

UCLA Teaching & Learning Center Equity Self-Assessment for Course Design

Use the rubric below to perform an equity self-assessment of your course plan (syllabus and major assignments--and any activities you have already planned / commonly use in your courses). It is important to **identify successes** so you can build on your strengths as an educator, but we also encourage you to **identify challenges and/or growth edges** on which you would like to work.

The equitable teaching practices listed on the left side of the chart on page 2 have been drawn from research on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Culturally Responsive/Sustaining Pedagogies. To prepare for this activity, you may want to review the short overviews of these pedagogies provided below. We have also included a list of sample strategies for interrupting bias in course design at the end of this resource guide, along with a link to additional resources. We welcome feedback from instructors who have used this self-assessment tool. Please contact TLC Associate Director for Faculty Engagement Dr. Beth Goodhue at bgoodhue@teaching.ucla.edu.

To download this resource guide or save a copy to your personal Google Drive, click FILE at top left of the menu and select the option of your choice.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is “a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn” (UDL Guidelines from CAST). The [UDL Guidelines homepage](#) outlines the three key commitments of UDL: offering multiple means of 1) engagement, 2) representation, and 3) action/expression. If you would like to take a deeper dive, feel free to click on any items in the table on the homepage that interest you--but you may find it easier to navigate through the PDF format of this [UDL Progression Rubric](#), which offers a deeper dive into UDL principles and includes examples of application to specific teaching contexts.

Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies encompass a wide range of teaching practices that emphasize “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 2010). Specific examples of culturally responsive teaching practices include incorporating diverse perspectives into course content (e.g. by diversifying reading lists), and ensuring that case studies, lecture examples, slide representations, exam questions, and assignment prompts reflect diverse cultural contexts and invite diverse applications of course concepts. To learn

more, we recommend [this overview of culturally responsive and sustaining teaching practices](#). If you would like to take a deeper dive, we recommend [this interview](#) with UCLA Professor H. Samy Alim and Django Paris of Michigan State University.

Equitable Course Design Self-Assessment Rubric

Strategy <i>Add your own equity concerns at the end of the table!</i>	Examples of how you are already working toward this goal & notes about challenges you are facing, steps you would like to take, and/or questions you have. Be specific!
Course expectations are transparent and authentic to the learning goals and disciplinary context.	What's going well? Challenges / growth edges in this area:
Course materials (e.g. textbooks, readings, multimedia content, etc) explore a broad range of diverse contributions to the discipline AND/OR Instructor acknowledges the lack of diversity in the discipline or topic under study, and provides a platform for discussion around representations and stereotypes.	What's going well? Challenges / growth edges in this area:

<p>Lecture content reflects diversity (e.g. case studies, powerpoint images, etc)</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>
<p>Lecture content is aligned with specific principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), i.e., multiple means of representation, action and expression, and/or engagement.</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>
<p>Course activities and assessments invite students to connect with their own lives and/or reflect on course content in relation to a variety of socio-cultural perspectives.</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>
<p>Course activities and assessments are aligned with specific principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), i.e., multiple means of representation, action and expression, and/or engagement.</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>
<p>Syllabus tone is welcoming and inclusive, striving to foster a growth mindset and cultivate community and belonging.</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>

<p>Course policies are transparent and framed to foster student agency and encourage shared ownership in the learning process.</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>
<p>[ADDITIONAL CRITERIA WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS]</p>	<p>What's going well?</p> <p>Challenges / growth edges in this area:</p>

NOTE: The self-assessment activity above was created by UCLA TLC Associate Director for Faculty Engagement Dr. Beth Goodhue (bgoodhue@teaching.ucla.edu). Some features of this activity have been adapted from an [equitable course design rubric](#) that was developed by the UC Instructional Design & Faculty Support (IDFS) Community of Practice. This UC-wide rubric is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Some Suggested Strategies for Centering Equity and Belonging in Course Design

Strategies for Interrupting Bias in Instructional Activities

- Offer multiple means for engaging with course concepts.
 - Incorporate multiple modalities for content delivery: text, image, video, audio, etc.
 - Offer multiple modalities for engagement: discussion, writing, polling, small group work, etc.
- Reflect & respond to cultural diversity across course design.
 - Expand reading lists beyond white male authors & other dominant voices.
 - Ensure course materials & assignments reflect diverse cultural contexts and invite diverse applications.
- Incorporate structured active & collaborative learning.

- Structure activities to help students practice applying course concepts.
- Design activities & group work with attention to equitable participation & awareness of bias.

Strategies for Interrupting Bias in Assessment

- Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate course knowledge
 - Give students choices about how to meet course objectives.
 - Vary assignment types & modalities -- papers, quizzes, projects, oral presentations, podcast/video, etc.
- Include authentic, culturally responsive options for assignments
 - Invite students to leverage prior knowledge & experience.
 - Create opportunities to apply course concepts to real-world situations & specific cultural contexts.
- Offer more low-stakes assessments with feedback
 - Break large assignments into component parts w/ feedback.
 - Use low-stakes quizzes in place of / as practice for exams.
 - Choose criterion-based rather than curved grading & use rubrics.