Inclusive Assessment

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What we're going to talk about

- Some themes from the literature
- What we can learn from what other HEIs are doing
- What we could do here at Bournemouth University

Inclusive education – an overarching philosophy

"The philosophy of inclusive pedagogy is grounded in upholding human rights, and promoting respect and equality, by providing equal opportunity for participation to all students irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, language or physical ability"
(Kaur et al 2017)

'When teachers discuss fairness openly, students usually understand that it would be unfair to keep glasses from those who need them and equally unfair to make everyone wear glasses.'

(Welch 2000)

Inclusive pedagogy

"Inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that attends to individual differences between pupils but avoids the marginalisation that can occur when pedagogical responses are designed only with individual needs in mind."

Florian and Beaton (2018)

Universal design of instruction (UDI)

"The design of instruction to be usable by all students, without the need for adaptation or specialized design"

"To apply UDI, instructors should consider the potential variation in individual skills, learning styles and preferences, age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, abilities, and disabilities as they select appropriate content and strategies for the delivery of instruction and then apply universal design to all course activities and resources."

https://www.washington.edu/doit/universal-design-instruction-udi-definition-principles-guidelines-and-examples

Goals of inclusive assessment

"Inclusive assessment means inclusive practice and a clear move away from ad hoc arrangements which require assessments to be modified for individual students, where possible.

"Universities have a growing diverse student population many with additional needs including disability, language concerns and personal or employment commitments. Universities need to ensure teaching, learning and assessment is accessible and supported."

Leeds Beckett University (2018)

Principles of inclusive assessment

Inclusive assessment should:

- *be accessible and equitable for all students*
- be explicit and transparent
- *fairly evaluate students' ability to meet module learning outcomes, academic and professional standards*
- support student engagement in learning, their progression and retention
- *address the needs of all our diverse student population*
- involve authentic, meaningful, tasks and valid and reliable processes
- *reduce the need for modified assessment e.g. alternatives/extra time*
- promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made.
- *enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes*

Leeds Beckett University (2018).

"We need to reflect upon whether the current teaching styles, course materials and assessment tasks allow disabled students the necessary opportunities to demonstrate their acquisition of the learning outcomes, in a way that is perceived as 'a level playing field'.

We need parity of assessment experience through strategic change, embedded, consistent practice rather than a 'bolt on' or 'ad hoc' provision"

Waterfield,J., & West,B. (2006)

Principles of inclusive assessment (Plymouth)

"A key underpinning principle is that inclusive assessment does not mean 'easier assessment', nor does it give students the opportunity to avoid specific tasks which are fundamental to development in their discipline.

Inclusivity is about enhancing practice to offer students greater opportunity to develop both skills and disciplinary knowledge in a supported and challenging environment."

Plymouth University (2016).

"An inclusive assessment will provide a clear assessment brief and marking criteria in advance of the task. There will be opportunity to explore this brief with peers and a tutor (this may be in class, or online) so that students can ask questions and clarify key elements of the task before they begin.

Teaching and learning approaches used in the module will develop skills that relate to the assessment task, with elements of formative feedback to support the process."

Plymouth University (2018).

Social sciences, Cardiff University (Morris et al. , 2019)

Students, especially those with a self-declared additional learning need supported changing assessment processes, but called for:

- Parity between the different modes of assessment, to ensure that assessment processes were fair (e.g., via bespoke marking criteria)

- In order to develop employability skills, each mode of assessment needed to be carefully introduced, with appropriate support and feedback to students to practise the necessary skills and competencies

Staff also supported change, but raised concerns about workload pressures and the need for training in designing assessment to accommodate student diversity

Social sciences, Cardiff University (Morris et al. , 2019)

Outcome of survey

- Pilots to be introduced at programme level, co-constructed with students and with strong moderation processes.

- Two types of assessment to be offered within modules:

    o mapped to carefully designed learning outcomes,

    o choice in assessment methods will be designed with

    o clear strategies for skills development

    o appropriate levels of support within the school to enable students and staff to become confident and familiar with this approach.

Inclusive assessment: a case example

HISTORY OF SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

- an 'enrichment' course to help scientists develop a social perspective on their studies and future work.

- now enrols upwards of 350 students from more than 100 degree programmes.

"We are currently developing an approach to assessment that we hope will be more responsive to the wide diversity of student backgrounds, needs, and goals, based on supporting student-led exploration through a wide variety of potential subjects and methods associated with the course.

Students are challenged to set goals, find appropriate course material and learning activities to meet those goals, and integrate their learning through self-evaluation."

(Barany, 2021)

Student experiences and outcomes

Data: longitudinal survey of student experiences and expectations; analysis of student interactions from course team; student-reported experiences in assessment submission

Main findings:

- Initial anxiety and uncertainty, mostly resolved by mid-course.
  - Confidence about mark and learning outcomes develops more slowly, arrives closer to end of course.

- Considerable exploration and adaptation upon gaining comfort with course and assessment.

- Students across all levels and forms of engagement had a strong sense of what they achieved.
  - Able to articulate strengths, weaknesses, and learning outcomes.
  - Successfully articulated relationship between this course and degree programmes and learning goals.
  - Close correspondence between student-evaluated and tutor-evaluated marks.

- Much improved correspondence between assessment and course content and aims.

Which BU assessment policies are helpful here?

Principles of Assessment Design Policy (6c)

https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/6c-principles-of-assessment-design-policy.pdf

The Generic Assessment Criteria (6f). Feedback and feedforward statements for all grade bands Levels 3 to 7.

https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/6f-generic-assessment-criteria-procedure.pdf

NB updated and approved at Senate in June 2021 for September 2021

Disability and Additional Learning Service
https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/learning/disability-additional-learning-support-als

Exceptional Circumstances Policy (6j)
https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/6j-exceptional-circumstances-policy-and-procedure.pdf

Disability & ALS

DECLARED DISABILITY OR ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEED

Strategies adopted

- Assessment policies and regulations make provision to:
  - offer adjustments
  - provide alternatives
- Considered on a case-by-case basis
- Requires an assessment/declaration

DECLARED DISABILITY OR ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEED

Limitations

1. Makes exceptions in specific cases, (so not truly inclusive)

   – labels some students as 'different' from others

2. Scope for 'adjustments' may be quite constrained by regulations or resources, or perfunctory

   — *e.g.* the once-widespread extra 30 minutes in exams

3. Students with 'invisible' disabilities may not wish to treated as a 'special case'

4. Potential tensions: between inclusivity and fairness, and between inclusivity and authenticity (Tai, 2021)

Exceptional circumstances

Envisaging circumstances (illness, injury, or bereavement) that prevent a student from undertaking certain assessments or poor performance

Strategies adopted

- Assessment policies and regulations make provision for:
    - extension
    - resubmission without penalties
- Requires documentary evidence
- Considered on a case-by-case basis

Exceptional circumstances

Limitations

1. Makes exceptions in very specific instances, (so not truly inclusive)

2. Determining what counts as exceptional (and what doesn't count) can be problematic

3. Circumstances have to be formally declared and documented

4. Potential tension between inclusivity and fairness

DIVERSITY, FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE IN ASSESSMENT

➢ **Diversity in types & forms of assessments**

e.g. in the skills and capabilities each assessment calls for

➢ **Flexibility**

e.g. in timing, frequency, place

➢ **Choice**

e.g. of questions, of medium (e.g. written report, or poster presentation, or video etc

Cultural responsiveness in curricula & assessment

"Universities have traditionally focused on the dominant cultural literacy as the primary means of both communicating course content and assessing students' understanding and engagement with that material.

Students from the dominant cultural literacy groups often fare much better in [such] learning environments. By default, students from non-dominant and diverse cultural and community literacies are isolated from the "norm".

These students are attempting to learn course content, while also attempting to grasp the cultural and educational requirements of the dominant cultural literacy, which is not a formally taught part of their educational experience; all of this, while simultaneously retaining their own cultural literacy that is deemed redundant. "

(MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003)

Culturally responsive curricula & assessment

(from MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003)

TABLE 2. What am I assessing in terms of intellectual engagement with content? (http://www.olt.qut.edu.au/udf/worldmarks/)

* Does my content assume Australian or western cultural or historical knowledge?
* Am I explicit about the fact that education in Australia reflects a western worldview?
* Does some of my content assume that students know about Australian television and culture?
* Have I provided students with a glossary of key terms and phrases?
* How will I know students have actually engaged with the content of my unit?
* How will I find out?
* How can I give students the choice of bringing in their own cultural knowledge and other skills?
* Will the material conflict with the students' cultural background?
* How would a student, for example, from a Marxist background be able to write an appraisal of capitalism?
* Can a student with fundamentalist religious views be asked to give a critique of an opposing religious point of view?

(Tai, 2021)

▶ **Authenticity of assessment**

"it is easier to be prepared for an online exam in your own home, in your own space, and you do not have to deal with other people. […] but at the same time […] The career path that I'm following, you can't do it at home, you have to go into the clinic, you have to be scrutinized by the doctors checking your work. I feel it's something that you need to get used to doing. "

– Eliza, health professions, RRR & LSES, learning disability

"written assessments […] I think not only is it best to show my skills but also I think that it's the closest to what I do in practice in that I have all my resources, I need to provide advice, I obviously have a word count in doing that because if I get it too long the client's not going to read it; and so developing those skills and writing concisely [… and] communicating them in a more understandable manner is I think one of the things that's best prepared me for practice. […] with the exams I don't think I'll ever be in practice, and be told like, 'You must write this memorandum of advice in two hours and you only have one book to do it, go.' "

– Rebecca, law, FiF, medical & mental health condition

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Discussion

In the units you're responsible for, what scope would there be to make assessment more inclusive?

What would help you and your students to achieve that?

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