Designing Inclusive Course Content

Course content allows instructors to impart essential information to students. The type and mode of content contributes to the inclusiveness and accessibility of a course. This guide offers tips for designing course content that is multimodal and culturally responsive to achieve that goal.

Multimodality

Offering content in more than one mode gives students options in the way they access course information. It also creates opportunities for choice, which can encourage autonomy and improve cognitive functioning in higher education classrooms where situational power dynamics exist.[i,ii]
Here are some tips for providing multimodal content:

- ❑ Text is not effective for all learners. Providing alternatives to text-based content can make information more accessible.
- ❑ Offer alternatives. If content is auditory, supplement with visual information and vice versa.[iii]
- ❑ State the link between two modes of media. How might they apply content in different ways?

Examples of Modality Types

The selection and presentation of content varies by discipline, teaching style, and course level. The following list is not exhaustive.

Auditory Content	Visual Content	Auditory Content
• Textbooks	• Photos/illustrations	• Podcasts
• Publisher content	• Tables/figures	• Audio books
• Articles	• Infographics	• Music
• Lecture Notes	• Memes	• Recorded lectures
• PowerPoint slides	• Videos	
• Newspapers/media		
• Blogs/web sites		

Culturally Relevant Content

Since the theory of culturally relevant teaching was made popular by Ladson-Billings in 1995, it has evolved into many different theories and frameworks and has been adapted in multiple contexts.[iv] We use it here to refer to the design of course curricula that is representative of UNT's student population. A few ways to design culturally relevant content are provided:

- ❑ Find images and media that represent the diversity of students at your institution.[v]
- ❑ Encourage students to analyze how specific groups are represented in images and media related to course topics.[vi]
- ❑ The Assessing Visual Materials for Diversity & Inclusivity Tool (Links to an external site) can help instructors and students learn how to analyze images for equity.[vii]

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[i] Smith, P.K.N., Nils, B. J., Galinsky, A.D., van Dijk W.W. (2008). Lacking power impairs executive functions. *Association for Psychological Science,* 19(5) 441-447

[ii] Addy, T.M., Dube, D., Mitchell, K.A., & SoRelle, M. (2021). *What Inclusive Instructors Do: Principles and Practices for Excellence in College Teaching,* Stylus Publishing.

[iii] CAST. (2018). Universal design for learning guidelines version 202. [graphic organizer]. https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

[iv] Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Research Journal, 32*(3) 564-491.

[v] Peralta Community College District. (2020). Peralta Online Equity Rubric, version 3.0 [Creative Commons license: BY-SA]. https://web.peralta.edu/de/peralta-online-equity-initiative/equity/

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Grotewold, K. (2020). Assessing Visual Materials for Diversity & Inclusivity. [Creative Commons License: BY-NC-SA]. https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/69336/overview-old