

Music of Multicultural America
Strategies and Safety Nets

Problem	Solution
Straight lecture was boring and did not engage students.	Incorporated Multimedia: Integrated my own piano playing, listening examples, videos, slides, and films to break up the monotony.
Students with limited English could not keep up with rapid-fire delivery—the same style that appealed to the young, restless native speakers.	Created précis for each lecture that provided an outline and guide as well as vocabulary. Audio-taped lecture for students to review.
Students had markedly different learning styles.	Allowed students to self-select from a variety of learning activities such as film observations and concert and special event attendance to supplement more conventional reading worksheets, lectures, and tests.
Test scores seemed just as dependent on English language facility as on understanding the concepts and information delivered in class.	Eventually moved toward alternative assessment measures such as take-home and open-book exams; essays.
Students seemed to be negatively obsessed with letter grades.	Moved to a “point accrual” system in which final letter grade was based on points earned from a variety of class activities.
Students occasionally had family, work, or school crises that prevented them from meeting deadlines and sometimes from completing the course.	Organized course into modules for which I retained and enforced deadlines, but allowed students to compensate for missed work by doing more work on other modules.
Excellent students wanted to work faster; poor students needed to work slower.	Because work was organized into modules, excellent students could work on more activities per module early in the quarter and be rewarded by “finishing” sooner than students who either had a slow start or who needed the work to be evenly paced throughout the quarter.