# How to Build Student Programming Through an EDI-R Lens

## What does it mean to have an EDI-R lens?

When you equip yourself with an EDI-R lens, it means that you are systematically and intentionally incorporating equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism into your daily practices. It involves active participation and willingness to learn from yourself and others. But what are the important distinctions between each concept?

**Diversity** is the variety of differences that make us unique and shape our perception of ourselves, others, and the world; these are traits such as race, sex, gender, age, sexuality, religion, ability, and more. To have an EDI-R lens, you must understand that we will never fully comprehend all the intricacies of a person's existence, but our differences is what makes us individuals.

**Equity** is sometimes used interchangeably with equality, but they are vastly different concepts. While equality focuses on providing everyone with the same resources (e.g., equality of opportunity), equity focuses on providing individual people and groups with the tools needed for them to succeed (equality of outcomes). Those who adopt an EDI-R lens understand that there are varied kinds of barriers that make some folks less capable of converting resources into opportunities/goods; what people need to succeed differs amongst individuals.

> **Self-Reflection Questions to Develop an EDI-R Lens:**
>
> - What social factors influence your life experiences?
> - What systems of oppression indirectly or directly impact you or your communities?
> - What assumptions or biases do you have and how can you correct for them?
> - How can you use your experiences to empathize and be in solidarity with marginalized people?

**Inclusion** takes diversity and equity one step further. It is the active, intentional, and continuous process of creating environments in which individuals or groups feel respected, supported, and are able to fully participate (The Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism, 2023).

**Anti-racism** refers to the active work of opposing racism in all forms by advocating for changes in all facets of social life (Race Forward, 2015). It is not enough to be "not racist" because silence and inaction makes us complicit in maintaining racism and white supremacy. To have a true EDI-R lens, you must strive to be anti-racist.

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## Principles of Student-Centred Learning

EDI-R lenses must be integrated into all domains of life. We need to be able to self-reflect, hold others and ourselves accountable, be willing to learn and know better, and be willing to equip ourselves with the tools to teach others about EDI-R. To incorporate all these practices into student programming is to allow the student to have autonomy in their own learning. Institutions that prioritize western understandings of prestige force conformity amongst students of marginalized identities. Unlike teacher-centred approaches, student-centred learning calls for the instructor to go beyond transmitting knowledge and instead facilitate active learning experiences, giving marginalized students the opportunity to have their own everyday lives be spoken to.
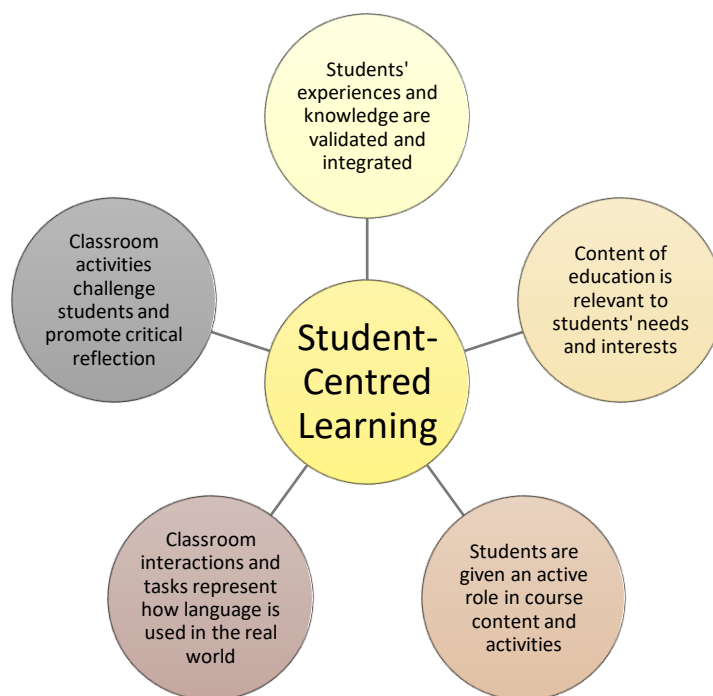


Figure 1: Principles of Student Centred Learning. Adapted from Ontario Tech University's Teaching and Learning Centre.

| Teacher-Centred Learning | Student-Centred Learning |
|---|---|
| The teacher is at the center of the learning process. | The student and their vast experiences at the center of the learning process. |
| The teacher deposits knowledge, similar to a passive banking system (Freire, 2018). | The teacher is merely a facilitator, involving students in the learning process. |
| The teacher chooses topics and activities with passive participation from the students. | Learners are primary designers in content that actively enables their everyday lives, sparking active participation. |
| Assessments are one-dimensional and focus on grading. | Assessments are multidimensional and provide continuous opportunities for feedback. |
| Prioritizes memorization and being correct. | Prioritizes critical thinking. |
| Academic culture is competitive and individualistic. | Academic culture is collaborative and supportive. |

Figure 2: Differences Between Teacher-Centred Learning and Student-Centred Learning. Adapted from Ontario Tech University's Teaching and Learning Centre.

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## Inclusive Design for Learning

You might be familiar with the concept of **Universal Design for Learning**, which attempts to create programming for users while taking into account a wide range of abilities and situations. While this is a good first try, attempting to account for everything possible tends to be counterproductive. Instead, let's turn to **Inclusive Design for Learning**, which means making choices that consider the needs of the people in the room. Instead of attempting to anticipate everything, inclusive design asks us to seek out and incorporate the feedback of students. This could look like co-creating your syllabus with your students during the first week of classes. The section below is a selection of questions from a Guide for Planning Inclusive Teaching Toolkit put together by San Jose State University.

### QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INCLUSIVE TEACHING

1. Are multiple identities and communities represented in the course material as legitimate sources of critique and knowledge?
2. Have I designed activities intended to bring students together in critical and student-led conversations?
3. Are there multiple ways for students to participate? Do my lessons/programming include multiple opportunities for students to talk with each other?
4. What opportunities for feedback can I facilitate for my students to help me make my course more inclusive?

## Resources for Student Programming

- "Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education: Lessons from Across Asia" – Catherine Shea Sanger: This open access book explores the relevance of understanding student diversity, providing a toolkit for educators.
- Educational Resources for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization: A resource guide put together by Wilfred Laurier University for educator self-growth and teaching resources.
- "Equitable but Not Diverse: Universal Design for Learning is Not Enough" – Amanda Roth, Gayatri Singh, and Dominique Turnbow: This journal article looks at the shortcomings of Universal Design for Learning.
- Students at the Center Hub: A resource hub that houses a variety of toolkits and educational material on student-centred learning.
- Why is Inclusive Instruction Important?: A resource hub for inclusive design for learning put together by the University of Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence.

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