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

**CATEGORY OF CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS:**

FACILITATING ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

**SEE ALSO:**

ACCESSIBILITY

COMMUNITY BUILDING and COLLABORATION

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

DIVERSE APPROACHES

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.

| **FACILITATING ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT** | | **YES** | **NO** | **I will revisit this** | **NOTES** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Clear Course Structure**  See Principle 2, in particular, of [5 Principles as Pathways to Inclusive Teaching](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/02/19/practical-steps-toward-more-inclusive-teaching-opinion) from Inside Higher Ed. | Does the course build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance?4  See these Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines around action and expression to [Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance](https://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression/expression-communication/fluencies-practice-performance). |  |  |  |  |
| Is content and/or are modules organized by topic or week, with clear start and end times that are intuitive to navigate?5 |  |  |  |  |
| Does each module list associated learning outcomes, with clear connection to associated learning activities and assessments?5 |  |  |  |  |
| Are due dates clearly communicated and consistent throughout the course (e.g., in discussion boards, assignments, and course outline)?5 |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships within content?4  See these Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines about how to [Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships](https://udlguidelines.cast.org/representation/comprehension/patterns-features). |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment Relevance, Variety, and Practice** | Are connections between real-world issues and course topics and content drawn?6  See this description of [Authentic/Alternative Assessments](https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1418620/pages/authentic-slash-alternative-assessment) and their connection to real-world competencies from the University of Washington. |  |  |  |  |
| Do assessments and activities optimize relevance, value, and authenticity?4, 6  See Brigham Young University’s pros, cons, and guidelines around [using alternative assessments](https://ctl.byu.edu/using-alternative-assessments) and Ryerson University’s [Best Practices in Alternative Assessments](https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/learning-teaching/teaching-resources/assessment/alternative-assessments.pdf). |  |  |  |  |
| Are a variety of assessment methods used throughout the course to provide student opportunities to demonstrate learning in multiple modalities and weightings?5, 6  See the University of Calgary’s list of [Alternative Online Assessments](https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/alternative-online-assessments) generated by the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, [A Guide to Alternative Assessments](https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/38325/Guide_Alternative_Assessments.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y) from York University, and this [List of Authentic Assessment Ideas](https://studylib.net/doc/18406293/a-list-of-authentic-assessment-ideas) on studylib.net. |  |  |  |  |
| If using online quizzes/tests, is an online practice test available to students to familiarize them with the technology and testing environment?5  See [Making the Transition to Online Exams](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-assessing-students/making-transition-online-exams) from the University of Waterloo. |  |  |  |  |
| **Supplemental Learning Opportunities**  See K. Patricia Cross Academy’s detailed description of [Making Good Use of Discussion Boards](https://kpcrossacademy.org/making-good-use-of-online-discussion-boards/). | Does the course involve an *FAQ* discussion board to encourage collaborative learning and where answers to common questions can be posted? This strategy can also reduce emails to the instructor.5 |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course feature a ‘*Dig Deeper’* discussion board for students to share additional resources they find?5 |  |  |  |  |
| **Multimedia**  See Carleton’s [Using Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning](https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/media/index.html). | Does the course use common file formats such as .doc or .pdf.?5  See the [Educator’s Accessibility Toolkit](https://accessiblecampus.ca/tools-resources/educators-tool-kit/) from the Council of Ontario Universities. |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course involve multiple media for communication?4  See the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines on how to [Use multiple media for communication](https://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression/expression-communication/use-multimedia). |  |  |  |  |
| Does the course leverage multiple tools for construction and composition?4  See the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines on how to [Use multiple tools for construction and composition](https://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression/expression-communication/construction-composition). |  |  |  |  |

**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> |