Designing an Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education (DICHE)
Project explanation

The DiCHE project is funded by the Higher Education Academy and is being undertaken by colleagues from Lancaster University's Departments of Applied Social Science and Educational Research. The DiCHE project aims to gather from the sector and disseminate information about, and provide examples of good practice of **inclusive curriculum design**.

The concept of "universal design" seeks to ensure that the built environment and everyday products, services and activities are designed with the needs of all citizens as a first principle. An everyday example of this is the low floor bus where accessibility is improved for several user groups including parents with pushchairs, wheelchair users and those with impaired mobility. Inclusive curriculum design (sometimes known as universal design) can be seen as the next step in the journey away from discrimination, travelling through inclusivity at a level of curriculum delivery (in resources, teaching practices and assessment) towards the destination of **meaningful inclusivity at a curriculum planning level**.

This DICHE project seeks to use a similar model so that the higher education curricula are designed (or re-designed) to ensure that they can meet the needs, views, experiences and particular challenges of **all students.** Inclusion is often associated with issues of disability and impairment. Within the DiCHE project we take a wider view of the term inclusion. Inclusive curriculum design aims to include all students and staff currently covered by recent UK legislation (race, disability, gender, age, sexuality, religion and faith) as well as those who may be marginalised for other reasons including physical, social, cultural, experiential, and circumstantial. These could include students with caring responsibilities; working class students; and international students, among others. We also recognise that an individual's experience may be influenced by multiple factors and that individuals who appear to have the same identity characteristics do not necessarily have the same needs.

We would like to hear from anyone with examples of curriculum design which meets the needs of any of the groups covered by UK equality legislation as well as other groups of learners who may be in danger of feeling marginalised. There is already a lot of information and guidance about inclusive practice with respect to delivering the curriculum and making adaptations or responding to individual students needs. The focus of inclusive curriculum design shifts to:
- structural issues including validation processes;
- curriculum content including a diverse range of examples e.g. syllabus content or reading lists that do not perpetuate stereotypes;
- assessment arrangements or teaching approaches that ensure all students needs are met and do not single out a group or individuals for special treatment

Finally, adopting an inclusive approach to design involves identifying the obstacles or barriers to inclusion, if you have examples of what hinders you in adopting an inclusive approach then please get in touch.

Output from this project will contain examples from UK higher education institutions which are already incorporating the principles of the inclusive curriculum. It will include sections for each HEA (Higher Education Academy) Subject Centre and links to subject and general materials to support inclusive curriculum design. All contributions will be acknowledged in the text to aid future collaboration and dissemination of good practice. .

For further information: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/hea/diche.html
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