

# Equity-Minded Worksheet for Instructors of Online Courses

## Winterim 2015

### Background

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the UW-Green Bay campus engaged in a process to select its HLC Quality Initiative (QI) Project. From the several ideas that emerged, in June 2013, Chancellor Harden and Provost Wallace selected a proposal that focused on improving the quality of our online courses. The QI project has two goals: (1) implement the Quality Matters process for certifying online courses, and (2) analyze our online course offerings to ensure that all students, including underrepresented and minority student, are well-served in the online learning environment.

During the Fall 2014 semester the Equity Analysis of Online Courses Taskforce began working towards goal (2) by evaluating and modifying as necessary the Equity Scorecard Document Analysis Rubric for Self-Assessment of Equity-Minded and Culturally Inclusive Policies and Practices. This rubric, developed by faculty and staff at the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education (CUE), provides a method for analyzing and aligning course design and instruction with the goals of equity and inclusivity. The faculty members examined the rubric and created this worksheet inspired by the Scorecard to allow instructors to more easily analyze their online course offerings to ensure that they are inclusive for all students.

Inclusive learning and teaching refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. The purpose of this tool is to aid instructors in their mindfulness of equity-minded and inclusive teaching practices in online courses.

### Directions

Your task is to use the attached worksheet to help guide your analysis and evaluation of your online course in reference to particular Principles and General Characteristics of inclusivity and equity-minded teaching practices.

For each Principle (i.e., Inclusivity) there are several General Characteristics listed in bold with some examples of those characteristics underneath each one. As you self-reflect and evaluate your own course, you can check the practices that relate to your class to give you a feel for where your course stands in relation to the General Characteristic. We also provide you space to add other examples in your course that relate to the General Characteristics. Please note that (1) all examples may not be relevant to all courses and (2) this is not an exhaustive list of characteristics/examples.

After you have evaluated your course for all General Characteristics for each given Principle, you can then rate the extent your online course demonstrates each Principle on a scale from Not Effective to Effective. Next, we have provided space for you to note any changes related to the Principle you might consider implementing in your course.

While you will not hand in this completed document – **you will be required to attend a one-hour discussion early in the Spring 2015** semester to reflect generally on your findings and to discuss this evaluative-process.

# Equity-Minded Worksheet for Instructors of Online Courses

## Principle 1: Inclusivity

Instructor communicates that all students are important and equal partners in the education process and acts in inclusive ways that demonstrate respect for all students and their contributions.

### General Characteristics:

- 1. Provide course guidelines for respectful communication that promote inclusivity, reduce polarization and marginalization.**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Encourage regular, open and inclusive communication on discussion boards and in collaborations among all students and instructor
- b. Intervene promptly when communication guidelines are not followed.
- c. Set up an online buddy system.
- d. Your own examples:

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- 2. Foster a spirit of collaboration and equal partnership and encourage student ownership of course.**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Offer students multiple means of providing formal and informal course feedback (e.g., anonymous Qualtrics survey; mid-semester evaluation).
- b. Allow students to use this inventory to give feedback on course inclusivity and diversity sensitivity.
- c. Create mechanism for students to leave anonymous feedback or contact instructor.
- d. Explore ways of actively transforming learners into teachers.
- e. Include student input when designing assignments and discussion topics
- f. Solicit student feedback about their prior active-learning experiences, encourages them to propose alternatives, and considers implementing their suggestions
- g. Incorporate learning spaces that are driven by student voices (special forum with introductions using videos, pictures, cultural symbolism, assignment options, and video).
- h. Your own examples:

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**3. Make intentional efforts to learn who students are individually.**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Include an assignment (such as a 400 word essay) and/or discussion which allows students to introduce themselves and share and honor their diverse and eclectic experiences and strengths
- b. Arrange for students to meet with instructor after receiving grade on first assignment
- c. Make efforts to identify students who are hesitant and/or afraid to approach the instructor early on thru class introductions and short quizzes; instructor should then stay in touch with the students
- d. Ask students to complete initial survey that asks about their prior educational and life experiences relevant to the course and are asked to share this type of information in the first discussion post with classmates
- e. Your own examples:

**4. Solicit, respect and adjust to students' communication preferences**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Include various means of contacting the instructor on the syllabus (e.g., office hours, email, phone/Skype options, txt, twitter)
- b. Your own examples:

**5. Demonstrate a welcoming approach**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Provide students clear and detailed contact information
- b. State clearly on the syllabus that the instructor will always be available for consultation during specific times during the week
- c. Demonstrate willingness to help by letting students know if they have problems with the work they are welcome to communicate with the instructor
- d. Your own examples:

**6. Assign students to groups and roles sensitively and equitably**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Rotate positions of leadership in class
- b. Be wary of allowing students to assign themselves to groups
- c. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

  
  


**Principle 1: Inclusivity**

**Instructor communicates that all students are important and equal partners in the education process and acts in inclusive ways that demonstrate respect for all students and their contributions.**

**How well does your course demonstrate Principle 1? Circle one below.**

Not Effective	Somewhat Not Effective		Neutral	Somewhat Effective		Effective
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to make it more welcoming and inclusive.**

## Principle 2: Respect for Diversity

Instructor communicates that racial/ethnic, cultural, gender, age, social class and other kinds of human difference are important and valued.

### General Characteristics:

#### 1. Course content explores a broad range of diverse contributions to the discipline

Yes	No
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##### Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Include material authored by people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives
- b. Rely on textbooks, and scholarly material that engages in respectful discussion of the history and contemporary experiences of discrimination, racism, and marginalization
- c. Include multiple perspectives on each topic rather than in one add-on unit
- d. Consider his/her diverse and eclectic experiences and biases when preparing course materials
- e. Solicit different points of view that relates to students' diverse backgrounds
- f. Provide video links and case studies related to diversity to promote discussion
- g. Use class examples encompassing different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, age groups, religions and abilities to make the students feel more comfortable and validated
- h. Show video clips and/or use case examples (to the extent they are relevant to the class), that illustrate the educational value of exploring a diverse array of experiences
- i. Your own examples:

#### 2. Guidelines and assignments affirm respect for diversity and inclusivity

Yes	No
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##### Examples

- a. Design assignments that prompt students to experience diversity firsthand and asks them to share their experiences (encourage or assign students to take part in on and off campus and/or online events about racism, discrimination and marginalization, i.e. attend a religious ceremony different from their own, events at the Pride Center, volunteer at an elder community, homeless shelter or youth reading program, etc.)

Check all that apply

- b. Ask students to let instructor know at the beginning of the course if their attendance/participation in class will be affected by religious holidays or practices
- c. Include a statement in the syllabus explicitly affirming the value diverse experiences (e.g., military, volunteer work, travel, caring for family members) and perspectives have in enhancing class discussions and learning
- d. Establish rules and netiquette guidelines with the class as to how to respect diverse viewpoints in an online environment
- e. Your own examples:

**3. Classroom behaviors reflect respect for diversity and inclusivity**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Avoid making students a cultural representative (“native informant”) of their group
- b. Consider his/her diverse and eclectic experiences and biases when interacting with students
- c. Consider students’ cultural, socioeconomic and diversity experiences when addressing their individual needs and challenges
- d. Your own examples:

**4. Reduce the negative effects on performance of stereotype threats**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Provide even a single role models that challenge stereotypic assumptions
- b. Encourage students to think about their characteristics, skills, values, or roles that they view as important
- c. Encourage students to think of themselves in ways that reduce the salience of a threatened identity that in turn would help in lowering stereotype threats (source: <http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/reduce.html>)
- d. Your own examples:

## Principle 2: Respect for Diversity

Instructor communicates that racial/ethnic, cultural, gender, age, social class and other kinds of human difference are important and valued.

How well does your course demonstrate Principle 2? Circle one below.

Not Effective	Somewhat Not Effective		Neutral	Somewhat Effective		Effective
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to enhance respect for diversity.

## Principle 3: Values Diverse Life Experiences and Ways of Knowing

Instructor respects and values diverse abilities, talents, life experience and ways of knowing and recognizes their importance for collaborative learning.

### General Characteristics:

- 1. Utilize diverse student and instructor experiences and perspectives as a resource and emphasize the enrichment they bring to the course**

Yes	No
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#### Examples

- a. Communicate a teaching philosophy that values diverse knowledge and life experience
- b. Explicitly share some of his/her own life experiences relevant to diverse types of formal education
- c. Use examples of the value of different teaching/training experiences, environments and achievements in class presentationS
- d. Establish a course blog that links diverse life experiences with course content
- e. Request permission and incorporate student experiences into course content later in the semester
- f. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

- 2. Indicate to students that their life experience and diverse knowledge matters in the assessment of their work**

Yes	No
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#### Examples

- a. Encourage students to present and use prior life experiences (either totally or in part) as a basis for at least one assignment
- b. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

- 3. Accommodate different ways of knowing and learning**

Yes	No
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#### Examples

- a. Ask students to reflect on how their diverse knowledge and unique life experience impact their learning

Check all that apply



- b. Allow students to choose project topics and/or ways of completing assignments (written versus oral; individual versus group assessment, text versus video)
- c. Honor diverse learning styles by providing students a variety of project and assignment choices
- d. Suggest students answer a question by making a video, blog post, etc
- e. Assess students' learning styles and adjust instruction accordingly
- f. Your own examples:

**4. Encourage students to apply their learning to real life situations and to consider how their life experience and knowledge gained in the course will integrate into their future careers**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Show video clips and/or use case examples of others using knowledge or skills relevant to the course to address real-world problems
- b. Assign discussion topics that involve group brainstorming about real-life problems
- c. Encourage students to apply course concepts to contemporary social problems by participating in internships and service learning programs
- d. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

### **Principle 3: Values Diverse Life Experiences and Ways of Knowing**

**Instructor respects and values diverse abilities, talents, life experience and ways of knowing and recognizes their importance for collaborative learning.**

**How well does your course demonstrate Principle 3? Circle one below.**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Somewhat Not Effective</b>		<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Effective</b>		<b>Effective</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to underscore the importance of diverse life experiences and ways of knowing for collaborative learning.**

## Principle 4: Advocates High Expectations for All Students

Instructor communicates inclusive and attainable high expectations and provides explicit criteria for success for all students.

### General Characteristics:

- 1. Consistently challenge students, encourages them to strive for success and praises quality work**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Clearly outline a teaching philosophy and expectations for success in the syllabus
- b. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

- 2. Engage students in learning above and beyond required course work**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. At the beginning of the semester, ask students if they ever doubted if they could obtain a college degree and why and discuss with the class the foundation and easing of these doubts
- b. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

- 3. Provide resources to aid students in their success**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Include a discussion forum for questions and frequent the forum to provide timely responses
- b. Create D2L sub-groups consisting of students of diverse backgrounds to encourage collaboration and discussion of how to work through real and perceived obstacles to success in the class
- c. Provide contact information for additional learning resources (e.g. the Writing Center, the Tutoring Center, and the Language Resource Center)
- d. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

**4. Provide clear, specific and inclusive course learning objectives, expectations and deadlines**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Provide a list of activities clearly aligned to the course and its learning objectives
- b. Consider including learning outcomes and ‘enduring outcomes’ for each unit
- c. Have each student assess whether they have met these outcomes in a brief note to the instructor
- d. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

**5. Provide multiple attempts for learning**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Provide assignments that gradually increase in difficulty and complexity throughout the semester
- b. Encourage students to submit early drafts of assignments to the instructor
- c. Consider pre-course and post-course assessments (i.e., ask students to read a primary text and state, in their own words, the text’s main message and its broad historical significance; at the end of the semester, students would repeat the same exercise, but with a different text, to discern whether their critical analytical skillset has improved during the course of the semester)
- d. Create study table, raise your hand, or a helpdesk forum
- e. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

**6. Create specific and intentional individual and/or group opportunities for accountability**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Have explicit deadlines throughout the course that encourage students to keep up with projects and assignments
- b. Ask students to give feedback on their group members and overall group dynamic
- c. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

**7. Course activities and learning objectives are clearly aligned with future careers, so students are motivated to succeed**

Yes	No
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Examples

- a. Read testimonials from college graduates of diverse backgrounds to learn how they grappled with obtaining higher educational goals
- b. Your own examples:

Check all that apply

  


**Principle 4: Advocates High Expectations for All Students**

**Instructor communicates inclusive and attainable high expectations and provides explicit criteria for success for all students.**

**How well does your course demonstrate Principle 4? Circle one below.**

Not Effective	Somewhat Not Effective		Neutral	Somewhat Effective		Effective
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to better communicate the high expectations you have for all students.**

## Principle 5: Accessibility

Instructor ensures inclusive practices regarding web design and on-line accessibility.

### General Characteristics:

#### 1. Provide activities clearly aligned with accessibility guidelines

Yes	No
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##### Examples

- Provide information as to how to master online assignments and how they might differ from those in classroom instruction
- Your own examples:

Check all that apply

#### 2. Acknowledge that navigating course material may become a struggle for some students and outline clear, simple steps for obtaining assistance

Yes	No
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##### Examples

- Provide information in the syllabus on how to acquire assistance
- Your own examples:

Check all that apply

#### 3. Provide clear instructions regarding how to request an accessibility (disability) accommodation

Yes	No
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##### Examples

- Include disability statement and how to acquire accommodations on syllabus
- Ask all students early in the course if they need any accommodations
- Your own examples:

Check all that apply

#### 4. Provide academic accommodations when requested

Yes	No
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##### Examples

- Provide course content using equivalent alternative to auditory and visual content when requested as a disability accommodation
- Provide additional time on exams and quizzes

Check all that apply

c. Provide alternative options for activities that may not be accessible to all students	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Contact ATS to caption audio/video instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Provide text equivalents of non-text content such as images, pre-recorded audio and/or video	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Your own examples:	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Principle 5: Accessibility**  
**Instructor ensures inclusive practices regarding web design and on-line accessibility.**

**How well does your course demonstrate Principle 5? Circle one below.**

Not Effective	Somewhat Not Effective		Neutral	Somewhat Effective		Effective
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to make it more accessible to all students.**

## Principle 6: Continuous Improvement and Self-Evaluation

Instructor uses assessment information to continually improve course design and instruction in order to enhance inclusivity and respect for diversity in the course and recommends areas in need of institution-wide improvement.

### General Characteristics:

- 1. Reflect on assessment results and makes intentional efforts to become a more equity-minded teacher**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Continue current practices/materials
- b. Modify current practices/materials (e.g., increase use of certain practice; eliminate certain material from syllabus or change its wording)
- c. Adopt a new practice/material (e.g., include a new assignment, put additional information in syllabus)
- d. Reach out to CATL for additional resources
- e. Your own examples:

- 2. Identify and communicate areas in need of improvement to administrators in order to create broader institutional change**

Yes	No
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Examples

Check all that apply

- a. Contact Greg Davis, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, with your suggestions
- b. Your own examples:



## **Principle 6: Continuous Improvement and Self-Evaluation**

**Instructor uses assessment information to continually improve course design and instruction in order to enhance inclusivity and respect for diversity in the course and recommends areas in need of institution-wide improvement.**

**How well does your course demonstrate Principle 6? Circle one below.**

<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Somewhat Not Effective</b>		<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Effective</b>		<b>Effective</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**For your own reflection, please record below what changes, if any, you are considering making to your course to use assessment information to reflect and improve.**