

CSUSB PTD ASSET-BASED FACULTY PD POSTTEST SUMMARY

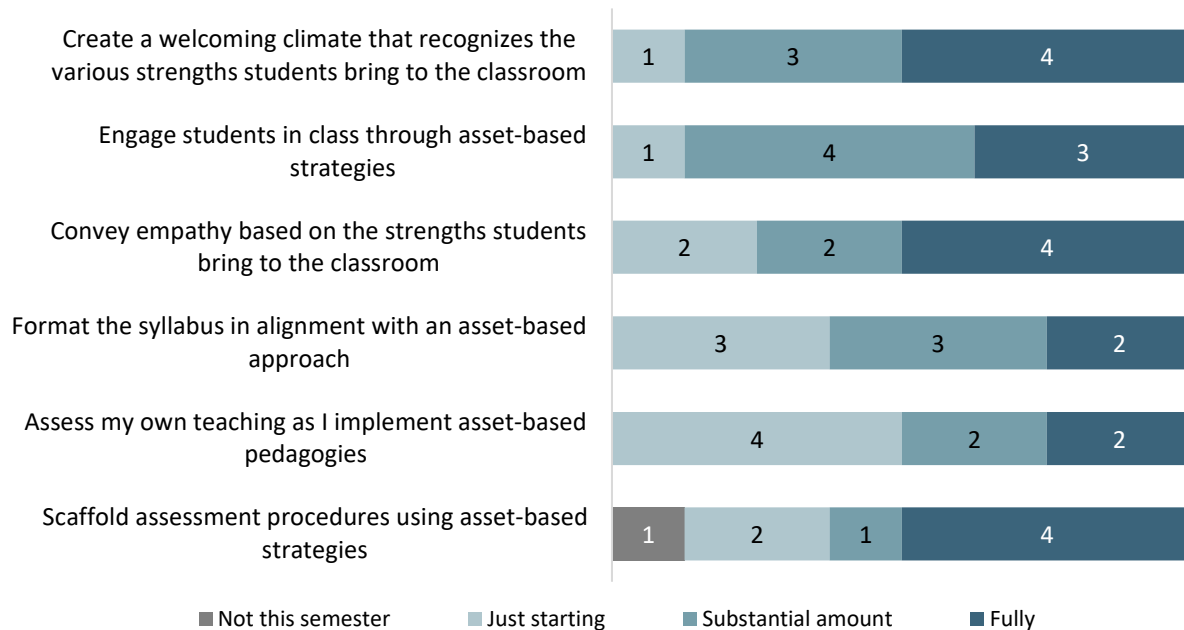
In summer 2023, 11 faculty members from the arts and humanities departments of California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), Norco College (NC), and San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) participated in a three-day professional development (PD) workshop on asset-based teaching as part of the Pathway to Success (PTS) program. Subsequently, during the Fall 2023 Semester, eight of these faculty members integrated asset-based teaching strategies into their courses. At the end of the semester, all eight completed a follow-up survey reporting on their implementation of asset-based strategies. A summary of their responses is provided below.

Student Assets Identification

Faculty members described which assets students brought to the classroom. While some faculty members reported that their students brought cultural assets in general, others noted specific types of cultural assets they recognized in their students. Those mainly included navigational assets, but also linguistic, familial, aspirational, and social assets. For example, one faculty member provided an example of students' navigational and linguistic assets: *"Students brought in a lot of skills and assets this semester! Students had great communication skills and were great with expressing themselves in both written and oral forms... [they] were naturally resourceful and motivated."* Other examples of students' navigational assets included students' dedication, curiosity, perseverance, willingness to take risks speaking in public in the classroom, empathy, and open mindedness. One faculty member provided an example of their students' familial assets: *"[Students brought] unique cultural experiences and perspectives, including religious backgrounds... and attitudes toward art held by their family/households."* In addition, two faculty members described their students' experience (e.g., life experience, professional experience) as assets. One of these respondents explained: *"Some of them [students] are teachers, and their knowledge of the education system in California aided our discussion of language and education."* Other assets recognized by faculty members included students' individual and unique perspectives, musical associations, and religious backgrounds.

Implementation of Asset-Based Pedagogy Strategies

Faculty members reported the extent to which they implemented asset-based teaching strategies in their fall 2023 course (i.e., "Not this semester," "Just starting," "Substantial amount," or "Fully"; see **Figure 1**). *Nearly all faculty members reported implementing all asset-based teaching strategies and approaches to some degree in their course.* The most substantially implemented strategies reported overall were creating a welcoming classroom environment, engaging students, and conveying empathy towards them.

Figure 1. Faculty Self-Ratings of Asset-Based Pedagogy Implementation

n = 8

Faculty members who reported implementing the asset-based teaching strategies (to any degree) explained their response and described their implementation, as summarized below. See the **Appendix** for complete responses by level of implementation.

Syllabus Formatting. Faculty members reported using various strategies for formatting their syllabus in alignment with an asset-based approach. Several reported revising the syllabus formatting, language, and content to enhance clarity and friendliness. For example, one faculty member described using strategies such as *“converting the syllabus to color, minimizing the font of classroom legalese and moving this content to the very end... and including a variety of images to make the syllabus entertaining.”* In addition, two faculty members incorporated collaborative elements into their syllabus (e.g., a class agreement inviting students to outline mutual responsibilities between themselves and the professor). Other syllabus revisions included using colors and images to increase the syllabus’s appeal and adding a survey that encouraged students to share their unique assets.

Assessment Procedures Scaffolding. Faculty members employed various asset-based strategies to scaffold their assessment procedures. Several reported breaking down the learning process into more manageable components, allowing students to incrementally build upon their knowledge and skills. For instance, one faculty member explained: *“I gave students low-stakes assessments as a way to prepare them for the final assessment. They wrote mini-papers, and I provided feedback to guide their writing of the final paper.”* Other examples included assigning skill-specific tasks and segmenting final projects into smaller tasks completed throughout the semester. In addition, two faculty members routinely facilitated class

discussions to gauge students' understanding and readiness for upcoming assignments. Other strategies included leveraging tutoring services and permitting students to omit their lowest grade. Of note, one faculty member reported previously employing scaffolding techniques in courses taught before the PD.

Student Engagement. Faculty members who reported engaging students through asset-based strategies provided descriptions and examples. Several reported emphasizing students' strengths, capital, and prior experience in their teaching. For example, one faculty member described: *"I drew a lot from students' personal experiences in my explanation of [course] concepts. I invited them to narrate events that they were comfortable sharing. We then look at the event from the lenses of some given theoretical concept."* Other faculty members integrated experiential learning activities such as mindfulness sessions and community concerts. Some of these activities were designed around students' interests, such as presentations on artists they enjoyed listening to. In addition, two faculty members incorporated group work in their classes to engage students. As described by one of them: *"I love to create small groups where they [students] work together to answer a question, create something, or help each other with different steps in the writing process."* Further, two faculty members routinely integrated class discussions about the course topics. Of note, one faculty member reported previously using student engagement strategies (e.g., collaborative assignments) in courses taught before the PD.

Welcoming Environment. Faculty members reported various ways in which they created a welcoming climate that recognized students' strengths. Several focused on getting to know students and building trusting relationships with them learning students names. Other examples included engaging with students on a personal level and inquiring about their well-being. In addition, a few faculty members reported trying to instill a sense of value and confidence in students. For instance, one faculty member communicated their dedication to creating a supportive learning environment that appreciates students' strengths and perspectives. Another shared: *"I validated students' contributions, while gently guiding them in case of misrepresentation of [course] concepts."* Further, several faculty members described their efforts to establish a comfortable learning environment. This involved ice-breaker activities at the semester's start, working in small groups to encourage active participation, and revising syllabus language to be warmer and more approachable.

Empathy Toward Students. Faculty members described various strategies for conveying empathy based on the strengths students brought to the classroom. Several reported focusing on understanding students' unique circumstances and adopting flexible course policies. One of them described: *"I had two students who worked the night shift... knowing their situation was paramount to empathizing with sleep deprivation and inconsistent attendance."* Other faculty members noted that they encouraged students during challenging times, for example, by reassuring them that making mistakes is part of the learning process and using positive

language to support students facing difficulties. Other strategies included motivating students to lead lessons on course topics that aligned with their interests and acknowledging students' strengths during class discussions.

Teaching Self-Assessment. Faculty members employed several strategies to assess their own teaching as they implemented asset-based pedagogies. Several solicited feedback from their students. As one faculty member described: *“At the end of the course... I asked them [students] where did we succeed, where did we miss the boat, and where/what would we like to improve.”* In addition, a few faculty members reported engaging in self-reflection on their pedagogical practices, either continuously throughout the semester or at its conclusion. Further, one faculty member reported staying up-to-date with PD opportunities and current research in their field. Of note, one faculty member who reported they were “Just starting” to assess their own teaching, noted that although they were not formally assessing their teaching, they observed higher than average retention and success rates in one of their courses.

Implementation Challenges

Faculty members described challenges in applying asset-based pedagogy. Several reported encountering difficulties with implementing specific activities, assignments, or strategies. For example, one faculty member noted they experienced challenges with implementing a role-playing game (a strength-based activity); another reported that some students failed to complete an assignment designed to leverage their cultural assets; and a third observed: *“I found that students were sometimes unsettled by the lack of an assigned grade on assignments and felt lost without a metric by which to measure their achievement.”* In addition, one faculty member identified students' low motivation and disinterest in the asset-based approach as a significant challenge, stating: *“Some students just didn't seem to want to approach class this way or perhaps view the skills they have as valuable.”* Conversely, three faculty members stated they did not encounter implementation-related challenges.

Additional Support

Faculty members described how PTS could support them in implementing asset-based strategies in the future. Several requested additional training, such as refresher and follow-up workshops. A few faculty members indicated their interest in re-engaging with their PD cohort for ongoing updates, either through meetings or by creating a faculty learning community across the community colleges and CSUSB. One of these faculty members explained: *“It would be nice to reconnect, either in-person or via Zoom, with the members in our summer cohort. I'd like to ask them how their journeys are going.”* In addition, one faculty member requested examples of specific activities to implement in their classes.

APPENDIX. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Table a. Faculty Members' Asset-Based Teaching Strategies Implementation

Please indicate the extent to which you implemented each of the following in your course(s) this semester. If you implemented this idea, please describe your approach.	
Format the syllabus in alignment with an asset-based approach	
Just starting (n = 3)	I include an online syllabus that asks students to make their own contributions to a class compact/agreement (what will I do/what will they do). They have the opportunity to help create/improve that agreement.
	I included a link to an entry survey in the syllabus to gauge the kinds of assets students brought to the class.
	I tried out something that was suggested during our workshop. I'm not sure who specifically mentioned it, but I tried out the collaborative syllabus building with my students. I had them come up with policies and goals that they thought were fair and good. They actually chose policies that were more strict than I would have given.
Substantial amount (n = 3)	I wrote the opening announcement about the material, alignment of students, and my goals with culturally responsive androgogy. I also revised the language of the syllabus in several parts making it friendlier and more empathetic.
	Implemented by revising syllabus language, grading scheme, final project options.
	Syllabus is welcoming, de-mystified, simple, and transparent.
Fully (n = 2)	I applied the tactics recommended in Norman Eng's book, Teaching College, which included converting the syllabus to color, minimizing the font of classroom legalese and moving this content to the very end of the syllabus, "selling" why students should take the class on the front page of the syllabus, and including a variety of images to make the syllabus entertaining and fun to read.
	In my semester I centered the information around the student and positioned the syllabus to work as a resource for students that they can refer to over the semester and down the line. I also made sure that the language of the syllabus showed us in partnership with their education and welcomed them to add to or "teach" in the class--I noted: I am not the only teacher in the class, each of you are teachers too and we are all students.
Scaffold assessment procedures using asset-based strategies	
Just starting (n = 2)	Every semester, I have students do the general long research paper assignment. I tried a different approach this semester where I replaced a different essay with a multipart research paper. It didn't quite work as I imagined, but I'm going to try it again in the spring with some adjustments that I think will work better and be less intimidating.
	I gave students low-stakes assessments as a way to prepare them for the final assessment. They wrote mini-papers, and I provided feedback to guide their writing of the final paper.
Substantial amount (n = 1)	Included "drop lowest grade / take a break" options
Fully (n = 4)	All assignments are scaffolded, targeting specific skills that are being built for the larger assignments.
	For this semester we worked on our major assignment over the course of the semester instead of as one large assignment at the end of the semester. I allowed them to work

	on it in chunks and we routinely discussed what they already knew, what they need to know, and then I shared what they didn't know they need to know.
	I was already utilizing the scaffolding technique with the final paper before and having discussions set in preparation and anticipation of big assignments such as final paper ideas, final paper draft, and glossary assignments.
	The course was scaffolded from beginning to end. The idea of having a cumulative Final Exam seemed intimidating at first, but the students were ready. Taking advantage of tutoring also assisted in scaffolded content throughout the semester, as a gap in someone's skillset was consistently noticed, making attention to the problem(s) easier to identify.
Engage students in class through asset-based strategies	
Just starting (n = 1)	Using brief mindfulness activities at the beginning of class that can help students (who are interested) in being more present/bringing their strengths to the class. Framing the mindfulness activities as designed with that intention. Just referring to students' strengths and using the language of their strengths -- rather than using the term "assets," which a colleague of mine pointed out subscribes heavily to capitalist ideology...
Substantial amount (n = 4)	Ask students to draw on prior knowledge and social capitals, give lots of constructive feedback, real-world applications, group work, and a welcoming environment with lots of opportunities for interaction with peers and the instructor.
	At the beginning of the semester, I included the assignment "Exploring Ethics through One's Own Cultural Capital, Media Artifacts & Course Reading Materials " - inspired by the workshop and the article we read there: Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. Race Ethnicity and Education, 8(1), 69-91. DOI: 10.1080/1361332052000341006
	Begin each class/topic with informal discussion about what students "already know" or "think they know" about topic.
Fully (n = 3)	I feel like I've already been doing a lot of this throughout my teachings. I love to create small groups where they work together to answer a question, create something, or help each other with different steps in the writing process. For instance, I want them to write outlines for their papers, so I have them get into groups of four where they all have to work together to help each member create a rough outline that they can further develop at home on their own. I feel like this allows students who have the skill to come up with ideas help the students who are good at organizing ideas. Together, they are able to help each other.
	I added a requirement of an individual presentation for this class. On the first day, students wrote down their top three choices of an artist they wanted to present on. By the second class meeting they were assigned an artist and a presentation date. Throughout the semester, typically after a review quiz and before learning new content, 1-2 5-minute presentations were given by students. Students and myself learned about who everyone else was listening to, and it immediately connected us to each other. Questions about artists were then included in the exams.
	I did this by allowing the students to run the in-class discussions weekly and allowed them to be the subject experts. They did amazing!
	I drew a lot from students' personal experiences in my explanation of [course] concepts. I invited them to narrate events that they were comfortable sharing. We then look at the event from the lenses of some given theoretical concepts.

Create a welcoming climate that recognizes the various strengths students bring to the classroom	
Just starting (n = 1)	(Re)introducing growth mindset at the beginning of the semester. I've found this to be very popular with students for quite some time, even those who have had exposure to the concept. I tried holding off on discussing the syllabus in order to do more ice-breakers/fun things so that students could get to know one another at the start of the semester. Reading and discussion in pairs/groups of three so that students feel more comfortable sharing in small groups. I wander around the room, getting into small discussions group by group rather than at the whole class level.
Substantial amount (n = 3)	I do my best to be welcoming. I changed the language in my syllabus to be more warm and approachable. To my surprise, on day one, a student who read the syllabus before coming to class told me I calmed a lot of her nerves based off my syllabus. She said it made it easier for her to come in the first day.
	I implemented a multifaceted approach to create a welcoming climate that recognizes the various strengths students bring to the classroom. Firstly, I added a comprehensive welcome message to my syllabus, explicitly expressing my commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment that values each student's unique strengths and perspectives. Moreover, I incorporated a more personal touch by initiating a brief, conversational welcome at the beginning of each class. During this time, I engage with students on a more personal level, inquiring about their well-being and responding to their questions. This practice not only sets a positive tone for the class but also establishes a sense of community. Additionally, I make an effort to exchange interesting observations related to the course material, their work, or their connections to current events. By integrating these elements, I aim to create a classroom atmosphere that acknowledges my students' diverse strengths and encourages open communication and mutual respect, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and enriching educational experience.
Fully (n = 4)	I made a point to learn everyone's name, and called on every student within every class meeting. As students participated, they were acknowledged by myself and each other by name, which clearly established a comfortable learning environment.
	The first week of class we focused on getting to know each other, I invited them to help me choose our readings, and I requested their "buy in" on some of the rules of the course and how the course assessment and due dates would be broken down. This was an important part of the class. I validated students' contributions, while gently guiding them in case of misrepresentation of [course] concepts. I reminded them that it is okay to make mistakes.
Convey empathy based on the strengths students bring to the classroom	
Just starting (n = 2)	I'm honestly not sure how to respond to this one. I take note of student strengths for sure and I encourage students to work with their strengths.
Substantial amount (n = 2)	After introducing the "Exploring Ethics through One's Own Cultural Capital, Media Artifacts & Course Reading Materials" assignment at the beginning of the semester, I was able to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths and cultural assets that each student brings to the classroom. We would bring up those in our discussion of material, especially during our talks of reflexivity. This helped me establish more meaningful connections with my students and created a more inclusive and respectful learning environment where every student feels valued. By connecting this reflection assignment with the possible implicit biases bestowed upon us by family, culture, and society,

	students could notice the finer nuances within intersubjective realities and representations and communicate about them more effectively.
	I feel like this comes from the way I talk with my students both individually and on a whole. Having positive language when students are struggling.
Fully (n = 4)	By reminding students throughout that it is okay to make mistakes, I encouraged them to not let fear of mistakes get in the way of contributing to class discussions.
	I don't know how to express this as I feel like this is something I naturally do. I had a number of students tell me how impactful this course was and my love for them was always apparent. I always look for opportunities to help a student to see their own strength and value and allow them to shine where they are naturally gifted. For example, I had students who volunteered to lead the class in lessons based on their particular interests and majors that intersected with our topics.
	I had two students who worked the night shift throughout the semester, and came straight to our 9:30am course from their jobs. While these students occasionally missed class, knowing their situation was paramount to empathizing with sleep deprivation and inconsistent attendance. A beginning of the semester survey was extremely helpful to find out who my students were.
	Lots of flexibility with policies, accept late work, generally approach students by giving the benefit of the doubt and lots of kindness, grace, and understanding.
Assess my own teaching as I implement asset-based pedagogies	
Just starting (n = 4)	I seek feedback from my students to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives, which helps me to make informed adjustments. I try to keep up with professional development opportunities and stay attuned to current research and informal discussions on this matter with colleagues, staff, and students. Sometimes unexpected insights and know-hows are most rewarding in the long run.
	I'm not formally assessing my teaching, but I did notice that one of my in-person classes had outstanding retention and success--extraordinary for me, since I tend to have moderate retention and low success.
	While I adjust my courses every semester, it's been nice to have an excuse to reflect on specific andragogical strategies that worked.
	Workshops like this one are an invaluable opportunity to reflect on my own pedagogical practices in a more concerted, structured way.
Substantial amount (n = 2)	I was being officially evaluated this semester as part of my tenure review, so all semester I was logging my reflections and considering what was and wasn't working.
Fully (n = 2)	I reflected a lot on the methods I adopted in the class. I also invited students to reflect on how effective my teaching was. I provided them a link to an anonymous Google form that they could use to let me know if they wanted me to change any aspect of my teaching. None of them made use of the form. The SOTE that I recently received for the class confirms that the students particularly found my asset-based teaching effective.
	With the class, at the end of the course I assessed myself and led the class in a self-assessment and an assessment of my teaching. I asked them where did we succeed, where did we miss the boat, and where/what would we like to improve. I modeled it first by assessing myself and them, and then I opened them up to assess me and themselves.