

Inclusive teaching: introduction to the collection

(Collection 6 of 7)

Overview

'Inclusive teaching' is teaching that is as helpful as possible to the widest possible range of students. The activities in this collection will help lecturers to take on board both some key elements of 'good practice' in inclusive teaching and the rationale behind them. Activities focused on the experiences of individual students (Imaginary students; Students, comments, conditions; Student voices) are complemented by activities examining recommendations for inclusive teaching (Inclusive lectures; Inclusive seminars) and for the preparation of inclusive teaching materials (Inaccessible documents). There is also an activity allowing lecturers to reflect individually on the policies and practices of their own department from an 'inclusive teaching' point of view (Departmental audit).

Inclusive teaching is teaching that works well for students with different physical and psychological conditions, different skills, enthusiasms and cultural backgrounds, different 'learning styles' and worldviews. It sounds like an obvious ideal to aim for, like the proverbial motherhood and apple pie. But teaching at HE level – even very good teaching – has not always been inclusive. Often in the past, lecturers designed their courses with a particular type of student in mind (if only implicitly): able-bodied, aged 18-21, culturally predisposed to take university study seriously and au fait with middle class western culture. This model is now unsustainable, and not just for obvious ethical reasons: any failure of teaching practice to keep pace with the increasing diversity of the student population could fall foul of legal safeguards now in place (consolidated in the 2010 Equality Act) for a wide range of 'nontraditional' students.



Echoing much other recent research, a recent report by the English Subject Centre on the experience of disabled students, 'Staying the Course', found that many of the issues identified by disabled students as particularly trying for them were not disability-specific, but, rather, problems that could be circumvented by small changes in teaching practice that would in fact benefit the vast majority of students. Disability legislation requires institutions to make 'reasonable adjustments' to teaching practice where current practice puts a disabled student at a considerable disadvantage. 'Staying the Course' showed that many such adjustments would be unnecessary if English departments taught more 'inclusively' in the first place. The care our discipline expends on attending to voices on the margin has not always extended into the classroom, as Robert Eaglestone points out in the Foreword to 'Staying the Course':

'English has been open to philosophical and ideological changes, but sometimes has been resistant to more practical and pedagogic ones: while the curriculum and content of the discipline has shifted, the mechanics of teaching – assessment, writing, marking, lecturing, e-learning – have often remained unexamined.'

Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 4:** The use of appropriate learning technologies
- **Professional Values 1:** Respect for individual learners
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>.

Individual & Group Activities

In this, as in other Pool collections, some activities are primarily designed for use by individual lecturers. Others are designed for use in groups: for example in departmental



development workshops, or in the context of Certificates of Academic Practice and the like. We hope that both individual teachers and course leaders will adapt resources and activities in ways that suit their own circumstances. Where we have not made a clear distinction between group and individual activity that is because we think that readers will prefer to make their own decisions about how best to adapt the item to their own purposes.

Resources in the inclusive teaching Collection

- **Inclusive teaching: introduction to the collection**
- Imaginary students: resource overview
 - Imaginary students: individual activity
 - Imaginary students: group activity
- Inclusive lectures: resource overview
 - Making lectures inclusive: individual activity
 - Making lectures inclusive: group activity
- Inclusive seminars: resource overview
 - Making seminars inclusive: individual activity
 - Making seminars inclusive: group activity
- Inaccessible documents: resource overview
 - Making 'PowerPoint' more accessible: individual activity
 - Making 'PowerPoint' more accessible: group activity
 - Making 'Word' documents accessible: individual activity
 - Making 'Word' documents accessible: group activity
- Students, comments, conditions: resource overview
 - Inclusive teaching quiz: individual activity
 - Inclusive teaching card sort: group activity
- Departmental audit: resource overview
 - How inclusive is your department?: individual activity

