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**LEARNING DESIGN REFLECTIONS**   
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION | UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING | TEACHING AND LEARNING ONLINE

**CATEGORY OF CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS:**

COMMUNITY BUILDING and COLLABORATION

**SEE ALSO:**

ACCESSIBILITY

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

DIVERSE APPROACHES

FACILITATING ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

ACCESS TO THE INSTRUCTOR

**Have you wondered about whether the learning activities and assessments you have designed are accessible, inclusive, and equitable? Have you contemplated how these approaches might be taken up in an online teaching and learning environment? Could your existing practices benefit from being explored through different lenses?**

**This tool was designed for you.**

**This is a tool that poses reflective questions and offers relevant resources inviting you to think about how to design face-to-face and online approaches to learning that are meaningfully accessible, diverse, equitable, and inclusive.**

Bringing together considerations informed by equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) educational framework, and best practices in teaching and learning online, this tool offers a nexus of considerations intended to help strengthen and enrich teaching and learning ideas, practices, and approaches at the University of Calgary.

There are six broad areas of consideration, organized into subcategories to facilitate targeted navigation. Each area offers questions intended to invite reflection about some aspect of learning design. Embedded throughout these considerations are over 50 links to related resources, included to help facilitate informed responses to self-observed deficits.

These reflective questions and the embedded resources are downloadable by section, one of which is captured here. The references that helped inform these questions are included. A full list of resources is available as a separate downloadable document.

| **COMMUNITY BUILDING and COLLABORATION** | | **YES** | **NO** | **I will revisit this** | **NOTES** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Shared Terms of Learning** | Does the course establish guidelines, ground rules, or community agreements for class participation?2  See UCLA’s summary of how to create these terms and respond to violations of them on pages 9 and 10 in the guide, [Creating a Positive Classroom Climate for Diversity](https://equity.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CreatingaPositiveClassroomClimateWeb-2.pdf). |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course address how differences of positionality/opinion/thinking will be handled in the classroom?6  For various ways to thoughtfully and meaningfully engage with difficult differences, see:   * Carnegie Mellon University’s strategies about how to [Handle Difficult Moments with Respect & Sensitivity](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/classroomclimate/handledifficultmoments.html#moments). * Several tools and approaches observed in [Diversity and Inclusion in the College Classroom](https://provost.tufts.edu/celt/files/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report.pdf), a Faculty Focus Special Report from Tufts. * [Addressing Microaggressions in the Classroom](https://teaching.washington.edu/topics/inclusive-teaching/addressing-microaggressions-in-the-classroom/) from the University of Washington * The University of British Columbia’s Inclusive Teaching module, [Navigating Difficult Conversations](https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/31444/pages/1-introduction-to-difficult-conversations?module_item_id=1523434). |  |  |  |  |
| **Fostering Collaboration and Community** | Does the course foster collaboration and community?4  See Yale’s recommendations on fostering an [Inclusive Classroom Climate](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/ClassClimates) and McMaster’s [Summary of Principles of Inclusive Teaching and Learning](https://mi.mcmaster.ca/inclusive-teaching/#tab-content-5-principles-of-inclusive-teaching). |  |  |  |  |
| Is collaboration or perspective-taking identified in the syllabus as skills that students will build in the course?2  See [Encouraging Perspective-Taking among College Students](https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/encouraging-perspective-taking-among-college-students) from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course involve a *Course Café*discussion board as a social place for students to interact outside the course requirements?5 *(Note that students might use their own preferred method of communicating outside the University’s Learning Management System (LMS) for social interactions and collaboration.)* |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course allow for productive risk and failure?  See [Why Students Need to Fail: How Falling Flat on Your Face May be a Terrific Way to Learn](https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/why-students-need-to-fail/) from University Affairs. |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course make it known that struggle and challenge are important parts of the learning process, not signs of student deficiency?2  See this article from *Educational Theory*, [Feeling Heard: Inclusive Education, Transformative Learning, and Productive Struggle](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/edth.12449?af=R). |  |  |  |  |
| **Perspective Taking and Diverse Perspectives as Strengths**  See the significance of *Diversity/Global Learning*, one of [Kuh’s (2008) High-Impact Educational Practices](https://provost.tufts.edu/celt/files/High-Impact-Ed-Practices1.pdf) summarized [here](https://www.aacu.org/node/4084). | Does the course communicate openness to multiple perspectives and experiences?6  See [The Ideal of the Common: The Importance of Perspective and Diversity in Students’ Intellectual Development](https://provost.tufts.edu/celt/news/2017/03/20/the-ideal-of-the-common-the-importance-of-perspective-and-diversity-in-students-intellectual-development/) from Tufts. |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course provide course materials and learning activities that encourage student interactions and different perspectives?5 |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course allow students to complete low-stakes small group activities that are inclusive for all group members and help them see and value the contributions of others?2  See this comprehensive description of [Inclusive Small Group Work](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/guides-to-support-inclusive-teaching-and-learning/inclusive-small-group-work/) from Oxford Brookes University. |  |  |  |  |
| Could the course incorporate study groups that deliberately group students with different strengths?2 |  |  |  |  |
| If the course involves long-term teams, are check-ins and opportunities for peer feedback about group process structured in?2 |  |  |  |  |

**REFERENCES**

The references below helped give shape to the categories and subcategories of considerations that inform the learning design reflection questions.

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| **1** | Diversity & Inclusion Syllabus Checklist (University of Southern California) <https://libguides.usc.edu/ld.php?content_id=39088117> |
| **2** | Inclusive Teaching Strategies: Reflecting on Your Practice (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan) <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QXOsiu5aDsbksadPpt0HqwNLXdLYfQayHa4miQ6PPpM/edit#heading=h.30j0zll> |
| **3** | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) (Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta) <https://www.ualberta.ca/centre-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-support/preparation/edi.html> |
| **4** | The UDL Guidelines [Universal Design for Learning] <https://udlguidelines.cast.org> |
| **5** | Online Course Design Checklist (Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary) <https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/Content/Resources/Online-Learning/Online-Course-Design-Checklist.pdf> |
| **6** | Inclusion by Design: Survey your Syllabus and Course Design (Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, Yale University) <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/inclusion_by_design_survey_your_syllabus_1.pdf> |