Template 2 - Course Activity Design Template: Engaging Learning Experiences

Step	Component (Iterative)	Description (May require additional resources, technology, or support services)	Addressing DFWI rates	Example (Customize for your specific course)
1	Activity Title, Discipline, & Context	• Ensure that the title is engaging, student-centered, inclusive, and focuses on the key skills or knowledge to be gained. Consider the broader context and relevance of the activity to students' lives and future goals.	A clear, discipline-specific title helps students connect the activity to their academic goals, increasing relevance and motivation, which are key factors in reducing DFWI rates.	• **Title:** Instead of "*Environmental Policy Debate*" Consider: "*Debating Climate Change Solutions: Navigating Science, Policy, and Advocacy*"
2	Learning Outcomes & Assessment Alignment	• Align the activity with the specific course learning outcomes and assessment strategies for the course. • Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy or other frameworks to ensure that the activity targets appropriate cognitive levels.	Explicit alignment with learning outcomes and assessments provides a clear roadmap for success. It helps students prioritize their efforts and stay on track, mitigating factors that contribute to DFWI rates.	• Evaluate different perspectives on climate change policy and formulate a reasoned argument. • Break down the learning outcome into specific, measurable criteria for success. For example, students will a) identify at least three perspectives, b) provide evidence for each, c) take a clear position, d) anticipate counterarguments.
3	Prerequisites & Instructional Support (Scaffolding)	• Provide resources, brief tutorials, or collaborative learning opportunities to help students fill in knowledge gaps and build necessary foundational skills. Consider the diverse needs and backgrounds of your students when designing instructional support.	Adequate preparation and instructional support level the playing field for student success. They address potential gaps in prior knowledge that can lead to DFWI, especially for historically underserved students.	• **Prerequisites:** Understanding the causes and effects of climate change. • **Scaffolding:** Provide resources on policy analysis and argumentation techniques prior to the debate.
4	Activity Type & Description	• Describe the type of learning activity, its scope, and provide a brief outline. Clearly articulate the	Active, collaborative learning increases student ownership and accountability, building essential self-efficacy and	• **Type:** Small-group debate • **Description:**

		rationale for the choice of activity and how it aligns with the learning outcomes and promotes student engagement. • Highlight the key skills or knowledge to be practiced and the expected level of student interaction, if any.	metacognitive skills that can be transferred to other rigorous courses and reduce the overall risk of DFWI.	Students form teams to debate a given environmental policy issue, fostering critical thinking and communication skills. • Adaptable to a variety of class sizes and formats.
5	Procedure & Integration	• Provide a suggested timeline for each step of the activity, including checkpoints to monitor progress and provide guidance.	Clear procedures and expectations create a supportive structure for learning. They have the potential to reduce unproductive confusion and affective barriers that can hinder success and persistence, especially for students from marginalized groups.	• **Steps include** preparation, position research, and structured debate format. • Integrate with course content by selecting topics relevant to the syllabus. • Include a post-debate debrief or reflection to reinforce learning and identify areas for improvement. • Provide a detailed handout or online resource with instructions and expectations.
6	Assessment & Feedback	• Outline assessment methods, feedback mechanisms, and how student feedback will be used to refine the activity. • Consider including self-assessment and goal setting to promote metacognition and self-directed learning.	Proactively designing for accessibility and inclusion creates a more equitable learning environment by reducing systemic barriers to success that disproportionately affect students from historically marginalized groups, a key factor in DFWI rates.	• Peer assessment of presentation skills and rubric-based assessment of argument quality. • Provide training and guidelines for effective peer feedback. Monitor and model the process. • Use student feedback to make improvements and adjustments.
7	Resources & Accessibility	• List materials needed, estimate time required, and ensure accessibility for all students. • Consider potential barriers to access (e.g., technology, language, disability) and proactively plan for accommodations.	Promotes equity by ensuring that all students have the resources and support they need to fully participate in course activities.	• **Resources:** Research materials, debate guidelines. • **Time:** Two 50-minute class sessions. • Ensure that all students have access to necessary resources and consider accessibility needs.

		• Use Universal Design for Learning principles.		
8	Reflection & Continuous Improvement	• Encourage student reflection and use feedback to continuously improve the activity. • Share aggregated feedback and planned improvements with students to close the loop and demonstrate responsiveness	Reflecting on learning and acting on feedback creates a culture of continuous improvement, fostering a growth mindset and sense of belonging that can improve academic performance and persistence, especially for students at higher risk for DFWI.	• Include reflection prompts or a post-activity survey. • Use a variety of reflection formats (written, oral, multimedia) to accommodate different preferences and strengths. • Review feedback regularly and make iterative changes to improve effectiveness and alignment with learning outcomes.