

In recognition of International Pronouns Day (October 20, 2021) the Teaching Hub has curated a guide to support you in cultivating a gender inclusive teaching practice and classroom space.

Normalizing Pronoun Use: Building a Culture of Awareness & Respect

If you are comfortable, we encourage you to display your pronouns in your email signature, digital avatars, and to state them in introductions. “You may have noticed that people are sharing their pronouns in introductions, on name tags, and at the beginning of meetings. This gives everyone in the room the opportunity to self identify instead of assuming someone’s identity or which pronouns they use. Including pronouns is a first step toward respecting people’s identity and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders.”¹ Using your personal pronouns also reaffirms that you are a safe person with which to engage.

Syllabus Statement

A student’s legal name may not align with how they would like to be addressed. By including a syllabus statement, you can open a conversation for students to let you know their preferred name. For example: “Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me accordingly early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.” (Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Iowa State University, n.d.)²

Pre-Class Survey

The University of Waterloo’s Centre for Teaching Excellence suggests you “Invite your students to share with you their pronouns. Consider doing this in a confidential “Getting to Know You” questionnaire on the first day of class to avoid putting your students in the position of either having to lie about their pronouns or having to out themselves if they are non-binary or trans-.”³ If you would like assistance in administering a similar survey, please contact the Teaching Hub.

Gender-Neutral Language and Fluency with Gender Non-Binary Vocabulary⁴

Understanding heteronormative language is an important step to speaking with intention and confidence in your gender inclusive classroom. You can do this by:

- Using gender-neutral terms like students or folks, rather than guys or ladies and gentlemen.
- Refreshing your understanding of the following (often mistakenly interchanged) terms:
 - sex assigned at birth versus gender identity
 - gender identity versus gender expression
 - sexual identity versus gender identity (Harbin et al., 2020)

Follow [this link](#) for more information on the above terms.

¹ GLSEN. (2020). Pronoun Guide. <https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-guide-glsen>

² Iowa State University. (2021). Example Inclusive Statements for Your Syllabi.

<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/preparing-to-teach/how-to-create-an-effective-syllabus/inclusive-examples-syllabi/>

³ The University of Waterloo’s Centre for Teaching Excellence. (n.d.). Gender Pronouns and Teaching.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/creating-positive-learning-environment/gender-pronouns-and-teaching>

⁴ Harbin, B., Roberts, L. M., Nelson, R., & Purcell, C. (2020). Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary in the University Classroom. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching.

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-beyond-the-gender-binary-in-the-university-classroom/>