*Include*All - Inclusive by Design: General teaching sessions

Getting it right from the start

When planning and designing your award, module or individual session there are a number of questions it is useful to consider - Do your learning outcomes enable students with a variety of needs to succeed? How, for example, can someone whose learning style better suits them to activity-based tasks, succeed on your module? Can you plan in a range of learning experiences so as to meet different needs? Do you need students to either 'understand' or 'demonstrate competence in' a certain skill and how do these relate to the Staffordshire Graduate attributes?

What are the core requirements of this module/course? What aspects of how the module course is designed, delivered and assessed might prevent some students from achieving these core requirements? Can these be redesigned to reduce or remove these potential barriers, not just for our current students in anticipation of those who might participate in the future?

In planning your teaching sessions, you will also need to consider the extent to which you are expecting your students to build on existing knowledge or experience. Is there a pre-requisite for existing knowledge and/or experience? How, for example, do you make sure that a mature student following a non-traditional route into your award can use their experience as much as other students' A-level knowledge? If some pre-requisite knowledge of skills are critical for student success on your module, how can make sure all students can access help to gain this?

Inclusive practice can be considered:

- In advance – learning outcomes and content; accessibility of venue and materials

- During – delivery style

- After – accessibility of follow up material and sources; management of discussion forums and so on; reviewing how the session went and what changes could be made for next time.

What our students say
'The teaching is fantastic; the content has engaged me and I feel inspired.'
(Level 4 Film & Media Production)

What our students say
'The fact that we can choose completely different modules and different course to potentially design our own degrees is great.'
(Level 6 Sports Development & Coaching)

Analysing your teaching sessions

In planning your teaching sessions, what proportion of the time will be spent on students listening as opposed to engaging in activities or group-work? Which of your students might this help or disadvantage? Who spoke up and who did not? How can those who did not contribute this time be encouraged to do so? How does your approach to teaching help all your students meet the module outcomes? What could you change?

Remember students often turn to friends for clarification about language, terminology or what is on the screen. They may ask friends for help rather than asking for a change in practice or contacting disability support. Students often do not want to make a fuss, so you may need to be proactive.

What students say:
'I don't like to go up to a lecturer and tell them I am deaf because I am a bit shy. I don't know them; I don't want to be treated differently; I don't want to be treated differently; I don't want to have a lot of attention focused on me and in any case I don't know what difference if would really make anyway '
(Student with hearing loss, Nicholson 2008)

Building academic skills

As curriculum and pedagogy moves away from transmission learning and testing to independent learning and critical analysis, it is recognised that most students, not just those from other educational cultures, need a structure and more formal way of developing higher level academic skills. Students start their courses with a wide variety of previous educational experience and structuring development of such skills as critical analysis helps ensure all students get the same start. Some students will need a clear lead that it is important to challenge what is said, criticise and debate published research. Some international students for instance might feel this is rude or inappropriate (see Working across cultural and linguistic boundaries).

Most students will need to learn to express themselves using an academic style of writing as they progress as undergraduates, learning to manipulate different syntax and grammar; growing their vocabulary to express concepts; learning to question, analyse and problem solve. Lower self-esteem, for example some students with dyslexia, or low perception of academic ability, for example some mature students, hampers learning, so these students may need more support as they build their skills.

Some students may need guidance on taking notes – whether linear or mind mapped - how, what and when. Students sometimes also have difficulties in coping

with different lecturers having different expectations of what notes are for and how crucial they are.

Managing behaviour

Creating a professional environment free from discrimination and harassment is part of inclusive practice. Students should feel safe, welcomed and their opinions respected and valued. For Thomas and May (2010, p12), classroom climate and the 'ways in which power is exercised and dynamics are managed' is very important, as is the balance of opportunities to voice differences of opinion or perspectives whilst remaining appropriate.

Establishing ground rules right at the beginning can help provide this environment. These can be decided by the students themselves:

- When is a student late? And what happens? Be aware that some cultures have different expectations around time – you might expect a 9am start to be just that whereas some international students might interpret this as 9.15ish.

- What are the rules about mobile and internet use? Students might be following up relevant links or contributing to discussions online.

- What about chatting to friends? Students might be seeking clarification of language or meaning.

Discussions may highlight cliques or dominant personalities which need to be managed. You may need to develop techniques to challenge inappropriate language and behaviour perhaps in relation to mental health, sexism, racism homophobia or transphobia. Sometimes a quiet word with the perpetrator solves the issue, but try not to punish the victim by isolating them or leaving them feeling they cannot attend.

Occasionally more serious incidents occur such as bullying, verbal harassment or even physical violence. There are policies and procedures in place including the *Behaviour and Fitness to Study Policy* which outline what to do if an incident occurs.

What does an inclusive lecture look like?

- Venue – most lecture theatres and large teaching rooms are accessible, but some students might need additional furniture such as a chair with a back-rest or a small table at the front of a lecture theatre; notetakers or personal assistants may need to be accommodated; you as a lecturer may

What students say*:*
'I'd like it that all lecturers use a microphone so everyone can hear easily'.
 (Student with hearing loss, ECU Sensory Access in HE, 2009)

need a particular environment due to a disability.

- Consideration of the timing of lectures to take account of school drop-off or finish.

- Signers or interpreters for hearing impaired students need regular breaks.

- If there is a mic use it – those who are hearing impaired will need it or may be using the associated induction loop; if there are questions use a roving mic or repeat the question so all can hear before answering.

- A paced delivery that allows for notetaking or translation.

- Pause for clarification or breaks to review material, react or question.

- Linkage from the previous session or to the course.

- Recap of the main points.

- Link to next session.

- Ensure good practice around the use of presentation software (see Inclusive by Design: PowerPoint and Prezi).

- If writing on a flipchart/white board/smart board stop talking when your back is to the group.

- Describe demonstrations.

- Use clear, clean language that avoids metaphors; explain jargon and use a glossary for technical terms

- Recording of general lectures should be allowed for a student's own use. It is common practice in some universities now to routinely record main lectures to go on the learning platform.

- Finish on time to allow everyone to get to their next session.

- With large numbers catering for unknown individual adjustments is very difficult, so anticipation is the key.

What does an inclusive seminar/tutorial look like?

This of course is very similar to that of an inclusive lecture, but with smaller numbers it is easier to get to know student's individual needs, and ways of working, and to check things are going alright.

IT suites should be accessible and with relevant software but a student might have specialist

What our students say
'We get the chance to explore things in our own way.'
(Level 4 Film & Media Production)

assistive software on their own laptop

Sometimes it can be very difficult to match all the different requirements and take time to get things right. The first session might be spent sorting out the environment as well as setting expectations and getting to know everyone. This however is important to help students settle in and start making friends as well as feeling positive about their learning.

Innovation in teaching

Lecturers are encouraged to use technology in learning, teaching and assessment and there is plenty of support available to try innovative methods. In many cases technology can improve accessibility and enable students to engage more effectively.

- Support for Technology Enhanced Learning is available from the Academic Development Unit and Information Services –

    www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/adu/tel/index.jsp

One of the newer developments to help all students feel included is to use a 'flipped classroom' technique. This puts the onus on them coming to the class prepared for the learning activity which is being planned. To learn more about this technique, please follow the link below:

http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/programs/teaching_insights/pdf/insight9_flipped_classrooms.pdf

Further hints, tips and background reading

- Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (eds) (2005) *Teaching International Students.* Abingdon: Routledge.

- Mortiboys, A. (2010) *How to Become an Effective Teacher in Higher Education: Answers to Lecturers Questions*. Milton Keynes: OUP.

- National Union of Students (2012). *Liberation, Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum*. London: NUS.

- Thomas, L. and May, H. (2010). *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Checklist for reflection: General teaching

Do I:

Take a coherent approach which is anticipatory and proactive?	
Provide an environment for effective learning for all?	
Ensure materials are accessible and representative and where relevant, challenging?	
Need to make any other adjustments to my communication methods?	
Do I need any extra equipment, furniture this time? Different tools? Rooms?	
Does everyone know how to get extra help?	
Know how to use a variety of new technologies to enhance inclusive practice?	

Reflection into action

Having reflected on the above, my key priorities for making my teaching more inclusive are:

Changes to be introduced	By when	Indicators that it has made my practice more inclusive

This document is part of an inclusive practice 'toolkit' - *Include***All**. The whole Toolkit, as one complete document or as separate documents, can be found on the University website at www.staffs.ac.uk/inclusivepractice .

It is split into four sections: Core Concepts; Inclusive by Design; Enhancing Practice; Checklists for Self-reflection.

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