

Targeted Universalism

Belonging in Praxis



Curriculum design by Whole Story and Studio Pathways for the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley. 2019.

Targeted Universalism:

Belonging in Praxis



Length — 30 minutes
 60 minutes
 90 minutes

Description

A 60-minute “training for trainers” tool that supports organizers and advocates in understanding and adapting core concepts of Targeted Universalism into their own work and communities of service.

Audience

Organizers in base-building orgs, leadership and equity advocates in the non-profit sector and the private sector.

Outcome

Leaders feel empowered to share, apply and teach new theories and concepts to others. Leaders have new ways to engage sets of learners with the concept at hand.

Facilitator’s Annex

[Targeted Universalism Film](#)
[problem of practice](#) by Nancy Johnson James
[Image Theatre Description \(adapted for Implementation Strategy Tableau\)](#)

Workshop Supplies Needed

- Large Butcher Paper, taped to cover each small group table.
- Colored Pens for each table.
- A/V Equipment for Slides and Music

Note: Participants should also have access to their own journals and writing utensils for notes and phones for photo documentation as desired.

Additional Resources

[john a. powell on Targeted Universalism](#)
[Universal Design for Learning](#)
[5 Examples of UDL](#)

Guiding Inquiries

- If belonging was our primary universal goal, what would our policies and practices look and feel like?
- How do you design policy in which everyone is in the story and part of the of the solution or strategy?

Overview

Moving Through the Process of Policymaking with A Targeted Universalist Approach:

Using Universal Design for Learning as a model, trainers will explore processes for addressing problems through methods aligned with the values and principles of Targeted Universalism.

5 minutes

Gather, Welcome, Acknowledgment of Land and Lineage

5 minutes

Watch Film

15 minutes

Adapting the principles of Universal Design for Learning to the context of policy making. Small Group Work- Moving Tableau; considerations particular to your Universal Goal

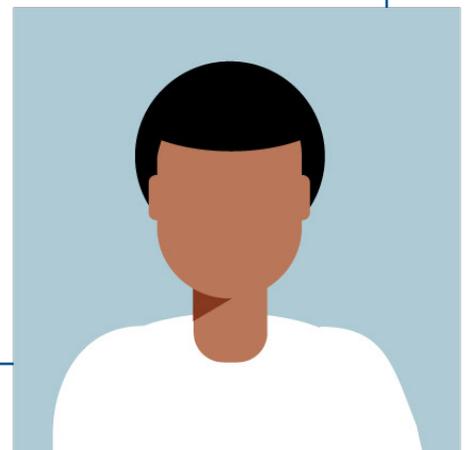
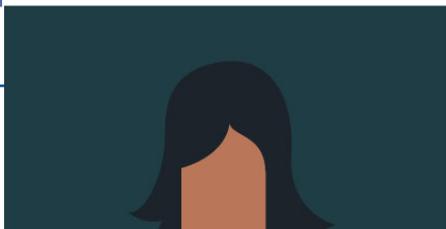
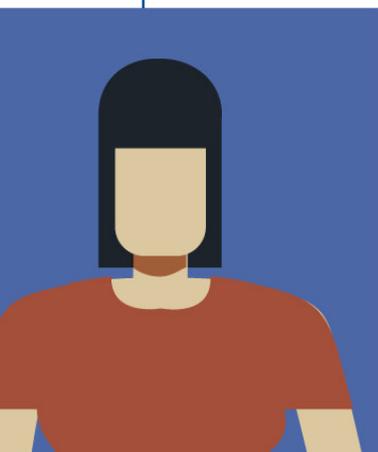
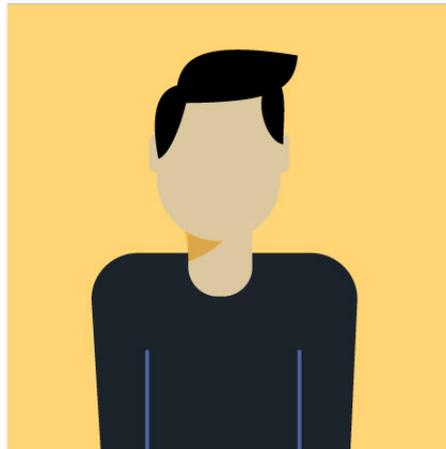
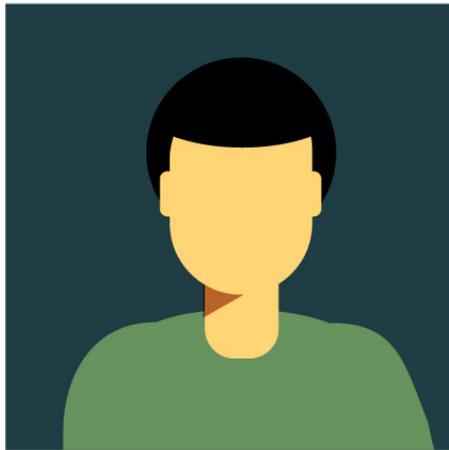
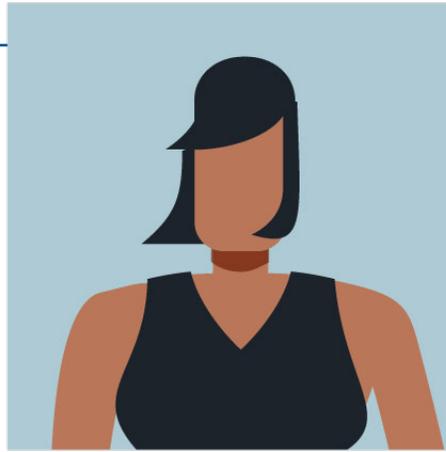
15 minutes

Closing Sharings w/Reflections

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Lesson Plan



1. Welcome
5 minutes

Gather, Welcome, Acknowledgment of Land and Lineage

(See 'Activity Guide' to consider which activities are best suited for your context. These are essential for setting the tone of the learning space)

“What is the most effective and sustainable policy response to problems in our society?”

Whole Group gathers in a circle (or if group is large many circles of about 20 participants each).

Facilitator leads in a moment of mindfulness of their choice. Acknowledge land and the community indigenous to the land you are convening on by name (prior research required). If the land has experienced settler colonization and/or theft from an Indigenous community, this is also acknowledged as a healing aspect of reckoning with our mutual past.

2. Activity
5 minutes

Conocimiento (See Activity Guide)

Center the group through a breathing exercise

Use the following pattern to support participants to center in their breath.

Model for them as you share the instruction:

“Exhale first. Breathe in deeply. Hold it for a moment. Exhale slowly.” (pause) Now take 3 deep breaths on your own. When you breathe in allow yourself to receive the air. As you exhale, relax completely.”

Facilitator invites participants to close eyes or soften gaze and asks: “Think of a personal goal that is close to your heart or that you have spent time or life’s work around. What was your original interest in and concern for this goal? Do you have a story that is meaningful to you that comes to mind? Who taught you something important about this goal, and what was the teaching? Think of the wisdom they had or that you now carry forward in relation to this issue.”

In whole group circle, each person is invited to name the wisdom they carry forward.

3. Whole Group Read Aloud

Poem excerpt from problem of practice by Nancy Johnson James.

Ask the community to read the following poem excerpt aloud, line by line, in considering the need for Targeted Universalism.

(Poem excerpt to be printed on one side of paper with entirety of poem printed on the other side, and shared with all participants.)



“This problem of practice,
Is a problem of wilderness, of survival,
Of tomorrow, of being fed.
Back in the day and maybe secretly now,
When a baby was born without something usual or,
With something extra unusual,
Different – we call it disability,
A doctor could order that they not be fed,
Not held,
Not nurtured,
Not seen,
Allowed to die.
Can you imagine a little being,
A life as pure as possibility,
Denied everything,
Every a chance to thrive?
And they called it a kindness,
Civilized,
Practical,
Because the child had no future.
What is the difference between starving cold, confused and alone,
In a sterile room and
Starving cold, confused and alone,
Under a tree,
On a cliff,
Outside the city walls?
It is all wilderness.
This problem of practice,
Is a problem of wilderness, of survival,
Of tomorrow, of being fed.”

Facilitator asks participants to have a seat, then reads:

“Targeted Universalism is a different way—a powerful way—to make the transformational changes we need. Changes we need to improve life chances, promote inclusion, and enhance and sustain equitable policies and programs. To better understand a Targeted Universalism framework, please enjoy this brief animated video, which explains the difference between Targeted Universalism and more traditional policy approaches.” -Haas Institute

5 minutes

Watch Film

5 minutes

Brief Text Rendering:

Invite participants to read the rest of the poem “*problem of practice*” and circle, underline, highlight or otherwise annotate concepts related to the idea

of Targeted Universalism and the need for Belonging. If time allows, share a few connected concepts with a table partner or to the whole group.

4. Images of Implementation 30 minutes

Adapting and embodying the principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) to the context of policymaking.

Share UDL Overview: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) the opportunity for all students to access, build on, and internalize general-education curriculum by reducing individual barriers to instruction. In practice, UDL is an example of Targeted Universalism because it focuses on the needs of a specific group for the benefit of all.

As a process-based and goal-oriented approach to community access, participation, and progress, UDL is an ideal framework to adapt for trainers and leaders in facilitating and designing policy change.

Creating meaning collaboratively through non-verbal representation can be a powerful tool in moving toward collective action.

*In small groups, you will take 5 minutes to create Image Theatre “freeze frames” or the tableaus will be embodying for UDL Step by **identifying ways you might implement strategies for Targeted Universalism in your own contexts or organizations.***

“**Image theater**, a social change tool developed by Augusto Boal, is one of the more widely used forms of Theater of the Oppressed, in which activists, students or any group are invited to form statues that represent a moment in time of an [oppressive] situation. The image can then serve as a springboard for critical group reflection in order to both understand the situation better and **to try out possible “solutions.”** Through the process of creating and working with the image, participants can decode the situation, dissecting each character’s personality, motivation and range of possible actions. Insofar as the participants identify with the characters, they can **explore possible actions that they themselves can take in their lives.**”

-Levana Saxon, Beautiful Trouble



Facilitator’s note

For “freeze frame” or Image Theatre “tableau,” consider your physical levels, representations of connection, relationship, othering and belonging, whole body ranges of motion, and take brave but safe risks. Also, record or remember each tableau as you go.



In all small group work, we suggest using Protocols/Shared Agreements, Speaking Order/Talking Stick (found in Orientation Guide), and/or timed responses so that all participants’ voices are shared and heard.

Targeted Universalism Step One

“Set A Universal Goal.”

Key Inquiry: How can understanding and amplifying the stories and structures impacting targeted groups help set a Universal Goal?

Work together to set a Universal Goal that prioritizes the stories and structures of targeted groups, but still has universal relevance and benefit.

As a group, discuss the key inquiry and considerations for setting a Universal Goal. As a group create a “freeze frame” physical representation of this consideration, also known as Image Theatre or “tableau.” All group members should be included. Record or remember tableau.

Targeted Universalism Step Two

“Measure How the Overall Population Fares Relative to the Universal Goal.”

Key Inquiry: WHAT do you want to measure and HOW will you measure it for the overall population?

Considerations in Implementation: What measurements promote inclusion in the circle of human concern and how can measurements alienate groups or bring them closer to understanding the benefits of the Universal Goal?

Discuss and name an inclusive approach to measurement and sharing data that you currently use, or would consider using or sharing. Create a tableau that is a physical representation of this practice. Include all group members.

Targeted Universalism Step Three

“Measure the Performance of Population Segments in Relation to the Universal Goal.”

Key Inquiry: How can you measure the way Universal Goal supports different segments of the population, especially the targeted group?

Considerations in Implementation: Can the population be invited to participate in their own research, and can research include participatory or arts-based forms?

Discuss and name research methods you currently use with targeted groups, or would consider using or sharing. Create a tableau representing this practice. Include all group members. Record or remember tableau.

Targeted Universalism Step Four

“Understand how structures and other factors support or impede groups’ progress toward the Universal Goal.”

Key Inquiry: How can you better understand how structures and other factors impede the target groups’ progress toward the Universal Goal? How can you collect and share this knowledge?

Considerations in Implementation: Needs and implementation strategies are determined by the stories and structures impacting that group. There are many ways for targeted groups to share wisdom and understanding.

Discuss and name ways of gaining or sharing understanding and/or examples

of structural supports or impediments that currently impact targeted groups. Create a tableau representing this understanding. Include all group members. Record or remember.

Targeted Universalism Step Five

“Implement targeted strategies so that each group can achieve the Universal Goal, based upon their needs and circumstances.”

Key Inquiry: What does success look like when the Universal Goal has been achieved for all groups?

Considerations in Implementation: Targeted strategies and inclusive policies are developed for all parties impacted by structural obstacles to attaining the Universal Goal.

Discuss and name ways of implementing targeted strategies and/or inclusive feedback loops so that each group can achieve the Universal Goals you are working towards. Create a tableau. Record or remember.

5. Closing Share 15 minutes

Depending on time and willingness, small groups share their 5-part tableau representing Targeted Universalism in Action. Take a few group reflections about interpretations, differences, similarities, and any new thoughts, ideas, questions or wonderings about Targeted Universalism that arise. As the full group, discuss any added insights, knowledge, connection or other experiences useful to mutual understandings.

Close by sharing one word each to describe current feelings or gratitude.

Activity Guide

Welcome and Opening Activities

Alter/Altar Space

As time and space allows, prepare the space for learning by making room for viewing films, holding circle, and engaging with exercises particular to your module. Optionally set a place for inclusion of any relevant objects of beauty or importance (books, flowers, art, etc.) and inviting participants to do the same.

Music

Play music as participants arrive and get settled. Some suggestions for songs: We Are-Sweet Honey and the Rock, Pata Pata-Miriam Makeba, People Everyday, Two Hearts-Valerie June, Waiting in Vain- Bob Marley, Can I Kick It-A Tribe Called Quest, I Am That I Am-Peter Tosh.

Circle Process

Most lessons open and close with circles, where participants and facilitator(s) stand or sit in a circle (or semi-circle or oval as needed!) in order to transform traditional, hierarchical learning spaces into collaborative community spaces.

Breathing Exercise

Invite participants to engage in an embodied practice of mindfulness and internal and external presence.



This icon indicates a talking point.

You might say something like: *“Exhale first. Breathe in deeply. Hold it for a moment. Exhale slowly.” (pause) Now take 3 deep breaths on your own. When you breathe in allow yourself to receive the air. As you exhale, relax completely.”*

Land Acknowledgement

Open with an acknowledgement of the land we stand on. Explain that land acknowledgement is an important element of reckoning with our collective past. It is a way to shift power by remembering and honoring the historical truth, the trauma, and the knowledge that our indigenous family is still here and has for centuries maintained stewardship over the land we are on.

A formal, opening acknowledgment of the indigenous land we stand on includes acknowledgement of the indigenous community whose land was colonized (in North American contexts). If more research is needed by facilitator, <https://native-land.ca> is an excellent resource.

Conocimiento

A Spanish word meaning “knowledge or conscience.” The Conocimiento Principle, a principle of the Latinx/Chicanx movement for transformation and equity, recognizes that common unity begins with the process of shared awareness and understanding, or Conocimiento.

–Roberto Vargas, Ph.D

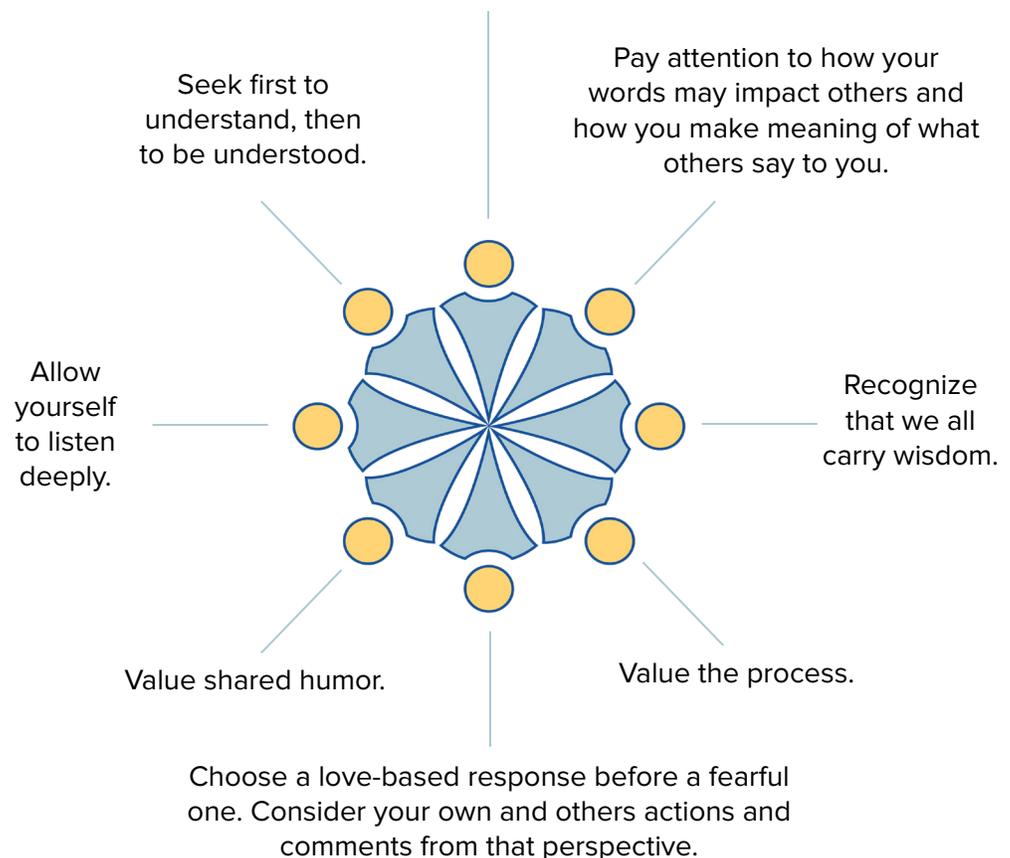


You might say something like... *“Conocimiento was used and highlighted during the Farm Workers’ Movement in California to bring people together in community to understand and leverage each others’ strengths.”*

The process of Belonging begins by identifying what’s already beautiful and present. Conocimiento is a practice that centers the human experience as meaningful and worthy. It is a practice that shares and uplifts the strengths of each person in relation to the collective, in order to achieve a common purpose. It will be important to practice *conocimiento* in your workshops to support people’s ability to feel immediately connected for a common cause.

Community Agreements

Use and adapt these agreements to help set the tone, intentions, values and ethics of the learning environment.



Various Thinking and Speaking Protocols

Save the Last Word - Save the Last Word is a thinking and discussion routine used to clarify and deepen thinking about a text.

See, Think, Wonder - See, Think, Wonder is a thinking routine developed by Project Zero (Harvard Graduate School of Education) to help learners make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations of what they see.

- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What does it make you wonder about?

Parts, Purposes, Complexities - Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine that helps learners slow down and make careful, detailed observations of an object or system they are examining. This routine encourages them to look beyond the obvious features of an object or system and to consider its functions and complexities. Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine created by Agency by Design with Harvard Project Zero.

- What are the parts? What are its various pieces or components?
- What are its purposes? What are the purposes for each of these parts?
- What are the complexities? How is it complicated in its parts and purposes, what are some complexities of the relationships between the two, what questions arise?

Speaking Order

Speaking Order is used in social practice circles around the world. It is one way to address and practice the reversal of systemic inequities introduced and held by white supremacy and patriarchy. Speaking order supports a shift in power from the people who have been granted the most power in our society based on colonialism, imperialism, and paternalism. These systems function to bias societies towards a worldview of hierarchical domination over others rather than a holding a viewpoint of community wisdom and collective good.

Speaking Order is often difficult to explain in settings where the system of inequity is not understood by all in the room, particularly with people in positions of privilege (such as white men) who may be used to holding more space in conversation and/or decision making, or are new to understanding white privilege and the role it plays in perpetuating the historical oppression of people of color around the world.



To introduce Speaking Order, you might say something like: *“We are going to practice shifting the power dynamics today. We will use Speaking Order as a way to reckon with our shared history of imperialism and a white ruling class. Speaking Order will ask that anyone who self identifies as having been granted the most unearned power in our society... based on factors of race, gender, age, religion, ability, etc...will let others speak before weighing in. Again, we ask the group to internally self-identify and simply stay mindful throughout our time together of who takes up the most/least airtime in group discussions and decisions. Speaking Order asks that the floor be turned over to lead from the wisdom of those who have been most “Othered” and carried most of the burden of societal oppressions. We acknowledge that there can be discomfort around this ask regardless of your positionality or “situatedness”, but invite this practice as a model for authentic reconciliation and as a path to increase mutual Belonging.”*

More Useful Resources

- [Culturally Responsive Resources](#)
- [Restorative Circle Processes](#)
- [Pillars of Andragogy](#)