

Some Tips for Preparers in Articulating DIV Goal 5.b and 5.c

****Also consult the [DIV Handbook](#)****

(b) “Discuss the varied ways peoples from marginalized groups resist oppression and wield agency despite structural exclusion and discrimination”

A key to consider in preparing for this learning outcome is in the interpretation of what constitutes “wielding agency.” While active resistance to oppression is a useful framework to understand this goal, reviewers understand that not every course is necessarily focused directly on specific strategies of resistance and may be structured around identifying and exploring unique cultural practices or the exploration of larger social systems that govern and/or oppress marginalized groups. In this instance, “wielding agency”, then, can also be understood to include elements like the discussion of cultural practice, discussion of the context in which oppression occurs, accompanying global history, knowledge production, material conditions of life, etc.

Generally, it is a good practice as a preparer to craft your syllabus in a way where readers (CAPC or students) can triangulate the course description with the course schedule and assignment descriptions to clearly identify how the learning activities require students to understand the circumstances in which various groups experience marginalization and whether their complex personhood is the core focus of the learning activity (in alignment with goal 5.b). A key objective for reviewers, then, will be to identify that marginalized communities are not being objectified or are acting as accessories to supplement an unrelated course learning outcome (which would not be in alignment with 5.b), but are instead being woven into the fabric of the course as a whole—i.e. as a preparer you should be making it clear that there is an attempt to understand how/why/through what means a community experiences marginalization as a result of identity. Some examples of related course activities may be small group discussion, reflective writing assignments, term papers, speeches and presentations, and even information retrieval assignments like tests and exams.

(c) “Identify relevant tools or strategies to challenge oppression and help create a more just and equitable world.”

Preparers should be aware that thorough engagement with scholars in appropriate fields can be understood as “tools” to challenge oppression, as noted in this learning outcome. Activism, knowledge production, advocacy, and solidarity can and should also be understood as a focused engagement with DIV discourse, and

not solely through tangible tactics the students leave the course with to fight oppression (like attending rallies, cultural events, etc.). Such a simplistic interpretation of “tools” obstructs the myriad ways that students can/should be empowered to consume knowledge and contribute to critical discourses of marginalization. As such, reviewers are aware that there is a wide range of interpretations for how “tools” are realized in syllabi, but preparers should make their interpretation of that goal clear. This can be expressed easily in the course description or assignment descriptions.

Thus, information retrieval assignments like standardized tests may not be suitable for equipping students with tools to challenge oppression and should be used as assignments to satisfy different learning goals. It should be clear that students are in some capacity *engaging* with the information being presented in the course to be understood as a “tool”. Term papers, discussion boards, speeches and debates, reflective writing assignments, activism-oriented projects (like letter writing campaigns), and even focused small group discussion can equip students with practical skills that enable them to practice advocacy and knowledge production are all appropriate. Like goal 5.b, these assignments should also have descriptions that echo the larger course description and the proposed reading/activity list to ensure that “tools” manifest themselves in some kind of engaged form of knowledge production or discourse.