UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

A spotlight on...
Inclusive curriculum
Centre for Innovation in Education

Overview

An inclusive curriculum ensures that all students, including those with protected characteristics, have equal opportunity to participate and succeed at every stage (AdvanceHE, n.d.).

Benefits

No student should face discrimination in education. The University is committed to inclusion, diversity, and social justice, and has an anticipatory duty to ensure disabled students are not disadvantaged.

Equality legislation protects characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Equality Act 2010).

Attainment gaps need addressing for the TEF (OfS, 2018). Consider also: low socio-economic background, widening participation, commuters, carers, those working/studying part-time.

Putting it into practice

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2019)
Designing for inclusion often provides **universal benefits:**

• Broad-based support for all students (anticipatory)
• Improved student understanding of learning/working alongside people who do not share their characteristics/ culture: valuing difference.

Remove barriers: fair access and support (QAA, 2018)

• How is our educational offer equally attractive to students whatever their disability, gender, sexuality, socio-economic or ethnic background?

• Is there adequate provision for part-time or distance learners? (more likely to be disabled, in work, carers or parents) (CFE Research/HESA, 2019).

• How are we ensuring all students are offered parity of experience and empowered to achieve parity of attainment?

• How are academic expectations, requirements, values and customs of the UK HE system made clear to students? How will they understand their role?

• What anticipatory support measures are in place? (e.g. relating to teaching and learning, assessment, feedback, attainment, accessibility, integration). Are these universally designed to avoid stigma?

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Include, welcome, address privilege, foster belonging

Invite your students to recognise, discuss and address privilege within your discipline, opening up additional perspectives and fostering equality (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011). This improves relevance and aids belonging, important for engagement/progression/the attainment gap (UUK/NUS, 2019).

• How will students encounter theories/ideas/data/artefacts created by, or relating to, people with their characteristics? Are examples balanced? (positive and negative).

• Are students' lived experiences valued and incorporated within learning activities and assessment?

• How are you addressing barriers to participation in events, excursions, projects, and placements? (e.g. cost, timing, location, facilities, customs) (Talbot, 2004).

• How will you integrate different groups within/outwith the classroom environment, and ensure all students feel included/have parity of experience?

Learning materials and learning activities

Multiple formats/diverse ways to engage remove barriers and support student action/expression (CAST, 2019). By law, from 9/19 all new digital material must be accessible (all by 9/20) including resources in VITAL/webpages.

• Can all students access your learning materials and participate in learning environments/activities with parity of experience?

• Can all students share opinions safely? (Talbot, 2004). Polling software/post-its/online discussion forums may assist those unable/unwilling to speak.

• Are class times/office hours inclusive? (e.g. religious practices, commuters, carers).

• Have you structured collaborative activities (e.g. group work) to support inclusion?

Other supportive practices may include: digital formats and online activities (support choice, e.g. text to speech, asynchronous learning), discussing accessible resource legislation with students, structuring learning with breaks where possible (cognitive load).

Learning outcomes and assessment

Inclusive learning and assessment offers student choice where possible via open-topic elements and choice of format, resulting in fewer reasonable adjustments (JISC, 2016).

Are you assessing abilities or disabilities? Make learning outcomes and marking criteria extremely clear (e.g. use rubrics identifying mark-bearing elements) and remove barriers when designing assessments (e.g. allow submission via presentation, report, or poster).

Barriers may relate to: format, method, location, time, activity-type, relevance, cultural knowledge, experience. How might someone work around a barrier (e.g. inability to speak) in real life?

• No curriculum is set in stone – regulatory bodies may be open to suggestions for positive change.

• Try to think programme-wide: What, when, and how are you assessing? What is the impact on your students? (e.g. assessment bunching, insufficient preparation time, and methods of assessment can adversely affect accessibility/mental health).

• How can you use formative assessment to support student skill development/provide safe practice opportunities?

Additional resources & references

For support, more detailed advice or if you need this resource in an alternative format, please contact us at: cie@liverpool.ac.uk

https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/centre-for-innovation-in-education/resources/all-resources/inclusive-curriculum.html

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