General Teaching Strategies

Below are strategies that benefit students with disabilities and assist in creating an equitable classroom. Some of these strategies may benefit all learners and may be described as Universal Design.

- Provide a copy of your syllabus in advance for students to access either the first day of the semester or even before the semester begins. Discuss class expectations the first day of the semester which will allow students to understand the structure of the course and behavior expectations. Include all semester due dates on your syllabus so that students can plan their workload ahead of time.

- Include a disability statement on your syllabus: “If you have a disability and will need academic accommodations please connect with the Office of AccessABILITY Services in room 207-M or via email at accessibilityservices@guttman.cuny.edu.

- If open, encourage students to discuss what strategies and accommodations have worked for them. Work with the Office of AccessABILITY Services to provide the needed supports. If you have any concerns or questions regarding the recommended accommodations, please do not hesitate to contact the person who signed to your House or Program of Study.

- Write an outline or key points on the board or power point before or during the lecture. Remember that all students have varying learning styles and your class may include students who have a visual, auditory or kinesthetic preference, as well as students with disabilities who have a disability that might impact any one or more of their senses.

- Provide written explanations of all assignments and discuss them in class. Offer office hours and contact information for students to follow up with you as needed.

- Be mindful when selecting a textbook or other instructional materials of the need for the book to be available in alternate format. Discussing the needs of students with disabilities with the publishers will assure that this is possible.

- Be mindful of the need for closed captioning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. If you have a deaf student in class do not show a film that is not closed captioned unless alternate arrangements have been made.

- Be aware that a recent Department of Justice and Office of Civil Rights Letter (2010) was issued to all institutions requiring that any technologies required at an institution be accessible to students with disabilities.
• Present topics using a variety of instructional methods including oral, visual and hands on projects. Provide cognitive supports such as summarizing major points, providing contextual information, offer scaffolding tools (outlines, class notes, summaries, study guides, copies of projected notes).

• Allow for voluntary student responses rather than calling directly on students. This is especially sensitive for students with speech and communication issues and students with short term processing disorders.

• Be open to assisting students in locating an effective peer note-taker, as indicated on the student’s accommodation card.

• Please do not provide disability related accommodations unless you have reviewed a student’s accommodation card.

Common Mistakes Made by Faculty that can lead to Institutional Violations

• Refusing to provide approved accommodations or informing the students not to use accommodations.

• Questioning whether the student has a disability or asking for information about their diagnosis.

• Inadvertently disclosing to classmates that a student has a disability.

• Not cooperating with the recommendations regarding Adapted Testing Services and insisting that a student take the “first” exam in class without proctoring with stated accommodations.