ENhance Quick Guides

Edinburgh Napier UNIVERSITY

Department of Learning & Teaching Enhancement

Theme: Inclusion

Authors: Dr Stuart Taylor & Adam Satur

What is an inclusive curriculum?

The Inclusion theme in the ENhance Framework challenges us to acknowledge the value of each of our learners and work to build a curriculum representative and celebrative of a diverse society. To do so, we must recognise "the plurality of disadvantaging factors and situations" (Schuelka 2019, p.xxxii) our learners may experience, and work to remove the barriers to learning (social, personal, physical, economic, cultural, technological) they may face. By actively engaging in this theme of ENhance, we can refine & (re)design programmes to actively encourage and support each student's values and voice, their presence and participation. By utilising strategies such as Universal Design for Learning, Anti-Racist Curricula, Decolonising Curricula, and embedding mental health and wellbeing in our programme design, we aim to enable success for all our students.
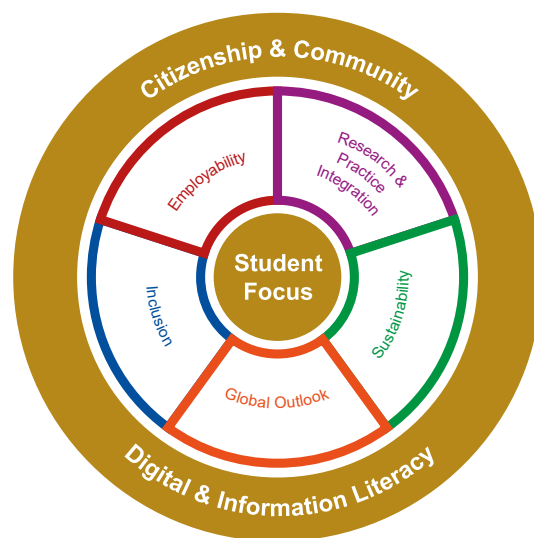
Why is inclusion important in Learning & Teaching?

Institutions of academic research and Higher Education are implicated in and built upon ongoing legacies of structural privilege, which curricula have often reinforced through (un)intentionally exclusionary methods of teaching and assessment, as well as prioritisations and promotions of certain knowledges over others within teaching and research practices (Arday and Mirza 2018). A broadly representative curriculum in which all students can see themselves and their experiences as valued has the potential to elevate potentially supressed knowledge, creating avenues for diverse sources of knowledge to be acknowledged and used to promote equity of knowledge and social collaboration. As we move toward co-creation with students, this includes student contributions to teaching (in relation to both content and learning) as some of the sources of knowledge to be elevated. This co-creation facilitates a cycle of enhancement which drives curricula to remain inclusively current.

Fundamentally, the potential for effective co-creation depends upon all students being able to: access information and resources; engage with their learning; and express themselves. Following Universal Design for Learning principles, we can aim to provide for our students "Multiple means of representation, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge; Multiple means of [action and] expression, to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know; Multiple means of engagement, to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation" (Dolmage 2015, para.3). In practice, this could look like: offering students the options to respond to a question verbally and to respond through a Mentimeter presentation, and offering students the choice in the format of their assessment submissions (action and expression); ensuring all video content is adequately captioned and transcribed (representation); including a balance of group and individual tasks (engagement). See Universal Design Ideas for more ideas and contact Dr Lee McCallum (Lecturer in Assessment & Feedback) for further support around assessment enhancement and choice.

Examples of Inclusion embedded in curricula:

Here are some examples where colleagues have embedded inclusive practices within their programmes across the University:

> Dr Catherine Mahoney, School of Health & Social Care (SHSC): Student choice in assessment formats.
>
> Undergraduate English programmes, School of Arts & Creative Industries (SACI): 'Critical Contexts: Introduction to Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory' module, led by Dr Elsa Bouet.
>
> Case Study by Associate Prof. Paul Gray: Co-created code of conduct for collaborative work in BA (Hons) Film.

Such examples of practice can be found across our institution, and sharing of practice is a core part of enabling inclusive enhancements throughout Edinburgh Napier. We encourage critical curiosity, engaging with the Inclusion theme of ENhance to the benefit of all students and staff, whether locally in Schools, or through cross-disciplinary spaces such as the PgCert for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education, Blended Online Education MSc, ENroute, and ENssentials provision.

Prompt statements/questions

The following prompt questions – along with the further resources listed below – may help you begin to outline how you can embed this theme in your programme(s):

▪ How does your programme/module create a learning environment that welcomes individual learners and diverse learning communities? What barriers still exist?

▪ How do your approaches to learning and teaching promote participation and equitable experiences for your learners? What are the ways in which every learner is able and supported to authentically express themselves: in learning activities, assessments, and evaluations?

▪ How does your programme/module incorporate multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expressions (see UDL Principles)?

Further Resources

'Inclusion' pages on the DLTE Hub

AHEAD Universal Design for Learning (specifically, The Principles in Practice page which features a quiz to evaluate your own practice through UDL considerations)

Arday, J., & Mirza, H. S. (Eds.). (2018). Dismantling Race in Higher Education : Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60261-5

Dolmage, J. (2015) Universal Design: Places to Start, Disability Studies Quarterly 35:2

Dolmage, J. (2015) Universal Design Ideas (Wiki site)

Schuelka, M. J., Johnstone, C. J., Thomas, G., & Artiles, A. J. (2019). The Sage handbook of inclusion and diversity in education. SAGE Publications Ltd, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526470430