

# TOWARD EQUITY



*AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE FOR  
SANTA MONICA COLLEGE FACULTY*

**Prepared by the Equity & Diversity Committee of the Academic Senate**

# **Toward Equity: An Interactive Guide for Santa Monica College Faculty**

## **Prepared by the Equity and Diversity Committee of the Academic Senate**

The Equity and Diversity Committee is a committee of the Academic Senate of Santa Monica College. The Equity and Diversity Committee explores academic and professional matters concerning faculty equity and diversity practices and policies at the college. It works with appropriate campus groups to develop, recommend, and assess policies, programs and strategies that promote equity and diversity in student success and to update the college's equity plan.

### Equity and Diversity Committee Members:

Sara Brewer

Kevin Chicas

Chante DeLoach

Angelica Duran

Kathleen Motoike

Mark Tomasic, Chair

Amber Urrutia

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## About Toward Equity: An Interactive Guide for Santa Monica College Faculty

**Toward Equity: An Interactive Guide for Santa Monica College Faculty** is a tool that will help you “**equitize**” your teaching practices.

Within this guide you will find tips, case studies, and classroom practices you can utilize in a number of different scenarios. You will learn how to develop equitable curriculum and syllabi, what best practices for an equitable classroom (both on ground and online) look like, and be provided with tools for equitable self and student assessment. Guiding questions allow for self-reflection on current practice and links are provided for those who want to dig deeper and research source material. As you read, observe the ways in which your current practices line up with those recommended. Don't forget to employ the **Equity Challenge** offered in each section to begin building an equitable teaching practice right now!

### Get Involved!

Do you have suggestions/questions about the SMC Equity Resource Guide or want to connect to a community of equity practitioners across campus? There are plenty of ways you can make a difference in closing the equity gap. Please visit the [Equity and Diversity Committee website](#), scan the QR code below or contact Mark Tomasic: [tomasic\\_mark@smc.edu](mailto:tomasic_mark@smc.edu), 310-434-8763.

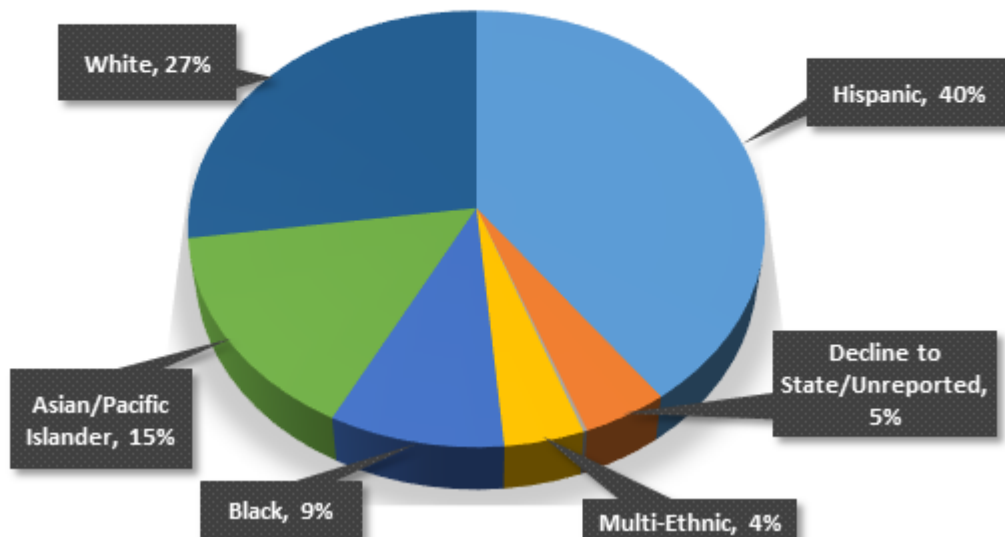


## Introduction

Santa Monica College is a wonderfully diverse campus. Our students come from a variety of [racial and] ethnic backgrounds. The student body includes those of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and gender identities, as well as students who are first generation college attendees, many international students and many who speak multiple languages. This assortment of experiences and viewpoints benefits our institution in a number of ways, including stronger academic discourse and exchange of ideas. It also means we as faculty need to be cognizant of the unique needs of each of our students. As you can see in the figure below, forty percent of our students identify as Hispanic, nine percent as Black, and twenty-seven percent as White. The purpose of this resource guide is to help you better understand and work with each and every one of them as students in your classroom.

### Santa Monica College Student Body by Ethnicity

Data From Institutional Research - Student Data by Ethnicity/Race Report



By contrast, our faculty is much less diverse, with approximately sixty percent of our full-time and part-time instructors being White (specifically, 58.8% of full-time faculty are White, and 64.4% of part-time faculty). Additionally, despite SMC's classification as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, only 14.8% of our full-time faculty, and 11% of part-time, identify as Hispanic. Additionally 11.3% of the full-time faculty on campus are Black, and only 8.2% of our part-time faculty. While each one of us as faculty brings our own unique and valuable perspectives to the campus and our classroom, these disparities between student ethnic composition and faculty

mean that it is increasingly important for us to consider our students in our decision making, and to be conscientious of potential equity issues. It is up to all of us to help close the equity gap!

### **Santa Monica College Equity Mission:**

Santa Monica College is committed to co-creating an educational institution dedicated to upholding an equitable learning and working environment. We intend to make clear, through our lived values and praxis, our commitment to inclusive excellence, which is reflected in our student outcomes, and employee satisfaction

### **Santa Monica College Equity Vision:**

SMC is a dynamic and culturally responsive educational community that upholds the values of equity, inclusion and social justice as a pathway to personal and academic excellence.



## **Definitions**

As part of your commitment to be a culturally competent instructor at Santa Monica College, it is important to build your understanding of language that will help guide your critical teaching practices. The following terminology is intended to help you strengthen your pedagogical 'toolbox' and encourage you to foster an equity-minded culture in your classroom.

**Ally:** An ally is a member of the “dominant” or “majority” group who questions or rejects the dominant ideology and works against oppression through support of, and as an advocate, with or for, the oppressed population. (Definition adapted from Washington, J. & Evans, N. J. “Becoming an Ally.” Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An Anthology on Racism, Antisemitism, Sexism, Heterosexism, Ableism, and Classism. Ed. Marianne Adams et al. New York: Routledge, 2000. 312-318)

**Example:** Many of our students come into the classroom facing teachers who do not look like them or identify with them. Members of the “dominant” or “majority” group, however, who understand oppression and systemic racism, can offer students a classroom environment that promotes their growth.

Supporting students of color means finding and presenting texts that they can see themselves in, that reflect their own lived experiences. It means sharing the history missing from textbooks that show strength and resilience and that challenge the dominant narrative. Have a guest speaker from a marginalized group impart knowledge or allow students to attend campus events featuring speakers from marginalized groups. Allies understand that, as an educator from the “dominant” group, teaching students from marginalized groups may be most effective by allowing people from the outside to step in. Supporting your marginalized students will sometimes mean stepping back.

Support students with compassion and kindness, even when they are not performing to your expectations. This is when your support is crucial. Offer them the safe place to ask questions and learn, and direct them to relevant resources.

For more information to support students in the classroom see [Teaching Tolerance: Teaching While White](#) by Molly Tansey and [Toolkit for “Anatomy of an Ally”](#) to think more about your own ally identity development.

**Calling In/Calling Out:** 'Call-out culture' refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behavior and language use by others.'

'Calling in' refers to the practice of using affirming, invitational language that serves as a 'starting place' to have a dialogue with others.

**Example:** In class you are giving a lecture on LGBTQ movements and history. A student raises their hand and says, "Why don't we have a Straight Pride month or Straight Pride flag?"

**Calling out:** You quickly reply, "There is a level of social and systemic privilege not afforded to many members of the LGBTQ community. Never has a person lost their job for

being straight, or been denied an apartment for being straight, or been denied medical treatment for being straight."

**Calling in:** You ask, "Do you see an importance for a Straight Pride month or Straight Pride flag? Can you think of examples when a straight person lost a job or been denied an apartment or medical treatment for being straight?"

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** Culturally responsive pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world.

**Example:** Rather than assuming you already know what each student in your classroom is expecting to learn, acknowledge the wide variety of viewpoints, experiences, and goals your students represent by having them tell you.

This is easily accomplished by distributing a survey or simply conducting a discussion at the beginning of the course in which you make it clear that your goal is to get to know them better as individuals in order to tailor the class experience to them.

Based on the information gathered, using inclusive examples, curriculum, and course materials throughout the semester will go a long way toward making students of all backgrounds feel valued in your class.

**Deficit-mindedness:** A perspective that places the responsibility for unrealized success solely on students. The deficit frame posits that students who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficits (such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the student, such as family dysfunctions or deficits (Richard Valencia, 1997).

**Example:** Deficit-minded instructors might assume students who are late, fall asleep, or do not complete assignments are unmotivated or lack academic skills. Simple steps such as finding out about a student's work schedule, how they get to school, or their favorite activity may help you get to know your students and serve to build a positive, trusting relationship. Reaching out to students in class or sending a "we missed you in class" email shows concern and open communication. In addition, make a connection between your course material and real life and align assignments with the skill levels of your students.

**Equality:** Equality means treating everyone the same/giving everyone the same resources. It is similar to equity in that it is seeking to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help.

**Example:** You give each student in your class the same assignment on paragraph revision on Monday and the same quiz on paragraph revision on Wednesday.

**Equity:** Fair outcomes, treatment, and opportunities for all students (California Dept. of Education). Equity means giving each student access to the resources they need to learn, thrive, and be successful.

**Example:** You notice a specific student who has difficulty with paragraph revision and needs additional guidance on punctuation and syntax. You provide individual mentoring during office hours and supplemental assignments and resources as needed.

**Hidden Curriculum:** The hidden curriculum is based on the work of autism researcher Brenda Smith Myles. It is the social information that is not directly taught but is assumed that everybody knows (Myles, Trautman, & Schelvan, 2004). The hidden curriculum refers to those unstated rules or customs that, if not understood, can make the world a confusing place and cause those of us who are not neurologically wired to automatically “get it” feel isolated and “out of it” (Endow, 2009a, 2010).

**Example:** Many students enter college unaware of the conventions surrounding certain practices, such as office hours.

Make sure all students are able to take advantage of the resources available to them by explicitly explaining your policies regarding office hours, such as that they are open and available to everyone, with no need for an appointment.

Assuming everyone already knows this important piece of information may isolate students who could benefit from this valuable resource significantly, effectively excluding them from this piece of the hidden curriculum.

**Microaggressions:** Microaggressions describe brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Perpetrators are usually unaware that they have engaged in an exchange that demeans the recipient of the communication. These insults and indignities are so pervasive that they are often unrecognized (Derald Wing Sue, 2010).

**Example:** The three-column table below illustrates a general theme, an example of microaggression(s) based on that theme, and the underlying message received by the target person. (Taken from *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Class and Sexual Orientation*, Sue, 2010)

| Themes   | Microaggression   | Message  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Alien in One's Own Land</b></p> <p><i>When Asian Americans and Latinx Americans are assumed to be foreign-born.</i></p>                                  | <p>"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?"<br/>"You speak English very well."</p> <p>A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.</p>   | <p>You are not American.</p> <p>You are a foreigner.</p>   |
| <p><b>Ascription of Intelligence</b></p> <p><i>Assigning intelligence to a person of color or woman based on their race/gender.</i></p>                        | <p>"You are a credit to your race."</p> <p>"Wow! How did you become so good in math?"</p> <p>Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem.</p>   | <p>People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.</p> <p>It is unusual for a woman to be smart in math.</p>   |
| <p><b>Color Blindness</b></p> <p><i>Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race.</i></p>                                    | <p>"When I look at you, I don't see color."</p> <p>"America is a melting pot."</p> <p>"There is only one race, the human race."</p>   | <p>Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences.</p> <p>Assimilate/acclurate to dominant culture.</p> <p>Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.</p> |
| <p><b>Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status</b></p> <p><i>A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on their race.</i></p> | <p>A White man or woman clutches their purse or checks their wallet as a Black or Latinx person approaches or passes.</p> <p>A store owner following a customer of color around the store.</p> <p>A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.</p> | <p>You are a criminal.</p> <p>You are going to steal/ You are poor/You do not belong.</p> <p>You are dangerous.</p>  |

| Themes  | Microaggression   | Message  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Use of Sexist/Heterosexist Language</b></p> <p><i>Terms that exclude or degrade women and LGBTQIA+ persons.</i></p>   | <p>Use of the pronoun “he” to refer to all people.</p> <p>Two options on a form for relationship status: married or single.</p> <p>An assertive woman is subject to a derogatory sexist slur.</p>   | <p>Male experience is universal. Female experience is meaningless.</p> <p>LGBTQIA+ partnerships do not matter/are meaningless.</p> <p>Women should be passive.</p>   |
| <p><b>Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/ Heterosexism</b></p> <p><i>A statement made when bias is denied.</i></p>  | <p>“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends.”</p> <p>“As an employer, I always treat men and women equally.”</p>   | <p>I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.</p> <p>I am incapable of sexism.</p>   |
| <p><b>Myth of Meritocracy</b></p> <p><i>Statements which assert that race or gender does not play a role in life successes.</i></p>   | <p>“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”</p> <p>“Men and women have equal opportunities for achievement.”</p>   | <p>People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.</p> <p>The playing field is even so if women cannot make it, the problem is with them.</p> |
| <p><b>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles</b></p> <p><i>The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal.</i></p> | <p>Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud/animated?” “Just calm down.”</p> <p>To an Asian or Latinx person: “Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal.” “Speak up more.”</p> <p>Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in a work or school setting.</p> | <p>Assimilate to dominant culture.</p> <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p>   |

| Themes  | Microaggression  | Message  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b></p> <p><i>Occurs when a target group member receives differential treatment from the power group.</i></p>                  | <p>A person of color is mistaken for a service worker.</p>   | <p>People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high status positions.</p>  |
| <p><b>Traditional Gender Role Prejudice and Stereotyping</b></p> <p><i>Occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed.</i></p> | <p>When a female student asked a male professor for extra help on a chemistry assignment, he asks "What do you need to work on this for anyway?"</p> <p>A person asks a woman her age and, upon hearing she is 31, looks quickly at her ring finger.</p> | <p>Women are less capable in math and science.</p> <p>Women should be married during child-bearing ages because that is their primary purpose.</p> |
| <p><b>Sexual Objectification</b></p> <p><i>Occurs when women are treated as though they were objects at men's disposal.</i></p>                           | <p>Whistles and catcalls as a female employee walks through a public setting.</p>  | <p>Your body/appearance is for men's enjoyment and pleasure.</p>   |
| <p><b>Assumption of Abnormality</b></p> <p><i>Occurs when it is implied that there is something wrong with being LGBTQIA+.</i></p>                        | <p>Students use the term "gay" to describe a fellow student who is socially ostracized at school.</p>  | <p>People who are weird and different are "gay."</p>   |



**Micro-affirmations:** Micro-affirmations are small acts, often ephemeral and hard-to-see, unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed. They involve gestures of inclusion and caring, graceful acts of listening, and deliberate actions that provide comfort and support when others are in distress, or a target of a public attack (Rowe 2008). Micro-affirmations substitute messages about deficit and exclusion with messages of excellence, openness, and opportunity (The Sheridan Center, Brown University). Within the context of higher education, micro-affirmations can communicate to students that they are welcome, visible, and capable of performing well in the college environment.

**Example:** Use micro-affirmative statements that convey inclusion, appreciation and recognition for individual students and their experiences:

- *“I’m glad you’re here.”*
- *“Coming in today was a good first step.”*
- *“I see you are making progress in this area ... excellent work.”*
- *“I am concerned about you. Come visit me in office hours to talk more about this.”*
- *“I know this is difficult news ...”*
- *“I understand that you are frustrated ...”*
- *“Have you thought about using this campus resource (e.g. the learning center, counseling and wellness services, the writing center)? Many successful students utilize this campus resource.”*
- *“I can tell that you are very outgoing/intellectually driven/social; have you considered participating in this opportunity/program ...?”*
- *“I see that you feel good about this, and I believe you should be proud of what you have accomplished thus far.”*

(Taken from *Micro-affirmations in Academic Advising: Small Acts, Big Impact*, Powell, Demetriou, & Fisher, 2013 - <https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2013/10/839/>)

**Stereotype Threat:** Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as a self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). [...] Performance in academic contexts can be harmed by the awareness that one's behavior might be viewed through the lens of racial stereotypes.

**Example:** To reduce the potential impact of this “threat,” create a learning environment in which mistakes and missteps are valued as opportunities for learning. Communicate often with your students about the usefulness of wrong answers—they help us to illuminate incomplete understanding and spur us on to learn more. Design assessments in your class that include “low-stakes” quizzes, homework, and shorter papers and other assignments as well as higher-stakes tests, papers, and projects. Provide students with an opportunity to receive feedback on their performance and to build knowledge and skills over time. When speaking with students who are not performing well in the course, avoid statements such as “some people have trouble with math [or writing] [or critical thinking]”; these statements can communicate the idea that intelligence is fixed

and may also remind students of identity-based stereotypes. Instead, work with the student to identify areas where the student is struggling and provide 1-2 new strategies the student can use to improve in those areas (Rattan, Good, Dweck, 2012).

## Equity and Language Barriers

Statewide, the California Community College system works with about 2.4 million students a year. Of these, approximately 70-80% of those who are entering as students for the first-time need at least one pre-transfer level mathematics, English reading and/or writing, and/or English as a second language course. Those students who face language barriers in the classroom deal with a unique set of challenges that have the potential to adversely impact their retention and performance if they are not specifically addressed in classroom practices.

For example, students facing language barriers may encounter increased difficulty understanding the way in which you communicate classroom material that goes beyond issues with comprehension of the material itself . For this reason it is important for students to process the material in different formats and for them to have access to methods that may make them feel more comfortable with all elements of the language - including speaking, reading, and writing. You may also find that some students struggle to understand culturally specific material and examples. Read on to discover some of the ways in which you can work with these students in order to encourage their success.

Data resource:

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Basic Skills Completion: The Key to Student Success in California Community Colleges - Effective Practices for Faculty, Staff and Administrators. Retrieved from ([http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/BasicSkills/2013Files/BSI\\_E-Resource\\_10-18-13.pdf](http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/BasicSkills/2013Files/BSI_E-Resource_10-18-13.pdf))

**Equitable Practices in Working with Students who Face Language Barriers:  
Utilizing a Variety of Teaching Tools**

Students who face language barriers in the classroom may struggle not just with understanding course content but with understanding the way you are communicating it. Therefore in order to create an inclusive classroom it is helpful to employ various teaching methods in communicating a single topic.

This means that you should be sure to include visual representations of the material rather than just oral, and assign group work in class to give students an outlet through which to practice language with their peers. Such practices in the classroom ensure that those students who face language barriers practice speaking, listening, writing, and reading – all essential elements of helping them become more comfortable in an English-based classroom.

**QUESTION:**

My teaching practices incorporate the following formats that create an inclusive classroom for students with language barriers:

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**EXAMPLE:**

If you are teaching the role of supply and demand in markets, you would discuss the topic, as well as illustrate it with graphs, provide supplemental handouts or slides for reference, and allow students time to process what they just learned by working in groups on some sample practice problems. While working, students can ask questions of each other they may have been reticent to ask in front of the class, or even approach you with questions in a one-on-one format where fear of saying something “incorrect” in front of the entire class may not present an obstacle.

## **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Do your courses utilize various teaching tools? Here's a challenge - aim for every class to include at least two out of these three elements: oral discussion of the topic, visual representations, and group work. Make sure students SWRL daily, that is make sure they are practicing all components of language acquisition – Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening.

## **RESOURCES:**

- Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence Intercultural Communication Center, Carnegie Mellon. Teaching in an Increasingly Multicultural Setting: A Guide for Faculty. Retrieved from [https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/Publications Archives/InternalReports/culturalvariations.pdf](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/Publications%20Archives/InternalReports/culturalvariations.pdf)
- Gonzalez, J. (2014, December 11). Twelve Ways to Support English Learners in the Mainstream Classroom. Retrieved from <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/supporting-esl-students-mainstream-classroom/>
- Cooper, A. (2012, January 25). 10 Tips for Teaching English-Language Learners: Tools and Techniques for Better Instruction. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-english-language-learners-ayanna-cooper>

**Equitable Practices in Working with Students who Face Language Barriers:  
Using Culturally Specific Material Wisely**

Students who face language barriers in the classroom may also struggle with understanding course content that is presented in a culturally specific way. This includes course materials, examples, or discussions that are centered on American culture, or any other culture the student may not be familiar with.

This means that you should be strategic in your use of culturally unique examples and vocabulary. It does not mean you have to avoid using this material, especially if it is pertinent to a better understanding of the subject matter, but be aware that further explanation may be needed for those in the classroom less familiar with the cultural specifics you are using in teaching. Taking care to teach in this way ensures that students who face language and cultural barriers avoid feeling frustrated by examples and culturally specific vocabulary they do not identify with, but instead gain a full understanding of the material, and even some cultural knowledge.

**QUESTION:**

My teaching practices include wise use of culturally specific material, examples, and vocabulary in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

If you present ‘peanut butter and jelly’ as an example of complementary goods in a market (products that consumers generally buy together), you would clearly explain the connection between the two items in American culture rather than assuming that all students will already understand this connection. This explanation can be through verbal explanation, or even by showing pictures or video so that those who may not have knowledge of the classic combination will be able to understand the connection as it ties to the subject material.

### **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Do your courses consider the way in which culturally specific materials, examples, and vocabulary are presented? Here's a challenge – review each lecture planned ahead of class time, specifically looking for all such material from the point of view of a student from another culture. Take at least one item and come up with a universally understandable way to explain its significance to all students, perhaps with the use of visual aids.

### **RESOURCES:**

- Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence Intercultural Communication Center, Carnegie Mellon. Teaching in an Increasingly Multicultural Setting: A Guide for Faculty. Retrieved from [https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/Publications Archives/InternalReports/culturalvariations.pdf](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/Publications%20Archives/InternalReports/culturalvariations.pdf)
- Gonzalez, J. (2014, December 11). Twelve Ways to Support English Learners in the Mainstream Classroom. Retrieved from <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/supporting-esl-students-mainstream-classroom/>

## **Developing Equitable Curriculum**

To “equitize” our curriculum, do we review textbook choices and revise reading assignments, or do we examine the entire culture of Santa Monica College and every experience our students have with our institution? The answer is “Yes” to all of the above. This section provides strategies for faculty to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in curriculum development including steps on how to encourage multiple viewpoints, perspectives and diverse voices. Equitize your curriculum and then, most importantly, implement the changes you have committed to. By turning ideas into action, we can create positive change for students, faculty and our entire college community.



**Equitable Practices in Curriculum Development:  
Representing Multiple Voices, Perspectives, and Scholarship**

Your course materials should ensure that voices of people from different cultures, genders, classes, sexualities and with differing abilities are heard and not just talked about by others.

**QUESTION:**

My course materials ensure that voices of people from different cultures, genders, classes, sexualities and with differing abilities are heard and not just talked about by others in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

If the topic is "The Great Depression in the USA," the content should not focus solely on the experiences of European Americans. Americans of African and Asian descent, American Indians, Mexicans, etc., had experiences and views that should be acknowledged. It is also important to include the experiences and views of people with different socioeconomic statuses.

**EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Do your course topics focus on a single perspective? Here's a challenge: aim for only one out of three readings to be written by the dominant culture. This strategy helps "disrupt the canon" and focuses on the presence of the perspective of non-dominant groups as opposed to non-dominant groups as the topic.

**RESOURCES:**

- Kardia, D. & Saunders, S. (1997). Creating Inclusive College Classrooms. Retrieved from [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3\\_1](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p3_1)
- Portland State University. (n.d.). Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Curriculum Resources: Creating Culturally Responsive Curriculum. Retrieved from <https://guides.library.pdx.edu/c.php?g=527355&p=3605354>
- Cook, S. (2008). Providing an Equitable Education Through Curriculum Transformation. Retrieved from <https://discoverarchive.vanderbilt.edu/handle/1803/4006>

**Equitable Practices in Curriculum Development:  
Inclusion of Key Contributors from Diverse Backgrounds**

Your course materials should include historic and present-day stories that convey how diverse populations have made key contributions in your discipline.

**QUESTION:**

In my curriculum, I ensure historic and present-day stories convey how diverse populations have made key contributions in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

Stories from both the history of science and present-day discoveries can convey that diverse populations of people can make key contributions in science. Include examples that connect biology concepts that students are learning to different cultural communities—well-known stories like that of Henrietta Lacks and her connection to cell biology and smaller stories like that of Cynthia Lucero and her connection to osmosis—demonstrate to students that you as an instructor want to help them see themselves within the discipline of biology.

**EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

What if my discipline traditionally has not included diverse voices? Be diligent about researching new findings in your discipline and sharing them with your students. If your discipline has not included diverse voices, you can still value the inclusion of diverse perspectives by simply being explicit about that fact. Let your students know that you expect them to literally change the face of the discipline.

**RESOURCES:**

- Brady, C. (2007). *Elizabeth Blackburn and the Story of Telomeres: Deciphering the Ends of DNA*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Chamany, K., Allen, D., & Tanner, KD. (2008). Making biology learning relevant to students: integrating people, history, and context into college biology teaching. *CBE Life Science Education*, 7, 267–278.
- Cote, JL. (2017). “None of My History Classes Were Like This”: An Experiment in Mastery Pedagogy. *The History Teacher*, 50(4), 597 - 617.

## **Developing Equitable Syllabi**

As instructors, we aspire to create equitable learning experiences for our students. One way we can do that is by creating an equitable syllabus. What do you think an equitable syllabus should look like for students with disabilities, first generation students, gender non-conforming students, etc.? This section will help you create a more equitable syllabus keeping all of our students in mind.

**Equitable Syllabi:  
Features of an Inclusive Syllabus & Statements of Inclusivity**

As a commitment to inclusion and equity in the classroom, your syllabus should strive to establish a climate that welcomes all students. According to Debie Lohe (2017), an inclusive syllabus...

- Incorporates content that represents a diverse set of perspectives and experiences.
- Prioritizes learning over content and/or rules.
- Explicitly articulates the norms and/or hidden “rules” you assume all students know.
- Explicitly values differences in students’ social identities and considers how these might affect students’ experience in the course.
- Allows for multiple ways to learn and demonstrate learning.

Your syllabus should also include many (if not all) of the following statements: Equitable Learning Environment Statement; Title IX Statement; Students with Disabilities Statement; Gender Expression and Identity Statement; Student Well-Being Statement; Veterans Statement; and DACA Statement.

The above statements are located at this link: <http://bit.ly/equitable syllabus>



Your syllabus should also follow the SMC “Model Course Syllabus Template” found here: <http://bit.ly/model syllabus>

**QUESTION:**

My syllabus welcomes all students in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

Some scholarship on syllabi show students react to the rhetoric of instructors. [Richard Harnish](#) and [Robert Bridges](#) conducted an experiment in which 172 students read syllabi containing either warm or cold language and rated professors. Unsurprisingly, students rated the “cold” professor more unfriendly and less approachable than the “warm” professor. Similarly, they rate the “cold” course more difficult even though the requirements were the same as the “warm” course. The chart below shows examples of differing language from the study.

The two column chart below illustrates sample phrases from a cold syllabus compared to sample phrases from a warm syllabus.

| <b>Sample Phrases from Cold Syllabus</b>                                 | <b>Sample Phrases from Warm Syllabus</b>   |
|--|--|
| “traumatic events . . . are no excuse for not contacting me within 24 h” | “traumatic events . . . are unwelcome and because I understand how difficult these times are, if you contact me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation, I will be happy to give you a make-up exam.” |

To highlight students’ agency in a course, instructors can create invitations instead of commands. They could phrase policies as logical consequences of student actions instead of retributive punishments. The chart below provides an example of how to use language to highlight collaboration rather than top-down authority on your syllabus.

The two column chart below illustrates differences in commanding versus invitational language.

| <b>Commands</b>  | <b>Invitations</b>  |
|--|---|
| “You are allowed to...”<br>“I only accept...”<br>“Late work receives a 40% reduction.” | “You are welcome to...”<br>“I encourage you to...”<br>“Late work is eligible for 60% of original points.” |

These phrases might not work for every situation, but requirements can be phrased to highlight how they produce strong assignments instead of how they enforce a list of rules. By justifying and explaining guidelines to students, they become more than a seemingly arbitrary list.

### **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Exchange syllabi with a colleague in your department. Have your colleague review your syllabus for inclusion, diverse perspectives, and equity--and vice versa. Then get together to discuss and offer recommendations for improvement.

### **RESOURCES:**

- Accessible Syllabus (2015). Retrieved from <https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu/rhetoric/>
- Brantmeier, E., Broscheid, A., & Moore, C. S. (2016). Inclusion by design: Survey your syllabus and course design. Retrieved from <http://cte.virginia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Inclusion-by-Design-Survey-Your-Syllabus-Brantmeier-Broscheid-Moore-.pdf>
- Harnish, R.J. & Bridges, K.R. (2011). Effect of syllabus tone: students' perceptions of instructor and course. *Soc Psychol Educ*, 14(3), 319-330.
- Lohe, D. (2017). Features of an inclusive syllabus. Retrieved from <http://www.slu.edu/blogs/cttl/2017/01/18/features-of-an-inclusive-syllabus/>



## **Equity in the Classroom**

In her book *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*, educator Sonia Nieto brings up the necessity of instructors to become “students of their students,” drawing upon acute observation to “learn what can help their students learn and change their teaching accordingly.” If instructors want to be culturally competent in their teaching practices, it is vital that they learn about their students, and learn with their students, to close intercultural communication gaps with them. The following strategies aim to assist instructors to be better attuned to students’ needs, and foster a sense of belonging in the classroom.

**Equitable Practices in the Classroom:  
Establishing an Empathy Mindset**

Be caring and empathetic. Empathy, a refined element of caring, refers to our ability to understand the classroom from our students’ perspectives, and to treat our students as respected co-learners. We will be more successful as empathic instructors if we approach our goal of holding all students to the same rigorous standards by seeking first to understand where our students are.

**QUESTION:**

I demonstrate an empathy mindset in my classroom in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

When a student is upset, disengaged, or reactive, we should take the time, no matter how inconvenient, to demonstrate empathy by making eye contact, taking the student aside to speak privately, and maintaining respect in words and actions during conversation. An empathic response does NOT seek to embarrass, belittle, or punish the student. Instead, give students tools to manage negative or destructive feelings, such as breathing exercises that can help them regain calm. In working with a student who is in an emotional state, we should remember that as adults, we usually have the coping mechanisms and experience to recognize and handle these emotions. Students may not have these coping mechanisms, and we cannot expect that from them, unless we expressly teach them these strategies.

**EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

When introducing behavioral expectations to students at the beginning of the year, how do you teach your students about empathy and the importance of building a culture of caring and respect in the classroom? Here’s a challenge: have students perform the “Circle of Concern” exercise:

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/circle-concern-strategy>

**RESOURCES:**

- Crowley, B., & Saide, B. (2018, February 28). Building Empathy in Classrooms and Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2016/01/20/building-empathy-in-classrooms-and-schools.html>
- Hough, L. (2014, September 8). How Teachers Can Make Caring More Common. Retrieved from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/14/09/how-teachers-can-make-caring-more-common>
- Rychly, L., & Graves, E. (2012). Teacher Characteristics for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 14(1), 44-49. doi:10.1080/15210960.2012.646853

**Equitable Practices in the Classroom:  
Encouraging Student Discussion and Participation**

Encouraging students to talk and participate in class involves helping them focus on important questions, stimulating them to grapple with key issues, helping them acquire intellectual excitement, and giving them the opportunity to construct their understanding.

**QUESTION:**

I encourage my students to talk and participate in class through the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

- A good discussion starter involves allowing students an opportunity to collect their thoughts (i.e., a quick write that answers a question or provides a solution to a problem) and to talk with a neighbor before addressing the whole class (see the **EQUITY CHALLENGE!** below).
- Avoid asking students to discuss an assigned reading. Instead, provoke and guide them into discussing ideas, issues or problems. When they make a claim regarding a topic, press them for evidence, question them about the nature of the evidence, and invoke arguments from the assigned reading. Encourage and allow students to challenge each other, point out agreements and disagreements on their claims, and raise appropriate follow-up questions.
- Take note of students who are shy or uncomfortable with public speaking – talk to them casually before a class session, to get to know a little about them, before you call on them. Relatedly, call on your students with care. Instructors should emphasize students’ understanding of a topic or problem rather than having them reach a predetermined response to a question associated with a topic or problem.

**EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

To stimulate a discussion in a class, pose a guiding question and ask students to spend a few minutes collecting their thoughts on paper or otherwise work on the problem individually before talking. Then ask students to share their thoughts (or solutions) with someone sitting nearby (“think then pair”). After a few more minutes, ask those pairs to pair up (“think/pair/square”). Finally, bring the entire class together for a full discussion, starting with the ideas already discussed in the smaller groups, calling on one or two groups to report and defend their conclusions (“think/pair/square/share”).

**RESOURCES:**

- Bain, K. (2004). *What The Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

## Equity in Online Education

Within the California Community College (CCC) system, 12.3% of courses are offered through distance education and nearly half of all courses have some online component (CCC, n.d.). Online coursework is often conceptualized as a method to improve access to college classes for populations who may not otherwise be able to do so. The empirical research focused on online learning and community college systems suggests that students who enroll in at least one online class are typically older, more likely to have dependents, and be employed full-time (Jaggars, 2012). Interestingly, these students are also more likely to be more academically prepared for college than on-ground students, less likely to be low-income, and less likely to be “ethnic minorities.” These relative privileges may be associated with what has come to be known nationally as the “digital divide” that highlights the significant racial differences in access to broadband internet in the home. Recent large scale research with online learners in community colleges suggests that completion rates are lower for online students and online students often earned lower grades than their on-ground counterparts (Jaggars, 2012). Notably, this research further highlights that specific groups such as men, African Americans, and students with lower levels of academic preparation had significantly more difficulty in online courses than they did in on-ground courses (Xu & Jaggars, 2011). Students who took more online courses also had lower graduation and transfer rates (Jaggars, 2012). It is unclear if these same patterns are reflected here at SMC; however, these demographics reflect the diversity among the student population at SMC and, moreover, reflect the populations with inequitable performance outcomes.

The CCC’s have been working together to address and close the online equity gap through a number of system-wide faculty and student resources. The CCC Online Education Study Equity Work Group has been established to help advance these objectives. These efforts will provide the following resources for faculty:

- Equity principles and culturally responsive practices in the Online Education Initiative rubric
- Equity-based and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning workshops that focus on high-impact practices to increase student retention and successful outcomes, and introduce online practitioners to a variety of approaches to building equity-minded online programs.
- An Online Student Equity Community of Practice (CoP) to provide networking opportunities, increase awareness, promote information sharing, demonstrate the valuing of culture and diversity, encourage self-assessment.

Note that the SMC equity guidebook will be updated with links to these resources as they become available.

**Equity in Online Education:  
Best Practices in Online Pedagogy**

Recent large scale research with online learners in community colleges suggests that completion rates are lower for online students and online students often earned lower grades and have lower graduation and transfer rates than their on-ground counterparts (Jaggars, 2014). Specific student groups such as men, African Americans, and students with lower levels of academic preparation, such as those identified as being of higher risk for inequitable outcomes at SMC, had significantly more difficulty in online courses than they did in on-ground courses.

**QUESTION:**

I ensure equitable outcomes for vulnerable students in my online classes in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

In applying Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, cultural humility, and other high impact practices, researchers suggest that faculty build upon the cultural capital that learners (and faculty) bring to the online classroom. Challenges with equity should be considered in all phases of online course design and instruction. Researchers recommend validating students' pre-existing knowledge with relevant activities, using activities that build upon students' strengths and pre-existing knowledge and integrating cultural knowledge and experiences as a way to frame course material.

Consider implementing the following in your online course:

- Offer course or program orientations: build community, preparing learners to use Canvas and succeed in the course. This can be done prior to course start.
- Pre-course assessment: instructors ask background information including familiarity with technology or Canvas, employment status, years in school or years since being in school, comfort with writing, English, etc.
- Student introduction activity on a discussion board: this activity can have students discuss different aspects of their background such as where they are from, language, gender-preferred pronouns, how they would like to be addressed, comfort working in groups, or other course/discipline-specific questions.

- High cognitive demand tasks in which students are able to make connections between course concepts and lived experiences.
- Interactive debates, role-plays, and case studies: these activities allow students to present multiple perspectives on a topic, consider problems, solutions, as well as barriers to solutions.
- Synchronous online meetings and other forms of collaboration.
- Student/team presentations that allow students to learn from one another, sharing their knowledge and experiences.
- Empower students through liberatory leadership opportunities:
  - provide a variety of activities and opportunities to learn and demonstrate learning (see the section on Assessment for Equity for more background on the importance of this approach)
  - Student mentor and coaching activities allow students to become co-creators and co-leaders of the course (students might facilitate or co-lead a weekly discussion, prepare discussion questions or other materials)

In addition to the above recommendations based on culturally responsive teaching, other recommendations from the research include:

- Use of increased degree of interpersonal connection and support from faculty including more direct guidance from instructors (Jaggars, 2014).
- Small online class sizes to help facilitate the type of personalized connections and guidance needed from instructors.
- Instructor use of technology to personalize the instructor and the material (e.g., audio or video recordings narrating lectures or walking students through class activities or material) (Jaggars & Xu, 2013).

### **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

In what ways do I integrate students' multiple identities and cultural knowledge into my online classes, thus personalizing the online learning experience? Here's a challenge: strive to incorporate at least one assignment per unit that invites students to build upon and integrate their life, work, and academic experience while using technology to personalize the instructor and fellow students.



**RESOURCES:**

- Jaggars, S. (2014). Democratization of education for whom? Online learning and educational equity. *American Association of Colleges & Universities, Vol 17, 1.*
- Jaggars, S., & Xu, D. (2013). Predicting Online Student Outcomes from a Measure of Course Quality (Working Paper 57). New York, NY: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Montenegro, E., & Jankowski, N.A. (2017). Equity and assessment: Moving towards culturally responsive assessment. Available online at:  
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/OccasionalPaper29.pdf>

## Equity in Assessment

Assessment is described as “the process of gathering information about a learner’s performance using a variety of methods and materials in order to determine learners’ knowledge, skills, and motivation for the purpose of making informed educational decisions”(UDL, n.d.). Recent innovative approaches to assessment invite educators to consider questions such as:

- How can assessment support a broader definition of student success?
- What assessment practices most effectively empower students to own and advance their learning?
- How can we pursue equity through assessment for learning?

Being equity-minded, is a critical aspect of assessment. “Assessment, if not done with equity in mind, privileges and validates certain types of learning and evidence of learning over others, can hinder the validation of multiple means of demonstration, and can reinforce within students the false notion that they do not belong in higher education” (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017, p. 5). Researchers argue that students must be provided with just and equitable means to demonstrate their learning. Culturally responsive assessment is offered as a vehicle for promoting more equitable outcomes for students. Assessments should be inclusive of all students to provide the greatest chance that various types of students are able to demonstrate their learning and mastery of course material. Such an approach fundamentally shapes the ways in which educators are designing courses and methods of assessment, including assignments, exams, and even deadlines. It requires being grounded in knowledge of the specific student population, using language that is appropriate for all students, acknowledging and integrating student needs and differences in development of learning outcomes, the selection of assessment tools or assignments, and in the use of the results.

**Equitable Practices in Assessment:  
Assessing Through an Equity Lens**

Being equity-minded, is a critical aspect of assessment. A common underlying assumption (and barrier) to assessing diverse learner needs is the belief that while learners may learn in different ways, they must or should demonstrate their knowledge in the same way. Assessments should be inclusive of all students to provide the greatest chance that various types of students are able to demonstrate their learning and mastery of course material.

**QUESTION:**

Equity is reflected in my methods of assessment in the following ways:

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**EXAMPLE:**

**Learning Outcomes:** learning outcomes must consider and reflect different ways of learning and the diverse ways in which students demonstrate learning. Culturally responsive teaching invites faculty to write learning outcome statements with and for students to increase student agency, personal investment in their own learning, and to foster student clarity about what is expected of them and how to demonstrate mastery of course material.

**Differentiated Assessment:** assess student learning before, during, and after instruction to better understand and build upon student knowledge and lived experience as well as to better facilitate learning. Examples of ways to include differentiated assessment include the use of in-class polling, clickers, exit-tickets, and reflection essays.

**Demonstration of Learning:** instructors may provide students with a list of different assignments that they may choose from. This provides students with a sense of agency and personal investment in how they earn the points needed in class and how they demonstrate their learning.

Culturally responsive rubrics, portfolios, and capstone projects can provide multiple methods of holistic formative assessment. Portfolios provide students with the opportunity to make connections between course concepts while applying them to personally meaningful situations. In

addition, because portfolios can be made available online, they can have an added benefit to students for use in marketing their skills.

### **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Do my assignments provide students with different types of opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of course material? Do students have any choice in how they demonstrate their learning or are all students expected to demonstrate their learning in the same ways? Here is a challenge: aim to provide students with at least 3 different methods of assessment that allow them to demonstrate their mastery of course material.

### **RESOURCES:**

- Bal, A., & Trainor, A.A. (2016). Culturally responsive experimental intervention studies: The development of a rubric for paradigm expansion. *Review of Education Research*, 86(2), 319-359.
- Montenegro, E., & Jankowski, N. A. (2017, January). Equity and assessment: Moving towards culturally responsive assessment (Occasional Paper No. 29). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)
- National Center on Design for Universal Learning (n.d.). What is universal design for learning? Retrieved from <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>

## **Equitable Practices in Assessment: Developing Formative Assessments**

Formative assessments are low risk activities that measure comprehension during or soon after instruction. These assessments let instructors know what concepts students may not have comprehended or understood. They may be informal or a formal (low stakes) quiz; they may be based on individual or group effort. The importance of the formative assessment is giving students immediate feedback on their learning or misconceptions and provide the instructor an opportunity to re-teach or provide additional learning experiences.

### **QUESTION:**

After direct instruction about a topic, I assess student's comprehension in the following ways:

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### **EXAMPLE:**

Examples of formative assessments may include:

- After directed instruction of a concept, ask students to write a one-minute essay that explains the concept
- Thumbs Assessment: thumb up – I've got it; thumb sideways – give me a couple more examples; thumb down – I'm confused.
- Performance tasks such as solving a problem.
- Exit tickets that ask for three important concepts discussed in class.
- Group analysis of an historical document.
- Mini case study.

### **EQUITY CHALLENGE!**

Do each of your units provide students an ample opportunity to test the depth of their understanding during a lesson as well as between lessons (prior to the final assessment)? How do you assess student learning on a concept, a type of analysis, or a problem prior to moving on to the next? Here's a challenge: aim for three or four different methods for students to understand the concept and the importance of each concept by use of a formative assessment.

**RESOURCES:**

- Barkley, Elizabeth F., & Major, Claire Howell. (2016). Learning assessment techniques: a handbook for college faculty. Hoboken, NJ John Wiley & Sons.
- Heacox, Diane. (2009). Making differentiation a habit. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit-Publishing.
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (2007). What does research say the benefits of formative assessment are? (Research Brief). Reston, VA: author.
- On-Course. Conference notebook. An introduction to empowering learner-centered principles and strategies. Redwood City, CA: author.

## Rubric for Culturally Responsive Lessons/Assignments

The five-column rubric below was developed by Jean Aguilar-Valdez (2015).

| Criteria  | Minimal   | Emerging  | Effective   | Highly Effective   |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>VOICE</b><br/>Lesson/Assignment allows places for students to work together cooperatively or share their learning experiences, strengths, backgrounds, interests, and needs with the instructor and each other.</p> | No intentionally designed places for students to work together, work cooperatively, or share these things – it is all teacher-centered. | One brief place for working together or sharing, not directly integrated with the topic of the lesson(s), otherwise teacher-centered. | Several places for working together cooperatively or sharing, somewhat connected to the topic of the lessons – mostly student-centered. | Students work together cooperatively or share throughout, in ways deeply interwoven with the topic of the lesson(s) – fully student-centered.                        |
| <p><b>DIFFERENTIATED</b><br/>Lesson/Assignment provides opportunities for individual learners to express their learning in various ways, accounting for multiple learning styles.</p>                                     | Only one way for all students to express their learning   | Students may interact with material in more than one way, but final product(s) have only one way to be considered acceptable.         | Several ways for students to express their learning.  | Several ways for students to express their learning, which have been informed by student input and instructor knowledge of individual students' strengths and needs. |
| <p><b>ACCESS</b><br/>Lesson/Activity communicates ideas in several different ways</p>   | Ideas communicated in only one way  | Ideas communicated in two similar ways  | Ideas communicated in three or more different ways  | Ideas communicated in three or more different ways that are informed by student input and instructor knowledge of students' differing learning styles.               |
| <p><b>CONNECTION</b><br/>Lesson/Activity incorporates real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.</p>   | No or minimal real-life connections made or representations given.  | One real-life connection made or represented from the experiences of the dominant culture.  | More than one real-life connection made or represented but mostly from the experiences of the dominant culture.                         | More than one real-life connection made or represented from a variety of cultures and life experiences.  |

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Minimal</b>   | <b>Emerging</b>  | <b>Effective</b>   | <b>Highly Effective</b>   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>HIGHER ORDER THINKING</b><br/>Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to engage in higher cognitive processing, applying learning to big-picture analysis and creative applications for learning.</p>  | Rudimentary level recall and understanding is all that is asked for or expected.                               | Mostly recall and basic understanding, with only one or two opportunities for higher order applications and creative thinking. | Some higher order applications and creative thinking included, but only in one predetermined way.  | Many opportunities for higher order applications and creative thinking, in several ways as originated from the students.  |
| <p><b>SOCIAL JUSTICE</b><br/>Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and enact change.</p>  | No or minimal avenues for connection learning to social concerns that are relevant to the students.            | One predetermined avenue to connect learning to social concerns relevant to the students and enact change.                     | Several predetermined avenues to connect learning to social concerns relevant to the students and enact change.  | Students given opportunity to explore many avenues of their choosing that connect learning to social concerns that are relevant to them and enact change meaningful to them.  |
| <p><b>EQUITY/DECOLONIZATION</b><br/>Attention paid to minimizing dominant discourses, deficit perspectives, and possible biases/micro-aggressions in instruction/language/expectation so students from non-dominant backgrounds (e.g. English language learners, students from poverty, students with special needs, students of various genders/sexual orientations) have access and can participate as readily as those from dominant backgrounds.</p> | The dominant discourse and perspective is the only one presented, and students who cannot access it will fail. | Some attention paid to making the discourse inclusive, but students are still expected to sink or swim.                        | Discourse and perspectives are presented in a variety of ways that are inclusive of non-dominant backgrounds, students given some multiple points of access. | Discourse and perspectives are presented in a variety of inclusive ways that honor students of non-dominant backgrounds, and all students of non-dominant backgrounds can access and feel included in the material. |



## **Self-Assessment and Professional Development**

It is a common practice for faculty to implement formative assessment methods in class and not use the outcome data to improve learning and teaching. This tendency may be even more pronounced when overall grades are relatively positive. Analyzing data by student population is important to identify, understand, and redress equity issues. Disaggregating the data may reveal that particular groups in our classes are struggling in certain areas or on certain assignments.

Faculty are encouraged to access and review their own equity data on a regular basis as a method of self-assessment, reflection, and professional development. This data may be requested through [SMC Institutional Research](#).

Additional opportunities for professional development related to issues of equity include [The Center for Teaching Excellence at Santa Monica College](#). SMC's Center for Teaching Excellence offers an annual Faculty Summer Institute, quarterly seminars for all faculty, departmental workshops that target career-specific improvements in math, English, and content specific-courses, and customized individual and small group support.

## **Case Studies**

The case studies included in this section provide an opportunity to examine your equity practices in relation to a specific incident or principle. Use them to inspire self-reflection or provide a spring board for discussion with a colleague or your entire department. Is there a case study you would like to see added to this resource guide? If so, please let us know - we value and desire your input. Case studies provided by Equity Speaks/Equity Brown Bag, November 14, 2017.

**Case Study #1**

African American male (let’s refer to him as “Mike”) student taking a course with a professor from a different ethnicity. The student consistently sits in the front of class and always engaged in taking notes. For some reason after class Professor Q calls him over and questions if he is taking notes. He has a notebook full of notes (which he has also shown other staff) but she has asked him after class to show her his notes.

Professor Q allows students to help other students during class time with the subject matter. Students who do the helping can earn extra credit points for this. Mike offers to help a student and he earned extra credit for this. Professor Q allegedly stated that Mike could earn another extra credit point if he would dance in front of the class. Professor Q has never asked anyone else to do this for extra credit.

In another situation, Professor Q thought that Mike should rap for the class to earn extra credit points. Mike waited until after the class was over to talk to her about the various issues. He expressed to her that he believed her requests were inappropriate and he questioned her about her need to check his notes. He begins to get upset in talking with her because Professor Q doesn’t see where she did anything wrong. Professor Q states that Mike is getting aggressive. The next class session, Professor Q makes a public statement that she cares about all of her students and wants everyone to know that she is a caring person and wants to make sure that they do well by checking their notes. Mike is frustrated by the entire situation. He comes to you to share this story.

**What are the issues with this scenario?**

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**What would you do if the student came to you?**

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**Case Study #2**

A white-identified female (“Bridgette”) is enrolled in class with a white-identified professor (“Professor M”). He found out that they both attended the same high school and Bridgette feels like he might have some sort of connection with her because of that and her being a white-identified female. Here are some scenarios from the class:

1. The way that the class is structured, Bridgette is paired with two other students for the semester. Both of the other students are black. One student is from an African country and has recently moved here to attend college. During a conversation in class, the professor discussed vaccinations and how if folks don’t get vaccinated, they are idiots.
2. Bridgette noticed that when she turns in papers based on group work, she consistently gets higher grades than her two black group partners.
3. Bridget had to be in the hospital for female health issues. She had to miss a test because of her hospitalization (which she has a doctor’s note). Professor M questioned her about how she spent her time in the hospital and that she should have spent her time studying while hospitalized. He then proceeded to tell her that she was on a 28-day cycle for her period and that based on his calculations, there should be no need for her to miss the next test.
4. Professor M privately told Bridgette that he completely disagrees with Affirmative Action and that SMC does too much to protect black students
5. Professor M has talked about blacks and Mexicans having too many babies to this student as she has talked about her future profession.

**What are the issues with this scenario?**

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**What would you do if the student came to you?**

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**Case Study #3**

There is a homeless student (“Larry”) who has accrued multiple absences over the equivalent of 2 weeks. Larry talks to Professor J and states that the absences are due to trying to arrange housing. Now, Larry’s grade is in jeopardy due to Professor J’s absences policy as well as Larry’s missing assignments. Larry seems to want to be engaged in the class but is having this issue of life needs taking over academic needs.

**What are the issues with this scenario?**

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**What would you do if the student came to you?**

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**How would you handle this if you were a classified staff, administrator, counseling faculty member or another instructional faculty member and the student came to you with this issue. What would your counsel be to the student?**

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## **Resources**

There are numerous resources available to SMC faculty interested in exploring and expanding their pedagogic practice through an equity lens. The Resources section contains links for further reading, data analysis, and professional development opportunities.

**Resources:**

**Academic Senate Equity and Diversity Committee**

<http://www.smc.edu/ACG/AcademicSenate/Committees/Pages/Equity-Diversity.aspx>

**Adelante Program**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/LatinoCenter/Pages/default.aspx>

**Black Collegians**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/BlackCollegians/Pages/default.aspx>

**Center for Teaching Excellence**

<http://www.smc.edu/AcademicAffairs/CenterForTeachingExcellence/Pages/default.aspx>

**Disabled Students Programs and Services**

<http://smc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityResources/Pages/What-is-DSPS.aspx>

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity at SMC**

<http://www.smc.edu/HumanResources/HumanResourcesDepartment/Diversity-and-Equity-at-SMC/Pages/default.aspx>

**EEO, Equity and Equivalency Statements**

<http://www.smc.edu/HumanResources/HumanResourcesDepartment/Pages/EEO,-Equity-and-Equivalency-Statements.aspx>

**Faculty/Staff Diversity Reports**

<http://www.smc.edu/HumanResources/HumanResourcesDepartment/Pages/Diversity-Reports.aspx>

**Gender Equity and Social Justice Center**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/StudentLife/Gender-Equity-Social-Justice-Center/Pages/default.aspx>

**Guided Pathways Framework**

<http://www.smc.edu/ACG/AcademicSenate/GuidedPathwaysFramework/Pages/default.aspx>

**Professional Development**

<http://www.smc.edu/ACG/AcademicSenate/Committees/Pages/Professional-Development.aspx>

**Student Resources**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/Social-Justice/Pages/default.aspx>

**Title IX/Sexual Violence Response and Prevention**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/SVRP/Pages/default.aspx>

**Veteran's Resource Center**

<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/VeteransResourceCenter/Pages/default.aspx>