Describing the Peralta Equity Rubric

If you teach college courses in any format—face-to-face, hybrid or online—you probably have heard about or worked on improving course quality, course accessibility, or both. But what about course equity? At its core, *equity* is defined as "freedom from bias" (Equity, n.d.). In the Distance Education context, Peralta uses the term equity to mean "freedom from bias or assumptions that negatively impact online learners' motivations, opportunities, or accomplishments." The table below outlines the research-based equity issues that a) affect online learners and b) form the basis of Peralta's Equity Rubric (download the rubric from http://web.peralta.edu/de/equity):

Peralta Equity Rubric Criteria	Peralta Equity Rubric Description	How You Can Start Addressing This Equity Issue
E1: Technology	These days it is easy to assume that all college students a) have access to the device(s) and Internet connectivity they need to successfully complete college courses and b) know how to use technology properly.	List each technology required to complete an online course successfully; suggest alternatives for students with technology impediments or challenges; and provide clear pathways for students to get assistance with commonly required technologies.
E2: Student Resources and Support	Another common assumption is that students know where to go for help, and will do so when they need it. Further, while online course enrollment grows dramatically at most colleges, there has not been an equivalent growth in services, resources, and support that students can access at a distance.	Outline student support & well-being services in several areas, such as a) general student assistance, b) online academic supports, c) technology assistance, d) health and well-being resources, e) resources for students with disabilities. Provide pathways for students to access this support from a distance.
E3: Universal Design for Learning	One pedagogical assumption is that all learners can follow the same pathway to succeed in a given course. That pathway may involve asking all students to review all course content in just one format, or to show what they have learned in the same way.	Align course content and activities with the three core Universal Design for Learning principles (see cast.org)—multiple means of a) representation, b) action & expression, and c) engagement.
E4: Diversity and Inclusion	It is also possible to assume that students automatically know or believe that all instructors value diverse ideas and perspectives.	Create a diversity and inclusion statement for your course syllabus. Demonstrate that diverse ideas and perspectives are valued by asking students to analyze a) course content from multiple perspectives or b) how diversity fosters better learning.

E5: Images and Representation	Teachers may select textbooks and create lecture presentations without considering image and representation bias. In other words, images and media can portray different groups of people unequally—e.g., according to gender, ethnicity, age, or some other factor—and/or promote stereotypes or inaccuracies about those groups.	Find images and media that represent the diversity of your institution. Encourage students to analyze the accuracy or stereotypes related to how specific groups are represented in images and media related to course topics.
E6: Human Bias	Teachers facilitate numerous interactions with and among students throughout a course. However, different biases like unconscious bias and human interaction bias can emerge, lowering students' willingness to participate in class activities or to complete the class at all.	Start identifying potential human biases that may impact online students' motivation. Then begin crafting strategies for addressing those biases and sharing your plans with your students.
E7: Content Meaning	Textbooks, standardized or publisher test bank questions, and other course materials may unknowingly exhibit a cultural bias by using descriptions, examples, and other language that represent only one (dominant) cultural background.	Create activities that require students to connect the course topics and course materials to their own social-cultural backgrounds as well as the socio-cultural backgrounds of others.
E8: Connection and Belonging	Another potential assumption is that students know or believe that the instructor a) cares about their success and b) wants them to participate. In actuality, online learners often feel alienated or alone, and some have had discouraging or negative online learning experiences.	Craft messages that communicate you care about each student's participation and success in your classes. Create course activities that go beyond requirements like "reply to two people" and deepen connections with other students. Encourage students to connect to your institution and, if applicable, your discipline.

References

Equity [Def. 1a]. (n.d.). *Merriam-Webster Online*. In Merriam-Webster. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equity