

## Workshop: Teaching with Sensitivity to Difference

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2 hours

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*The seminar was designed to create awareness for students that need accommodations in the classroom. We learned about the legal background on how to deal with students in such cases and were presented some learning tools that can be used in the classroom.*

## SUMMARY

This workshop showed us how to create an inclusive teaching environment. The instructors created awareness for students that may need accommodations and I learned about some tools and techniques that can be used. For instance, the use of smart pens which allow to synchronize audio (instructor talking) with notes taken and using universally designed content and products in class (e.g., class caption, PDF files with optical recognition, textbook for visually impaired) are tools I either did not know about or did not consider using in the classroom prior to the workshop.

We also discussed the importance of inclusive and accurate phrasing in the “accommodations” section in a syllabus. It is a sensitive topic since students often approach the instructor asking for accommodations without presenting appropriate documentation. The syllabus is an important tool to let students know that the possibility for accommodations exists, what the purpose of such accommodations is (i.e. to help) and about the legal responsibility of the instructor to treat everyone equally if no documentation is presented.

Previously, I had considered this section as a collection of standard phrases and I had not planned to spend a lot of time refining it. However, this workshop caused me rethink the importance of this section and I decided to devote a greater amount of time and effort in order to make my statement on accommodations as inclusive as possible.

## APPLICATION

The workshop inspired me to refine my statement on accommodations and students with disabilities (see below). I tried to use inclusive language and I highlighted students with non-visible disabilities. I also explicitly mentioned my duty to treat all students equally unless there is documentation of a disability and provided relevant contact information at the University for reference.

### Accommodations

I encourage **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injuries and attention deficit/hyperactive disorders, to **discuss appropriate accommodations** that might be **helpful** to them with me (after class or during office hours).

You must provide documentation of your disability from the NCSU Disability Student Services, 2000 Harris Hall, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG 02.20.1) at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-01> and Disability Services Office at <http://www.ncsu.edu/dso/>. **If you have a disability, don't wait until you struggle (or until a few days before the final exam) with reporting it!** I am bound by law to treat all students equally unless there is documentation of a disability.