



# Fostering a Safe Space for Learning: Inclusive Excellence in the Classroom

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## DISCLAIMER

**The first question is: Can learning take place  
if in fact it silences the voices of the people  
it is supposed to teach?**

**And the answer is: Yes.  
*People learn that they don't count.*  
--Henry Giroux**



## AT YOUR TABLES

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Discuss your reactions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings in relation to this quote.

(5 mins)



# OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, you should be able to:

1. Define inclusive excellence
2. Discuss the value of inclusive excellence drawing on scholarly findings
3. Generate some principles and strategies for inclusive teaching





# Research Findings

## A BASIC COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE

# Individual differences affect learning and performance

Because the way learners filter, represent and organize information is based in part on their unique experiences.

(Lovett et al. 2023)



## UNPACKING THE PRINCIPLE

### Individual differences affect learning and performance

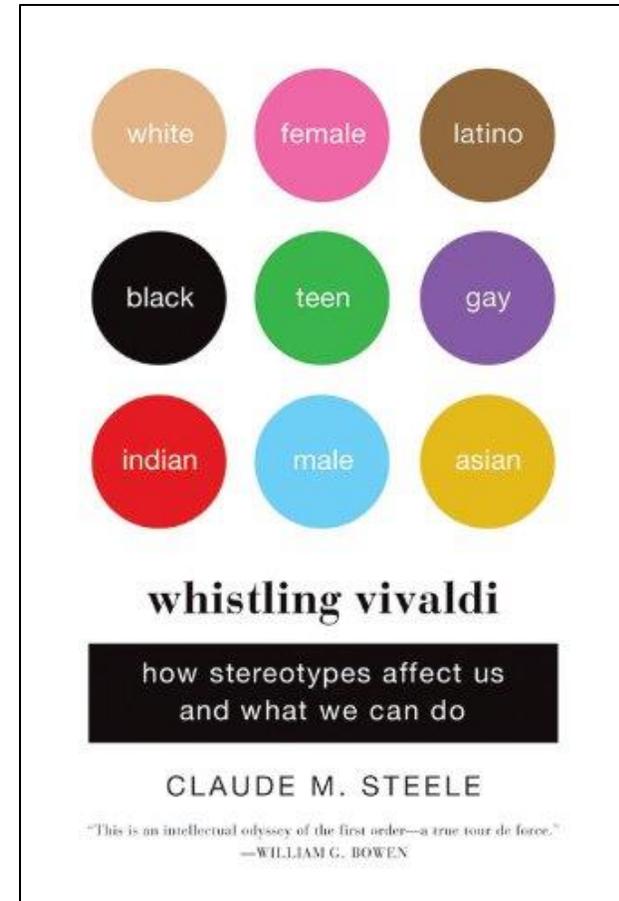
- We do not mean learning styles
  - ✓ There is no empirical support for the concept of learning styles
- Some of it is our individuality
- Some of it is the cumulative effect of how the world responds to our individuality



# STEREOTYPE THREAT

Simply activating a stereotype right before an exam depresses performance for the stereotyped group

- ✓ Tested on every academic stereotype you can think of
- ✓ Regardless of whether the students buy into the stereotype



# INTENTIONAL INCLUSION

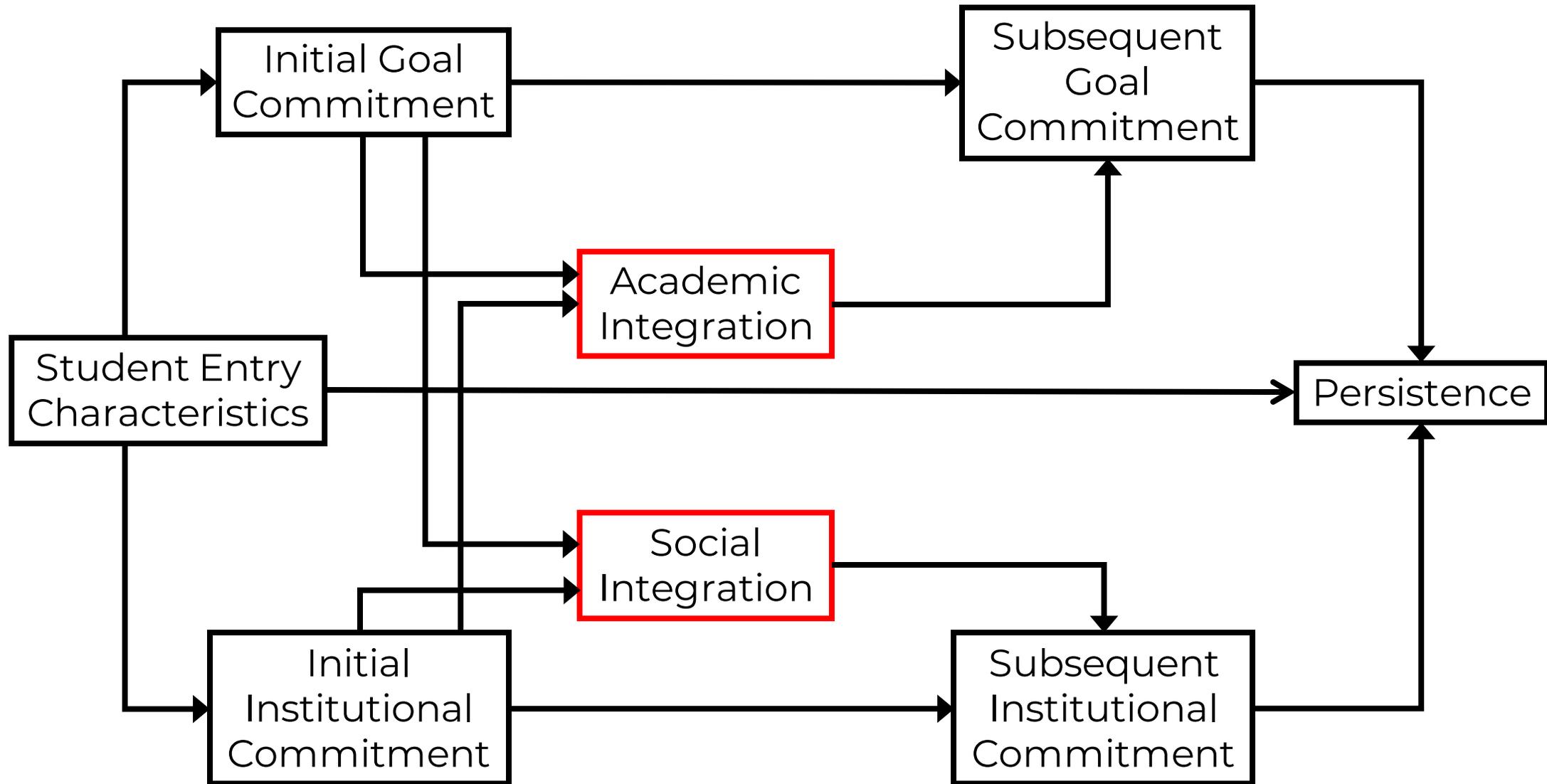
A culture of inclusion is best understood in a continuum



(DeSurra & Church 1994)



# TINTO'S MODEL OF STUDENT RETENTION



(Tinto 1994, 2012)



## INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

“Inclusive Excellence is the recognition that a community or institution's success is dependent on how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni constituents.”

--University of Denver

<https://operations.du.edu/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-excellence>

“The ideals of inclusive excellence call for institutions of higher education to recognize that an inclusive campus requires inclusive classrooms.”

(Considine et al. 2017, p. 172)





# An Inclusive Excellence Framework

# AN INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

1. Intrapersonal Awareness
2. Interpersonal Awareness
3. Curriculum Transformation
4. Inclusive Pedagogy
5. Inclusive Learning Environment



# 1. INTRAPERSONAL AWARENESS

Intrapersonal Awareness means "engaging in a reflexive and critical examination of the ideas, assumptions, and values that we bring into the classroom."

(Salazar et al., 2009, p. 210).



## 2. INTERPERSONAL AWARENESS

Interpersonal Awareness means “building relationships and fostering dialogues that honor multiple perspectives and inviting students to share their cultural experiences.”

Implication: we need to know who our students are

(Salazar et al., 2009, p. 213)



# OUR STUDENTS

From KSU's most recent Fact Book:

- Average High School GPA: 3.50
- Average SAT: 1120 (570 verbal, 554 math)
- Gender split: ~50/50
- Racial breakdown: 45% White, 25% Black, 13.6% Hispanic, 5.4% Asian
- 93.5% from GA (urban and rural)

<https://ir.kennesaw.edu/publications/fact-book.php>



### 3. CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

Curriculum Transformation means “integrating multiple identity groups into the curriculum beyond superficial multiculturalism and reviewing the curriculum for [...] stereotyping, inaccurate generalizations, and historical omissions and making appropriate changes.”

(Salazar et al., 2009, p. 215)



## 4. INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

“Inclusive pedagogy is a student-centered teaching approach that considers all students’ backgrounds, experiences, and learning variabilities in the planning and implementation of student engagement activities, equitable access to content, mutual respect, and a more robust learning experience for all learners.”

<https://tilt.colostate.edu/prodev/teaching-effectiveness/tef/inclusive-pedagogy/>



## 5. INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

An Inclusive Learning Environment is one where “caring for and respecting students, building professional relationships with them and ensuring safe learning environments” is the norm.

(Salazar et. al., 2009, p. 217)



# Teaching Principles and Strategies



## SOME INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRINCIPLES

- Treat students as individuals, not as members of social groups.
- Treat students as full humans, recognizing the full diversity of experiences, histories, goals etc.
- Learning is challenging and can be uncomfortable. Minimize the discomfort not germane to learning.
- Treating everybody the same might disadvantage some students.



## SOME SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- TILT an assignment
- Create a learning-centered syllabus
- Reflect on the default assumptions we make about our students
- Assess students' prior knowledge and include it in the course
- Honor students' preferred names and pronouns
- Communicate your belief that you want all students to succeed
- Prioritize students' learning needs vs. content coverage
- Give students choice and control as appropriate
- Co-create community agreements for your course
- Create multiple opportunities for students to offer feedback on the course



## IDEAS SO FAR

- Based on what we discussed so far, what are some concrete strategies that would work in your context?
- Jot down some reflections on this padlet: [bit.ly/ksunfo23](https://bit.ly/ksunfo23)
- (Or scan this QR code)



# DISCUSSION

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- Scan the padlet
- Reflect on your experience
- What issues or questions stands out?



## A SNEAK PREVIEW

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We have collected these concepts and more in a new resource, titled  
“Expanding the NEST: 25 Faculty Practices for Cultivating Student Success through a Sense of Belonging”





# REFERENCES

- Considine, J., Mihalick, J., Mogi-Hein, Y., Penick-Parks, M., & Van Auken, P. (2017) How Do You Achieve Inclusive Excellence in the Classroom? *New directions for teaching and learning, no. 151*, 171-187.
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