**Crowdsourced Ideas**

For Equitable Completion in General Education Courses

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| A group of people sitting around a table with a computer  Description automatically generated with low confidence | Table of Contents   * Page 2—Ideas for Course Content * Page 3—Ideas for Pacing, Structure, and Deadlines * Page 5—Ideas for Connection Building * Page 10—Ideas for Assignment Design * Page 11—Other Ideas |

By the Faculty of Salt Lake Community College

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**Ideas for Course Content**

1. **Open Educational Resources (OER)**— All General Education courses should move to low cost/no cost textbooks. OER is so doable. . . More low cost/ no cost textbook courses. . . 65% of learners are visual learners. Use images to explain or reinforce concepts throughout OER curriculum. . . Require all General Education courses to be OER so that students only have to be registered in the course and not have to pay any additional costs. They need access to all of the course content from day one. When students can barely find the resources to get registered they frequently don't purchase the materials and do poorly or fail. [Check out [Open SLCC](https://www.slcc.edu/open/), [Openstax](https://openstax.org/), [OER Commons](https://www.oercommons.org/), and [MERLOT Collection](https://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm)]
2. **Information Literacy and Authority**— Include information literacy skills in course content, with discussions around "authority" in the field being studied. Have honest discussions and critiques of equity issues in fields being studied. (Whose voices have historically moved the profession forward? Who has been left out of these conversations? Why? Is it unique to this discipline? Why is a peer reviewed scholarly source the best level of evidence in this field? Are there alternatives? Etc.). [Check out the [SLCC information literacy rubrics](https://libguides.slcc.edu/toolkit/rubric), [SLCC library instruction request](https://libweb.slcc.edu/services/library-instruction-request), [SLCC library search skills](https://libweb.slcc.edu/services/library-search-skills), [SLCC library research links](https://libweb.slcc.edu/research)]
3. **Diversify Readings and Course Material**— Look for a diverse collection of readings and course material when possible. . . I wonder if A: there is a lack of diversity in the authorship of our course content and, if there is a lack of diversity, if B: that lack of diversity makes it difficult for our students of color to relate to the authors, their histories, and their perspectives. For example, BUS 1050: Foundations of Business Thought, (not GenEd, but a good example) is OER and has over 30 readings, and, with the exception of one essay by Mahatma Gandhi, all of the readings are from old white males. I have tried to integrate readings from W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez, but I have struggled. The whole tone and philosophy of the course is rooted in Western, White, Capitalist conceptions of business, so finding a good home for these readings (OER readings at that—not easy) is tough to do. That said, writing this up has renewed my commitment to the idea so my Spring 2021 students will see some optional readings included. Anyway, my point is this: after having read How to Be an Antiracist, I now understand that we don’t all see the world the same way or connect with the same ideas, attitudes, or philosophies. I’m reminded of when, as a kid from California, I had to take a history class on the Civil War as a college student in Tennessee. I felt a real sense of culture shock as we discussed the “War of Northern Aggression” and learned how the war was all about the North beating down the Southern economy to keep the balance of power in their favor. Slavery was hardly even a footnote. So, I wonder if the feeling of cultural and philosophical dissonance I felt in that one class is more of a daily occurrence for our diverse students. . . Review texts and course materials to ensure they are up to date, especially regarding equity issues. Some older texts may have good information, but if it is presented in a way that reinforces systemic racism (which is sometimes subtle), students may struggle to connect to the subject. I have also found it helpful, especially if my text/OER is not as racial diverse as I prefer, to include more diverse representation in the materials I present in class, especially when there is a visual element. I have found that students seem to respond well if time is taken to find diverse scholars which contribute to the course materials before class, then in class, the material is presented on the merits of its contribution to the topic at hand. There are scholars in various disciplines who are compiling lists of scholars to make this idea easier for busy faculty, such as this one: <https://www.indigenousmathematicians.org/profiles/> [Check out Willamette University’s [resource page](https://libguides.willamette.edu/c.php?g=1052084) for diversifying syllabi and links from professional associations on how to diversify content, or Oakton Community College’s BLM movement [resource page](https://researchguides.oakton.edu/blacklivesmatter)]
4. **Get Students Moving**— In course design, I try to include kinetic activities, videos, text, and comprehension quizzes. I have also played with gamification elements. Students have mostly had positive feedback for courses where the weekly modules build and stack for the final project. [Check out [15 active learning techniques](https://www.nureva.com/blog/education/15-active-learning-activities-to-energize-your-next-college-class), [kinesthetic learning in online environments](https://ctl.wiley.com/kinesthetic-learning-online-learning-environment/)]
5. **Highlight Diversity in the Discipline**— This is a new intervention that I will be trying - I'm assembling a list of diverse scientists and building in a short segment in every class. There is a picture of the scientist and either a piece of data that they have produced or a short bio, or a summary of how their work moved science forward. I want each student to see someone that looks like them by the end of the semester.
6. **Emphasize Relevance**— I try to demonstrate how learning and engaging with a range of content will help them in their personal, professional, and academic pursuits, whatever those may be. Hoping to encourage participation in and completion of the course.
7. **Encourage Student Created Content**—Have students create content. [Check out Vanderbilt University on [using wikis in class](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/wikis/), or these [video creation tools](https://www.techporn.ph/best-video-creation-tools-teachers-students/) for students]

**Ideas for Pacing, Structure, and Deadlines**

1. **Remove timed tests**— Timed tests put English Language Learners and students with learning disabilities at a disadvantage.
2. **Use Online Tests**— Online tests allow students to have a comfortable environment, free from distraction. It allows students to take the test at the time of day they are the most productive. This helps all students, but especially students with Lupus, Epstein-Barr, Chronic Fatigue, MS, and ADHD.
3. **Employ Appropriate Pacing**— We need to not cram in so many assignments and projects with online classes. Maybe do a reading assignment and homework each week, spacing out labs and projects to one every few weeks. This will reduce the stress on already stressed students, plus reduce faculty grading time. Just because we can automate grading, doesn’t mean we as faculty should pile on more homework.
4. **Offer Flexibility for Missed Deadlines**— Most of our students work full time and many have families while attending school. They need lifelines for missed deadlines. I do not penalize the missed deadline. Instead, I send reminder emails with a sense of urgency; letting them know they missed an assignment. Student feedback shows appreciation for the reminders. Canvas has an automated way to send a reminder. I have seen student success increase since the reminder practice went out. . . I allow students to submit work late (points deducted for each day late; no point deduction for documented emergencies). I have hard deadlines for work I must read and grade, but soft deadlines for work Canvas can be set to correct. If students are consistently submitting late work and I see a pattern (work due Saturday, but submitting on Tuesday), I reach out to students and ask if Tuesday is a better day for work to be due. If so, I change the due date that best fits their schedule. . . More flexibility with deadlines when possible. Allow for \_\_ number of late work with no excuse needed and no impacts on grade (life happens). . . I have eliminated late penalties for students in my classes, for nearly all assignments and even exams. Students still have a 'due date' and a schedule to meet, because as I tell them, I do have to submit grades by the end of the semester! I encourage them to let me know if they are going to take an exam late. But it gives them flexibility if they end up with a conflict such as a sick child, or an unexpected work shift, or an illness - they don't have to beg for an exception, they don't have to wait for me to respond to an email to know they can alter the schedule, they just work around it to get caught up. I think these kinds of interruptions disproportionately affect minority populations and minimizing the effects of them can be powerful. This does have the danger of giving students too much freedom, in the which they may suffer by procrastinating too much - but then again, this is college and I expect my students to be self-disciplined. If the only thing they learn from my course is they need to take responsibility for how they spend their time, I think that's a valuable lesson learned. . . I am flexible with students who need more time to complete assignments. I once has a student who spent several weeks in a homeless shelter with her children while they were trying to find a new place to rent. . . There is a need for very flexible deadlines since this is a cultural trait from British/German culture and is therefore biased. I'm a white male of British/German descent and value this myself but know that it disproportionately affects underrepresented students in STEM so have flexible deadlines will help. . . Create extra work for missed classes rather than dock points for attendance. . . Allowing late work with a small penalty (or no penalty with prior student communication). I do not require documentation because that can be ableist. . . I'm being very lenient on due dates and writing to lots of students encouraging them to get caught up and letting them know what assignments are missing. I wrote a ton of emails before finals, helping students get their grades up. . . Accepting late work. In the online course I teach, the weekly quizzes and discussions need to happen the week they are assigned. These 2 items are only worth 20% of the final grade, however. Assignments are accepted up until the final week of the semester. I have found especially with the pandemic the past few semesters, that this has made a big difference for students. Many have had job changes, job losses, general anxiety, child-care problems, lack of stable internet, and only one computer to use. [Check out Ellen Boucher’s [argument](https://www.chronicle.com/article/its-time-to-ditch-our-deadlines/) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about deadlines]
5. **Schedule Routine in Courses**— Student feedback stated they prefer a routine with the schedule. The most popular deadline date is Sunday.
6. **Use Interactive Content**— I also plan on creating more interactive material/content and videos in the course.
7. **Send a Week 2 Email**— Send an email to students after Week 2 who have not completed ALL of the material. The emails can basically have the same content but sending one to each student is a great way to communicate individual concern. Sample: *Name, I have noticed that you have not completed the course work through Week 2. I want to make sure everything is going okay. I don’t want you to fall behind in class as more impactful assignments come along. Please get in touch with me via email, office hours, a video call, etc. if you have any questions about the material or class rules. I would appreciate it if you could answer this email just so I know you got it. Thanks and hope all is well!*
8. **Design with a** **Clear Structure**— This isn't my idea, but it's well-demonstrated that increased course structure is beneficial for all students, and particularly minoritized students. I build in a lot of formative assignments to prepare them for summative assignments, as well as have them demonstrate competency in the form of discussions and assignments rather than high-stakes tests. [Check out [this article](https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/a-renewed-case-for-student-success-using-transparency-in-assignment-design-when-teaching-remotely/) about transparency in assignment design in remote education, and UNLV’s [resources on transparent assignment design](https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/164/Teaching%20UNLV%20Students%20Research%20Based%20Best%20Practices%20handout.pdf)]
9. **Create CBE English 1010**— Create an English 1010 section that is competency based, using the units built into the current OER course shell. Allow students to work at their own pace, independent of the academic school calendar. Meet regularly. Use small group instruction. [A CBE English 1010 course does exist as part of the CBE Gen Ed Pilot 2.0]
10. **Allow Revise and Resubmit**— Let students revise and resubmit. Give them chances to re-do what they have either missed or messed up on. Give them second chances. Do away with deadlines that are intended to "get them ready for the real world". Our students already are living in the real world. [Check out Christine Witcher’s [article](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2019-03-13-growth-over-grades-how-a-resubmit-policy-is-helping-us-build-a-culture-of-revision) about a revise and resubmit policy in a secondary setting, and [this article](http://collegequarterly.ca/2017-vol20-num02-spring/getting-students-to-read-instructor-feedback-and-maybe-actually-learn-from-it.html) from *College Quarterly* about the positive benefits of feedback-revise-resubmit pedagogy]

**Ideas for Connection Building**

1. **Approach Teaching as a Shared Learning Experience**— Acknowledge student experiences outside the classroom are valuable inside the classroom. Encourage safe spaces to share (never pressure) and let students learn from each other. Push aside the idea that faculty know it all. Experts admit what they don't know, still want to learn, etc. Approach teaching as a "shared learning experience". . . I try to encourage students to share their perspectives with the class. Noting that the more voices/narratives we hear the better prepared we are to engage in meaningful analysis.
2. **Cultivate Growth Mindset**— After taking the ACUE online course this past semester. One idea that I thought would be very easy to incorporate into all my classes is the idea of the "growth mindset". I pulled up a YouTube video and placed it in my "orientation discussion" assignments, or other "orientation" type assignments and asked students to watch the short 2-minute video over "growth mindset". I then asked them to answer some questions over the video, such as: 1. what did you think of that video? 2. Had you heard of a growth mindset before? 3. What does this mean for you? 4. Does this change the way you might see yourself being successful in this class and other courses? 5. How might this change the way you approach this semester? Thus far, I have had some interesting responses. [Check out Hazel Kelly’s [article](https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/growth-mindset-success-2019.aspx) on the role of growth mindset for student success in college, and Omid Fotuhi’s [article](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/10/21/misperceptions-among-professors-about-growth-mind-set-concept-may-be-harming-some) on the complexities of growth mindset in college settings]
3. **Connect Via Technology**— I have a Zoom room link that I included in all of my contact information. Whenever students are having any issues in the class, I offer to zoom with them and allow them to pick a time that works for them. Because all of my classes are online currently, I have not set specific meeting times, as I want to open all my time up for students. I want to show them that I am easily accessible and there to help. I have mentioned in the syllabus and on the home page of all my classes that I am available face to face in my office to meet, and by Zoom and that my schedule will work around their schedule. Recently, just this semester, which we are only 4 days in, I have met with two students on Zoom. My plan is to continue to advise students when they reach out to me to meet me in my Zoom room, and I am going to continue to let them pick the time and date. I also plan on reaching out to all of my students, especially ones that are not doing well in the class, or seem to need extra help, and encourage them to meet me in Zoom and I can walk them through anything in the course, by sharing my screen on Zoom. . . Send students weekly and daily reminder videos to students. . . Have a weekly zoom meeting that is mandatory.
4. **Use Names, Preferred Nicknames, and Pronouns**— I've used this successfully for a couple years. I give a Canvas quiz that's open before the semester starts asking for preferred name/nickname and the students' pronouns. This is really helpful to make sure I'm not using inappropriate pronouns or someone's dead name. There are also plenty of students that use a nickname or middle name that appreciate it as well. I think I'm going to add a question asking for an audio clip of them pronouncing their name so that I can get it right. . . Be sure to learn the names of ALL your students, and especially diverse students that you feel like don't have much in common with. Try to learn about where they are from to and their background if you can. I know it takes effort. It's easy to ignore those we don't feel comfortable with. Right now I'm working on learning Spanish so I can at least say a few words of it. . . Prioritize learning student preferred names and calling on students equitably by name to make sure all students' voices are heard and can contribute, not just the students who are used to speaking in class. I have found that this is even more effective if I am open about being shy, because students are then more comfortable volunteering to speak. Related to this, is there a way to make it easier to use preferred names in Canvas? [Check out the University of Maryland’s [good practices for names and pronouns](https://lgbt.umd.edu/good-practices-names-and-pronouns)]
5. **Use Group Work**— I have students do frequent group work in class for a low number of points. I shuffle groups, although it could work to keep the same team all semester depending on the students. I tell them this is explicitly, so they interact with every person in the class by the end of the semester. This really works. Some students hate it at first, but they quickly get comfortable to the point where it's hard to get them to stop talking to each other. [There are a bazillion books on group work. One recommendation is Barkley, Cross, and Major’s [*Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*](https://www.amazon.com/Collaborative-Learning-Techniques-Handbook-College/dp/1118761553/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=2ATVRMN7S9B52&dchild=1&keywords=collaborative+learning+techniques+a+handbook+for+college+faculty&qid=1611772537&sprefix=collaborative+learning+tech%2Caps%2C232&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFYT0laRVcxRFJRQkImZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTAzNDYwODIxSDJJU1FZQU5UOVhFJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA0MTQ1MzkyOFdDMEVYMkVVQ1hDJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==)]
6. **Use Peer Mentors**— One of the things that is very obvious with my students - especially in my general education courses - is that they are not college ready. I am not talking strictly about academic readiness; I am also talking about them being ready to deal with the culture and expectations of college courses. One of the things that really hampers my students - especially the minority and first-generation college students - is that they do not feel at all comfortable coming to me, their professor, and asking for help when they need it. I have found that when students have a group, they can work with in a course they do so much better communicating their needs to their peers. I would love to have a student that has successfully completed the course be a peer mentor to the course. This student would be there to work with the current students not only understand the course content but also to help the current students learn to navigate their new college culture and expectations. This peer mentor would not be at all in charge of grading or grades - an essential for the other students to feel completely secure in their communications. The peer mentor would also communicate frequently with the professor to help her/him understand where the students are struggling. The idea of peer mentoring will also allow the students to have one of their own model success in the course for them. If that mentor could succeed, so can they! [Check out this [article](https://www.pnas.org/content/114/23/5964/) about female peer mentors in engineering, and note that SLCC uses peer mentoring in the Student Writing Center, the STEM Learning Resource Center, the ePortfolio Labs, and many other places]
7. **Empower Students Vis a Vis the Content**— Have students come up with discussion, exam, and reflection prompts/questions. Have class reflect together and/or in small groups throughout the semester AND with the final reflection prompts.
8. **Reach Out to Students**— I learn students' name which is powerful. I reach out to students who are not showing activity or participation in class and I ask them if they're not doing the assignment in class because they don't understand it, or if it's a time management issue. Based on their response, I act. One last thing that helps is I use diverse people in my case scenarios. The manager in a case is a woman wearing a hijab. The director in a case is of the LGBTQ + community, etc. Just these depictions speak of my intentions to be inclusive.
9. **Engage in Trauma-Informed Teaching**— Build in elements of trauma-informed teaching into each gen ed course. One element of this in particular that may be useful is student empowerment; all students should be treated as experts of their own experience and their past experience should be viewed in a strengths-based manner. . . In my classes, my discussions with faculty from other disciplines, and discussions with friends who are parents, I have found that many students have courses-work related stories which could be considered mildly traumatic or otherwise demoralizing. Many of these include being told by previous teachers that they are horrible at (subject), in some cases, the worst that the teacher has seen. Other times, the student responded to a question in class, only to have the teacher harshly shut down the response and change the subject. These stories have almost always happened in classes prior to college. To counter these types of experiences, I (and other faculty who have heard similar stories) have begun to approach teaching with a more trauma/anxiety aware response. I have found that being more aware of this issue and paying close attention to what students say about past classes, has allowed me to be more responsive to their needs for specific encouragement and feedback to which my students seem to have responded well. [Check out Mays Imad’s [article](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/06/03/seven-recommendations-helping-students-thrive-times-trauma) on trauma in *Inside Higher Education*, and Ohio University’s [trauma-informed teaching strategies page](https://www.ohio.edu/diversity/trauma-informed-teaching)]
10. **Give Prompt Feedback**— Constant and timely feedback is the most effective way of developing student success and retention. . . This is good practice for any online class. Don't leave students hanging. They don't feel they can work on something unless they get a response to a question or if they wait a long time to be graded. [Check out this [short publication](https://www.utm.edu/departments/rgc/_pdfs/tsi2007.pdf) from Teaching Scholars Institute on prompt feedback]
11. **Share Success Strategies—** Be very deliberate in sharing strategies for success in your course and program. I have started having students share with each other their study strategies, as well as their overall planning and workload distribution strategies. I find that students trust each other to be honest with these things in a way that they don't quite trust the professor. Students who have 'figured it out' - whether because they have the cultural background and know-how or for any other reason, can help acclimate other students to success within the course itself and across courses overall.Specifically, inside of a face-to-face class I may invite students who "feel like they did well" to share with the rest of the course what worked for them to prepare for the test. (This is a general invitation, not an invitation to any specific student). Or, invite students to share what tools I provide that were the most useful. In an online class, I maintain a robust discussion forum, one subforum which is dedicated to course/program/college/life success. I have had students talk about my class, recommend professors for other courses, recommend programs and share advice that program advisors have given them. I have even had returning students talk about how their life didn't work out the way they intended and that talk about going back to school to get the job they wanted. I feel like all of this is really valuable for students who don't have the institutional and cultural knowledge that the idealized white college student with white educated parents would have. [Check out [SLCC’s Orientation and Student Success resources](http://www.slcc.edu/oss/student-success-skills/index.aspx), and [SLCC’s tutoring resources](http://www.slcc.edu/tutoring/)]
12. **Be Relatable**— Share little bits of your own life: family, hobbies, interests, etc. This makes your more relatable. Also be sure to smile and be courteous in your online responses. Try to care about each person. [Check out [faculty voices](https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1629) on promoting first-generation college student success.
13. **Be a Presence in Online Courses**— This is not a new idea, but one I have found works judging from comments on my course evaluations. Also, comments I receive from students regarding other courses, is their main frustration is usually anxiety over questions that don't get answered. I mentor and advise students in our program and hear first-hand stories of frustration. Suggestions: Weekly announcement with encouragement, compliments on the weeks work and a "look ahead to the coming week". Returning emails with-in 12 hours...usually less. Participating in the discussions online. Again...this should seem obvious, but it seems many instructors don't do this. [Check out [SLCC’s online teaching resources](https://faculty.slcc.edu/elearning/teaching-resources.aspx), and this *Inside Higher Education* [article](https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/07/12/7-guidelines-effective-teaching-online) on effective online teaching]
14. **Welcome All Students to Class**— Here’s my script to make ALL students feel welcome in class, to communicate my belief that every student can succeed, they are on a common journey, the subject matter directly connects to their lives and I am truly here to help them succeed. Feel free to borrow and adapt to suit your needs.

*I want everyone to pause and process what I am about to say. I want each and every one of you to succeed in this class. I believe that you all can and want you all to believe that you can.*

*I also want everyone to deeply internalize that, for example, no matter your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, background, the religion you practice, that government and politics affect your lives in countless ways. Do you think that the education policy that Congress passes may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that the healthcare policy that Congress passes may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that a policy on reproductive issues that Congress passes may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that a presidential decision to go to war may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that a tax policy that Congress passes may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that a Supreme Court decision related to firearms regulation may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Do you think that a policy on welfare benefits may affect your life or someone close to you? Very likely. Know this and let it drive you to understand the material in this class and also to let it build a foundation for some civic participation in your communities and an understanding of events farther afield from various state capitals to Washington DC.*

*I also want you all to be aware about how much you can learn from each other. I guarantee you that you will learn more than you think via your classmates. You all have different backgrounds and experiences and, thereby over our semester, will bring different perspectives to class topics. Whether you agree or not, cherish these variety of perspectives. The opportunity to share your thoughts on various political questions in such a purposeful setting does not come around often. You are taking this course together. Thus, you are all on a journey together as you interact with the same course material. Yes, you will receive individual grades but there is a shared experience that brings us together. Encourage each other and be supportive during group work. So, sense this common experience in the class while appreciating each other’s different experiences.*

*I am very committed to teaching and want to be here for EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU as much as I can. If you are having issues understanding content, please contact me for help. If there are unforeseen circumstances that come up which may cause a delay in keeping up with class, contact me and we likely can work something out. There are rules in the syllabus that we will follow but there is flexibility for exceptional circumstance so if the situation warrants it, I will work with you. I want you all to take your education seriously because I really do. I hope to help you grow not only in this particular subject area but also to become a better critical thinker, classmate, citizen, writer and more. Lastly, I want to emphasize that I really enjoy communicating with students so please know that and get in touch when necessary via email, through office hours, before/after class, or through a video conference.*

**Ideas for Assignment Design**

1. **Employ Flexible Assignment Modalities**— When possible, build flexibility into your assignment submissions. Allow students to turn in a paper, a video, a series of social media posts, etc. The point is for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills, so if the format is not vitally important, give students the freedom to “own” how they want to meet the demands of the assignment. Grade all submissions with the same rubric—that you share with students early—so they can weigh the pros and cons of the different submission modalities, and so you can set a consistent level of expectations regardless of submission modality. . . Give students options/openness for modifying assignments/projects. OR give options for projects that can be taken up. For example, for some of my classes, the final project is an option between an anthology project or a syllabus project. Sometimes students hybridize facets from both project options to create their own kind of project. It's been amazing. . . Allow for communication and demonstration of skills and learning to go beyond written or oral communication. Communication has always-already been multi-modal. Have students examine political, scientific, historical, cultural, media, economic tropes and stereotypes that have been used to reaffirm "otherness" in the discipline students are studying.
2. **Embrace Revision**— I allow all my students to continue to re-submit their work for a better grade. On the job, revision is critical. The revision practice teaches students how to hone their skillsets for higher quality/professional work while boosting their grades; which have positive effects on self-esteem and G.P.A. For the student, this method has all pros and no cons. This practice especially helps students who may have missed content due to fatigue or a lack of understanding for the assignment. [Check out SLCC’s Writing Across the College [support for writing in the classroom](https://i.slcc.edu/wac/witc.aspx), and [this journal article](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158379.pdf) on revision in Business courses]
3. **Use Assignment Checklists**— I also plan on making "checklists" for each assignment based off the instructions and the rubric. This was another idea from ACUE course.
4. **Try a Rubric Assignment**— I want to do a "rubric" assignment where students learn to access and use a rubric properly. Another idea from ACUE.
5. **Emphasize Accessible Design**— I'm making all of my documents, assignments, etc. accessible now but it is a LOT of work to do it correctly, and I still have old stuff that needs to be fixed. I think that we really really need some support, guidance, and release time for this kind of work. It's not fair to our students with disabilities to have inaccessible courses, but it's also not fair to faculty to expect them to magically make courses accessible without training and time. [Check out [SLCC’s universal design basics](https://faculty.slcc.edu/drc-for-faculty/universal-design-basics.aspx)]
6. **Use Hands-on Learning**— More hands-on active learning in the lecture classroom. Old school "sage on the stage" is disproportionately works for us white folks. Can you imagine learning how to ride a bike by listening to someone lecture on how it works for 4 months? Learn by doing as much as possible. Leverage learning management systems to get straight "sage on the stage" lecture content delivered. They don't need to be in class for that. Do that remotely, then use class for hands-on activities, group work, applications, real-world stuff, discussion, mini-writing assignments, inter-personal high-impact practices. [Check out this [journal article on active learning](https://ctl.dixie.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/72/2016/01/Active_Learning_in_College_Classrooms.pdf) in lecture courses, and this [review of the literature on the efficacy of active learning](https://journals.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/advan.00053.2006)]
7. **Allow Flexible Assignment Language**— I believe that we should allow students to turn in answers in both English and their native tongue. With the advances in real time translation, think Google translate, we should allow students to express answers in the language they speak best, especially with online courses. Maybe we can get Google translate embedded into Canvas?
8. **Be Transparent in Your Assignment Design**— Improving consistency in transparent assignment design might help. Especially while we are doing so much at a distance, it's crucial for students to understand what is being asked of them. [Check out [this article on reaching first-generation and underrepresented students](https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/lib_fac/11/) with transparent assignment design; click on the download button once there]
9. **Develop a Shared Vocabulary for Writing Assignments**— Creating a shared vocabulary for writing assignments may be helpful. Descriptions of effective writing vary tremendously among different disciplines and also between high school and college. A group could work with WAC to develop some supportive materials to translate different expectations for students. [Check out [SLCC’s Writing Across the College resources](http://www.slcc.edu/wac/index.aspx)]

**Other Ideas**

1. **Use Quick Checks**— I have started and am going to continue to place "quick checks" in the course where there are content pages. I believe these are a successful way to remind students of the very important information on those pages.
2. **Help Students with Challenges**— Faculty are often the first to know when a student starts sliding towards not completing a course. It would be useful to have a quick "Cheat sheet" of where students can get help with certain challenges. For instance, I had a student last semester who lost her job and when I checked up on her for non-participation, she told me she didn't have the money to pay her tuition. Fortunately, I knew about the student in crisis fund. I was able to steer her there and she got funded! A couple weeks later, she told me her laptop died and so she was going to have to drop her online courses. I knew our department had laptops to lend out to students and I got her in touch with the proper person, so she checked out a laptop. Other students have expressed difficulties with reading, focusing and learning and I was able to send them to the DRC. One of my students got accommodations and a scholarship due to her learning handicap. If faculty had a list with contact people and if we knew what was available all on one easy to read sheet (just a list, no explanation or comment) then we could help steer students towards help and away from dropping out. [Check out [SLCC’s DRC](http://www.slcc.edu/drc/), and [SLCC’s Bruin Pantry](https://www.slcc.edu/thaynecenter/programs-services/bruinpantry.aspx), and give to [SLCC’s Students in Crisis Fund](https://www.slcc.edu/development-and-alumni/ways-to-give/emergency-student-support-fund.aspx)]
3. **Use Teaching Assistants**— I spend a large amount of my time creating and grading various types of assessments. This time could be better spent in many other ways that could help my students: individual help for those that are falling behind, more time to spend helping individuals understand the course content, helping advise my students etc. If each course had a TA, that TA could at least help with the grading which would free up time for the professor to address increasing completion and specific equity gaps in the course. Also, this TA would be another line of communication for the students in this course so if they didn't feel comfortable going to their professor for help they could go to the TA. It would be really nice to have the TA be a former student of that professor's course that has been successful so this person could model success for the other students.
4. **Gather Real Data**— I love my faculty dashboard and it shows that I have equity gaps that I need to address. However, it does not give me the data I need to understand why those gaps exist. For example, I know that exam 3 is the key indicator of success in one of my courses because most of the students that fail the course just stop trying after exam 2 (so if they stick around long enough to take exam 3 then they will most likely be successful in the course). However, I do not know WHY the students are giving up after exam 2. We need a LOT more specific data to be gathered on our students so that we can understand what factors are leading them to 1) stop attending the course 2) stop doing the work in the course 3) give up and walk away from the course. Perhaps an "exit poll"? Gather data especially on the students that have left so that we can understand why they did it and begin to address those issues - if possible - with changes in course design and delivery. [Check out information about [SLCC’s faculty dashboard](https://i.slcc.edu/ir/faculty-dashboard.aspx)]
5. **Allow Language Flexibility**— When I was a student in my MBA program, the courses had an option where I can choose which language I wanted the course to be set to for me. This would be very beneficial for the ELL (English Language Learning) students. The work was submitted in English, but the course material could be available in any language. Is there a way to find that resource or invest in it for our students?
6. **Use Predictive Analytics for Advising**— Use predictive analytics to identify students who are underperforming and actively advise them. There are classes in Biology and Math that have been taken 5-15 times, and still not passed. We need to break that cycle.
7. **Use a Different Demographic Name**— Stop referring to students as "non-resident alien” in our demographics reporting. This is awful and can't make them feel welcome. [Check out this [opinion piece](https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/423570-this-new-year-lets-stop-using-the-word-alien) about the baggage associated with the term, although it remains as of this writing the standard U.S. government term.]
8. **Increase Faculty Diversity**— Increase diversity of instructors and staff.
9. **Engage in High School Outreach**— Just wondering if there are ways we could reach out to area high schools more, to motivate preparedness. I know there are some things we already do, but I think if students knew that better math prep in high school could save them time at college, for example, they might come to us a little more ready. Just a thought!
10. **Use a Self-Placement Exam**— Create a new self-placement exam that has two separate sections for English and ESL since these are two separate areas.
11. **Differentiate English and ESL**— Recognize that English courses are not equivalent to ESL courses. Students who should be taking ESL are better served in ESL versus English. For example a beginning-level ESL student would gain more knowledge for English language skills in ESL instead of courses in the English department.
12. **Change the Admissions Process as it Pertains to ESL**— ESL students should not have to choose Humanities as their area of study if they want/need to take ESL as a credit course. This is currently what is being done, and it should be changed since ESL students may have different majors other than Humanities.
13. **Focus Class Registration on Degree Completion**— For degree completion, registration systems should be set up to only allow students to enroll in classes that count toward their degree. Those should be the only options they see unless they do a couple extra steps to get a waiver and have a sound rationale such as "personal interest". So, all students will have to declare a major right away, or at least a general area of study such as art, science, or social science.
14. **Administratively Drop Students Who Do Not Show Up**— A certain percentage of E grades each semester stem from students who sign up for classes and do not attend them, either forgetting to drop or not knowing that they need to drop. This has adverse consequences for the students and the college. [Check out the [guidelines for administrative drops](https://slccbruins.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/teams/FacultySenate/Documents/MeetingMaterials/2020-12-07/AdminDropGuidline_nonattendance12072020.docx?d=w49eb170e378e42508dbdc467b143a209&csf=1&web=1&e=TSWhCD) that Garth Butcher presented last year in the Faculty Senate]