How Might We:

Ensure that students feel seen, respected, and valued?

Contents

Overview

Introduction

Each individual student deserves to feel seen and respected, and this is crucial to belonging and student success. To help achieve this, we need to:

- **Decolonise our curriculum** to understand, acknowledge and challenge the sources of our knowledge and develop our learning and teaching to rebalance such educational inequalities.

- Surface the **hidden elements of the curriculum** by avoiding assumptions of our students' prior knowledge and backgrounds, and their familiarity with the higher education environment.

- Ensure that our **teaching is inclusive** by changing practices that risk putting some students at a disadvantage.

- Enable students to build rich, inclusive **learning communities**.

- Provide our students with the knowledge and skills they need to have a **positive impact in the world** and to contribute solutions in our local community, and globally in an equitable and just way. This includes considering how sustainability is embedded in the curriculum, recognising the **UN (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goals** and the interdependence of environmental integrity, social justice, equality, and economic prosperity across these.

Each of these aspects are interrelated and are supported through a range of projects and initiatives, with accompanying resources. They link to the following University strategies:

1. **University Strategy 2020–2030**
2. **Student Education Strategy 2020 to 2030**
3. **Access and Student Success Strategy 2025**
4. **University of Leeds Library Vision**
5. **University of Leeds Climate Plan**

Student Voice

**Our approach is informed by what
our students tell us**

> **[I feel I belong] when working in the foyer of my school, where I have been able to engage in small talk with tutors who remember me and want to have a chat...**

> **[I] have had experience where I literally understood nothing due to the fast paced nature of teaching but also some very positive experience with patient and clear teaching.**

> **I have had the first-hand experience of not seeing myself reflected in the curriculum...It has meant that academic work has appeared inaccessible to me.**

> **"I have become more conscious and concerned about global environmental and social issues, as well as our role as citizens in this matter"**

How might we...

Inclusive practice for programme and module development

Practitioner reflective prompts

Designing inclusive practices into your modules and programmes increases the opportunities for your students to feel seen, valued, and respected. This will facilitate a sense of belonging and contribute to student success.

Consider the module or programme you are currently developing. In discussion with your team and peers, ask yourself the questions below. We do not expect you to be able to answer all these questions but discussing them will allow you to review the progress you have made in relation to embedding inclusive practices and to identify areas that require further work.

In preparing your programmes and modules:

1. Do we encourage students to co-create reading lists and suggest items they have read (including on social media, blogs, tv and cinema)?

2. How can we incorporate community building initiatives, which foster a sense of belonging among students, into our modules? For example, group or project work that enables meaningful connections through shared production.

3. How can we embed interaction with the Leeds community in our teaching through placements or other learning opportunities?

4. How do we ensure our learning and teaching materials are physically, digitally, and linguistically accessible to our students?

5. How do we ensure students have a clear and consistent experience of finding learning resources and information in Minerva across the programme?

6. How can the module summary and content be linked explicitly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

7. Are our student feedback mechanisms sensitive enough to capture views of students who may feel excluded from an element of their learning experience?

In the teaching/learning space:

1. How do we know that we have clearly explained what is expected of our students and not assumed that they already possess language, skills and knowledge which are necessary to be successful?

2. How do we enable students to prepare for taught or discursive sessions at their own pace, and in advance?

3. Can we find ways to develop our students' reflexive thinking and writing, to help us understand and respect each other better? What opportunities do we, and can we, give to students to tell their stories?

4. How do we engage students in questioning the dominant culture and exploring beyond it?

5. Where modules involve discussion groups, how can students be assigned to multiple groups to widen their peer-to-peer connections?

6. How can we design teaching in a way that recognises students may have days when they cannot attend, due to a variety of circumstances, but will still want to engage with the content?

7. How do we ensure all students are able to revisit content in their own time, to support their learning?

In designing and carrying out assessment

1. How can we incorporate student-led assessment design or choice?

2. How do we recognise and reward students for engaging with inclusive pedagogies in assessment criteria and feedback?

3. How does assessment design clearly link to the learning outcomes? How have we made sure only things that are taught are assessed?

Developing our practices: the bigger picture

1. Are our curricular practices dominated by Eurocentric voices? Do we draw on 'non-western' and 'non-white' forms of knowledge in our teaching?

2. How willing are we to reflect on the educational practices that need to change? How willing are we to fight to change them? Do we recognise the microaggressions of higher education in our practices and how do we challenge these?

More Information

Belonging & Hidden Curriculum

- **Belonging at Leeds resources** - designed to help staff develop a shared understanding of how to approach this. It includes a toolkit, case studies and background literature

- **The Student's Guide to the Hidden Curriculum** is a practical, student-facing resource aimed at new students starting university

Decolonising

- **Decolonising Resources at University of Leeds** - provides key principles of decolonisation, a reading list, how-to guides, and numerous other resources to support staff in embedding this into their teaching.

Sustainability

- **Leeds Sustainable Curriculum website** - provides information on the Leeds Sustainable Curriculum programme and external resources to support embedding sustainability into the curriculum (additional resources to be added here as the Sustainable Curriculum programme develops).

- **QAA Education for Sustainable Development** provides a framework for embedding sustainable knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

- **AdvanceHE Sustainable Development Toolkit** is a toolkit for introducing the QAA Education for Sustainable Development framework.

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** is a global framework to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. There are 17 goals, each addressing global challenges such as poverty, climate change, peace, and justice, which are all interconnected.

Inclusive Learning and Teaching

- **Inclusive Teaching Resources at University of Leeds** - guides covering module and programme design, all aspects of teaching delivery, inclusive approaches to assessment, creating an inclusive learning environment and digital accessibility, as well as key contacts in schools (School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice)

- **Inclusive Assessment, Student Success and Belonging** (Student Success SharePoint site) - Case studies, workshop recordings and sector wide good practice on inclusive assessment

- **Education for Mental Health Toolkit** (Advance HE) - this toolkit has been created to provide evidence informed guidance on the ways in which curriculum can support both wellbeing and learning.

What next?

Based on your discussions of the question prompts in the section above, you may have identified areas that require further development under the themes of belonging & hidden curricula, decolonising, sustainability and inclusive learning and teaching. Here are some links to some existing resources that you may find useful:

References

Arday, Jason, Mirza, Heidi Safia (Eds.) (2018). Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy (Palgrave Macmillan)

Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial and Kerem Nişancıoğlu (eds). (2018). Decolonizing the university (Pluto Press)

Margolis, E (2002) The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education. New York and London: Routledge.

Semper, J and Blasco, M (2018) 'Revealing the hidden curriculum in higher education', Studies in Philosophy & Education, 37 (5): 481–498.

Sian, Katy. (2019). Navigating Institutional Racism in British Universities. Palgrave Macmillan (especially chapters 4 (Teaching Experiences) and 5 (Decolonizing the Curriculum)

Martin, N, Wray, M, James, A, Draffan, EA, Krupa, J and Turner, P (2019). Implementing Inclusive Teaching and Learning in UK Higher Education – Utilising Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a Route to Excellence. Society for Research into Higher Education.
 https://openresearch.lsbu.ac.uk/item/8666q

Morgan, H. and Houghton, A.M., (2011). Inclusive curriculum design in higher education: Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas **https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/introduction_and_overview.pdf**

Blogs and other web resources

Louise Banahene, Inside Track – A Place Where All Students Belong

Louise Banahene, Inside Track - Tackling degree awarding gaps

Jenny Brady, SEC 2022: Belonging, Community and Inclusive Teaching

Bridgette Bewick, Why do we need a compassionate campus?

Belonging at Leeds: Developing Belonging