

GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Why inclusive learning and teaching?

Higher Education is more diverse than it has ever been. We know that different groups of students have different rates of completion and attainment. We need to make sure that the learning, teaching and assessment at Oxford Brookes does not disadvantage any groups of students and allows all students to reach their potential.

What do we mean by inclusive?

With a greater emphasis today on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) we should revisit our teaching and engage with the learning needs of all students by adopting inclusive pedagogies. By inclusive we mean valuing the contribution of students regardless of their backgrounds and appreciating the contributions of different value systems. Inclusive learning and teaching benefits all students by drawing on the strengths of students from different backgrounds. It is not about providing 'remedial' or 'special' measures for certain groups of students.

Benefits of inclusive teaching:

- You can connect with and engage with a variety of students.
- Students connect with course materials that are relevant to them.
- Students feel comfortable in the classroom environment to voice their ideas/thoughts/questions.
- Students are more likely to experience success in your course through activities that support their learning, abilities, and backgrounds.

Inclusive Assessment:

"Inclusive assessment offers flexibility of assessment choice; a range of tried and tested methods for assessing competence in a rigorous and reliable way, built into course design and subject to student and staff evaluation. Student preferences for assessment modes, based upon their own perceived strengths and weaknesses, form a key component of making assessment inclusive.

Research shows that inclusive assessment achieves higher levels of student satisfaction, provides increased opportunities for discussion and leads to improvements in student marks and grades. For staff, inclusive assessment removes the need for individual modified assessment provisions, reduces the reliance upon alternative assessments, better reflects the achievements of the diverse student population and can make modules more interesting to teach." (Waterfield & West n.d)

Tips for inclusive teaching – group work

- Provide learning opportunities which require all students to participate (e.g. group activities where each person has a specific role; structured discussions in which each person has a turn to speak etc.) to reduce the potential for discussion to be dominated by an individual or a specific group of students.
- Allocate students to groups, rather than allowing them to self select on all occasions, in order to provide a more diverse learning context.

Did you know?

Nationally and at Oxford Brookes, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students are less likely to complete their degree and are less likely to get a first or a 2.1.

Reflection: How can you adapt your curriculum to be more culturally inclusive?

For more info: If you are interested in developing your learning and teaching in this area contact Neil Currant, ncurrant@brookes.ac.uk in OCSLD.

Student quote:

“We were told to do a poster about someone who inspires you ... and all us African students chose to do a black person, I mean you want to do a piece of work that you’re actually happy about, if you tell me I talk about Simon Cowell, he doesn’t inspire me in any way, the Queen doesn’t inspire in any way, I cannot relate to her.”

Brookes undergraduate

Reflections: How can you modify your assessment to motivate and make them relevant to students?



Tips for inclusive teaching – curriculum

- Draw on the experiences and expertise of international students where possible by including course content which refers to contexts outside the UK.

Tips for inclusive teaching – the first year

- Engage in a discussion with students at the start of the year about expectations of the role of the tutor and learner.
- Assist transition from school to university by providing more explicit guidance on autonomous learning (why it is important and how much time commitment might be expected to be successful).
- Be explicit about the need for criticality and analytical thinking, and explain clearly to students what this means in practice.
- Consider setting up a peer mentoring scheme to assist with transition for all students



Did you know?

The number of disabled students has been steadily increasing year on year from 5.4% of all students in 2004 to 8.6% in 2012. That's an extra 100,000 disabled students studying at UK universities.

Reflection: With nearly 10% of all students having some form of disability, it is safe to assume that at least one person in our classes is disabled. However, they don't have to declare it and it may be a 'hidden' disability. So do you make sure your teaching and assessment is accessible to all students?

For more info: contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service at the university.

Quick quiz

Which group of students has the best attainment?

- Disabled students
- Mature students
- Female students

Reflection: Did you know you can use APTT to check this. What is the answer in your course? What might you do to improve the attainment of the other groups?

Quick Quiz Answer

- Female students.

Female students outperform their male colleagues. Disabled students and mature students are less likely to get a good degree than non-disabled students and younger students.

Student quote:

"Lecturers will give examples and likely may not have African illustrations of business concepts... I'm always allowed to speak and give my examples."

Brookes postgraduate

Reflections: Do you use culturally specific examples in your teaching? How might your examples be more inclusive? How can you take advantage of the students' own experiences in your class?



Tips for inclusive teaching – supporting students

- Enable students to undertake self-assessment of their own skills (possibly through an online resource, or with academic advisors) with links to appropriate support services for those who need further guidance. (We are currently using an academic skills audit in FHLS & FTDE, contact Neil Currant for more information, ncurrant@brookes.ac.uk).
- Create an environment that encourages non-traditional students to ask for support outside of the classroom (there is some evidence to suggest that overseas students prefer email contact and one-to-one support).

Tips for inclusive teaching – teaching

- Encourage students to ask questions in lectures, or use electronic voting equipment to check students' understanding, as they may be afraid to ask even if unsure.



Tips for inclusive teaching – assessment

- Consider using more diverse modes of assessment which draw on other skills aside from the written word (e.g. practicals, presentations, posters).
- Demonstrate what a 'good assignment' looks like, and explain what its key features are.
- Build up the level of writing in assignments gradually, in order to 'scaffold' development of writing abilities in the discipline.
- Provide feedback on student writing at an early stage of the programme and signpost students to available support for assignment writing and English language (including Oxford Brookes International and Upgrade).

Did you know?

The university has an agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) which sets targets for retention, completion, attainment and a number of other factors for seven groups of students. One of the groups we monitor are students who are the first person in their family to go to university.

Reflection: Why might this impact on a student at the university? What do you do on your course to support the transition in higher education?

For more info: Yorke & Longden (2008) *The First-Year Experience of Higher Education in the UK*. HEA: York

For more help and ideas for making your teaching or your curriculum more inclusive contact OCSLD, ocsld@brookes.ac.uk or your OCSLD faculty link developer.



References:

The tips for inclusive teaching were drawn from Cotton, D., George, R. & Joyner, M. (2013) *The Gender and Ethnicity Attainment Gap Research Report*, PedRIO: Plymouth

Other sources that inspired the content of this booklet include:

Cornell University (2013) *Inclusive Teaching Strategies*, Center for Teaching Excellence [online] available at: www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/inclusive-teaching-strategies.html

Waterfield & West (n.d.) *Inclusive Assessment* HEA; York [online] available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/subjects/psychology/Inclusive_Assessment

University of Plymouth (n.d.) *7 Steps to Adopting Culturally Inclusive Teaching Practices* Teaching and Learning Directorate: Plymouth [online] available at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/files/extranet/docs/DoTLE/7%20steps%20to%20Adopting....pdf