Framing Your Course Design and Content

Have you incorporated a diversity and inclusion statement, information about class culture, and more in your syllabi? You may select and modify what is appropriate from sample language here: <https://www.ohio.edu/instructional-innovation/ctl/resources/syllabus-recommended.html>

☐ Have you weighed the pros and cons of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, and communicated flexibility within your syllabi of due dates for assignments due to technology, child or elder care, or work challenges?

☐Do you choose a textbook that is available through open access sites: <https://www.ohio.edu/instructional-innovation/initiatives/textbook-initiative.html>?

☐ Be transparent with students as to why the textbook was chosen, as well as limitations found with the textbook in regards to diversity and inclusion and the diversity of experts represented (see Wood et al. for an analysis on demographics in biology textbooks).

☐ If able, create space in your class (through a discussion on Blackboard, or a day reserved in your course schedule to explore student requests) that allows for students to contribute suggested readings or perspectives that uplift perspectives from those who have been marginalized on the basis of their identity (LGBTQ+ population, communities of color, women).

☐ Do you provide diversified assessment opportunities?

☐ Are there low risk assignments that allow students trial and error in their learning process?

☐ Are there options for how a student can demonstrate how they have achieved the learning outcomes?

☐ Can students have a phone/Teams/Zoom conversation with you rather than writing a paper?

☐ Can students propose their own assessment ideas?[[1]](#footnote-1)

☐ Do you have a grading rubric visible to your students, or use a matrix that shows how each assessment/assignment aligns with the learning outcomes?

Questions you should ask yourself regarding your course content:

How do you represent canon in your field? (i.e. Are diverse voices represented? Are you able to identify to your students the identities of those whose texts you are reading?)

Is diversity represented *throughout* the syllabus? For example, do you have discussions about how healthcare can be improved for racial and ethnic minorities only during Black History Month, or is it infused throughout your course?

Do you include diverse examples for your case studies or in how you assess the learning outcomes for your course? Have you analyzed the case studies that you have chosen for issues of bias, or perpetuating stereotypes?

☐ Wherever possible, have you created learning outcomes or embedded the following intercultural competencies or diversity and inclusion within the course material in order to assist student achievement in their careers within your field?

☐ Can you incorporate a learning outcome, skills, or knowledge that focuses on being an engaged, and better-informed public? E.g., Awareness of one’s role and value in contributing to the community at large;

☐ Can you incorporate a learning outcome, skills, or knowledge that addresses diversity and inclusion in the community? E.g., Improved familiarity with the expectations of our professional body in respect to inclusive practices within the workplace;

☐ Can you incorporate an outcome, skills, or knowledge that includes incorporating diverse readings? E.g., Understanding of diverse and marginalized perspectives within one‘s field;

☐ Can you incorporate an outcome, skills, or knowledge that looks historically at bias and privilege in one’s field? E.g., Knowledge of how bias has limited those in one’s field, and how that bias has shaped what areas have been studied and how communities have been impacted;

☐ Can you incorporate an outcome, skills, or knowledge in healthy conversation or intercultural communication? E.g., Debate controversial issues by using academic resources, whilst respecting everyone in the classroom.

Have you assessed your PowerPoints, assignments, and lectures for the following?

Universal design elements (including closed captioning, color contrast, and much more, see [Hollingshead P. 292](https://proxy.library.ohio.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgvr&AN=edsgcl.7424000029&site=eds-live&scope=site) for a helpful checklist, (Hollingshead link requires OHIO login): <https://www.ohio.edu/instructional-innovation/stories/showcase/universal-design-for-learning.html>

Diversity in visual imagery and examples, without relying on stereotypes. Visual cues may assist our students in seeing themselves within our fields of study and foster social identification with the field.

Acknowledgement of conflicts within your field, or issues that demonstrate a history of institutionalized oppression (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) and the steps that your field is taking, or considering, to improve.

References:

Hollingshead, Aleksandra. *Designing Engaging Online Environments: Universal Design for Learning Principles*, 2018. <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.library.ohio.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgvr&AN=edsgcl.7424000029&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Wood, Sara, Henning, Jeremiah A., Chen, Luoying, McKibben, Taylor, Smith, Michael L., Weber, Marjorie, Zemenick, Ash and Ballen, Cissy J. (2020). A scientist like me: demographic analysis of biology textbooks reveals both progress and long-term lags. Proceedings. Biological Sciences, 287(1929), 20200877. https://doi-org.proxy.library.ohio.edu/10.1098/rspb.2020.0877

1. Not only does this recognize technological barriers that could impede submitting pre-designed assessments, but it also allows students flexibility in demonstrating their knowledge within your classroom. Inclusive pedagogy encourages providing multiple forms of assessment, either by you diversifying assessment throughout the course and/or you providing different options for students and allowing them to choose which assessment they would like to complete. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)