# Portland Community College - Culturally Responsive Online Teaching

This is a living document that's updated occasionally with new resources and ideas

**Document Table of Contents**

## Culturally responsive online teaching: Common themes

By the CROT Inquiry Group at Portland Community College, 2019
**Culturally responsive online teaching has the following characteristics:**

1. It *establishes* a culture of *inclusion* in the online space, specifically by
   a. Maximizing opportunities for fully human communication between instructors and students;
   b. Eliminating barriers to use of technology by all students;
   c. Using the full affordances of technology to create opportunities for engagement and active learning; and
   d. Using technology to enact multiple pedagogical strategies to support different cultural learning styles; strategies might include multimodal learning, universal

design for learning, choice in assignment structure and the deliverable and in ways of demonstrating outcomes.

2. It *conveys* messages of *openness* to new ways of thinking and being, and *avoids standardization* in ways of thinking and being ("This is the way things are …"). It acknowledges students as legitimate knowledge sources and as co-creators of learning, within a community. It uses technology to create different paths to the same destination, while acknowledging the primacy of lived experiences and a student's life goals.

3. It *challenges* students to give the best that their authentic selves can produce in the pursuit of greater knowledge and improved skills (instructor as "warm demander"). It allows students to challenge the system and helps them figure out where they are and where they are going in the system.

4. It *acknowledges the importance of relationships* within the online space, using technology to support social activities such as group-work. It recognizes the power dynamics involved in formal instruction while allowing students to feel comfortable in their current place.

5. It provides *access* to necessary support and advising services for student success and an *awareness* of the life-challenges our students might be facing that can divert from successful learning.

6. It provides *flexibility* for students. "Teacher as ally."

# Questions to ask about your online course

## Course structure

- ○ What assumptions am I making about learners when I create the structure and learning activities within the online class?
- ○ What assumptions does my LMS make about learners? And what assumptions does the LMS make about what a virtual learning space *should* look like?
- ○ Do the learning activities in my online course reflect a variety of ways of learning?
- ○ How much choice can I give learners in creating learning experiences that work for them?
- ○ Are learners provided opportunities to demonstrate various ways of knowing?

## Course content

- ● What is the dominant ideology represented in my course? What inequities does that present?
- ● Who is not present in my course content?

- How does it make a student feel to not see their identity represented?
- How can I challenge the dominant perspective or usual way of doing things?
- Have I provided opportunities for the learners to contribute knowledge to the course?

## Online community

- How can I create an atmosphere where it's safe for students to be vulnerable?
- Do my actions as the instructor demonstrate my care for students?
- How can my online classroom feel less impersonal and more about connection and community?
- What could encourage students to have a positive academic mindset?

# Tips for making your online course more culturally responsive

## Course structure

- Create individual **and** group learning activities, and allow students to choose learning activities, where possible. A destination may be reached by many different paths.
- Allowing different paths does NOT mean "anything goes"! Think about providing choice within structure.
- Maximize the use of any "group" tools in your learning management system. Most LMSs default to individualized learning activities, so it will be more work to create group activities - but the effort will really benefit your collectivist learners.

## Course content

Selecting Content:

- Choose reading that reflect diverse contributions from your field
- Be mindful of visuals that reinforce stereotypes
- Emphasize a range of identities in readings and resources used
- Choose materials that reflect a diverse range of student experiences

Instructor Practices:

- Use a variety of teaching methods and modalities
- Emphasize the larger purpose and value of course content- give students space to explain where it content fits into their lives and experiences
- Help students connect their prior learning to new learning in your class
- Invite students to bring and share content- especially examples from their lived experience

## Online community

- Use technology to enhance verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors
- Encourage students to form discussion groups that can occur synchronously
- Instead of providing a study guide for exams, host a live study session online where students help you build the study guide for an exam
- Ask students to share how what they've learned shows up in the community around them
- Use appropriate self-disclosure to build a climate of reciprocity and trust.

# TLC Session: Debate on Due Dates

In this session we debate the topic *Online instructors should require students to meet assignment deadlines* since our approach to structure and late work is an important consideration in culturally responsive teaching.

## Links to Group's Debate Arguments

[Group 1- Affirmative](#)
[Group 2- Affirmative](#)
[Group 3- Negative](#)
[Group 4- Negative](#)

## Crowd sourced practices related to deadlines

- I at least hope for a conversation with the students who are needing extension and in that conversation the purpose is to set up a plan that they design and adhere to
- I've taken to be very explicit about being flexible, but do ask that students reach out to me so we can if there's a larger conversation to have. In our group we talked too about using the tools of D2L to get students to talk to us like a zero in the gradebook with a comment that they can still complete the work. They'll respond to the zero.
- I hold them to discussion deadlines only. Assignments and quizzes are given "due dates" but will remain open
- In most cases I give another week, but I am also open to negotiation, because life has a way of happening while you're busy making other plans, as the song goes.
- I will accept late work through a specified date during finals week, usually Wednesday. There is no penalty for late work. I use contract grading. The only downside for students is that they won't get feedback on work that's extremely late.
- I give students a second deadline ("can you get it to me by next Friday?" e.g.) in order to keep late-term grading to a minimum, but the absolute too-late deadline for me isn't until Saturday before grades are due.

- I have due dates with late work accepted with 10% reduction in points for each week it is late.  They can email me for extensions.  Discussions do not allow late posts (so I can monitor them, and I use it to confirm attendance)
- This is the language in my syllabus:  "Due dates are in the Course Schedule and on the Week Overview pages in Canvas.  If your work is there when I grade it, it's on time and gets graded. If it isn't, it gets a 0. If you can't make a due date, tell me ahead of time and make arrangements with me.  If you miss a due date and/or have gotten a 0, communicate with me when you expect to turn your work in AND when you actually turn it in.
- The absolute last date to turn in any work except for the final project is the last day the class meets. Don't wait until this date! Communicate with me so that you can successfully complete your work, benefit from it, and receive the best grade."

- For my classes, I have a due date but my policy is that all work can be turned in one week late no questions asked. The day after the due date I put a 0 in the gradebook with a note letting them know the date they can submit by. I've had higher rates of assignment completion with this format.
- Perhaps instead of "No Late Work"....exceptions are ...and specify extreme illness i.e. COVID, death in family, etc.
- The weekly assignments have due date set up but my students could turn them in before a deadline in the midterm and a deadline before final.
- I have a due date and an end date a week later. I put a '0' in the grade with a soft reminder that they have a week to get it in … that '0' (and a comment) is a good reminder. I stopped deducting points this year and it's going fine.
- Counterpoint: sometimes I feel that endless deadlines are cruel and keep students in a class that they will never actual complete. Maybe cutting them loose would be more compassionate.
- I think the point that some students might not feel comfortable asking for extensions or help due to cultural reasons is SO IMPORTANT!
- I send out a "gentle reminder" the day the assignments are due and often offer a "if it comes in by the end of today or tomorrow" as most often I will not grade the work that day (unless it's a really time sensitive assignment in terms of scaffolding)
- I have a calendar with clear due dates for each deliverable/contribution, but I make it clear that there's plenty of flexibility for most activities (except when there's a situation where logistically it won't work — e.g. peer review. But then I have a "second chance group." I use contract grading, so they're looking at the whole picture of their engagement for the term, so I don't have to deal with whether to penalize or not.  (Note: I teach writing.)

# Resources

Davis, Bonnie M. *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies*. 2nd edition. Corwin, 2012.

Freire, Paulo. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder & Herder, 1970.

Gay, Geneva. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & Practice*. Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 2000.

Ginsberg, Margery B. and Raymond J. Wlodkowski. *Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching in College*. Wiley, 2009.

Gonzalez, Jennifer. An interview with Zaretta Hammond. Cult of Pedagogy web site (https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/culturally-responsive-misconceptions/). Downloaded on Feb 1, 2019.

Hammond, Zaretta. *Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Corwin, 2015.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children*. Wiley, 2009.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 465-491.

Plotts, Courtney. *Three Secrets to Building Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environments*. A Magna Online Seminar. Magna Publications, 2018.

# Crowd sourced live from other presentations we've made

https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/aeq.12146

Link to Zaretta Hammond's site:
https://crtandthebrain.com/book/

https://www.amazon.com/Culturally-Responsive-Pedagogy-Decolonization-Interculturalism/dp/3319834924/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=culturally+responsive+pedagogy+working+towards+decolonization+indigeneity+and+interculturalism&qid=1592935972&sr=8-1

Folks may also be interested in reviewing the recordings from USC's Center for Urban Equity webinar series this spring on equity-minded online teaching: https://cue.usc.edu/events/

https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/16/05/where-are-all-teachers-color

This a good read. We need to have more educators of color and decolonize the epistemological perspectives of the Eurocentric view that seeks to marginalize students of color.
https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/aeq.12146

https://www.natcom.org/communication-currents/instructor's-corner-nonverbal-immediacy-behaviors-and-online-student

https://www.apadivisions.org/division-20/publications/newsletters/adult-development/2015/04/online-learning

Videoconferencing Alternatives: How Low-Bandwidth Teaching Will Save Us All

https://www.iddblog.org/videoconferencing-alternatives-how-low-bandwidth-teaching-will-save-us-all/

Another good read
https://rowman.com/isbn/9781498503754/decolonizing-the-westernized-university-interventions-in-philosophy-of-education-from-within-and-without

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