# Lecture 9 – Embedding and Evaluating EDI – Guest Lecture

## Kate Ippolito

Introduction

* Kate is Principal Teaching Fellow in Educational Development for EDU. EDU – Educational Development Unit
* She provides training for teaching.
* She has provided a session to MechEng teaching staff about inclusive teaching practices.
* Kate also helped to design the module

Associated pre-reading

* Kate’s focus and overall theme of this session are teaching practices and university experience as that is her experience.
* Kate recommends the associated reading.
* The AdvanceHE reading is about designing an inclusive curriculum. The themes look simple but are underpinned by lots of theory and research. Students have a lot of power in changing practice and policy.
* Students’ guide to Imperial was designed by a range of underrepresented students. This included women, racially minoritised and working class students.

Mentimeter - What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learnt from the module so far?

Answers:

* EDI affects a lot more people than expected. Designing inclusively helps everyone
* Seat belts were not designed for women
* 25% of professional engineers have considered self-harm or suicide (to clarifying, it was 25% of respondents of a survey)
* That car dummies are designed for men with a height of 175cm
* The role of education at the youngest levels in forming our roles and progression in society, necessitating EDI in outreach
* How many things are designed with only 1 particular group in mind (especially when testing etc)
* Refer to slides for additional information

Conceptualising and contextualising EDI

* The graphic of 3 people on boxes to view a baseball game is commonly used.
* Equity/Liberation is the aim rather than equality.
* Reality is the new part of the graphic Kate has seen. This might be based on barriers from social background, ethnicity etc.
* Liberation refers to the fence being removed.
* This is a metaphor, and metaphors are useful for us to think about complex concepts

Group question: What do you think are the fences and what do you think are the boxes? The fence means a barrier to access, and a box means an invention to help equalise access.

Answers:

* The baseball game itself can represent a range of things from education, to a career to a social experience
* Fence may be “social capital” preventing people from engaging in university culture
* Who takes the boxes down? Admins such as UGO for logistical barriers, for cultural barriers it’s those in a privileged position who can help dismantle this
	+ This shows a flaw in the image as by helping others you are usually not “giving a box away” by peer-learning or sharing
* If you are tall enough you don’t notice the fence, or if you do it’s something to lean on and support you. It’s always been there and it keeps people safe and means the game is uninterrupted, so the tall people won’t want to take the fence down

What do we mean by inclusive teaching and learning?

* The key word for Kate is anticipate, she provides two quotes defining “inclusive teaching and learning” which are provided on the slides.
* We should anticipate the breadth of needs we have rather than only have interventions available for specific students.
* The feeling of being included can be hard to achieve and quite subjective to define.
* EDI sometimes focuses on the need of the individual. Kate interprets it as understanding the community aspect, including collaborating with the students to create inclusion.

Defining inclusive curriculum

* Being transparent is important. Be clear about the criteria and assessment. The fence could be the lack of awareness of what the expectations are.
* The idea of identity in relation to the curriculum has an impact on the way you see yourself. Some parts of the curriculum make you value yourself. There are other parts that make you feel unpleasant, but hopefully temporarily.
* In some areas, like mechanical engineering, we consider the curriculum to be “neutral” as it is about science and numbers and therefore how can it exclude anyone? Is this true though? Kate asks the students “How does the mechanical engineering curriculum make you feel about yourself and your role?” Student answers:
	+ For most people transition from school to uni is a shock, you are used to being good at things and now you are “terrible” which lowers your self-esteem and aspirations. As you progress through the degree though you find things you enjoy and are good at and this raises your self-esteem and aspirations again.

A framework for inclusive practice

* Inclusive Educational Design
* Preparing Students for Learning
* Managing Inclusive learning environments
* Assessment and feedback for learning
* Question: How do you like to be assessed? Student answers:
	+ Exams - doesn’t rely on you being loud and confident in a team so assesses you more personally, though problems with the time pressure
	+ Reports
	+ Projects - better for people to show their skills, and doesn’t base it on just one day

Mentimeter: What are the existing, EDI-related barriers to learning that you like to tackle?

Answers

* More professors from minorities, examples in exams and tutorial sheets relevant to minorities/different cultures/less developed countries
* The attainment gap which gives a lower proportion of black people with s A\*s at A level a first for their degree
* Stigma surrounding talking about EDI amongst students
* Student loans for international students
* Undiagnosed learning disabilities can make someone’s student life particularly hard, and its very difficult and long to get diagnosis for free
* Cultural (e.g. familial) support for academia as a lifestyle/career path e.g. in working class backgrounds

Higher education academy

* Slide shows details of the different “diversity dimensions” which can impact success in higher education and gives a link to the full report
* Cultural capital helps us to think of everyone rather than specific groups. Normally when we talk about culture, we think about international culture. I think everyone has to get used to Imperial culture. Maybe that’s an initiative idea, how do you change the culture?
* Imperial is known to be a competitive culture. What can we do to change that?

Examples of projects and research at Imperial

* Curriculum review – looking at case studies from LGBTQ+ lens
* Staff development workshops
* Masters in University Teaching and Learning final projects
* Raising awareness of SpLDs and ND in the Imperial community
* Decolonisation of the curriculum
* Belonging, community and engagement project
* SIDUS
* Impact of learning, teaching and assessment on mental health and wellbeing

**Making project supervision more inclusive**

* In terms of the final project in 4th year (or DMT/LRP in 3rd year), think about making project supervision more inclusive.

Answers:

* Supervisors can be a little more available. They can sometimes be hard to reach.
* Every student will be different in terms of the amount the pace they work. There should be guidance about expectations and matching this with the pace of working. Advice for supervisors is to ask opening questions. The starting question can be ‘why are you interested in this?
* Supervisors should have proper training. Supervisors should give you reasons why ideas are good or bad. There should be guidance about inclusive language and creating a supportive environment.
* Discrepancies between supervisors – some are more hands on, others are not. Only mandatory meetings are once a term, maybe increasing this for better balance.
* It can feel like supervisors don’t have time for you. It can feel like students are a burden to supervisors. They are in a position of power.

Evaluating EDI initiatives:

Evaluation Cycle

* Measure, Judge, Action, Monitor
* Measurement; gathering a range of data to measure the existing provision. Student examples of data are:
	+ Demographics of participants / attendees
	+ Opinions on how included/supported students feel
	+ Quantity of hours spent being supervised
* Value Judgment; considering the significance and meaning of data and making a judgment based on this
	+ An example is if students say there is too much work to do, this gets treated as being objective (ie there is too much work to do) but actually it might be about students being unclear on expectations or not knowing when to stop work on a submission
* Action; implementing changes based on the above information
* Monitoring; checking the impact of the change

Validity in social science

* Validity in quantitative research looks at objectivity, replicability, generalisability, predictability etc. but requires a large sample size in order for it to have power
* By contrast validity in qualitative research requires honesty, positions of power, subjectivity, feelings and reasons (therefore “why is it…” is an important part of the questioning)

Questionnaires/Surveys

* An advantage ease for respondents
* An advantage is the option of anonymity. Why is anonymity important? It allows people to be more honest without repercussions, and also more people to answer
* Low response rate (you want at least 25% of participants) can be an issue
* Often only seeks to identify the issues, or only people who are “annoyed” bother to complete it so it can be quite negative
* Standardised questions may already exist, which makes it easier to set up
* Participants will likely to be familiar with the format
* Can be superficial data leaving minimal ability to probe further
* Different formats are available (sentence completion, rating/Likert scale, bipolar questions, open questions)

Focus groups

Advantages:

* Personal experience of specific topics
* People are more willing to talk if they take part
* If participants are from the same demographic, they feel more comfortable being candid/honest

Disadvantages:

* People who attend are already vocal, the data collected can be biased. Self-selecting people who feel very strongly either positive or negative.

Interviews:

Advantages:

* Flexible, open questions
* Clarifying/follow-up questions can be asked

Disadvantages:

* Not many people will come forward to do it
* Time consuming

