

## **TAPP: Introduction to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Teaching Assistants**

### **Belinda Jin**

The Introduction to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion session emphasized the importance of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in education and provided a comprehensive overview of its principles, theories, and definitions. Beyond understanding the theory and key concepts related to EDI in teaching and learning environments, a key highlight for this session was the hands-on experience of using an AI tool <https://www.ai4equity.dev> to generate EDI-related scenarios and analyze them. This interactive component helped bridge the gap between theory and practical application, demonstrating how EDI can be integrated into real-world educational contexts.

As an instructional designer, I have already applied many of the EDI principles discussed during the session in my course design. Specifically, I led a team that designed an eight-week English Language and Culture ESL curriculum. Throughout this project, I consciously incorporated EDI principles into various aspects of the course to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Below are some of the key strategies I implemented, which directly align with the session's takeaways:

1. **Selecting Diverse Course Materials:** One of the primary ways to foster an inclusive learning environment is through the careful selection of course materials. In the ESL curriculum, I chose readings, resources, and examples that reflected the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of the students. By doing so, I aimed to create a curriculum that was both culturally responsive and engaging for students from various backgrounds. This approach ensured that students saw themselves represented in the materials, making the learning experience more meaningful and relevant.
2. **Using Inclusive Language:** The session highlighted the importance of using inclusive language in all course materials and interactions, which I ensured in my ESL course design. From lesson instructions to discussion prompts, I made sure that the language was neutral, respectful, and reflective of diverse identities. This not only creates a respectful atmosphere but also fosters a sense of belonging among students, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background.
3. **Offering Varied Instructional Approaches:** Another critical aspect of EDI in course design is accommodating diverse learning styles and abilities. To do this, I incorporated various instructional strategies in the ESL curriculum, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, group work, and technology-enhanced learning tools. This multimodal approach ensured that students with different learning preferences had equal opportunities to succeed. For example, students who excelled in visual learning benefited from infographics and videos, while those who preferred active participation thrived in group discussions and collaborative tasks.
4. **Fostering a Collaborative Learning Environment:** The session emphasized creating a collaborative and supportive learning space where students can learn from each other's diverse perspectives and experiences. In my curriculum, I facilitated this by encouraging peer-to-peer interactions, group discussions, and

collaborative projects. These activities promoted cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, allowing students to gain new insights into both language learning and cultural exchange. By working together on projects, students were able to learn not only from the instructor but also from their peers, enriching the overall learning experience.

5. **Providing Multiple Assessment Options:** The importance of offering diverse assessment options to cater to different learning styles was another key highlight from the session. In my course design, I offered students various ways to demonstrate their language proficiency. Instead of relying solely on traditional exams or written assignments, I included assessments like presentations, portfolios, and oral exams. This approach ensured that all students had the opportunity to showcase their strengths in ways that best suited their abilities, fostering a more equitable evaluation process.
6. **Ensuring Accessibility:** Accessibility is a core component of EDI, and during the session, we discussed the need to make course materials accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or diverse learning needs. In the ESL curriculum, I ensured that all course materials and activities were accessible by providing alternative formats, captions for videos, and accommodations where needed. This not only allowed students with disabilities to fully participate in the course but also made the learning experience more inclusive for everyone.

While I have applied these strategies in my instructional design work, I hope to see how they translate to my teaching practices. Teaching will offer me the opportunity to experience firsthand the impact of these EDI principles in the classroom. I believe that by practicing what I advocate, I will be able to further refine my approach and discover new ways to support diverse learners effectively.