

## **USC Libraries Teaching Excellence Definition**

### **Introduction**

The University of Southern California is committed to excellence in teaching through the use of evidence-based, inclusive pedagogies that foster the knowledge, skills, relationships, and values necessary for students to navigate ambiguity and succeed in a rapidly changing world. The faculty of the USC Libraries engage with learners through various modes of instruction (for example, classroom instruction, one-on-one interactions, and asynchronous learning objects such as research guides), partner with faculty and administrators, and incorporate information literacy into disciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts, in order to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

### **Ongoing Pedagogical Engagement**

- Demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement of teaching through openness to implementing new pedagogical practices, exploring new instructional technologies, and applying research-based best practices in information literacy and instructional design (including specialized or discipline-specific practices and standards).
- Analyzes the needs of each teaching/learning setting, environment, or group and employs appropriate pedagogical and classroom management techniques to meet those needs.
- Seeks out and engages teaching partners, remaining open to various ways of collaborating and building mutual respect, trust, and understanding.
- Actively participates in discussions on teaching and learning with colleagues in person, online, and in other forums.

### **Defining and Assessing Learning**

- Articulates goals and learning outcomes for information literacy instruction, and makes these explicit during the course of instruction.
- Creates innovative and engaging lessons with instructional materials that align with learning outcomes, and that are current, rigorous, and informed by theory, research, evidence, and context.
- Demonstrates effectiveness of instruction through assessment of defined learning outcomes.
- Uses assessment of the success and impact of learning experiences to make appropriate adjustments in order to improve student engagement and learning.

### **Designing Learning Experiences**

- Includes students' strengths, interests, experiences, and identities in the learning process.
- Models and fosters critical, analytical, and creative thinking.
- Encourages student curiosity, exploration, and self-directed learning.
- Cultivates in learners a belief that mistakes and failed experiments further knowledge and understanding and fosters a mindset where growth is always possible, and ability is not fixed.
- Engages with students in a non-judgmental manner of mutual regard and respect.
- Uses active learning strategies and deliberative practice to promote development of expertise.
- Fosters situated learning through student use of discipline-specific customs and language.
- Fosters transfer of non-resource-specific learning and problem-solving skills applicable across a broad range of contexts.

## Creating Inclusive Environments

- Recognizes the influence of power and privilege on the dynamics of instructional contexts and provides materials, cases, or applications that include underrepresented experiences, perspectives, and/or populations.
- Respectfully expresses curiosity about the histories and lived experiences of underrepresented cultures and groups.
- Applies multiple techniques and strategies to reach all students using [culturally responsive teaching](#).
- Recognizes stereotypes and relates to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.
- Follows guidelines of [Universal Design for Learning](#), accessibility best practices, and [ACRL Diversity Standards](#).

### NOTES:

1. We drew from the following guidelines, sometimes verbatim, in constructing this document:
  - <http://cet.usc.edu/about/usc-definition-of-excellence-in-teaching/>
  - <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/teachinglibrarians>
  - <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>
  - [https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT\\_Social\\_Justice\\_Standards\\_0.pdf](https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT_Social_Justice_Standards_0.pdf)
2. Examples of each component of the definition generated by the USC Libraries faculty can be found [here](#).