is important to their education, and that they perceive the student body at Yale-NUS College to be quite diverse. They perceive the

faculty to be less diverse compared to the students, but they believe that the faculty have a reasonably good understanding of diversity and ability to handle diversity in the classroom.

Both Singaporean and international students reported that diversity related to nationality, ethnicity, and religion produced some enhancements to their educational experience. International students reported that language differences produced greater learning benefits compared to Singaporean students. Overall, students reported that diversity led to relatively minimal challenges to their educational experience, but international students reported significantly higher levels of challenge compared to Singaporean students, particularly with regard to language differences. Students reported personally experiencing and also witnessing others experiencing learning arising from diversity about once a month, and misunderstanding arising from diversity about once or twice a semester.

Some descriptions of student experiences suggest that faculty may be able to mitigate the negative aspects of some classroom experiences by ensuring that students feel they have an opportunity to provide their own cultural context, but not that they are expected to do so. Students should not be expected to have expertise on a particular topic just because of their cultural background, and should not be asked to serve as representatives of their entire culture.

Associate Professor Mira Seo
Recipient of the Distinguished
Teaching Excellence Award

PART III: Practical Strategies for an Inclusive Classroom

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With

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Section Overview: Part III is designed as a very practical resource for faculty wanting to enhance inclusivity and learning in their classrooms. Each chapter emphasises different dimensions of diversity – e.g. nationality, language, health – or specific pedagogical issues – e.g. participation, grading and assessment – that are highly relevant in the Yale-NUS context.

While we encourage interested faculty to read through the entire section, they may also focus on specific chapters that are most relevant to their teaching goals and disciplinary context.

There are many ways to develop an inclusive classroom. We promote a sense of belonging when we select topics, authors, assignments, and activities with diversity in mind. We teach students to engage with each other rigorously and with respect when we deliberately articulate class expectations and discussion guidelines. We also instil a sense of belonging when we humble ourselves enough to solicit student feedback and input as the class unfolds.

We have tried to offer strategies which are fairly easy to implement, but we also recognise that some of these approaches may seem difficult or unfamiliar, or simply not align with your learning goals and pedagogy. Some of the strategies presented here might be challenging but with practice, these new ways of speaking and teaching can become more intuitive and instinctual.

If faculty members have strategies, ideas, and resources that should be incorporated into this section in future iterations, please share them with the CTL.

Diverse Prior Knowledge and Educational Backgrounds

Prior to entering college, students have varied exposure to different teaching styles, and come with different levels of knowledge across disciplines. Acknowledging and finding methods to reach differing levels of prior knowledge, especially in Common Curriculum classes, will help your classroom be more inclusive to all students.

Research has shown that difference in prior knowledge and exposure can result in varying efficacies of teaching methods. For example, novices often learn better with examples, whereas students with more expertise learn better when they solve problems themselves.

You can create a classroom that is inclusive towards differences in prior knowledge and exposure using the following techniques.[64]

Techniques for an Inclusive Classroom

1.   Acknowledge and Bring Prior Knowledge Into the Classroom

Giving students a way to communicate their prior knowledge, or lack thereof, can help you pitch your class to their existing capacity.[65] It can also signal to students that you are aware of their diverse background knowledge, and that you are willing to work with them to help them succeed in your class. The following techniques can help you gauge students' prior knowledge, and help the students to learn new material by connecting it to existing knowledge.[66]

· Meet individually with students and ask about their transition to college and how they are feeling about their work. Consider mandatory office hours appointments for first year students.

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[64] Adapted from "Strategies to Create an Inclusive Course," Iowa State University, accessed December 18, 2018, from http://www.celt.iastate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/StrategiestoCreateanInclusiveCourse.pdf.
[65] William Rando, "Integrating Learner's Prior Knowledge into the Common Curriculum: Teaching Strategies for First Year Students", Yale-NUS College, Singapore, 11 October 2018
[66] William Rando, "Integrating Learner's Prior Knowledge into the Common Curriculum: Teaching Strategies for First Year Students", Yale-NUS College, Singapore, 11 October 2018

- Do an ungraded intake quiz or reflective writing activity to better understand the prior knowledge of your students.

- Acknowledge the variety of prior exposure in the class, and solicit a discussion of prior learning environments and comfort zones. Use this as a launchpad to suggest resources that students with less prior knowledge can use to catch up over the first few weeks.

- In group work activities, intentionally pair students with more and less prior experience so that the more experienced students can help guide their less experienced peers.

- Create reflective activities (discussions, writing activities) throughout the term that ask students to think about how their prior knowledge has been amplified, disrupted, or applied in the class.

- Ask students to report not only their answers, but also the process they took to arrive at those answers. Provide feedback on process as well as product.

2. *Use A Variety of Learning Activities and Assessment Formats*

Adopting a pedagogical approach that incorporates degrees of freedom in learning activities and assessment, enables levels of engagement for all students to maximise their learning[67]. Incorporating different types of activities over a given semester, and creating variety in your teaching methods, will make your classroom more inclusive towards the different prior experiences and learning strengths of your students. Integrating a mix of the following or other activities and assignments will help students with diverse backgrounds and approaches to learning.

Teaching Techniques/Classroom Learning Activities
- Open-ended discussions
- Structured discussions or debates
- Students writing on the board
- Paired or small-group student activities

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[67] Biggs, John. Teaching for quality learning at university, 2nd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003.

- Reading aloud exercises
- Free writing exercises
- Problem-based learning
- Team-based learning
- Research exercises
- Field trips/experiential learning activities

Assignments/Out-of-Classroom Learning:
- Written assignments in academic formats
- Written assignments in journalistic, creative, or other formats
- Verbal presentations (individual or teamwork-based)
- Visual presentations and representations (posters, individual or team-based)
- Online discussion forums or blogs
- Video assignments
- Descriptive and analytical writing
- Assignments summarising existing arguments/claims/facts
- Assignments synthesising existing arguments/claims/facts
- Assignments making new and original arguments/claims

Social-Economic Inclusivity

Our students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. For students from less affluent backgrounds, both the academic and social adjustment to Yale-NUS can be very challenging. Here are some strategies that will help students feel supported and included in your classes.

Strategies for Socio-Economic Inclusivity

1. Provide Early Information on Due Dates and Keep to Them

Some students work their way through college to help pay their tuition or contribute to family finances. These students have to manage their time very carefully to meet their financial and academic commitments. Giving all assignment deadlines and expectations early in the semester, and sticking to those timelines, helps students manage their different priorities.

2. Consider the Costs of Your Reading Assignments and Investigate Alternatives

For students on a tight budget, it can be very stressful when course selection comes at an actual financial cost. When you are making choices about reading assignments, consider if there are less expensive options such as digital versions of books/articles that you can assign. Sometimes expensive hard copy books cannot be avoided, but you may be able to assign an older edition that will be available for second-hand purchase more cheaply online. The earlier you can share the book list with students the more time they will have to secure less expensive copies.

3. Consider the Hidden Costs of Your Assignments and Expectations

For example, if you design an activity that requires a trip to a museum or theatre production, suggest some cost-free options or inquire if students can be subsidised by the Dean of Faculty Office. If you assign students to create a poster or creative product, help them access similar materials so that students' ideas and effort, not finances, determine the quality of their

work. If you hold office hours at Café Agora or Starbucks, recognise that there may be students who cannot afford to join you for a cappuccino.

4. *Consider How Your Speech Includes or Alienates*

Ask yourself if you routinely use words or references that are likely to be unfamiliar or alienating to students from less affluent backgrounds. For example, people from more affluent backgrounds might have a habit of saying 'where are you going for break,' which assumes all students can afford international travel. Asking 'what are your plans for break' is a more inclusive way of signalling interest. Using a sophisticated vocabulary can be an inspiration to students, and help them expand their own linguistic repertoire. However, if you often use 'fancy' words that might be unknown to students, it can also serve to alienate and hinder their comprehension. If you know you tend to use more esoteric language, consider telling students at the beginning of the term that they should ask you if you use words they do not know, or they should write it down and look the words up after class. You could even give them participation credit for doing so if you really want to signal the importance of developing their vocabulary.

Supporting First Generation Students

As discussed in Part I, the term 'first-generation student' typically refers to students who are the first in their family to attend college or university. Unfamiliarity with the subtle, 'unwritten rules' of elite higher education is a common issue facing first-generation college students. Expectations around speaking up during class, publicly asking questions, attending office hours, asking friends to proof-read papers, utilising tutors, and admitting to uncertainty may feel particularly challenging. Additionally, first-generation students may not be able to call home for helpful advice as they navigate their college years. In some ways, the majority of Yale-NUS students are "first-generation" in the sense that few have parents who attended a liberal arts, fully residential college like Yale-NUS.

A combination of unfamiliarity, imposter syndrome, shame, and guilt can combine to make first-generation students less likely to take full advantage of academic and emotional support resources such as faculty office hours, tutoring programmes, counselling services, and peer support.

Fortunately, faculty members can help. Here are some steps you can take to create an inclusive environment for first-generation students:

Creating an Inclusive Environment for First-Generation Students

1.   Be Transparent and Explicit About Your Expectations

It may be obvious to you why you have given students a particular activity or assignment, and how it will be evaluated. But for some students, this is not at all clear. To make your classroom inclusive to all, try to be as transparent as possible about what you are asking them to do, why you are asking them to do it (e.g. what will they learn from it), and how you will evaluate their work.[68] You can also help students transition to college by being explicit about things like email etiquette and how you want them to present themselves in class.

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[68] Dan Berrett, "The Unwritten Rules of College," The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 21, 2015, https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Unwritten-Rules-of/233245; Galina, "Teaching First-Generation College Students."

2. Promote Resources and Encourage Self-Help Strategies

You can help first-generation students help themselves by actively encouraging students to take full advantage of all academic support resources including office hours, peers both in the class and out, tutoring through the CTL and Writers' Centre, faculty advisors and Assistant Deans, librarians, counselling centre, etc. If you feel comfortable doing so, you may want to share an example of how you took advantage of such resources during your education or how you have seen it make a difference for other students.

3. Mandatory Office Hours for All

Especially if you are teaching a class with many first-year students, you might want to require all students come to office hours as a course requirement early in the semester. This will ensure that even students who are unaccustomed to this practice will gain some familiarity with the process. It also demonstrates that you are open and willing to work with them outside of class, where they may be more willing to ask questions and admit to their uncertainty.

4. Model Vulnerability and Growth Mindset

To the extent that you feel comfortable doing so, it may help to share your own academic struggles and how you managed setbacks and uncertainty. Modelling that it is OK to be uncertain, and that learning is a process, may inspire students to be open with you about their struggles so you can help them learn.[69]

5. Encourage Collaboration and Group-Work

Create class time activities and assignments where peers can support each other and bring their different talents together for shared success. Organise study groups or review sessions for all students, perhaps making

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[69] "Teaching a Growth Mindset," PERTS, accessed December 18, 2018, from https://www.mindsetkit.org/topics/teaching-growth-mindset.

attendance a factor in your participation grade. This signals that asking for help and collaborating with peers is a priority.

6. *Use and Share Rubrics*

We recognise that some faculty members have become allergic to the 'R' word. However, rubrics do two things that promote inclusivity: 1) they help you grade all students according to the same standards and therefore reduce bias; 2) they help students understand exactly what is expected of them, which levels the playing field between students from highly and less privileged educational backgrounds.

7. *Provide Do-Over Opportunities*

Students who come from less affluent educational backgrounds and less well-resourced schools may have less practice doing the kinds of assignments that are common at Yale-NUS. Consider giving all students the opportunity to submit drafts, or to re-do their first assignment if it is disappointing. For example, you might give students the opportunity to re-write a mid-term essay or re-run an experiment for one-third of the original grade.

National, Ethnic, and Linguistic Inclusivity

A typical Yale-NUS seminar may have students from Tunisia, Costa Rica, Canada, Vietnam, Mongolia, and Singapore collaborating in learning and discovery. For students and faculty alike, it is extremely rewarding to have people from such a diversity of cultural backgrounds engaging in discussion about a puzzle, historical narrative, or poem. At the same time, it can be challenging and even alienating to be a minority in terms of nationality or ethnicity, even in a Yale-NUS classroom. Here are four steps you can take to support students from diverse national, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Strategies for Classroom Inclusivity

1. *Create Opportunities – Rather Than Expectations – for Students to Draw on Personal Identities*

We have heard from our own students, and read in the literature on inclusive learning, that students appreciate having the opportunity to share their perspectives and background, but typically resent being expected to represent their entire country, continent, or race. This is especially the case for students from less-represented countries, who may be tired of answering basic questions about their country and culture. As a professor, you can set an inclusive tone by inviting everyone to share what they know about a given topic, rather than assuming that because a student is from Nicaragua that they know a lot about political upheaval in Mexico. In general, avoid expecting individual students to speak on behalf of an entire nation, region, race, or culture.

Depending on your subject matter and the extent to which you want students to draw from personal experience, you may want to have an explicit conversation about this at the beginning of the term and set some expectations about how people will engage with their own and each other's backgrounds. You can even develop a set of aspirations and guidelines collectively with the students for how you will harness the diversity of the group without making any individuals feel tokenised or stereotyped. (See "Discussion Guidelines" for more detailed suggestions.)

2. Avoid or Explain Culturally Specific References

Having students from across the world in our classes also means some references, words, and phrases that might be 'common knowledge' in your context will be foreign to others. For an English or French professor, illustrating a point by referencing 'the distance across The Channel,' might be an obvious reference, but students from other regions might wonder what channel you are talking about – the one between Singapore and Malaysia? If you catch yourself using a reference or phrase that might be culturally contingent, take a minute to explain what you mean so all students get the benefit of the analogy or point you are trying to make.

3. Be Inclusive in Examples

Use a range of examples and illustrations, including those from underrepresented communities. Be conscious of how you use examples of historically marginalised peoples. For example, integrate examples of people in desirable roles and making leadership contributions, not only positions of oppression and victimisation or roles that reinforce stereotypes.

4. Integrate Visual Communication

While all Yale-NUS students and faculty speak English, we speak many different varieties of English. This linguistic diversity can leave some students unsure of what is being said in class, especially in a fast-paced discussion. This lack of clarity, in turn, impinges on learning and participation. Complementing verbal communication by using slides and having students write key ideas on the board can help. It may also help to reiterate that it is to be expected that students will not always understand the professor's, or each other's, references and language, creating pauses in the conversation for students to seek clarification and ask questions.

5. Individualise Support for Students Adjusting to English-Language Instruction

Inviting students to talk to you if they are still adjusting to English-language instruction will help them feel included in your class. These students

might benefit from additional office hours appointments. Consider whether you can adjust some practices for their benefit. For example, even if you normally do not share lecture notes, students adjusting to English classrooms might really benefit from having notes to follow along with. Giving students additional ungraded practice opportunities in verbal and written communication can also help. Refer students to the Writer's Centre for assistance, and they may want to consult with the NUS Centre for English Language Communication – http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/.[70]

6. *Push Yourself to Learn All Student Names*

For most of us, it is easier to learn students' names that are familiar, and we may struggle to differentiate Dave and Dan or Hui Yi and Li Yi. Unfortunately, this completely understandable limitation can lead faculty to disproportionately call on the students whose names they can pronounce, and avoid calling on students whose names they are afraid of mispronouncing. To promote a feeling of belonging among students, take time to learn student names early in the semester, and take steps to pronounce them correctly (perhaps ask students to give you a 'sounds like' cheat sheet). There are name cards available in the CTL and Faculty Support offices that students can display on their desks so peers can also refer to each other correctly.

This website can help you familiarise yourself with names common to different countries and cultures: http://hearnames.com/. You can learn more about pronouncing Chinese names, in particular, at the following web site. But keep in mind that just as there are multiple variants of English, there are multiple variants of Chinese as well: https://silc.asu.edu/content/how-pronounce-common-chinese-names.

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[70] See also, "ESL Resources," University of Illinois, accessed December 18, 2018, from http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/esl/.

LGBTQ+ and Gender-Inclusivity in the Classroom

Harnessing the diversity of our community also involves inclusivity of diverse gender and sexual identities. Faculty members can help by countering negative stereotypes that impede learning and reflecting on embedded biases in their own practices. Research into gender and teaching has found that teachers, including female teachers, are more likely to call on male students, even when female students' hands are raised, and are also more likely to give male students more encouragement during and outside of class.[71] In addition, there is now greater awareness that many students do not identify as exclusively male or female. Many faculty make it a point to alternate between male and female pronouns when giving examples, but for many of our students this assumption of a gender binary is considered archaic and exclusionary to gender-queer, non-binary students.

Here are some steps you can take to be more inclusive to all gender identities in the classroom. Some of these suggestions pertain to using language that may feel uncomfortable or artificial at first. Over time, this new language can become much more intuitive and authentic to the user.

Strategies for Classroom Inclusivity

1. Avoid language or jokes that assume all students will live according to heteronormative or stereotypical conceptions of gender and sexuality. For example, comments like "when you men get married" or "when you ladies have children" signal that all students will follow a particular life path. This can be exclusionary to students who have other plans or ideas about family (e.g. gay marriage which is not allowed in Singapore, or women who do not plan to have children).

2. Don't assume all students identify as male or female. Students in your class may identify as some combination of transgender, gender-queer, or gender-non-conforming. When addressing the class, instead of

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[71] "Gender Dynamics in the Classroom," University of Virginia, accessed December 18, 2018, from http://cte.virginia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Diverse-Student-Body-Chapter-2.pdf.

saying "welcome ladies and gentlemen," you can make all students feel welcome by using more inclusive words like "welcome students".[72] Invite students to tell you and their peers their preferred name and gender pronouns (e.g. she/her, he/his, they/theirs) if they would like. To avoid forcing people to reveal information they would rather keep private, you may want to invite students to share in a more general way, for example by asking students to share "anything about your name, how you like to be addressed, or anything about you we should know to facilitate and support your learning in this class". You can then model how you hope they will answer, for example: "my name is Jin Schminn, you can call me Prof Schminn and refer to me with he/him pronouns. Also, I am aware I speak too quickly, and it is something I am working on. If I'm talking too quickly, please ask me to slow down." Even for faculty who pride themselves on their inclusivity and socially conscious teaching, this new vocabulary and conception of gender can be difficult to enact. With practice it becomes more natural, and students who prefer they/them/their pronouns will appreciate faculty efforts to be inclusive.[73]

3. Allow for students' identities to change over time. Students may identify with different gender identities and sexualities over the course of college. For this reason, you may want to ask students to tell you their names at the beginning of semester, rather than assuming they still use the names provided by Registry.

4. Acknowledge mistakes: If you accidentally engage in stereotyping or misgender someone, or a student uses the wrong pronouns in reference to a peer, gently acknowledge the mistake, and then move on with the conversation (e.g. "I think Jin prefers male pronouns. Your point about the Etruscan architecture is very relevant to last week's reading on…").[74]

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[72] HRC, "Four Ways to Make a Classroom Gender-Inclusive."

[73] For helpful information and ideas on creating a gender inclusive classroom environment visit: Harbin, "Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary in the Classroom.

[74] Dean Spade, "Some Very Basic Tips for Making Higher Education More Accessible to Trans Students and Rethinking How We Talk about Gendered Bodies," Radical Teacher, no. 92 (2011): 57–62; Harbin, "Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary in the Classroom."

5. Do not assume everyone has a mother and father. When referencing family units, for example, you might ask students to "consider your parents' generation" not "your mother and father's generation".

6. Include authors, voices, and experiences across different gender identities. Ideally incorporate a range of voices in ways that do not fall into stereotypes.

7. Acknowledge gender inequities when they arise. For example, if you are studying a period in history when there were only male leaders or writers, acknowledge this imbalance. If gendered patterns emerge in how students interrupt each other gently acknowledge it and give students who were interrupted a chance to finish their point.

8. Give all students equal attention and advising; even, and perhaps especially, the quieter ones. In some cultures, female students may be socialised to speak less often or less forcefully. Try scanning the room and making eye contact to invite contributions and ascertain student engagement. Increasing the amount of time you wait for a response or before selecting a student to speak can also give quieter students a chance to enter the conversation.

9. Incorporate different modes of learning which might be more intuitive to different gender identities. For example, in come cultural contexts male students may do better in competitive modes of learning (e.g. debates) than female students. Having a range of learning activities can help create a more inclusive climate.

10. During mid-semester feedback, invite students to give feedback on classroom dynamics and whether they feel comfortable contributing to discussions. Anonymous mid-semester student evaluations can help you understand student perspectives and adjust as necessary.

Avoiding gender bias in reference writing

Got a great student? Planning to write a super letter of reference?
Don't fall into these common traps based on unconscious gender bias.

Mention research & publications

Letters of reference for men are 4x more likely to mention publications and twice as likely to have multiple references to research. Make sure you put these critical accomplishments in every letter!

Don't stop now!

On average, letters for men are 16% longer than letters for women and letters for women are 2.5x as likely to make a minimal assurance ('she can do the job') rather than a ringing endorsement ('she is the best for the job').

Emphasize accomplishments, not effort

Letters for reference for men are more likely to emphasize accomplishments ('his research', 'his skills', or 'his career') while letters for women are 50% more likely to include 'grind-stone' adjectives that describe effort. 'Hard-working' associates with effort, but not ability.

We all share bias

It is important to remember that unconscious gender bias isn't a male problem. Research shows that women are just as susceptible to these common pitfalls as men.
This is a problem for all of us - let's solve it together!

Keep it professional

Letters of reference for women are 7x more likely to mention personal life - something that is almost always irrelevant for the application. Also make sure you use formal titles and surnames for both men and women.

Stay away from stereotypes

Although they describe positive traits, adjectives like 'caring', 'compassionate', and 'helpful' are used more frequently in letters for women and can evoke gender stereotypes which can hurt a candidate. And be careful not to invoke these stereotypes directly ('she is not emotional').

Be careful raising doubt

We all want to write honest letters, but negative or irrelevant comments, such as 'challenging personality' or 'I have confidence that she will become better than average' are twice as common in letters for female applicants. Don't add doubt unless it is strictly necessary!

Adjectives to avoid:
caring
compassionate
hard-working
conscientious
dependable
diligent
dedicated
tactful
interpersonal
warm
helpful

Adjectives to include:
successful
excellent
accomplished
outstanding
skilled
knowlegable
insightful
resourceful
confident
ambitious
independent
intellectual

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Research from Trix, F & Psenka, C. Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty. Discourse & Society, 2003; and Madera, JM, Hebl, MR, & Martin, RC. Gender and letters of Recommendation for Academia: Agentic and Communal Differences. Journal of Applied Psychology, 2009.

Avoiding gender bias in reference writing by The University of Arizona[75]

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[75] The University of Arizona, "Avoiding gender bias in reference writing", 22 Jan 2016, https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf

Student Health and Special Learning Needs

In most developed countries, legal systems and educational institutions implicitly agree that schools and teachers have responsibilities for supporting students with physical disabilities such as blindness, lack of limbs, or the inability to speak. In contrast, students, faculty, and administrators often have very different expectations of faculty members' responsibility to students' cognitive and mental health needs.

From many students' perspective, it is a professor's job to accommodate and defer to their mental health. But from the perspective of many, possibly most, faculty members, their job is to teach and hold all students to a shared standard. Applying a high common standard is important because it allows students, as well as future graduate schools or employers, to know their relative strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, when a student asks a faculty member for a last minute extension because they are having a very stressful time, the student may think they are appropriately signalling that their mental health is strained and expect understanding. But for many faculty members, it is the student's own responsibility to maintain their mental health and meet their academic deadlines.

Yale-NUS policies around mental health, and all kinds of health and disability-based accommodation, remove these decisions from the professor-student relationship to protect faculty from having to weigh in on medical issues, to maintain students' privacy, and to ensure students get consistent support regardless of their faculty members' individual approaches. Students should not expect professors to issue medical diagnoses or excuses. Instead, students should see their Residential College Assistant Deans, the Counselling Centre at Yale-NUS, or the NUS University Health Centre for support. And faculty can create an inclusive environment for students with medical needs or ongoing disabilities by encouraging students to use these resources, and being understanding when they receive an Assistant Dean's Note, Medical Certificate (MC), or Learning Accommodation notification.[76]

Without feeling undue responsibility for students' health and wellness, there are several proactive steps faculty can take to be more inclusive to students with a range of physical, cognitive, and emotional profiles.[77]

Strategies for Ability Inclusivity

1. Give Pre-Course Surveys

Consider a pre-course survey that seeks to understand students' perceived strengths and challenges, and include a question like, "What is something that would positively contribute to your learning experience or ability to do well?" This opens the door for all students to communicate their accessibility needs at the start of the course. Though you cannot give specific accommodations (e.g. extra time to complete assignments) to individual students without a formal University Health Centre recommendation, knowing your students learning needs can help you structure your classes and think about how you design activities and assignments for the entire class.

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[76] To protect student privacy, it is not appropriate to ask students to defend or explain the AD Note, MC, or learning accommodation. If you are concerned that your student is relying too heavily on these devices, or that they are misusing these systems, you should discuss your concerns with their Assistant Dean (for AD Notes and MCs), the Centre for Teaching and Learning (for learning accommodations), or the Dean of Faculty if you feel more comfortable doing so.

[77] Adapted from Sheryl Burgstahler, "Equal Access/ Universal Design of Instruction," accessed December 18, 2018, from https://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-instruction.

2. Signal Your Approachability and Interest in Accessibility for All

If students feel you care about them as people, they will be more likely to disclose struggles they may be having or barriers to learning they encounter in your course. You will then have the ability to counsel them to get appropriate medical, psychological or learning support, or to adjust your course to make it more accessible to their needs. You can signal approachability by learning students names, strongly encouraging attendance at office hours (especially early in the semester), and emphasising your desire to know their learning needs, both in the syllabus and on the first day of class.

3. Include Accessibility Statements

You can open channels of communication with students by including a clause in your course syllabus about learning accommodation resources and accessibility. Including a statement about accessibility and learning accommodations signals that you value diversity and inclusive learning, and normalises disability and the accommodations process. Yale-NUS' learning accommodations policies and protocols are available at the CTL Website: https://teaching.yale-nus.edu.sg/learning-accommodations/.

4. Help Students Plan Ahead

Give all assignments and course expectations in both written and verbal form at the beginning of the course. Time management is an essential ingredient for students with certain disabilities. Setting clear expectations in advance for the whole class will make it easier for students of all abilities to plan ahead. Students with slow reading rates will have difficulty adding a new reading to their to-do list at the last minute, as will students with vision impairments who need to have documents translated into audio files. If assignment changes occur after the course has begun, they should be made as far in advance of the deadline as possible. If assignment changes cannot be made far in advance, consider flexibility in terms of deadline, **format, or quality of student work.**

5. *Allow for Flexibility in How Students Convey Knowledge*

To help students progress, you need to know how well they are understanding course material. Combining different modes of assessment can help you gauge a wider range of student learning. If it is consistent with your teaching style, give students the option of how they want to present their work – through oral presentations, written essays, or visual representations – or to give students the option to complement traditional essays or exams with more personalised submissions as well.

6. *Diversify Methods and Formats of Representation*

Consider what barriers might exist for different types of learners in accessing and processing information in your class. If your primary content delivery method is visual, consider complementing that with audio or text-based information. For example, while presenting pictures, graphs and charts to communicate information or illustrate concepts, also have students describe in words and in writing what they see and what it conveys. Then have students share those descriptions with the class. Using multiple formats has specific benefit to students with visual and auditory impairments, but also serves the entire class by developing all students' visual and verbal acuity. Conversely, if you often transmit information in lecture format, consider sharing the transcript of your lecture so that students who may struggle to integrate verbal information can complement lecture with an alternate format. This would help students with low hearing or auditory processing disorders, but also those who may be unaccustomed to your accent or to English-based instruction.

7. Share Class Notes

Consider having an assigned note-taker or two for each class session with the responsibility for taking and posting notes for the whole class. This will be useful for students who, due to an attention deficit or processing disorder, find it difficult to take notes while also listening and participating in class. In addition to increasing access to course material for students with certain disabilities, this note-taker system also has the benefit of giving you a means of teaching all students good note-taking skills, a key academic success strategy. Creating a structured system for students to share high-quality class notes also promotes diversity of experience as students can see differences in what their peers saw as most central or interesting.

8. Allow for Physical Movement

Consider giving all students permission and even encouragement to do what is needed to succeed and be healthy during class. For example, students with anxiety or attention deficit issues may benefit from occasionally getting up and moving around the room. Some students may not be able to process information visually and aurally at the same time, and need to plug their ears while looking at a graph or artwork under discussion. A student getting up and walking around the room might be distracting the first week or two of the semester, but overtime become the norm for the entire class. If you are worried about distraction or students missing course information, build-in a break time during the class to give students the chance to get up, stretch, and rest their minds if needed, especially if the class is longer than 1.5 hours.

9. Don't make assumptions about non-normative eye contact and communications styles.

You might assume that lack of eye contact or verbal communication implies a lack of interest or engagement with course material. But those students might be highly engaged, and simply have other reasons for exhibiting those behaviours. A student might be avoiding eye contact due to autism-spectrum disorder, or keeping quiet to conceal a speech impediment. If

a student is not participating, you might consider asking to meet with them and inviting them to help you brainstorm ways of participating more actively in class. Other mechanisms of participation can include online discussion boards or in-class writing exercises, if preferable given their needs and your learning goals.

10. Consider Untimed Exams

Two of the most common learning accommodations our students receive are extra time on exams and the ability to take exams in private rooms. Consider whether having timed exams is important to your learning goals. If not, consider letting all students take their exam with the amount of time they need to complete the work. In some cases, time is a central feature of our discipline or course design. However, many faculty understandably give timed exams for their convenience, so they do not need to proctor long exams or find a time all students can be in a room together for an extended period. It may be worth considering whether your students can take the exam independently, at their own pace. This has the added benefit of not using up valuable in-class time on testing.

These steps not only support students with disabilities and health impediments. Many of these strategies also improve learning for students who may be unfamiliar with your discipline or pedagogy. (A much more detailed discussion of how faculty can be responsive to student health, disability, and learning needs is available in the online Appendix.)

Inclusive Syllabi

As discussed in previous chapters, one of the most important elements of inclusive pedagogy is being transparent with students about your goals and expectations. The syllabus is an essential tool for teaching a diverse student body. There are several steps you can take in syllabus development to create an inclusive class:

Strategies for an Inclusive Syllabus

1. ***Reflect on whether the content of your syllabus represents diverse authors, communities, and cases when appropriate.*** For example, you could attempt to represent different gender identities, or ensure authors from underrepresented groups are included in your syllabus. At the same time, avoid doing so in a tokenistic way by ensuring that these inclusions have a clear purpose within the class content. Try to choose textbook(s) that uphold a commitment to diversity. Check to see if examples and photographs include people of all genders and of various races and ethnicities. If you do use materials or resources that are not written in neutral language, acknowledge this to your students and explain the trade-offs. This can be an opportunity to discuss how diversity and inclusion issues have evolved over time in your discipline.

2. ***Review the academic calendar*** to be aware of religious holidays when planning tests, assessments or assignment due dates. Assignments cannot be due on public holidays or during recess and reading week.

3. ***Be clear about deadlines and expectations for assignments.*** Support students who may be working while in college by giving deadlines early. Support students who may have health issues by articulating your expectations around attendance and late submission of work.

4. ***Signal your approachability and interest in their success.*** The syllabus is an opportunity to set a tone, to communicate your genuine commitment to working with students and helping them thrive in your course. For example, the syllabus can communicate not only when and where office hours are, but why you think it is important for them to visit and how they should prepare to use office hours most effectively.

5. ***Use the CTL Syllabus Framework available on the CTL web site:*** https://teaching.yale-nus.edu.sg/our-services/course-design/. This will remind you to include relevant information on College resources and prompt you to be more transparent with students about your teaching goals and expectations.

Inclusive Grading and Assessment

Bias can sneak its way into grading and assessment despite our best intentions. Here are five tips to be inclusive in your grading practices:

Strategies for Inclusive Grading

1. ***Ask yourself whether you are grading what you yourself have taught,*** or if you are inadvertently grading students' prior knowledge and background. Students from more privileged backgrounds, or from similar educational systems to your own, may be performing better not because they have learned more in your class, but because they are conforming to norms of expression you find familiar and therefore more desirable. To the extent that you want to reward learning and not prior training and privilege, you may need to be very explicit with students about your standards and provide the resources to help students achieve those standards.

2. ***Use diverse assignment and assessment types.*** We have already discussed the importance of using multiple kinds of assignments or scaffolded assignments, in recognition of students' diverse backgrounds and learning strengths. You may also refer to the Yale-NUS College Centre for teaching and Learning "Grading and Assessment Source Guide" at teaching.yale-nus.edu.sg

3. ***Using rubrics with set evaluative criteria*** can help you hold all students to common standards. The act of creating a rubric helps faculty be clear in their own minds about what they are interested in assessing. Consider in particular how much you want the final grade to reflect writing quality, organisation, grammar, etc. In addition to helping faculty organise their own thinking, rubrics also promote transparency with students. If you worry that providing a rubric will result in boring, cookie-cutter essays or presentations, you can add in "bravery" bonus points to encourage creativity and bold arguments.

4. ***Remove students' names from their papers/exams/submissions to keep biases out of your grading practices.*** Some faculty like to know who they are grading so they can reward progress and hard work by students who may have struggled in the past. It may be safer to grade "blind" initially, and you can take effort and trajectory into account as part of bonus points or participation grades later.

5. ***Don't let the grade speak for itself.*** Give students ample feedback to understand strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improvement. Students who are unfamiliar with your pedagogy and your discipline may be very discouraged by low grades and not know how to improve upon the work they submitted. Feedback is an essential way to help them learn more and perform more strongly moving forward. It may be helpful to share an exemplar with the entire class, and have the class discuss in some detail what makes that particular work successful.

Culturally-Attuned Participation Expectations

Classroom participation can be a particularly fraught dimension of grading and assessment in our diverse context. When deciding how to teach and assess participation and verbal communication, faculty should be mindful that Yale-NUS College students come from many different cultural contexts. It is useful to keep in mind that one student's laid-back, low-stress classroom is another student's pressure-cooker. Some students come from educational backgrounds where speaking up in class is the norm from a young age. However, other students come from backgrounds where students, and young people in general, are discouraged from speaking in class without being explicitly commanded to do so. As a result of these experiences, different students will enter Yale-NUS with varied comfort levels and competencies in classroom-based verbal communication.

Faculty may be trying to create a laid-back environment, but without top-down direction, many students will not know how to join the conversation. Faculty may want to think about how to make a laid-back environment more inclusive to all by giving students ways of entering the conversation and making norms of academic conversation very explicit. Bringing enough whiteboard pens for all to write on the board, allowing students to think on their own and then share back to the group, or encourage working in parts will help all students engage. The book "Teaching Tips" by Mckeachie has excellent practical options for different ways to draw out class participation in the class. The Yale-NUS Centre for Teaching and Learning can provide faculty members with a copy and the library has several copies for loan.

Yael Sharan provides a general synopsis of how culture can impact behaviour in the classroom:

> "How else does culture affect students' behaviour in class? Another relevant dimension of culture, studied by sociolinguists, is the kind of verbal participation structures it develops in its children. A teacher may plan an activity designed to have students speak up spontaneously and voice their opinions openly. Students from a Euro-

American background adapt easily to this behaviour, while those from a Latin or Southeast Asian background may expect the teacher to initiate communication and will speak up only when called upon for fear they say the 'wrong' thing. In some cultures, students are used to non-verbal participation and may not volunteer comments to the group."[78] Similarly, in a 2006 piece, Nguyen Phuong-Mai refers to a Confucian heritage cultural context, explaining that students with this background are most comfortable when they are told what they need to know and given detailed instruction on how to demonstrate they have learned the material.[79] The above descriptions may rely on contestable generalisations, and we recognise that Yale-NUS students have complex identities that transcend national background. Nonetheless, the issues raised by Sharan and Nguyen – that culture and educational background impact academic participation norms and student performance – are important to consider. One of the benefits of having 18 or fewer students in a class is the opportunity to learn their academic strengths, their anxieties, and their prior educational experiences. Yale-NUS' curriculum stresses articulate communication, and we would therefore expect student participation to be central to many faculty members' practice. Being mindful of the importance of culture, combined with an attempt to understand each student's distinctive experiences and needs, can help faculty empower students to participate actively during class, rather than alienate them. Below we present two strategies which may be used together or separately depending on your pedagogical goals.

Strategies for Inclusive Participation

1. *Diverse Methods of Participation and Evaluation*

Acknowledging students' diverse backgrounds and comfort levels,

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[78] Yael Sharan, "Cooperative learning: a diversified pedagogy for diverse classrooms," Intercultural Education 21, no. 3 (2010): 195–203.
[79] Nguyen Phuong-Mai, "Culturally appropriate pedagogy: The case of group learning in a Confucian Heritage Culture context," Intercultural Education 17, no. 1 (2006): 1–19.

faculty may want to include a variety of assessment criteria and allow for different kinds of participation to demonstrate learning. When assessing "participation", faculty can then use multiple data points. Some students will thrive in communication activities that are more informal, which might be best for interrogating course content; while others will do better in formal, presentation-style activities. Faculty can design different activities – and evaluative opportunities – focused on oral and visual communication, written communication, active listening skills, informal and formal communication, individual and group-based participation, and design activities that give students exposure to both leadership and supporting roles. For example, faculty might utilise the following activities in their teaching and assessment of "participation":

- Informal discussions of assigned readings with more or less focused prompts (e.g. "What did you think of today's reading?" or "Who can summarise chapter 5's thesis and data collection methods?")

- Individual free-writing or reflective writing exercises

- Peer editing and peer feedback of written work

- Use of Canvas discussion boards or a course blog for written submissions, either open-topic or in response to specific prompts

- Collective or individual collage, graphing, mapping, or poster projects

- Fishbowl listening exercises (www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/fishbowl)

- Formal presentations on pre-assigned or student-developed topics

- Group work including jigsaw activities which allow students to alternate between learner and teacher roles (https://teaching.berkeley.edu/active-learning-strategies)

2. *Scaffolding a Particular Mode of Participation and Evaluation*

Alternatively, if it is important for your learning goals to focus on one

or two modes of expression and participation, you can scaffold learning activities to help students who are unfamiliar with that modality gain the skills and confidence needed to achieve your standards. In this scenario, you can provide your students with a definition of what good oral communication is, and how you will be assessing it, through a mixture of small group conversations, full-class discussions, structured debates, formal presentations, etc.

For example, many faculty members are primarily interested in developing students' verbal communication skills in a discussion or conversational format. Students enter Yale-NUS with highly varied prior experiences with verbal communication in an academic setting. Just as we assign shorter research papers in the earlier years of college before expecting students to write a lengthy and original Capstone, it may be helpful to offer students more manageable and structured verbal communication activities before expecting them to speak about course material with sophistication in a free-flowing environment.

Here are some strategies to help students learn and acclimatise in a discussion-based class.

- Be explicit about what good verbal communication entails. Give examples (e.g. videos, podcasts, demonstrations).

- Provide ungraded, low-stakes building-block exercises to help unfamiliar students develop their skills. For example, have a few students start class by verbally summarising a news article or concept relevant to that day's topic. Speaking from a prepared script may be easier than spontaneously speaking up during a free-flowing discussion.

- Assign students specific conversational roles to acclimatise them to speaking up in class. Allocate each student a different conversational role during the early weeks of the semester, with students embodying different personas for different classes. For example, there could be designated question-askers, devil's advocates, affirmers/synthesisers, fact-finders, listener/recorders, etc. This gives students practice contributing in different ways to the discussion.[80]

- Start with small group conversations focused on very specific questions before moving to class-wide discussions on more wide-ranging topics.

- Encourage students to take a few minutes of free-writing before speaking on a particular topic or discussion question. Allow students to read what they have written to acclimate to speaking in class.

- Ask students in private if they would like to be called on in class. Some students do not speak for fear of saying something wrong, but others do not speak because they feel it is arrogant to voluntarily enter the discussion. They may feel more comfortable speaking if explicitly invited to do so by the professor. Faculty might think that it would be cruel to call on a very quiet student to get them to engage in the conversation. However, rather than assuming your students do not want to be called on, ask quieter students if they would like to be more explicitly called upon to contribute. Some quieter students would appreciate being called on, because they want to engage in the conversation but it is the act of entering in that feels so uncomfortable. For students who come from more authority-driven, call-and-response

[80] Using Roles in Group Work," University of Washignton in St. Louis, accessed December 18, 2018, from http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/teaching-methods/group-work-in-class/using-roles-in-group-work/. Thank you to Malcolm Keating who has shared these methods with me and many colleagues.

type education systems, a very vaguely-run, open-ended, student-driven discussion environment can be intimidating and stressful.

- Give students the opportunity to reflect on their communication skills and progress, either with you in meetings or through written reflection. Sprinkling these reflective exercises throughout the term may help students develop skills and confidence in this area.

- Provide continuous feedback so students learn desired communication skills and have opportunities to improve over time. The American Association of Colleges and Universities' Values Rubric includes a useful tool for Oral Communication (available at www.aacu.org/value-rubrics and in hard copies at the CTL).

Inclusive Discussion Guidelines

Take some time to consider the kind of classroom environment you want to cultivate and your standards of inquiry and interaction. You probably implicitly know what you hope to accomplish in terms of how students interact with each other and with you. Your students, however, may benefit from explicit guidance in this area. These guidelines can shape student-to-professor, professor-to-student, and student-to-student interactions.

You may want to articulate your expectations to students as a set of Discussion Guidelines, Ground Rules, or Community Expectations for the class. Alternatively, you may want to develop such guidelines in a more consultative process with your students. A more consultative approach can be a useful way to learn about their needs, and to keep your approach relevant as your student population shifts with time. For example, in one class your students may decide that a community guideline is not to use computers during class because it poses a distraction, whereas another group might have members who need computers to take notes and develop different norms around computer use.

Guidelines, shared understanding of appropriate classroom norms, are advantageous in a number of ways:

1. They take pressure off the professor. When there are explicit expectations, students can invoke them during the term to keep conversations inclusive, respectful, and rigorous.

2. They take pressure off more vulnerable students by depersonalising difficult moments. If minority students and others who may be vulnerable to insensitive comments start to feel excluded or marginalised during a discussion, the guidelines provide ready-made language for the professor, other students, or the impacted students to step in without personalising the event. Rather than having to say "I feel targeted by that statement" or "What you just said is really insensitive to Aubrey's ethnicity", the professor and students can ask, "Is this conversation consistent with our guidelines?"

3. They give the professor tools to respond to difficult classroom situations later in the term. If you take some time to establish discussion guidelines and expectations up-front, you can revisit and invoke them if awkward, tense, confrontational, or emotionally fraught incidents arise later.

4. They promote rigour as well as inclusion. As you can see from the examples below, there does not need to be a trade-off between inclusion and rigour. In fact, guidelines can be an avenue to articulate what rigourous, intelligent, thoughtful discussion and communication should look and sound like in your discipline.

Here are some **Sample Guidelines** drawn but adapted from the University of Michigan Centre for Research on Teaching and Learning.[81]

1. **Respect People, Challenge Ideas.** We will respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from our own. When we disagree, we will challenge or criticise the idea, not the person. We will not demean, devalue, or "put down" people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

2. **Listen.** We will listen carefully to what others are saying even when we disagree with what is being said. We won't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking. We will use attentive, courteous body language. If we are uncertain about someone else's approach, we will ask a question to explore areas of uncertainty.

3. **Support Your Statements.** We will use evidence and provide a rationale for our points. We will provide references and sources for our information. If our statements derive from personal experience rather than course material we will acknowledge this, and offer appropriate context so that our peers understand the significance and relevance of these comments.

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[81] "Examples of Discussion Guidelines," CRLT, accessed December 18, 2018, from http://www.crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines. Headings and guidelines in brackets are not from the University of Michigan and have been inserted by the author.

4. **Sit Up and Sit Back.** We share responsibility for including all voices in the discussion. If we have a tendency to contribute often, we will give others the opportunity to speak. If we tend to stay quiet, we will challenge ourselves to share ideas so others can learn from us

5. **Start with the Assumption of Positive Intent:** We will trust that people are doing the best they can. We recognise that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes. We are willing to change our perspective, and make space for others to do the same.

6. **Speak your discomfort.** If we are hurt or offended by someone's speech or actions, we will alert them to the harm they caused in or outside of class as we feel most comfortable. If we feel uncomfortable and cannot resolve it with your peers, we will alert the professor. If the professor has made us uncomfortable we will alert them.

7. **Take Risks and Try New Ideas:** We will be open to changing our minds, and making space for others to do so as well. We will try not to "freeze people in time" but leave space for everyone to learn and change through our interactions with one another.

8. **Cooperate:** We will take paired work or small group work seriously. We will remember that our peers' learning depends upon our own engagement.

9. **Engage:** We will make an effort to get to know other students and refer to classmates by name.

10. **Confidentiality.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange and intellectual risk-taking. Information and ideas shared in this class can be shared with others, but identifying information should not.

Responding To Difficult Classroom Situations

A student's face flushes with anger as you are talking, and you don't know why.

Should you ask why they seem upset?

A student starts making an argument you fear will lead to a tense class-derailing brouhaha.

Should you intervene?

A student unknowingly uses a pejorative slur, and the rest of the class starts yelling at them.

Should you come to the aid of the inadvertent offender, or the offended?

One student belittles another student's religion, but the offended student says nothing.

Should you say something?

Situations such as the above will inevitably occur at some point in a faculty members career. It can therefore be helpful to have a game-plan in place when such hot moments arise. While we offer some advice here, the right response will depend on your own teaching goals, your personal comfort managing difficult classroom situations, and your relationship to the class. One of the most important steps you can take is to anticipate difficult moments that might arise and have a rough plan for how you will choose to respond. Here are some steps you might want to take, adapted from the University of Michigan's Centre for Research on Teaching and Learning "Making the Most of Hot Moments in the Classroom":[82]

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[82] "Making the Most of 'Hot Moments' In the Classroom" University of Michigan, accessed December 18, 2018, from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tuMuMVnI7soHLcTNxzCTqcpkun0ASHW_WvNuxphyyxA/edit

1) Take a Moment

Give yourself a moment before responding and decide how you want to handle the situation. If you need to, ask the class to take a silent break or to write quietly for a few minutes.

2) Consider Your Options

When there is a "hot moment" in class, there are several potential responses: address it now during class, address it either at the next session or via email, and address it later with one or two specific students. Your decision might vary depending on the nature of the comment (e.g. a racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive remark to the whole class vs. a problematic joke whispered to a neighbouring peer), your relationship with the students, your confidence in your planned response, and where you are in your class (e.g. has it just started or is it ending in a few minutes).

3) Address It, and Soon

If you decide to address it after class, do so as quickly as possible before or during the next class. Letting offensive statements or insults go unacknowledged for too long can make marginalised or hurt students feel unsupported, leading them to turn off from learning in your class. It is

valuable for the class to know that you were aware of what happened, why it was potentially harmful, and to have your leadership and guidance in how to think about the incident.

4) Reference Established Course Norms, or Create Some

Invoke discussion guidelines or syllabus statements on appropriate modes of participation if you have them. If not, and if the situation is likely to persist or be repeated, you may want to take some time to charge the class with developing some conversational guidelines before moving forward with class content.

5) Assume Positive Intent

Assume positive intent unless something was clearly intended to offend. Where possible, give students the benefit of the doubt when they speak words that seem to devalue or discount other people or perspectives. Some ways of responding might be:

- "I don't think this is what you intended, but…"

- "You may not realize how this sounded…"

- "I hear that you're primarily making a joke, and yet…"

"And, when the student seems to have made an error, not a calculated insult, seek to clarify student comments that have sparked tension. Students sometimes say inadvertently insulting or marginalising things when they are struggling to understand a new perspective or feeling the intellectual discomfort of having their familiar views challenged. If you think a comment is coming from such a place of cognitive struggle, you might give the student a chance to explain the thought process behind their remark ('What do you mean by X?" or "I heard you saying Y; is that what you meant to say?') or just ask them to rephrase if it's evident they understand they made a misstep ('Do you want to try saying that differently?' And then, perhaps, 'Shall we talk about why X's initial phrasing felt so problematic?')."

6) Depersonalise

Avoid referring to the students personal actions and instead try to discuss the content.

Try to depersonalise positions of disagreement that have emerged among students (e.g. instead of referring to "what X said vs. what Y said," referring to 'this disagreement about such-and-such' or 'the use of phrase/word X in this context'). This can help minimize unproductive defensiveness and invite more students into the conversation. Similarly, asking for additional possible points of view (e.g., 'We've heard perspectives A and B -- how else might one think about this question?') can helpfully move the conversation away from particular speakers to the ideas or perspectives they are raising. You can also depersonalise by acknowledging when a widely-held view has been raised: 'Many people share this perspective. What might their reasons be?' And then: 'And why might others object to or feel disrespected by this view?'

7) Be an Ally

Be an ally to those who might be hurting by taking on the role of educating the class about why some language or statements are harmful. It can be emotionally exhausting and socially taxing for students, especially those from minority groups, to shoulder the burden of pointing out offensive language to their peers. By contrast, as a faculty member you are empowered to explain why a comment or word was inappropriate.

8) Turn Hot into Learning Moment

If you feel comfortable doing so, you may want to turn the conflict or offensive statement into a learning moment. What does the conflict illuminate about course themes or topics? What does the incident tell us about the learning process or the college experience itself?

9) Re-Set and Move Forward

Once the comment or incident has been addressed, create a re-set opportunity. Take a bathroom or water break. Invite students to free-write

for a few minutes, or just walk around the room and stretch. Then return to class and move on to new subject matter. "Create a path forward: 'As we continue on this topic, let's all remember not to generalise from our particular experience...', or 'I want to pause from our plan for 5 minutes to think a bit about the other issues that have been raised', or 'Keeping those commitments in mind, let's get back to the main topic at hand here.'"

10) Follow-Up

At the end of class or after, consider what follow-up support individual students might need. Reach out to students who were most directly involved in the incident during class, and consider reminding the entire class about resources – including yourself – if they are feeling uncertain or upset. And the hardest of all, acknowledge your impact if you created the offense. Sometimes the person who inadvertently offended was you, the professor. In these situations, model the behaviour you would want from your students, which is probably to take responsibility for your impact even if your intentions were not malicious.

Self-Reflection For Inclusive Teaching

Perhaps the best way to create an inclusive classroom is to be self-reflexive about your goals as an educator. What are your goals in terms of harnessing diversity and promoting inclusivity? How central is social justice to your teaching philosophy? Are you trying to teach habits of discussion and thought which connect to pluralism and foster diverse viewpoints?

In particular, we encourage you to reflect on whether you have historically rewarded and favoured students who think like you, who share your learning or expression styles, and whether your pedagogy assumes students learn best the same way you do. These unconscious tendencies can unintentionally disadvantage students with different learning styles, strengths, and educational backgrounds.

You can also strive for greater inclusivity by reflecting honestly on any biases or blind spots you or your discipline may have that would pose barriers for learning in your classes. You might ask trusted friends if they have noticed any biases in your language or behaviour. Another tool to help you identify your implicit biases is Harvard's Implicit Bias Project ¬– https://implicit.harvard.edu – which has self-assessment exercises you can take which may be illuminating. We have all been exposed to biases and stereotypes that may impact the way we see and operate in the world. The more we come to terms with those biases, the more we can work to prevent them from damaging our teaching.

After reflecting on possible biases, audit your own teaching for those biases as you launch into a new semester. Reflect on whether you tend to call on particular students first, and why. Ask yourself whether students of different genders and nationalities are contributing equally. If not, ask yourself if there something you can do to invite all voices into the conversation – perhaps starting with group work, or assigning quieter students low-stakes speaking roles. One tool which might be helpful is to have your class videotaped, and then watch for gender, racial, or other dynamics at play in how you teach, and how students operate in

the classroom. If you would like, the CTL and ERT teams can assist with this. You can also ask someone to sit-in on your course with particular attention to inclusivity.

It can be harder to assess how inclusive your teaching is of non-visible dimensions of diversity, such as of socio-economic status. You may want to ask about students' perception of inclusivity in anonymous mid-semester feedback, for example including a question like "How comfortable do you feel participating in this class?" or "How inclusive do you find our classroom dynamics to be with regard to nationality, race or ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, ability, and other forms of diversity?"

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The book cover reflects the diverse community and vibrant culture of Yale-NUS via a patchwork of iconic patterns and fabrics that represents how different nations come together to form the College's unique community.

The design was created by Min Lim (Yale-NUS Class of 2018), whose works can be found at minlim.com.

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