

# Diverse Representation in Class Content

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Skillcrush classes aim to celebrate and reflect student diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Also, Skillcrush aims to present positive, counter-stereotypical images to combat stereotypes and misconceptions encountered by our students. For example, common stereotypes and misconceptions are that tech is for white males only, tech requires a college degree, and that learning tech is best for young people.

## How Diversity Relates to Class Content

Instructional design often implicitly promotes the predominant culture's images and stereotypes, including those listed above. In other words, those making class content don't intentionally exclude or promote one representation over another; instead, it's a common phenomenon found at all levels of education.

So, how can we at Skillcrush prevent this unintentional messaging? First, it starts with awareness of where representations appear in the class content. Second, it takes those working on the instructional design—including instructional designers, SMEs, and instructors—to actively work to de-emphasize these images and stereotypes, while simultaneously emphasizing counter representations that promote the idea that tech is genuinely for everyone.

## Step 1: Gain Awareness

Emphasizing positive, diverse messages start with being aware of areas of representation in classes, including:

- On-screen video talent
- Personas in scenarios and case studies
- Names used in examples (e.g. "Jade is a programmer...")
- Authors/creators of recommended resources
- Authors/creators of exemplars (e.g., profiles, portfolios)
- Recommended experts in a field
- People included in visuals (e.g., screenshots, gifs, learning aids)
- Words to describe individual characteristics (e.g., race, age, gender, disability)

For examples of each representation area in current Skillcrush classes, see the [Class Representation Examples section](#) below.

## Step 2: Actively Choose Diverse Representations

With the areas identified, those working on the instructional design can seek to ensure a diverse representation of people in classes. The goal is not to highlight only one type of student or group of people above all others, but to present a variety of different representations.

Here are some steps you can take to add diversity to class content:

- Choose tech and design role models, like experts and thought leaders, from a variety of backgrounds.
- Mix up those example names! For inspiration, check out Wikipedia's list of [popular given names](#) by region or Baby Name Wizard's [International Names List](#).
- Hire on-screen talent underrepresented in previous Skillcrush videos.
- Create personas for video and text from a variety of backgrounds like different age groups, cultures, and life experiences. After all, our students come from various backgrounds, and their future clients will be diverse as well.
- Adopt bias-free language when describing individuals and groups. The American Psychological Association (APA) has a comprehensive guide to [Bias-Free Language](#).
- Use sources of diverse stock photos. Some sources are free, like photos from [Christina Morillo](#), while many others are paid, premium sources, like [Tonl](#), [Styled Stock Society](#), [ColorJoy Stock](#), [CreateHER Stock](#), and [Eye for Ebony](#).

## Skillcrush Class Representation Examples

Here are some representation examples that are currently in Skillcrush classes and resources, like the FAQ.

On-screen video talent

- Lex is a [video talent](#) in many classes. (Python, Digital Marketing, Advanced CSS, Git & GitHub, JS React, Coding Camp)
- Caro and Glenn are a [video talent team](#). (Milestone: Get Job Ready milestone)

#### Personas in scenarios and case studies

- Sylvia Sanchez is the [fictitious client](#) for digital marketing class projects.

#### Names used in examples (e.g. “Jade is a programmer...”)

- “Ann, Chelsea, Nichole, Max” are [contact names in a Python program](#) students build. (110: Getting Started with Python)

#### Authors/creators of recommended resources

- Students are linked to a blog, [A List Apart](#), whose tech articles are from authors with different backgrounds. (101: HTML & CSS)

#### Authors/creators of exemplars (e.g., profiles, portfolios)

- The [Skillcrush FAQ article on portfolios](#) lists former students' portfolios that current students can use for inspiration.

#### Recommended experts in a field

- [Internet entrepreneur Ash Ambirge](#) encourages readers to select a niche for their online business. (300: Intro to Freelancing)

#### People included in visuals (e.g., screenshots, gifs, learning aids)

- People from a variety of life experiences are reflected in the [photos used in the Hometown News site](#) students build. (210: Advanced CSS Layouts)
- An [example buyer persona](#) is an East Asian woman who lives in Brazil. (109: Intro to Digital Marketing)

#### Words to describe individual characteristics (e.g., race, age, gender, disability)

- In a video explaining the alt attribute, a [“person browsing your website is blind”](#) is described as using alt text. (101: HTML & CSS - video at the 3m06s mark)