

# DEI ONLINE COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL CHECKLIST

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This checklist was developed at The University of Kansas by John Bricklemyer as part of the KU Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Diversity Scholars program in 2017-2018. This checklist has been designed to be used in conjunction with the DEI Syllabus Assessment Tool from the Urban Planning program at KU when designing an online course to specifically address how to improve an online course's climate, pedagogy, and content from a DEI perspective. ([DEI Syllabus Assessment Tool](#) )

## DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION – PRINCIPLE 1: ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT AN ONLINE CLASS CLIMATE THAT FOSTERS BELONGING FOR ALL STUDENTS

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- Online instructor-student rapport is built through:**
- Being organized.
  - Starting the course with a welcoming email.
  - Keeping all commitments.
  - Responding to email promptly and consistently within stated guidelines.
  - Consistent communication is provided through contributions to discussion boards and by sending periodic, general emails.
  - Maintains consistent, virtual office hours.
  - All student interactions are focused on providing motivation for student success.
  - Providing students with an "icebreaker" introduction to the instructor and the instructor's teaching philosophy as a way for the students to get to know them.
  - Also see the *Establish community agreements and discussion guidelines by:* section on page 3.

Additional information: [Tips for Establishing a Rapport with Online Students](#) and [Instructor to Student Interaction Online](#)

- Online student-student rapport is built by providing socially-focused exchanges such as:**
- Guided online introductions.
  - Icebreakers and exchanges of information such as backgrounds, majors, interests, contact information, and other information, as appropriate and desired by the student.
  - Online activities designed to increase social rapport.

Additional information: [Student to Student Interaction: Building Rapport in Online Courses](#)

- **Each student is treated online as an individual by:**
  - Responding to each students' introduction posting with an individualized response.
  - Providing individualized feedback on assignments.
  - Follow up on lapses in a student's online activity with individualized emails.

Additional information: [Make a Personal Connection in Your Online Classroom](#)

- **Address challenging online moments head-on by:**
  - Addressing appropriate behavior in an online course up-front in your course syllabus and, as appropriate, in grading rubrics.
  - Turning over abusive or threatening students to appropriate professionals at your institution.
  - Individually contacting any AWOL students.
  - Responding quickly to seemingly angry students.
  - Providing feedback mechanisms to reduce back-channel complaining.
  - Not being drawn in by personal comments or challenges.
  - Keeping your focus on the class as a whole, while fine-tuning individual responses from this baseline.

Additional information: [Difficult Online Students](#) and [Dealing with Difficult Students in the Online Classroom](#)

- **Ask for feedback by:**
  - Providing multiple avenues for students to provide input, such as email, discussion boards, surveys, and/or virtual office hours.  
Promoting the use of the above avenues with the students on a frequent basis.
  - Offering a mid-semester course evaluation.
  - Promoting end-of-semester formal course evaluations.

Additional information: [How Unfavorable Student Feedback Improves Online Courses](#)

## **DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION – PRINCIPLE 2: SET EXPLICIT STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ONLINE COURSES**

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- **Online assessment criteria are clearly articulated by:**
  - Aligning your assessments' criteria to learning objectives.
  - Ensuring assessment rubrics are clearly worded and available to students.
  - Ensuring assessment instructions and feedback are clear and student-oriented when possible use the Transparent Assignment Template.
  - Balancing formative and summative assessments.
  - Providing examples of student assignments and/or online "norming" sessions to allow students to better understand how grading criteria will be applied. (Please also see the *Demonstrate exemplary work by:* section below)

Additional information: [Assessing Your Students](#) and [A Teaching Intervention That Increases Underserved College Students' Success](#)

- Provide timely feedback to students by:**
  - Providing an online instructor “presence” in the course.
  - Providing guidelines on when students should expect feedback.
  - Providing assessment feedback within the stated guidelines.Additional information: [Providing Effective Feedback in the Online Classroom](#)

- Establish community agreements and discussion guidelines by:**
  - Posting netiquette guidelines for online behaviors and interactions within this online course.
  - Developing course ground rules, in conjunction with the students, outlining acceptable behaviors and interactions.
  - Reinforcing adherence to these guidelines, as appropriate, by incorporating netiquette criteria and/or course ground rules in assessment rubrics.Additional information: [Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#) and [15 Rules of Netiquette for Online Discussion Boards](#)

- Demonstrate exemplary work by:**
  - Posting examples of students’ work for selected assignments which communicates expectations, facilitate their understanding, helps articulate assessment expectations and standards, and models discipline-specific skills. Obtain students’ permission to use their work using the form from CTE, which is available here: [CTE Student Consent Form](#)Additional information: [Designing Effective Online Assignments](#)

- Model expected online behavior by:**
  - Responding to student comments and questions within time frames set in the course syllabus.
  - Providing general feedback to the entire class of specific assignments or discussions, while at the same time providing individual encouragement and comments to students.
  - Providing feedback on graded assignments that both recognizes good work and makes suggestions for improvement.
  - Modeling the right way students should communicate online.Additional information: [Best Practices for Teaching Online](#)

## DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION – PRINCIPLE 3: SELECT ONLINE COURSE CONTENT THAT RECOGNIZES DIVERSITY AND ACKNOWLEDGES BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

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- Select content that engages a diversity of ideas and perspectives by:**
  - Incorporating, as much as possible, a variety of perspectives by selecting course readings, textbooks, and other materials that don't systematically underrepresent, or are absent of, certain perspectives.
  - Providing multiple perspectives on each topic of the course rather than by solely on a single perspective by selecting content by authors of diverse backgrounds and/or perspectives.
  - Discussing contributions made to the field by historically underrepresented groups and explaining why these efforts are significant.
  - Pointing out the shortcomings of material that is problematic or incorporates stereotypes.
  - Providing content applicable to students' real-world experiences.
  
- Work to build a fully inclusive culture by:**
  - Providing multiple and diverse examples that speak across gender, work across cultures, and are relatable to people from various socioeconomic statuses, ages, and religions.
  - Drawing on resources, materials, humor, and anecdotes that respect, and are sensitive to, the social and cultural diversity of your students.

Additional information for both sections: [Creating Inclusive College Classrooms](#)

## DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION – PRINCIPLE 4: DESIGN ALL ONLINE COURSE ELEMENTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

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- Provide multiple means of representation by:**
  - Incorporating alternate text (alt text) that is informationally equivalent to the visual depiction of all images, figures, visuals, and maps. Additional information: [Making Images Accessible](#) and [Accessible Images](#)
  - Providing accurate (97 – 99%) verbatim closed captioning (timed text) for all audio and video files, optimally, the captions should be enriched with relevant descriptive details in addition to spoken speech for video files. Additional information: [Captions, Transcripts, and Audio Descriptions](#) and [Accessible Multimedia](#)
  - Providing live transcription for live/virtual events or taking other steps to make the event accessible. Additional information: [Providing Captions for Live Online Events](#) and [Seven Steps for Setting Up an Accessible Virtual Exchange](#)
  - Providing keyboard shortcut capabilities for all interactive objects (including animations, games, videos, and other action objects) and online experiences to enable user access and navigation based on assistive devices. Additional information: [Keyboard-Only Navigation for Improved Accessibility](#)

- Providing text which has been written for screen reader compatibility. Additional information: [Designing for Screen Reader Compatibility](#) and [Write Accessible Content](#). You might also try the FANGS screen reader emulator for Firefox to find out what the experience is like for users of screen readers.
- Naming documents so that they are properly and informatively labeled for easier navigation. Additional information: [Provide a Descriptive Document File Name and Title](#)
- Designing data tables which are accessible and clearly understandable, cell by cell, when read by a screen reader. Additional information: [Creating Accessible Tables](#) and [How Can Data Tables be Made Accessible?](#)
- Convey information through multiple means in addition to—or instead of—color, such as labels, captions, textual descriptions, patterns, textures, and other methods are used to share information. Additional information: [How to Design for Color Blindness](#)
- Creating digital files in accessible digital formats for access, usability, and digital preservation. Additional information: [Create Accessible Electronic Documents](#), [PDF Accessibility](#), [Microsoft Word: Creating Accessible Documents](#), [PowerPoint Accessibility](#), and [Creating Accessible Excel Documents](#)

Additional information: [Creating Accessible Electronic Content](#)

**Provide multiple means of action and expression through:**

- Providing a range of ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge.
- Allowing students to interact with course materials in a way that advances their learning.
- Reviewing all technology tools utilized in the course for accessibility.
- Providing scaffolding. Helping students build executive functioning skills by articulating the necessary steps between the granular mechanics and the big picture outcomes in a learning experience.
- Providing frequent opportunities for informal assessment and feedback on progress, and building into this process places where learners should stop and reflect before acting (see Principle 2).

Additional information: [Scaffolding Assignments](#), [Scaffolding Assignments: Designing Structure and Support](#), and [Effective Assignment Sequencing for Scaffolding Learning](#)

**Provide multiple means of engagement by:**

- Providing a variety of instructional material and assignment types within each online course module to accommodate different student learning pathways.
- Providing opportunities for group work and reminding students of the importance of collaborative skills in the workplace.
- Being open to student feedback for further diversifying course materials and assignments.

Additional information: [Student Engagement Strategies for the Online Learning Environment](#)

## DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION – PRINCIPLE 5: REFLECT ON ONE’S BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING TO MAXIMIZE SELF-AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

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- What are my identities, and how do others/my students perceive me?**
- Take inventory of the way your affiliations and identities – the readily evident ones as well as the ones that are less visible – may shape your perceptions and connections with others or their perceptions and connections with you.
  - Consider which of your behaviors contribute to intercultural literacy and which do not.
  - Monitor myself against defensive reactions.
- Additional information: [Want to Become More Culturally Competent? Start with your Cultural Self-Awareness](#)
- What are my implicit (or explicit) biases? Do I propagate, neutralize, or challenge stereotypes in my class?**
- Taking an honest inventory of the ways you might unconsciously or consciously be affected by or perpetuate bias. Proactively adjusting your behavior, and encouraging others to modify theirs to avoid creating a marginalizing course environment.
  - Familiarizing yourself with the concept of stereotype threat and working to neutralize or intentionally discuss instances where stereotypes arise. Challenging stereotypes when evident in content, or in the spoken or written comments of students. Working to reduce your unconsciously held stereotypes in the future.
- Additional information: [How Do I Know if My Biases Affect My Teaching?](#) and [Top 5 UDL Tips for Reducing Stereotype Threat](#)
- How do I handle challenges from online students?**
- Cultivating reflective distance by asking yourself: what student behaviors trigger strong emotions in me, cause me to lose equilibrium, or otherwise distract my attention?
  - Developing greater self-awareness of the ways you handle difficult moments can help to model constructive behavior for students (see Principle 2).
- Additional information: [Reflective Teaching: Exploring our own Classroom Practice](#)
- How might the ways I set up online course spaces and activities foster inclusion or dis-inclusion?**
- Understand what ways are you interacting with students and how is that perceived by them.
  - Review the types of activities and assignments which you have chosen for whether they are inclusive of all students.
  - Obtain feedback regarding any suggested course changes through the use of an informal, anonymous midterm survey of students.
- Additional information: Utilize the Inclusive Practice Tool self-assessment (K-12 oriented, but it is applicable): [Inclusive Practice Tool: Self-Assessment Form](#)

The five principles and some content were adapted for online learning from material provided in Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning (2018). [Guide to Inclusive Teaching at Columbia](#).

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