

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Content Curriculum Audits

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# Table of Contents

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at Molloy University

Page 5

**DEI and Our Pedagogy** 

Page 6

Why Do We Need Curriculum Audits?

Page 8

Challenges to Establishing a Curriculum that Reflects Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Page 12

**Integrating DEI Content** 

Page 14

**Rubric and Audit Process** 

Page 19

**Bibliography** 

Page 19

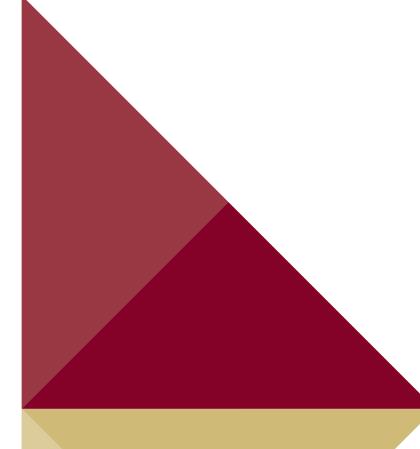
**Individual Course Audit** 

Page 20

Department or Program Curriculum Audits

Page 23





## GUIDED BY OUR MISSION



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at Molloy University

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a key component of Molloy University's mission and our values as a campus community. Guided by our Mission and the Four Pillars of Dominican Life, Molloy is committed to providing an environment in which everyone belongs and thrives.

### "Diversity is recognizing and valuing our difference.

Our differences can include race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, (dis) ability, age, political perspective, and socioeconomic status, among other identity markers. Everyone has intersecting identities, which make them who they are, and we value the educational and lifelong benefits of studying, serving, and reflecting in community with those who are different than us.

### Equity is giving people what they need.

We continuously seek to promote equity in our procedures and processes, choosing good, and improving the lives of others.

### Inclusion is making sure we all belong AND thrive.

The richness of our diversity is only fully valued through inclusion."

There are many components to making DEI a lived reality on our campus. The treatment of employees and students, the campus culture, university policies, accessibility, all contribute to the who is welcomed, valued, and included on our campus. Curricular content is a key component to DEI. This means not only what courses and content are taught, but also how they are taught. Whose voices, narratives, and forms of knowledge are centered and normalized? And whose voices, narratives, and forms of knowledge are excluded, marginalized, or tokenized?

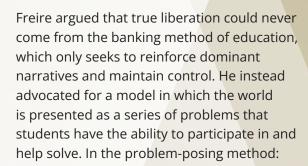




### **DEI and Our Pedagogy**

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire introduced two different types of education: a) the banking method of education and b) the problem-posing method of education. The banking method of education is ultimately aimed at preserving the status quo and reinforcing the values of the dominant class. In classrooms that utilize the banking method:

- The teacher teaches, and the students are taught
- Knowledge is considered a gift from one who knows to one who knows nothing
- Knowledge is "deposited" through a process of memorize, recite, repeat
- The teachers are the subjects and students are passive objects
- The world is presented as static, fixed, and incapable of change
- Students are taught to passively accept and adapt to the world as it is, not see it as something to transform



- Teacher-students and student-teachers learn from each other in conversation and dialogue
- Knowledge is an ongoing process of cocreation
- Students are encouraged to see the world as problems that can be transformed
- Students are acknowledged as reliable knowers with perspectives to share
- The world is presented as an ongoing created reality that students can shape (Freire 72-86)

Affirming DEI as a priority at Molloy must be accompanied by reflecting DEI goals in our curriculum. Revising our curriculum to reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion must involve the acknowledgement, celebration, and respect for the diverse identities of our student body. Our mission and values also require that students are exposed to issues of social justice from perspectives other than the mainstream.







# Why Do We Need Curriculum Audits?

A curriculum that centers the experiences, voices, and knowledges of mainstream Americans only is harmful to all students, even those whose identities fit within the mainstream. In the United States. "mainstream" values and cultures are white or European, Christian, straight, cisgendered, able-bodied, neurotypical, English speaking, and middle or upper class. Those who fall outside of the mainstream based on one or multiple aspects of their identities experience themselves as othered, while those who exist within the mainstream are denied meaningful opportunities to learn from the experiences, voices, and knowledges of other groups. James A. Banks focuses specifically on multicultural curriculum, and the importance of meaningfully including cultures outside of the mainstream. He writes,

A curriculum that focuses on the experiences of mainstream Americans and largely ignores the experiences, cultures, and histories of other ethnic, racial, cultural, language, and religious groups has negative consequences for both mainstream students and students of color. A mainstream-centric curriculum is one major way in which racism and ethnocentrism are reinforced and perpetuated in the schools, in colleges and universities, and in society at large. (Banks 242)

Banks identifies the harms or negative consequences of mainstream curriculum as follows:

Negative consequences of a mainstream curriculum for "mainstream" students:

- Reinforces a false sense of superiority
- Gives a misleading conception of their relationship with other racial and ethnic groups
- Denies opportunities to learn from the knowledge, perspectives, and frames of reference from studying other cultures and groups
- Denies mainstream students the opportunity to view their culture



through the lens of other cultures and groups

Negative consequences of mainstream curriculum for students of color and students with marginalized identities:

- Marginalizes their experiences and cultures and does not reflect their perspectives, hopes, and values
- Denies them social equality within the school setting
- Students experience discontinuity between their community and curriculum which can lead to not learning as well or being as motivated

When referring to cultural perspectives, Banks notes,

In the mainstream-centric curriculum, events, themes, concepts, and issues are viewed primarily from the perspective of mainstream Americans and Europeans. Events and cultural developments such as

the European explorations in the Americas and the development of American music are viewed from Anglo and European perspectives and are evaluated using mainstream-centric criteria and points of view. (243)

The following are examples of mainstream centric curriculum, some of them presented by Banks, and others that have been added by me. It is important that we include racial and ethnic diversity, but also that we recognize that a truly diverse curriculum also values identities such as LGBTQIA+, disability, and socioeconomic status, among other identities.

 When the European explorations of the Americas are viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, the Americas are perceived as having been "discovered" by the European explorers such as Columbus and Cortes. The view that native peoples in the Americas were discovered by the Europeans subtly suggests that [Indigenous]cultures did not exist until they were "discovered" by the Europeans and that the lands occupied





- by the American Indians were rightfully owned by the Europeans after they settled on and claimed them. (Banks 243)
- When the formation and nature of U.S. cultural developments, such as music and dance, are viewed from mainstream-centric perspectives, these art forms become important and significant only when they are recognized or legitimized by mainstream critics and artists. The music of African American musicians such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard was not viewed as significant by the mainstream society until White singers such as the Beatles and Rod Stewart publicly acknowledged the significant ways in which their own music had been deeply influenced by these African American

- musicians. It often takes White artists to legitimize ethnic cultural forms and innovations created by Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. (Banks 243)
- When the philosophy classes and philosophers who are required and argued to be "foundational" or "canonical" are all of European descent, this implies that only Europeans are responsible for creating philosophical ideas, and that African, Asian, Latino, or Native American philosophers are only worth learning to the extent that they engage with the work of mainstream European philosophers.
- When health sciences curricula does not acknowledge the disparate ways that white Americans and Americans who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color experience the health care system in the past or the long history of racism within U.S. health care institutions, the curriculum is doing a disservice to both mainstream students and students of color. Students of color do not see their experiences of the health care system reflected in class curriculum, and mainstream students are deprived of an opportunity to learn about important historical and existing inequalities they will be navigating in their future careers.
- When science curricula teach that contact with spiritual realities is imagination, hallucination, or pathology, this marginalizes cultures in which contact with spiritual beings and spiritual realities is an ongoing accepted part of life. For example, many Native American and Latin American cultures have regular ongoing contact with ancestors and the recently deceased, which mainstream curriculum would classify as "bereavement hallucinations." The pathologizing of contact with spiritual realities or alternative states of consciousness marginalizes the experiences of Native American and Latin American students

and sends the message that their cultural traditions are pathologies or illnesses. In *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat document the harms and challenges that many Native American students face when they leave the reservation and come to college classrooms, which dismiss their tribal ways of knowing.

- When assigned authors for a course are all able-bodied and neurotypical, students do not hear the perspectives of disabled individuals and are denied first-hand testimony of the experience of living with disability.
- When courses that focus on gender or feminism are taught primarily from the perspective of cisgendered white women, trans women, poor women, and women of color do not see their lived experience represented in "women's" experiences. The mainstream feminist movement has been criticized by thinkers such as bell hooks for focusing only on the experiences and

challenges faced by upper middle class white women and ignoring the experiences of women who have been most harmed by patriarchal norms.

These are but a handful of examples of how mainstream-centric curriculum may manifest throughout an educational setting. It is important to note that faculty may have a mainstream-centric curriculum without realizing it. This does not mean that they are poor educators or bad people. It simply means that we all have important work to do in terms of critically examining our own curriculum and exploring ways that we can do better.

We acknowledge that various schools, programs, or departments may have conducted their own DEI curricular audits or revisions, focusing on their unique learning outcomes. The purpose of this material and audit process is not to substitute for any previous efforts but to complement them and potentially pinpoint areas for further enhancement.





# Challenges to Establishing a Curriculum that Reflects Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

A curriculum that truly represents DEI faces several challenges, and some fields or disciplines face more challenges than others. Banks identifies three forms of challenges: a) ideological resistance, b) political resistance, and c) status quo bias. I have added industry or field standards/accreditation.

#### **Ideological Resistance**

The assimilationist ideology makes it difficult for educators to think differently about how U.S. society and culture developed and to acquire a commitment to make the curriculum multicultural. Individuals who have a strong assimilationist ideology believe that most important events and developments in U.S. society are related to the nation's British heritage and that the contributions of other ethnic and cultural groups are not very significant by comparison. (Banks244)

Banks is focused on multicultural content, but this point can be expanded to encompass other types of identities. For example, there is strong ideological resistance to transgender identities and the use of pronouns and chosen or lived names.

#### **Political Resistance**

A DEI perspective on U.S. society challenges the existing power structure. We currently see political resistance to or the literal banning of "critical race theory" or LGBTQIA+ content that challenges mainstream legitimizing narratives about the history of the U.S. or promotes social change. While we do not currently face content bans in New York, the political climate nationwide is worrisome and can affect educators' ability or willingness to present content that challenges mainstream narratives. (Banks)

#### **Status Quo Bias**

When faced with the possibility of changing or staying the same, it is human nature to default to the status quo and the educational content that we ourselves were educated with. Many of us were educated with mainstream-centric curriculum in our undergraduate and graduate educational experience. (Banks)

#### Industry or Field Standards/Accreditation

Some programs are limited in the scope of how much they can alter their curriculum. They are held to strict curricular standards that may be out of their control, due to accreditation or to students needing to be able to pass boards/exams upon graduation from the program.

There is so simple fix to the above challenges. Some of them are bigger hurdles than others depending on the department, program, or faculty member. In most cases, there is room for improvement, and all of us can make a commitment to rejecting status quo bias if DEI are values at Molloy.



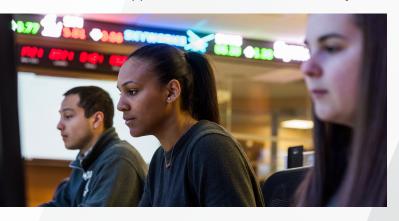


### **Integrating DEI Content**

A curriculum that truly represents DEI is not just a matter of what is taught or who is taught, but *how* the material is taught. Content that remains primarily reflective of mainstream views but "sprinkles" in thinkers or content from marginalized identities is also problematic, as the curriculum remains largely unchanged. However, everyone must start somewhere, and different programs, departments, and courses will find themselves at different levels of content integration. The goal is to keep making progress so as to move towards approaches in which the mainstream viewpoint is one option among others provided.

Banks, again focusing on multicultural content, identifies four levels of integration: a) the Contributions Approach, b) the Additive Approach, c) the Transformation Approach, and d) the Social Action Approach.

**Level 1: Contributions Approach**This approach focuses on heroes, holidays,



and discrete cultural elements. In the Contribution Approach, contributions from scholars/individuals or marginalized backgrounds are added into the curriculum. For example, figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, or Crispus Attucks are added to course content and taught alongside traditional American heroes. Foods, dances, music, artifacts, etc. of different ethnic groups are studied, but little attention is paid to their full cultural meaning. The mainstream curriculum remains unchanged in its basic structure and goals. Individuals who challenged society's ideologies and advocated major economic and social reform are rarely included. This is the easiest approach but also the one with the most limitations. Banks notes. "When the integration of the curriculum is accomplished primarily through the infusion of ethnic heroes/heroines and contributions, students do not attain a global view of the role of ethnic and cultural groups in U.S. society. Rather, they see ethnic issues and events primarily as an addition to the curriculum and consequently as an appendage to the main story of the development of the nation and to the core curriculum in the language arts, the social studies, the arts, and other subject areas" (247).

#### **Level 2: The Additive Approach**

With this approach, content, concepts, and themes are added to the curriculum without changing its structure. This approach "is often accomplished by the addition of a

book, a unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing it substantially. Examples of this approach include adding a book such as The Color Purple to a unit on the twentieth century in an English class, the use of the film Miss Jane Pittman during a unit on the 1960s, and the addition of a videotape on the internment of the Japanese Americans, such as Rabbit in the Moon, during a study of World War II in a class on U.S. history" (Banks 248). This approach allows the teacher to put ethnic content into the curriculum without restructuring it or rethinking its purpose, nature, and goals. This can often be the first phase of a transformative curriculum. However, it still has several shortcomings, as "it usually results in the viewing of ethnic content from the perspectives of mainstream historians, writers, artists, and scientists because it does not involve a restructuring of the curriculum. The events, concepts, issues, and problems selected for study are selected using mainstream-centric and Eurocentric criteria and perspectives" (Banks 249). For example, a history unit called "The Westward Movement" is still taught from the viewpoint of European migration. If taught from the

perspective of the Oglala Sioux, it would be called "The Invasion from the East." The histories of white European Americans and Native Americans and African Americans are all interconnected. "The additive approach fails to help students view society from diverse cultural and ethnic perspectives and to understand the ways in which the histories and cultures of the nation's diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious groups are interconnected" (Banks 250).

#### **Level 3: The Transformation Approach**

This approach includes the infusion of different perspectives, frames of reference, and content from different groups. The divergent meanings of historical events or cultural narratives are explored. The transformation approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. The mainstream-centric perspective is one of only several perspectives from which issues, problems, concepts, and issues are viewed" (Banks 250). It is not possible, nor is it desirable to view every issue



from the point of view of every identity or cultural group. The goal should be for students to view the concepts and issues from multiple perspectives and from the point of view of the groups that were most active in or most affected by the event, issue or concept being studied.

#### Banks' examples:

- In the language arts, when students are taught U.S. English, they should be helped to understand the rich linguistic and language diversity in the United States and the ways in which a wide range of regional, cultural, and ethnic groups have influenced the development of U.S. English.
- When studying U.S. history, language, music, arts, science, and mathematics, the emphasis should not be on the ways in which various ethnic and cultural groups have contributed to mainstream U.S. society and culture. The emphasis should be on how the common U.S. culture and society emerged from a complex synthesis and interaction of the diverse cultural elements that originated within the various cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups that make up U.S. society. (251)

#### **Level 4: The Social Action Approach**

The social action approach includes all the elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem studied in the unit. The goals of instruction in this approach are to educate students for social criticism and social change and to teach them decision-making skills. In this approach, teachers are agents of social change who promote democratic values and the empowerment of students (Banks 252-253). Teaching units organized using the social action approach have the following components:

- 1. A decision problem or question
- 2. An inquiry that provides data related to the decision problem
- 3. Value inquiry and moral analysis

#### 4. Decision making and social action

The goal is for students to take meaningful action in response to a social problem. Challenges with this approach are that it requires substantial planning and funding, and may receive pushback from students or community members, and students may find there are few meaningful actions they can take to solve a problem.

Banks' model is not the only or necessarily the best model for integrating DEI content into coursework, but his various stages show that how the material is integrated into the overall learning outcomes and structure of the course is of vital importance. When DEI content is sprinkled in or taught as "addons," the mainstream curriculum remains intact and identities outside the mainstream are still marginalized or othered.

Another model for integrating DEI content comes from Morey and Kitano (1997). Morey and Kitano identify three different levels of course change when an instructor is going through the process of diversifying their curriculum: a) the exclusive level, b) inclusive level, and c) transformed level.

#### **Exclusive Level**

An instructor teaching to the exclusive level relegates diversity to the margins of the course. The instruction is teacher-centered, and students are not challenged in their beliefs about social dynamics, such as power and privilege. If alternative perspectives are included, they are selected to confirm stereotypes. The instructor conveys information in a didactic manner, and students demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge through objective or subjective written examinations. This level shows similarities with Freire's banking method of education. (Morey and Kitano)

#### **Inclusive Level**

At the inclusive level, the focus shifts to a greater emphasis on student knowledge construction and exploring different societal perspectives. Content integration in an inclusive can range from simple addition of new viewpoints without elaboration to efforts at analyzing and understanding reasons for historical exclusion. The instructor uses a wide array of teaching methods to support students' active learning of course content but the instruction is still professor-focused. (Morey and Kitano)

#### **Transformed Level**

When an instructor moves to the transformed level, students are encouraged to challenge one another's views and reflect on personal and societal values as they relate to diverse populations. The professor guides and supports students as they examine these ideas, without being the focus of instruction. A transformed course challenges traditional views and assumptions; encourages new ways of thinking; and reconceptualizes the field in light of new knowledge, scholarship, and ways of knowing. The instructor restructures the classroom so that the instructor and students share power (withinthe limits of responsibility and reality). Methods capitalize on the experience and knowledge that students bring and encourage personal as well as academic growth. Alternatives to traditional assessment procedures are used, including self-evaluation and projects that contribute to real-life change. All members of the class benefit from each other's active participation (Booker and Cambell-Whatley 22; Morey and Kitano 23). A transformed course utilizes Freire's problemposing method of pedagogy.

A final checklist for an integrated DEI curriculum comes from Paul Gorski, who identifies the following as characteristics of a multicultural or DEI curriculum:

- Teacher delivery must address different learning styles and perspectives and challenge typical power dynamics in the classroom.
- Content must accurately represent the contributions and perspectives of all groups, while avoiding stereotypes and language that represents a bias or one perspective.
- Educators should incorporate diversity in learning materials—both in language and perspective —and also type, i.e: texts, newspapers, videos, images, games, social

- media, etc.
- Content, events and movements should be presented from a variety of lenses, and through more than just a few "heroic characters."
- Include the perspectives and experiences of your students and their heritage (and other identities) and encourage ways to connect these with relevant historical events.
- Hold honest discussions about racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression, and connect students to their local and global community.
- Constantly evaluate and assess curriculum "for completeness, accuracy, and bias" (Gorski 1-3)

These models offer basic frameworks or guidelines for the integration of DEI content. How this looks in practice will vary based on the standards of each program, discipline, and department. However, a key starting point for every DEI audit process is a commitment to buildinga curriculum that represents identities, voices, narratives, methodologies, and forms of knowledge from outside of the mainstream. Doing so is vital to our mission and values as a Catholic, Dominican University that wishes to be a welcoming place for all.

### A WELCOMING PLACE FOR ALL

#### **Rubric and Audit Process**

In the following pages you will find a rubric as well as a series of questions that will aid departments, programs, and faculty in auditing their courses or programs for DEI content. This rubric and question process is not intended as the be-all, end-all of the DEI curricular discussion, but as a starting point that each program, department or individual can tailor to their needs. Revising our curriculum for DEI content is an ongoing, living process, that will never be complete. Rather, this rubric and questions are meant to serve as guidance for the process of taking steps towards diverse, equitable, inclusive, transformed curriculum.

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#### **Individual Course Audit**

Criteria	Material/Topic/Assignment/ Experience	Notes
Contributions and/ormaterials created by scholars, authors, thinkers, etc. who are minoritized or marginalizedwith regard to race and ethnicity, gender or gender identity, language, socioeconomic status or social class, sexualorientation, (dis)abilities, and/or religion.  (Include specific material)		
Topics focused onequity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice (Include specific topic)		
Assignments that require students to examine experiences with cultural identities outside of their own (Include specific assignment)		
Assignments that require students to grapple with bias, privilege, or cultural competence (Include specific assignment)		
Community engagementexperiences that requirestudents to work in diverse settings with diverse populations and collaborate with diverse leaders (Include specifics about setting, students, & leaders)		
Opportunities to hear fromexpertsinafieldwhoare part ofa marginalized or minoritizedgroups (Include specific experts & guest speakers)		
Topics that address the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism (Include assignments, topics, or other features)		
Topics that challenge Eurocentric epistemologies or are open to other modalities of knowing or forms of knowledge (include specific topics)		
Learning materials or assignments that accommodate different learning styles and go beyond memorization and repetition (include specific materials or assignments)		

#### **Summary of DEI Content in the Course**

Total # of materials:	# of DEI materials:
Total # of topics:	# of DEI topics:
Total # of assignments:	# of DEI assignments:
Total # of community engagement experiences:	# of DEI community engagement experiences:
Total # of experts:	# of DEI experts:
Total # of epistemologies:	# of DEI epistemologies:
# of learning styles accommodated:	

Adapted from audit by Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education with edits by Kimberly S. Engels

#### **Integration Questions**

#### 1) How is material being presented?

Contributions Approach (DEI content focus on select thinkers or "heroes," taught as appendages to the mainstream curriculum):

Additive Approach (content, concepts, and themes are added to the curriculum without changing its structure):

Transformational Approach (changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several perspectives and points of view):

Social Action Approach: (contains the elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem studied in the course).

Describe which approaches are being most used in the course:

#### 2) Is the course Exclusive? Inclusive? Transformed?

<u>Exclusive</u>: Diversity is relegated to the margins, instruction is teacher-centered, power dynamics and status quo is not challenged.

<u>Inclusive:</u> Different perspectives and teaching methods are explored, however the course remains teacher-centered and reasons for the historical exclusion of other viewpoints are not explored.

<u>Transformed:</u> Challenges traditional views and assumptions; encourages new ways of thinking; and reconceptualizes the field in light of new knowledge, scholarship, and ways of knowing. The instructor restructures the classroom so that the instructor and students share power (withinthe limits of responsibility and reality).

#### **Department or Program Curriculum Audits**

Criteria	Courses	Material/Topic/Assignment/ Experience	Notes
Courses that utilize contributions and/or materials created by scholars, authors, thinkers, etc. who are minoritized or marginalized* with regard to race and ethnicity, gender, language, socioeconomic status and social class, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, and/or religion. (Include specific material)			
Courses that include topics focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice (Include specific topic)			
Courses with assignments that require students to examine experiences with cultural identities outside of their own (Include specific assignment)			
Courses with assignments that require students to grapple with bias, privilege, or cultural competence (Include specific assignment)			
Courses with community engagement experiences that require students to work in diverse settings with diverse populations and collaborate with diverse leaders (Include specifics about setting, students, & leaders)			
Courses that enableopportunities to hear from experts in a field who are part of a marginalized or minoritized group (Include specific faculty, adjunct faculty, & guest speakers)			
Courses that address the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism (Include assignments, topics, or other features)			
Courses that challenge Eurocentric epistemologies or are open to other modalities of knowing or forms of knowledge (Include specific epistemologies)			
Courses featuring learning materials or assignments that accommodate different learning styles and go beyond memorization and repetition (include specific materials or assignments)			

#### **Summary of DEI Content in the Department or Program**

Total # of materials:	# of DEI materials:
Total # of topics:	# of DEI topics:
Total # of assignments:	# of DEI assignments:
Total # of community engagement experiences:	# of DEI community engagement experiences:
Total # of experts:	# of DEI experts:
Total # of epistemologies:	# of DEI Epistemologies:
# of learning styles accommodated:	

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#### **Integration Questions**

1) How many courses utilize a contributions approach? The Additive Approach? The Transformed Approach? The Social Action Approach?

Approach	Courses
Contributions	
Additive	
Transformed	
Social Action	

2) How many courses are Exclusive? Inclusive? Transformed?

Approach	Courses
Exclusive	
Inclusive	
Transformed	



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