**Planning Worksheet for Inclusive & Equitable Teaching Online**

With each issue of the Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter Summer Series, you’ll be provided with a planning worksheet so that you can apply the tips and best practices for inclusive & equitable teaching presented in the newsletter issue to your online course plans. In each planning worksheet, we suggest some best practices as possible examples for you to use in your online course. The list of examples is not exhaustive, and we encourage you to try one or more of these examples when planning your course or use them as a jumping-off point for your own further research.

**MAKING LEARNING RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL**

***Download this document to use it for your planning!***

Reflect on your online teaching and how you incorporate students’ identities, backgrounds, and ways of knowing to make learning inclusive, relevant, and meaningful for all, including students from minoritized or under-represented groups. Then identify practices & plan activities that you already use or that you wish to explore to make learning relevant and meaningful for all online students.

| **Reflection Questions for Making Learning Relevant and Meaningful**   * How do I make learning relevant and meaningful for all of my online students, including minoritized or under-represented populations? * How does my teaching reflect intentional efforts to engage Mason’s diverse and/or under-represented populations? * How does my teaching demonstrate cultural sensitivity for all, including international and multilingual students? * How does my online course reflect & include a diversity of voices? * How is my online course content (including images and media) inclusive and relevant to Mason’s diverse and evolving student body? |
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| **Identify & Plan for Inclusive & Equitable Teaching Online**   * View the listed examples of best practices for culturally responsive teaching on the following pages. Then consider & plan various ways you may incorporate culturally responsive teaching into your online courses, guided by the four elements of the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching: **Inclusion, Attitude, Meaning, and Confidence**. |

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| **How to Create a Culturally Responsive Learning Environment Online?**  [**The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching**](https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/05/16/motivational-framework-instructional-equity-higher-education/)encourages participation, inquiry, and discourse by respecting students’ varied backgrounds. On the following pages, we share teaching practices which you may use for culturally responsive teaching online. Practices are organized according to the four elements of the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching: **Inclusion, Attitude, Meaning and Confidence** [see table below].  You’ll also find many of these practices detailed in the Stearns Center Digital Learning’s *Quality Assurance Checklist and Guidelines for Online Courses* (available by request from [**Stearns Center Digital Learning Quality Assurance Team**](mailto:qateam@gmu.edu?subject=Quality%20Assurance%20Checklist%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Online%20Courses)).  We encourage you to try one or more of these examples when planning & teaching your online course, in order to make learning relevant and meaningful to all online students.   | **FOUR ELEMENTS OF MOTIVATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR**  **CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING** | | --- | | **Establish INCLUSION**  *Students feel safe, respected and connected.* | | **Develop ATTITUDE**  *Students find learning relevant and related to their personal lives and goals.* | | **Enhance MEANING**  *Students learn from challenging learning experiences that with support, lead to deep engagement & meaning in learning.* | | **Engender CONFIDENCE**  *Students are effectively learning something they value in ways that authentically apply to their lives and aspirations.* | |

| **Examples of Practices to Establish Inclusion**   * **Start with the syllabus!** Include [**Mason Diversity Statement**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/purpose-and-mission/mason-diversity-statement/) in your syllabus.   Include statements or ground rules for civil communication, such as these examples:   * + We should respect diverse points of view. We do not need to agree on any particular issues; we can agree to disagree.   + Our use of language should be respectful of other persons or groups. As your instructor, I will not let injurious statements pass without comment. * You need not represent any group, only yourself, though you may choose to describe? a group if you wish. * If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the class environment, it is your responsibility to discuss it with me, your instructor. * **Share with your students that you support an inclusive & culturally-responsive classroom;** let them know what that means and what is expected of everyone in the course to support inclusion. Include your students in this initial discussion to set the tone of shared responsibility for their learning. * **Start off your online course with a discussion of culture – how it is defined and what it means.** It is important that your students have a shared understanding of how culture is defined. Culture includes many dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and age. As appropriate, continue discussions of culture and its dimensions throughout your course.      * **In class introductions, share cultural identities and backgrounds.** You are encouraged to share your own cultural identities and backgrounds, and have your students share their cultural identities and backgrounds. Having students feel comfortable to share their voices promotes inclusion and a culturally-responsive learning environment. * **Treat students as individuals whose identities are complex and unique.** Ask open-ended questions to solicit students' reports of their own experiences without calling on a single student to speak for their race, gender, culture, etc. * **Model cultural sensitivity.**  Be aware that international and multilingual students in your class face unique challenges, including cultural, social, and language challenges. Set clear expectations about your role as an instructor, students' role, and the online learning environment. Model how you would like all your students to behave and treat each other. Facilitate student collaborations between local and international students. Also, see Stearns Center’s information on [**Teaching Multilingual Learners**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/student-engagement-classroom-managment/teaching-multilingual-learners/) and [**Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom.**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Cultural-sensitivity-in-the-classroom.pdf) |
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| **Examples of Practices to Develop Attitude**   * **Include representation of diversity in course content.** Most mainstream academic textbooks and curricula are tailored to the dominant cultural group. Include content, images, and media that reflect diverse identities, especially reflecting the identities of your students. * **Include and acknowledge diverse contributions.** Include content acknowledging contributions of researchers, scholars, and scientists from minoritized or under-represented groups. Contact your [**Mason Subject Librarian**](https://library.gmu.edu/subject-librarians) for assistance in finding content. * **Keep content current and relevant to all.**  Connect course material to students’ identities, cultures, communities, and real-world issues. * **Invite students to help create culturally-relevant content.** Ask students to find news items, articles, and resources which show how real-world issues affect them and their cultural identities. Incorporate diverse student voices, perspectives, and examples without stereotyping. * **Include multiple perspectives through media**. Use TED talks, YouTube or Vimeo videos, podcasts, and content from other educational sites to show multiple perspectives on a topic. * **Pay attention to images posted to your course.** Images send powerful messages to your students. Ensure images and illustrations represent diverse appearances (*e.g.,* races, genders, abilities, ages, etc.). * **Use supportive language that promotes a growth mindset.** Use inclusive language that focuses on assets and constructive actions for every student, not on perceived deficits. |

| **Examples of Practices to Enhance Meaning**   * **Guide your students in critical and reflective thinking.** Have them draw connections between their identities and course content. In the asynchronous online Blackboard classroom, have students share their reflections in [**journals**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Interact/Journals)**,** [**wikis**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Original/Interact/Wikis), or [**discussion boards**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Interact/Discussions/Manage/Moderate_Discussions). * **Consider ways to engage students with the course content, with one another, and with you.** Try out our new tools, [**VoiceThread**](https://voicethread.com/) or [**Harmonize**](https://harmonize.42lines.net/about), which allow for interactive multimedia experiences in Blackboard. These tools now are available to Mason instructors to be integrated into your Blackboard courses. Learn more about these tools by viewing recorded training presentations found posted at [**Webinars & Trainings**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/trainings/) on the Stearns Center website. You must complete the [**License Request Form**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VXKFnlffR0ygwAVGRgOAy3ice4DtLX1Lg1V4L6MUxOtUM1JZTzQwTTJWWFYyUEFNN01RNzcxTzdFNS4u) to receive access to the tools. Note that licenses are limited during this pilot year and will be distributed on a first-come-first-serve basis. * **Provide support for academic success.** Help your students to understand academic integrity, academic writing, online learning, and how to access library resources. Direct students to Mason resources, such as [**Office of Academic Integrity**](https://oai.gmu.edu/)**,** [**University Libraries**](https://library.gmu.edu/)**,** [**The Writing Center**](https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)**,** [**Learning Services**](https://learningservices.gmu.edu/). * **Provide clarity, guidance, and direction.** Help your students who are international students or first-generation students to understand and navigate the U.S. higher education system (in general) and Mason (specifically). International students may not be familiar with the active academic teaching and learning style which characterizes American higher education. Reaching out to your students and providing them guidance can help to motivate them because they know that you are interested in their success. Use communication tools, such as email or Zoom, to reach out to students. |
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| **Examples of Practices to Engender Confidence**   * **Give students choices.** As listed below – consider offering students choices or options for readings, topics, assignments, & formats**.** [**Choice + Agency = Learning!**](https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/52424/why-choice-matters-to-student-learning) * **Offer choices and options for readings and topics.** Consider what is necessary for all students to complete and what each student may select from a range of reading or topic options, in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes. * **Offer choices and options for assignments.** Allow students to give their learning individual meaning and relevance. Invite students to complete projects on self-selected topics and to draw on their personal interests and goals. * **Offer choices and options for assignment formats.** Provide a range of options for assignment formats (*e.g.,* live or recorded oral presentation, research paper, infographic, multimedia presentation). * **Showcase student learning.** Use assessment methods that allow students to showcase their individual learning. In asynchronous online Blackboard courses, this could include the use of [**portfolios**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Assignments/Portfolios)**,** [**journals**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Interact/Journals), and student-led [**discussions**](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Interact/Discussions/Manage/Moderate_Discussions). * **Evaluate assignments through culturally-responsive lens.** Here is an example of [**Rubric for Culturally Responsive Lessons/Assignments**](https://guides.library.pdx.edu/ld.php?content_id=36253839)**.** * **Assign authentic assessments.** Use alternative or [**authentic assessments**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Ten-Tips-for-Planning-Authentic-Assessments_Student-Perspective_FINAL_APRIL-2021.pdf) which involve projects that allow students to apply knowledge to real-world tasks; authentic assessments also tend to be more interesting and motivating for students. * **Invite students to help “co-design” elements of online course activities.** For example, you may have students help with creating/contributing to exam study guides, review sessions, flashcards, or other learning resources for the course. * **Provide leadership opportunities**. Build confidence by providing students with leadership opportunities in the online course. For example, assign students to co-facilitate online discussions or to lead groups in Blackboard or break-out sessions in Zoom or Collaborate Ultra. |
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**Learn More!**

* Ginsberg, M. (2018, May 16). [**A motivational framework for instructional equity in higher education**](https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/05/16/motivational-framework-instructional-equity-higher-education/)**.** *Higher Education Today*, American Council on Education (ACE).
* Singhal, M. and Gulati, S. (2020, August 31). [**Five essential strategies to embrace culturally responsive teaching.**](https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/equality-inclusion-and-diversity/five-essential-strategies-to-embrace-culturally-responsive-teaching/) *Faculty Focus*, Magna Publications.

**Links to Mason Resources**

* Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning, George Mason University. [***Creating Inclusive Classrooms.***](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/student-engagement-classroom-managment/creating-inclusive-classrooms/)
* Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning, George Mason University. [***Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom***](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Cultural-sensitivity-in-the-classroom.pdf)***.***
* Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning, George Mason University. [***Teaching Multilingual Learners***](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/student-engagement-classroom-managment/teaching-multilingual-learners/)***.***
* Make sure to regularly check[**Stearns Center website**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/)for [**online teaching resources**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/online-teaching/)**,** upcoming[**webinars & workshops**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/trainings/)**,** and for[**continuing professional development for teaching**](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/stearns-center-opportunities/continuing-professional-development/)**!**

| **Contact Us!**  **Office of Digital Learning** | Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning  Phone: 703-993-6200 | Email: [**stearns@gmu.edu**](mailto:stearns@gmu.edu)  Suite 412 Innovation Hall, Fairfax Campus  George Mason University |
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**MY PLANNING NOTES**