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## Diversity Statement

Education is for everyone. No one should ever be left out of attaining the highest knowledge or skill level in a particular field, especially communication. To ensure that every student has an equal chance at succeeding in my courses, my approach to diversity and inclusion in the classroom can be summarized into three Ds: **design**, **dialogue**, and **deference**.

First, I embrace universal **design**. Universal design is an approach to creating educational materials and lectures that ensure that students of all abilities can utilize them effectively. In my online courses, I make sure to use alt-text on images, captioned video lectures, and a user-friendly layout of my modules. In my face-to-face classes, I selectively utilize examples and language that all are relatable to the demographic that I am teaching yet also not exclusive to others.

I also prioritize using OER materials to keep my courses free of charge, which lowers the cost barrier for my students. In fact, I led the creation of an OER to create this possibility for my 1318 students. Universal design is not about creating course materials and then “adapting” them for accessibility. Rather, it is creating materials with accessibility in mind from the beginning.

As I apply universally accessible principles, I also ensure to keep an open **dialogue** with my students. I know that my lived experiences do not account for everyone’s. When I share a story or give a personal example about a topic, I always create an opportunity for students to share their experiences on it too. They are repeatedly reminded that my experience is a limited one, and that they help provide a complete picture of possibilities by sharing theirs too. This reminder helps create a dialogic relationship among the students, course material, and me.

To ensure that the dialogue among students goes constructively, I create an environment of **deference**. Diversity is something to be embraced and respected. To implement that principle, I tell my students on the first day that they are not to judge other classmates for whatever they disclose in discussions. Instead, they are to seek understanding of what a particular person’s circumstances and lived experiences might have been. We want to create a classroom culture of deference, where every student can begin to understand and empathize with each other.

In sum, I embrace diversity and inclusion in the classroom through **design**, **dialogue**, and **deference**. These three elements work together to create an inclusive learning experience by having designed materials that create an opportunity for dialogue among students who are deferent to each other.