

# Rise, Teach, Learn - Season 3 Episode 1

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## The CAREFUL Assessment Framework

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We acknowledge and are mindful that CSU Chico stands on lands that were originally occupied by the first people of this area, the Mechoopda, and we recognize their distinctive spiritual relationship with this land and the waters that run through campus. We are humbled that our campus resides upon sacred lands that once sustained the Mechoopda people for centuries.

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Welcome to the Rise, Teach, Learn Podcast. I am Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Director of Faculty Development at Chico State, and we are happy to make this resource available to our campus community and beyond. The podcast is hosted by Dr. Jamie Linn Gunderson and she will engage in timely conversations with faculty, staff, and students and give you a taste of the Chico experience. Subscribe to our podcast and explore the many resources available on our website. Thank you for listening.

00:49

Hello, and welcome to season three of Rise Teach Learn. I'm your host and in this episode, we will explore the CAREFUL assessment framework and in an effort to make this podcast interactive. I encourage you to download the CAREFUL assessment graphic organizer from the FDEV podcast web page and follow along as we explore the components together. Alright, so I am here with Paul Bailey, a lecturer in Mathematics and Statistics Department and the equity fellow with the Office of Faculty Development. And I'm also here with Rachel Teasdale, a professor in geological and Environmental Sciences Department. And they, along with Dr. Ben Seipel, a colleague of mine in the school of education came up with this really cool framework called CAREFUL. It stands for culturally responsive authentic, reflective, ethical, formative, universal and learner focused. And I've asked them on to the podcast today to kind of explain a little bit about how that word came to me and how that work can impact fellow faculty at CSU. So Paul and Rachel, thank you for being on our episode to start off the spring semester. And I just want to open it up to both of you.

02:20

The CAREFUL framework is I mean, essentially, what you just said, right, like we're talking about various facets of what make assessment meaningful and equitable. And there's a lot of connections and overlap between this it's really kind of a complex framework in the fact that there's a lot of intersections between these pieces, but essentially, it's that it's that if we want to use, develop and use assessment that's going to be one meaningful as a tool, and also help us in supporting learners to get you know from point A to point B, these academic trajectories, then these facets of the key points that are going to help guide us towards creating effective assessment.

03:09

Yeah, I think I think that's a great overview, Paul. There's multiple components here. And it really is a nice guide for you know, when you're creating your assessments, thinking about them in in these

different components. And so, you know, it's not that every assessment has to use every single component, but it's really an opportunity to think about your assessments and think about the ways that they could be supported by these different facets. So it's, it's kind of an opportunity to assess your own assessment, which is cool, because I know without it, I don't think about all of these components. So you know, I might be lacking something that would easily fit in and be that much more supportive for students.

03:57

In preparation for this episode I watched a webinar from tipping point on grades grading and equity. And I have to say I've already used this framework in my own practice and eliminated some of my held strong beliefs on grading and so an example of that would be I didn't actually accept late work under any circumstances. My point being and I think it was reflected in the webinar was because I thought that, you know, it's due when I tell you it's due at the beginning of the semester, but I'm not really thinking about the ways in which that might influence or impact my students negatively. So already just in watching the webinar I was able to kind of apply that framework and maybe just kind of reevaluate that practice. But can we go through the components and break those down because I think that would be really helpful for our listeners to hear.

04:58

Sure, so I can kick this off or Paul, do you want to do it? Sure. So CAREFUL is an acronym and each of the components or the facets that make up the CAREFUL framework, you know, come from that acronym. So we'll start with C culturally responsive, and this is a checkpoint where you can figure out am I am I using my students experiences, their backgrounds or did they assessments, incorporate those backgrounds, so sort of their cultural capital, and so having opportunities where students can incorporate their culture is a really cool way for students to learn. And then the A is for authentic, and these are an authentic assessment would be something that students might encounter in the real world. So you know, we don't have to only use multiple choice exams. That's one option for assessment that there are lots of experiences that students might encounter in the discipline of the course that would offer them something that's more authentic. Then we go to R is reflective, but sometimes this is called metacognition. This is giving students opportunities to think about their learning, and how their learning was successful, so that they might use those successes or those processes that were successful in other learning settings. And then the E is for ethical, and so we want to make sure that our assessments are valid or reliable, and not biased. So these, this would include something like your learning goals and your activities are all in alignment with the way the students are evaluated. And then we move on to F for formative, so many assessments can be formative that is where the assessment is happening as the learning is occurring. And so this gives an opportunity for the instructor to know where students are in their process of learning, but it also is really cool. Because it gives the students a chance to get feedback from the instructor so that they know about the process of their learning and they can make adjustments as needed. Then u stands for Universal Design. And this is basically offering flexibility to students in the types of assessments. So it could be that you offer them choices or types of projects or what they want to participate in, or that flexibility could be something along the lines that you were saying Jamie, where you're using you know, a less rigid format for deadlines. So that's the U, then the last is the L and that is learner focus, and we want to make sure that assessments are focused on the learner and their learning and maybe less focused on me, the instructor. So as we're

emphasizing the learner, then that brings us back to the learning and less about the breathing and what the instructors will is in this.

08:21

So that's CAREFUL and if you don't mind, Jamie, at risk of kind of going down a rabbit hole here. I like that first anecdote that you shared, because I think it's actually really dense and there's a lot we could kind of unpack with that. And it speaks to this fact that these facets are all interconnected and intersecting, right. And so and then the other important thing that so there's one layer of what I'm trying to unpack here, the other piece of this too, that's really was really cool about that example is it gets to another challenge that I hear a lot of times from faculty when talking about looking at any kind of lesson design piece, but especially assessment when we're talking about how do we make sure these things are, you know, valid, reliable, unbiased and equitable for our students, is a lot of times we start talking about things like equity, and culturally responsive, folks are like, I don't know like, what does that look like? It's hard to wrap our heads around a concrete sort of picture in our mind of what that looks like. And you gave a really good concrete idea of what that could look like, in that, you know, our students are coming from multiple different backgrounds and so even just like those little logistical things, like the way that we set due dates or policies around due dates, can connect to student backgrounds versus like first gen non first gen students or students who have financial support, so that they don't have to work additional jobs, whereas some do or have family obligations, or whatever it may be.

09:54

Another example of this that I usually go back to a lot in my own practice. Is that a number of years ago, I apologize, this is going to be deep. But like a number of years ago, I was reflecting on my own assessment practices. And I was like, especially in math, traditional math assessments are often very much this narrow kind of view of what assessment looks like. And I was thinking I was like, I am miserable, writing these math exams. I am miserable grading them. My students are miserable taking them and grades only go down with them. As I started doing some just some personal analysis on my courses over multiple semesters. And what I found was that when I wanted to look at like the outcomes on these different forms of assessment that I used, versus what their overall learning was, you know, in theory, if the grades are accurate, that the traditional exams were the least predictive of what their final grades were going to be in the class of the types of assessment that I used. My formative assessment was by far the highest predictor so I could look at their quiz scores over the course of a semester partway through and have a really good idea of where the students were gonna land at the end of the semester if I didn't introduce any additional interventions. And so, like, even in that piece, I was like, Okay, well, I found out that formative assessment is better than these traditional assessments that I had been using. So really focusing on this importance of formative assessment. So then you can unpack that and like okay, well why is it helpful?

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And so a lot of colleagues will probably, this will resonate with them. I would be in these situations where I would be informally assessing students throughout the course of the semester, having conversations with them about the content, listening to their conversations with each other, having them write about it, do work on it, and be like these students got this, and that I get exam grades and according to the exam they don't got this. And I couldn't reconcile those two really well. And so it's

already getting me that question of validity. Well, then, how valid are my formal assessments that I'm giving these students with all of the data that I have available tells me that these are not really valid assessments. So you can see where this starts to get like, it can snowball pretty quick. But even that formative assessment piece gets to the UDL component, because part of how I had designed my formative assessments was to provide students with multiple means of engaging with the content, and multiple means in expressing their knowledge on the content. And so by including this UDL component in my formative assessment, now I have multiple facets of the CAREFUL framework, helping support these students and having sort of these successful academic experiences that are meaningful to them as learning experiences, and providing me with a better picture of what's really going on inside my students heads.

13:05

And I would say that that is a perfect example of a learner focused approach to assessment, right? You're thinking about what the students are learning. You're not as focused now on how well they did on the test that you made. So I think that fits right into the CAREFUL assessment protocol.

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I really think that one of the things that this CAREFUL framework has to offer is it kind of parallels universal design for learning in that it's not that you need to have every component of the framework. It's that you just need to kind of be mindful of these different components. And be thinking about them as you design assessments much like we should be thinking about the principles, guidelines and checkpoints of UDL as we design our lessons and assessments as well.

13:57

One other thing that I think is important about CAREFUL assessment is that we're not suggesting that every assessment you use in your class has to satisfy every single component. We're just, we're just offering it as a series of checkpoints that you can be aware of and that, that maybe your whole, like, all the assessments in your course, might have some of these components. And so you know, all of them might be addressed, but not necessarily in every activity. So it's something to be mindful of, but not necessarily like rules are rigid. And then the other thing I want to say about CAREFUL assessment is CAREFUL assessment starts because of the acronym with culturally responsive, but there is no order here. There's no hierarchy. You don't have to satisfy one before you can move to the other. If you are designing a new assessment, like see, see which of the CAREFUL elements work for your assessment, and then which other ones could work with simple adjustments. Like this doesn't have to be a complete overhaul of everything you're doing.

15:13

Jamie, I think your example was great you made a little tweak by saying okay, I will accept late work under these circumstances. And that's a super simple, easy thing to adjust. And, ultimately, as Paul mentioned before, that simple adjustment is actually aligned with several of the elements of CAREFUL assessment.

15:40

And there you have it folks, we explored the CAREFUL assessment framework and discussed ways that faculty and staff think about designing assessments that are more meaningful to our students. I'd like to thank our guests Paul Bailey and Dr. Rachel Teasdale, for their contributions to this episode. Don't forget that you can access previous episodes of rise, cheat, learn, as well as all of the resources associated with this and other episodes in our series through the FDEV podcast web page. A big thank you to you for listening. And until next time, we got this Wildcats!