

# Targeted Universalism

Expanding Belonging



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.

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# Targeted Universalism:

Expanding Belonging



Length — [  30 minutes  
          [  60 minutes  
          [  90 minutes

## Description

A 90 minute workshop drawing on real world case-studies and examples that support participants in applying the film to their own work and life experience through considerations and methods for achieving universal goals through targeted approaches.

## Audience

High school and college students with some concept familiarity, equity advocates in non-profit sector, community organizers, members of base-building orgs, government staff.

## Workshop Supplies Needed

- Large Whiteboard or Chart Paper
- Colored Pens for Whiteboard or Chart Paper
- Sticky Notes/Post Its: 2 Colors
- Optional:
- Butcher Paper, One Roll
- Tape
- A/V Equipment for Slides and Music

Note: Participants should also have access to their own journals and writing utensils for notes.

## Sources/Resources

Film Links:

- [Targeted Universalism](#)
- [john a. powell on Targeted Universalism](#)

Related Frames and Tools:

- [Understanding Target and Non-Target Status --- A Tool for Self-Reflection and Change](#)
- [Frames for Life Liberation and Belonging](#)

Academic Research:

- [Population Health: Determinants, Outcomes, Inequities and Role Targeted Universalism](#)
- [Positionality at the Center](#)
- [Is Reconciliation Possible?](#)

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## Guiding Inquiries

A core question this film seeks to answer is:

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

Throughout this module, we will also ask ourselves:

- What is possible or desirable in determining shared universal goals?
- What are the values of approaching universal goals through targeted responses?
- In what ways might positionality and unconscious bias or “situatedness” be considered in developing measurements and implementing policy change?

## Overview

**The origin of the word “target” is also “shield” or “protection”. Universalism is a spiritual concept drawn from the ideas and practices of humanitarian redemption or restitution. Together we will explore the concept of Targeted Universalism and what it means to “measure”, “understand” and “implement” change by examining positionality, intersectionality, and power, or our own “situatedness”... and operationalizing equity as it relates to the processes of research and policy towards achieving Universal Goals.**

*“The challenge of othering and belonging is the challenge of our time. Putting these ambitious changes on the agenda for equity advocates cannot be more critical.*

*Targeted Universalism is a much-needed framework for putting belonging into practice—for grounding the idea of what structural belonging and inclusion can look like in its most robust and radical sense.*

*We have seen a strong turn for social justice organizations to orient around equity, structural change, and new narratives or storytelling. This language represents an important insight. The potential of employing these critical ingredients is muted if our practices and strategies fail to pursue a rich understanding of equity and the diversity of people who will benefit from its realization.*

*Targeted universalism is a method to design efforts to make transformative or transactional changes. Most importantly, it encompasses a process that can make sure that all changes—big or small—are aligned to create the world we urgently need.*

*In its name, targeted universalism signals flawed policies that are either targeted policies or universal policies. Targeted universalism addresses the weaknesses and strengths of these two types of policies. In so doing, targeted universalism is conceptually and operationally different—it is not simply an amalgamation of each type.*

*Neither universal or targeted approaches are able to accomplish swift, lasting, and largescale, transformative change. We refer to targeted universalism as equity 2.0 because the framework puts equity into practice while bringing to*

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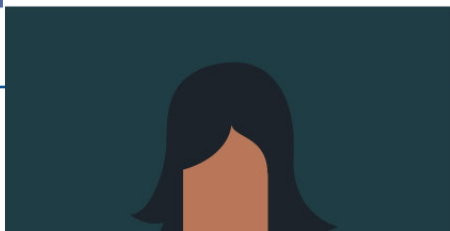
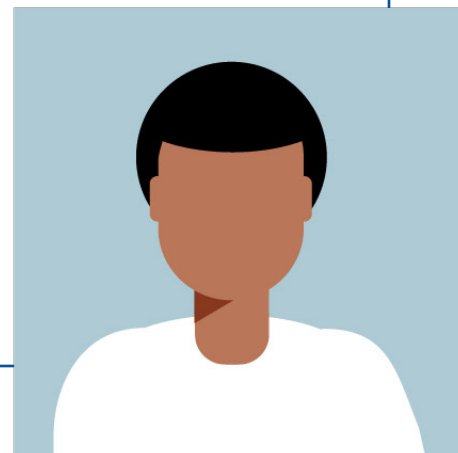
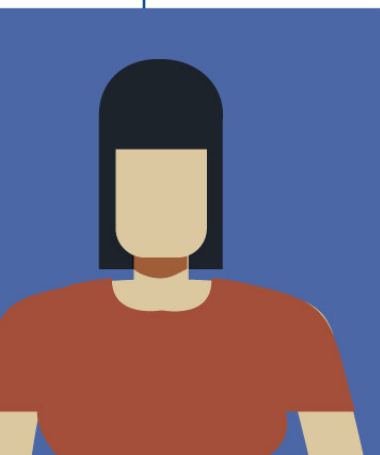
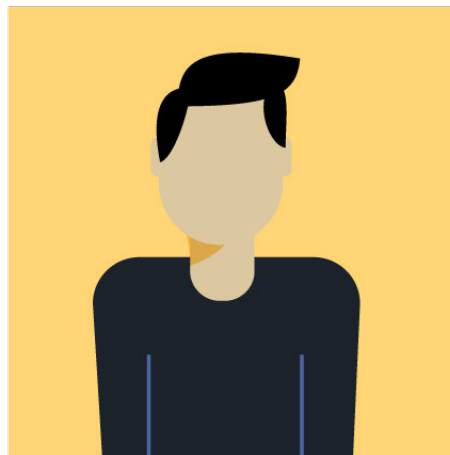
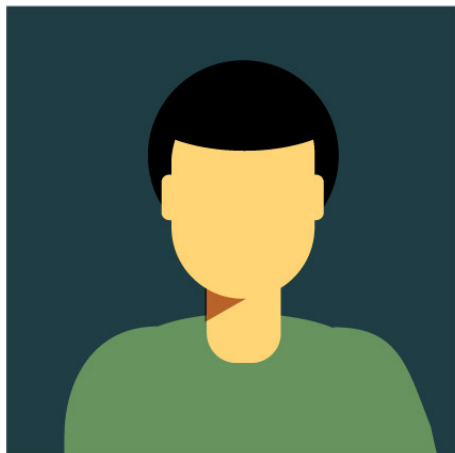
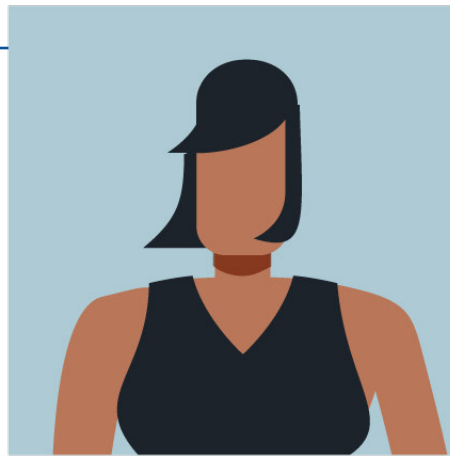
*fruition the full potential of focusing on equity over equality—one of many critical distinctions necessary to respond to the diverse forms of othering that we have to dismantle.”*

-Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society

# Targeted Universalism:

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Lesson Plan



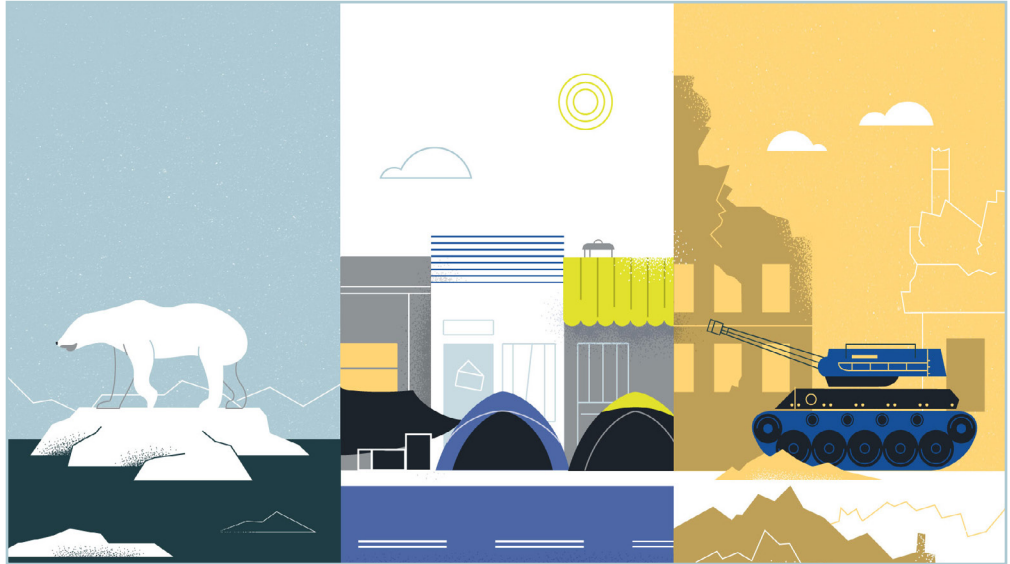
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**“Telling a story where everyone is in the story.”**  
-john a. powell

**1. Welcome & Film**  
5 minutes

**Welcome, Mindfulness and Land Acknowledgment**  
(See Activity Guide for more description of these activities.)

Watch [Targeted Universalism](#) Film (5 min)



Welcome from Facilitator, who Invites whole group to gather 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 (a few deep breaths as a group will do). 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. Community Building**  
10 minutes

*Round One:* Each participant is invited to share their name and a gesture, to which the other participants respond by repeating and mirroring back as whole-body “call and response”.

*Round Two:* Share an issue you care about with a gesture you associate with that issue. As with the previous round, whole group repeats and mirrors as whole-body call and response. Facilitator scribes issues on butcher paper on floor in center of circle, or on whiteboard or chart paper.

**3. Universal Goal**  
5 minutes

*Share the following question and quote, and invite two participants to read this guiding inquiry aloud (twice for increased comprehension and retention):*

When creating policy, how can we define Universal Goals that account for distinct targeted areas or groups?



You might say something like:

*“Universal Goals are goals whose values can be shared and inclusive of us all in the circle of human concern. As a group exercise, identify one Universal Goal to work with for the workshop time, determined as a sample from all of the important issues cared for as whole group: i.e. climate change, ending poverty, changing health outcomes, healing racism...”*

For example, if health is a goal, it can be framed as a Universal Goal by exploring shared outcomes in the following way:

“While we look at health inequities and the social determinants of health, our goal is improving the health of the entire population, not just achieving equity for disenfranchised groups who may live in disenfranchised areas. The future of Detroit is linked to the future of Southeast Michigan, the future of our individual communities is linked to the future of the U.S., and the future of the U.S. is linked to the future of the world.” -john a. powell

You may choose to select a Universal Goal repeated by the most people or a Universal Goal related to the organization or an existing assignment.

Ask participants to be seated.

*Facilitators’ note: Community building and Universal Goal setting is an excellent time to do assessment or “read the room” which will be explored further. Facilitator may also chose to invoke Speaking Order. (See Activity Guide for instructions on Speaking Order).*

Write the selected Universal Goal at the center of a spiral shape at least 2’ but ideally 3’ round on large chart or butcher paper.

#### 4. Viewing of Films

10 minutes

- Invite participants again to view the film with the selected Universal Goal in mind, with notation in journal of their choice or [Codex \(Accordion Journal Instructions\)](#)
- After the film, ask:

**What happens when our measures, understandings, and implementation of policy account for our “situatedness,” or our different places in society enforced by structures and systems?**

- Invite participants to write this question in their journals and contemplate while viewing short film of john a. powell speaking to Targeted Universalism:
  - “Where am I situated?”

10 minutes

**Where am I situated? Situatedness Assessment: Targets and Shields.**



*Facilitator says something like:*

“In your journals, take a moment to self identify where you are in relationship to the chosen Universal Goal, or your own situatedness. This could take the form of writing or drawing.”

*The origin of the word “target” is also “shield” or “protection”.*

In what ways have you been a target of the social problem the Universal Goal will address? Where and/or how have you been personally shielded from the more harmful aspects of this issue by your situatedness?”

**Write for 5 minutes.**

## 5. Theatre Game 20 minutes

### **Partner Improv: Our Stories in Gibberish**

**“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”**

*Invite participants to find a partner to work with.*

### **Improv: The Shape of Our Stories**

**2 min-Tell a story (one you are comfortable sharing) of a time you have been targeted or shielded around issues surrounding the Universal Goal. Use ONLY gestures, drawings, or even humming but NO spoken words in any language (also no approximation or mimicry of any language, human or animal, which could inadvertently feel disrespectful or cause harm).**

**1 min- Share a spoken interpretation of your partner’s story back to them, including any gestures or sounds that were clues.**

**2 min- “Storyteller” names which aspects of the interpretation were true and which were misinterpreted or incorrect.**

Switch

Discuss in pairs:

- What details did you each know and what did you have to guess?
- How did you come to understand that which you could not measure with words?
- What assumptions were incorrect?

Whole Group Discussion:

Invite two participants to read aloud, so that inquiry is read twice:

- “How might our measures and interpretations, our “situatedness” bias our understanding of one another’s realities and stories?
- How can we seek to understand that which is unfamiliar to us in ways that are inclusive and increase our sense of belonging?”



Discuss for 5 minutes taking 3-4 reflections from group.

## 6. Six Word Stories

15 minutes



### The Race Card

Michelle Norris founded and produced the Race Card Project, which encourages people to condense their observations and experiences about race into one sentence with just six words.

*You might say something like:*

“Using The Race Card Project as inspiration, on a colored sticky note, write a six word story of a time that describes your needs that would need to be addressed in order for you to partake in the Universal Goal. These needs should take into account your situatedness. When done, place your sticky note in the spiral. The closer to the center you place it, the closer you see yourself to partaking in the Universal Goal.”

Invite the participants to read their six-word stories aloud, starting with those closest to the Universal Goal or center of spiral. Invite participants to adjust sticky note further or closer based on hearing one another’s stories if they like.

Invite the whole group to write on a second sticky note in one or two words the structures and systems that need to be transformed in order to design policies of targeted universalism that can move everyone closer to the Universal Goal. Place these sticky notes on the spiral and lead them out loud. *i.e. wealth gap, mass incarceration, sexism, capitalism, etc.*

## 7. Wisdom-Based Policymaking

10 minutes

### Closing Inquiries:

In small table groups, discuss the following provocation:

**What strengths and wisdom does the community hold and what protections, bridges and structures are needed to support all towards achieving the Universal Goal?**

- Policies of Belonging are done BY or WITH, not FOR, TO or AT the communities most impacted by systemic targeting.
- Ask each small group member to name one wisdom or insight they bring to implementing needed policy change towards a Universal Goal that recognizes their unique situatedness.

## 8. Closing Circle

5 minutes

### Whole Group Circle

To close, have each person name for the whole group:

- One word or phrase of a structural change needed and
- One strength or wisdom you personally bring to the Universal Goal

Invite folks to use this newly declared foundational community wisdom in answering film's initial inquiry:

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

Closing Quote:

“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.”  
*-haas institute for a fair and inclusive society*

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## Activity Guide

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## Welcome and Opening Activities

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### 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

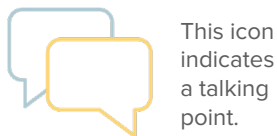
Play music as participants arrive and get settled. Some suggestions for songs: We Are-Sweet Honey and the Rock, Pata Pata-Miriam Makeba, People Everyday, Two Hearts-Valerie June, Waiting in Vain- Bob Marley, Can I Kick It-A Tribe Called Quest, I Am That I Am-Peter Tosh.

### 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.



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

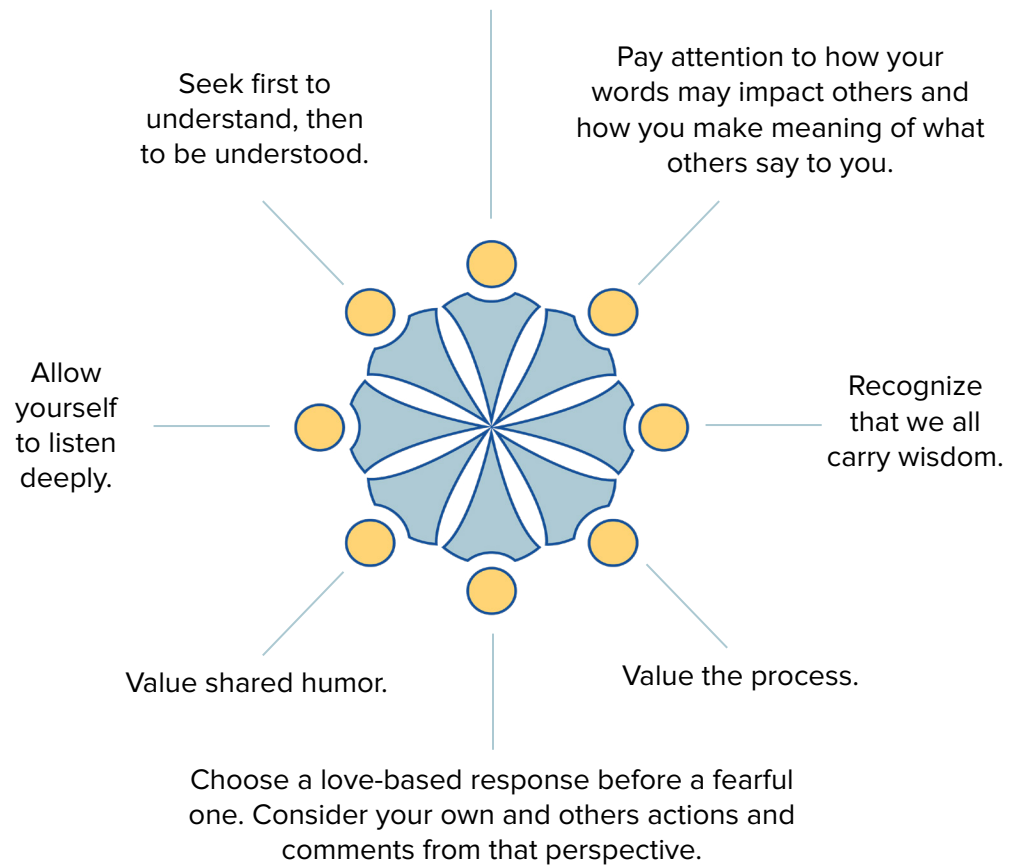


You might say something like... *“Conocimiento was used and highlighted during the Farm Workers’ Movement in California to bring people together in community to understand and leverage each others’ strengths.”*

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](#)