

Title: **Spotlight on inclusive practice – raising the achievement of all Higher Education learners**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- examine their understanding of the term ‘inclusive practice’ and what this means for their own teaching, learning and assessment
- review a range of inclusive and accessible learning and teaching approaches
- identify an aspect of ‘inclusive practice’ that they would like to explore over the next academic year

Session Outline

In a rapidly changing HE context - DSA reforms, Equality Act (2010), Competitions and Markets Authority, White Paper (DBIS, 2016) and TEF - students are paying more towards their education, employability is a key concern, and those with additional needs are finding it particularly challenging both financially and educationally.

HE has a significant role in shaping a “democratic, inclusive society that enables individuals to develop their own capabilities” (Dearing, 1997). Several researchers have highlighted the need for HE practices to: recognise and value individual difference; pedagogies and spaces where students can fully participate, and course offerings that are flexible and equitable (May and Bridger, 2010; Thomas and May, 2010; Morgan and Houghton, 2011, Burke and Crozier, 2012; Moríña, 2017).

More recently, Draffan, James and Martin (2018) recommend that successful inclusive practices involve planning, design, delivery and evaluation of curricula outcomes as part of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) agenda. Practitioners should therefore be encouraged to design for the “greatest degree of match between the individual learner’s requirements and the provision that is made for them” (Tomlinson, 1996).

Here at the University of Wolverhampton, the production of the publication *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in HE as a route to Excellence* (DoE, 2017) has driven the formation of an institutional-wide working group on inclusive practice. More locally, there is a commitment to make a difference to the Institute of Education’s (IoE’s) inclusive practice

and IoE colleagues were invited to volunteer themselves to explore an aspect of practice during 2017/18 that aimed to benefit their students.

This discussion paper explores what is meant by inclusive practice and considers the benefits to students, the IoE and participants' own institutions. We will showcase IoE good practice and report on the progress being made. We hope discussions will inspire colleagues to consider their own professional journey towards inclusive practice and promote opportunities for supporting each other in developing.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

20 minute presentation:

1. Concept and benefits of adopting inclusive practice

a) Concept:

- The Inclusive Practice pilot projects include groups of taught undergraduate and postgraduate students within the Institute of Education on a range of degree programmes and an initial teacher training course*. Each project within the Institute is different, recognising variations in characteristics of the student body, the demands of different courses, and the special interests of colleagues.
- The project specifically refers to '*inclusive practice*' as an exploration of an aspect of learning and teaching that is innovative and recognises the diversity of students. The overall aim is for each project to better enable a focused group or all registered students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths at assessment.

* *Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion Studies/Ed Studies UG degree modules, Post Compulsory Education PGCE course, MA Professional Practice and Lifelong Education module, a BEd Primary degree module and Childhood and Families Studies UG degree courses.*

b) Benefits:

- all groups of students (BAME, mature, widening participation, disabled)
- less need for 'further adjustment' for students?
- cost savings
- reputational enhancement
- reasonable adjustments: anticipatory, empowering
- student voice: students as learning partners
- inclusive practice: quality systems to match; risk strategy

2. What is the IoE Inclusive Practice Project?

- a) Overview
- b) Projects
- c) Timescales

3. Project examples

- a) Enhancing the transition of Level 3 students in HE
- b) Alternative assessment methods
 - Extending Criticality module as part of MA Professional Practice and Lifelong Education programme. Critical reflective practice demonstrated via a multi-mode creative format (choice of student) i.e. artefact / video
- c) Facilitating disabled students in work based learning
- d) Accessibility of CANVAS for students

4. Reflections and Next Steps...

25 minutes of discussion:

1. Small group activity with a template to record responses
 - a. What is your own understanding of inclusive practice?
 - b. Does your department or institution use a common shared language when you refer to inclusive practice?
2. All participant discussion
 - a. What does 'inclusive practice' mean for us as staff?
 - b. What are the current / future opportunities and challenges?
3. Stakeholder considerations – one flipchart for each group
Question - how can XXXXX best support you to work towards a more inclusive approach to your teaching, learning and assessment, when XXXXX are?
 - a. Academic colleagues
 - b. Professional services staff
 - c. Senior Leaders
 - d. External organisations
4. Talking partner activity
 - a. Identify an aspect of 'inclusive practice' that you would like to explore and confirm the steps required to implement

References

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