



Dealing with Multiple Ability Levels

- Keep in mind the goal: for *all* students to contribute successfully during class – including those who struggle. Success is a powerful motivator.
- Plan your questions in advance. Question at a variety of cognitive levels but include plenty that you know they can answer.
- Set students up for success by sequencing your questions logically (“scaffolding”)
- Include visual support for information/instructions you deliver aloud (charts, graphs, overheads, keywords on board).
- Learn the possible meanings of silence and respond appropriately (see attached).
- Channel the energy of zealous students in any positive way you can (i.e. use them ... to draw a diagram on the board, to model a concept, to rephrase or summarize concepts/directions, etc.. Make them a teaching ally).
 - Use the persistent question-answerer (to respond to questions from other students, to create possible test questions for others, to teach others in a small group).
 - Redirect the persistent question-asker by encouraging him/her to email you, come to office hours, or to continue the discussion with you after class.
- Be ready to challenge quick learners by having more difficult, alternative problems available. (“If you’re ready for an additional challenge, try this problem instead ...”).
- Use groups—try both homogeneous and heterogeneous ability groups.
- Ask yourself, “Will students who have not studied or read be able to participate successfully in this session today?” and plan for their lack of preparation. (Provide an excerpt from a text, for example, or have them summarize major points from a lecture/chapter in small groups).
- Encourage active use of in-class learning supports (lecture notes, textbook, a peer).