

Creating Inclusive Assignments and Assessments

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This resource guide, adapted from the Creating Inclusive Assignments webinar from LSA Technology Services, details practices for creating inclusive assignments and assessments. Inclusive assignments and assessments focus on accessibility and leverage a variety of skillsets that students can use to demonstrate their learning. Whether you are assigning an individual or group assignment/assessment, it is vital to ensure that students understand what an inclusive assignment looks like by providing a clear rubric and roadmap for success. If instructors stress the importance of accessibility in individual and/or group assignments, accessibility becomes a learning objective for students as they strive to meet accessibility standards in their work.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To define what accessibility and inclusivity mean for assignments/assessments. 2) To provide instructors with strategies to make individual and group assignments/assessments more inclusive. 3) To encourage instructors to think about different modalities of assessment for students.
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>This resource focuses on how to implement inclusive assignments in the classroom from individual to group-based projects and assessments. It is a great starting place for thinking through how to create inclusive assignments.</p> <p>In any discipline, instructors can take deliberate steps to ensure that all students feel welcomed and valued as part of the learning community. The following practices can help to create an intentionally inclusive environment in any class.</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>It may not be feasible to implement all the strategies offered in this resource guide at the same time. Rather, it is a good practice to take on the +1 strategy of choosing one new method to try out and building your capacity to take on more from that point. It is also recommended that instructors reach out to colleagues who may have exemplar models of inclusive individual or group assignments.</p>
<p>Citations</p>	<p>Adapted from ‘Creating Inclusive Assignments,’ LSA Technology Services, University of Michigan. Adapted with permission. 2020.</p>

Practices to Consider for Inclusive Assignments and Assessments

What is Accessibility?

- Accessibility and inclusivity are concepts that require you to think about the different identities, needs, and learning styles of students in your classroom. In practice, accessibility is ensuring that students with disabilities have full access to learning opportunities in the classroom. This process starts when you first design the course and requires that you take the time to think about how all students will participate and learn in your classroom. Accessibility is about preparation and thoughtful consideration for the different abilities and learning styles that will be present in the classroom. In designing an accessible classroom, you are answering the question, “how do I ensure all students have full and equal access?”
- Accessibility, when used as a learning objective, allows students to ensure that their assignments meet accessibility standards. Students should learn about using captioning for videos or alternative text for images in the classroom as opposed to learning by making a mistake in a professional setting. It instills the mindset that high-quality work entails meeting accessibility standards.

Inclusive Individual Assignments

- Always consult with the [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) office to ensure you are providing the right accommodations for your classroom.
- When thinking about inclusive assignments, remember that your classroom will include students from different backgrounds, students with different skillsets, and students with different learning styles.
- A practice to ensure you are acknowledging the different skill sets and learning styles in the classroom is to create alternative assignments for students to demonstrate mastery of content.
 - Alternative assignments could include creating a podcast, a video essay, a timeline of events, website creation, an infographic or zine, an interview, or various types of artwork (photos, drawings, or other visuals).
 - If offering an alternative assignment, it is important to ensure that you are providing the necessary resources for students to complete the assignment. For example, if students are creating a podcast, do they have access to the appropriate software and equipment?
 - If you are offering alternative assignments, look for exemplar projects that you can use to showcase to students, especially for those who are accustomed to writing a paper as an assignment.
 - If you are offering alternative assignments for the first time, seek out colleagues who may have exemplar projects for you to use.
 - Ensure that the rubric is a roadmap for students.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A well-designed rubric will allow students to understand where they need to put forth effort on a project, identify critical project milestones, and identify where they may need help with a particular component to the project. ○ Gauging effort between different modalities can be difficult. Ask students for feedback on assignments to understand what the experience was like and always be sure to consult a colleague for advice.
<p>Inclusive Group Assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group assignments are a great way to build inclusivity in your classroom. • The points applied to Inclusive Individual Assignments correspond to Inclusive Group Assignments as well. • When assigning group projects, if you let students choose their groups, it will most likely lead to students of similar backgrounds or talents grouping together. Therefore, it is a best practice for the instructor to assign groups. Creating more inclusive groups allows for wisdom and experience to be shared across the class, pushing students beyond their immediate circles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is important to understand who your students are when creating groups as you can create more inclusive groups as a result. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One great way to get to know your students and to build community in the class is to regularly use icebreakers at the beginning of the semester. ▪ Issuing a survey or skill assessment can also help you better understand your students, ensuring equitable skillsets across groups. • Establish group roles and expectations to allow students to develop skillsets or to get out of their comfort zone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating roles like researcher, content creator, editor, manager, etc. helps create inclusivity as it ensures work is distributed equally and that everyone’s voice and skills are being recognized. • At the end of a group project, a reflection essay or survey can provide helpful feedback for professors to better understand the effort that went into a group project. This feedback can be used to inform future iterations of the project.
<p>Scaffolding for Inclusivity in Assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding helps to foster inclusivity as it allows students to better understand what is expected of them throughout a course. Having a better understanding of what is expected helps students identify where they may need help or clarity on a project. • Scaffolding can help provide ongoing support throughout the project and ensure that higher quality work is being produced and that group dynamics are stable.

Ensuring Inclusivity in Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In an individual or group assignment, the objectives of the assignment must be made clear to students.• If using an alternative assignment be sure to differentiate between the content produced and the delivery of the content.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For example, if a group is creating a podcast, are you more concerned that the group learns how to create a quality podcast or that they demonstrate mastery of content?○ Be sure to make it clear what students are being assessed on for an assignment.• Consider having multiple rubrics for different types of assessments or having a single rubric, if you can generalize the verbiage used in it.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Consider how you would assess a student or student group producing an infographic with the same rigor that you would a paper.
Additional Resources	<p>Accessibility Website</p> <p>Audiovisual and Design Tools Page</p> <p>ITS Adobe CC Page</p> <p>Sweetland Writing Center</p> <p>Services for Students with Disabilities</p> <p>Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</p>