Whose W.O.R.D.D. counts?

A tool to critically assess the extent to which diversity is embedded in course content

> "An artist said that to draw is to omit. In other words, when you make a mark on a piece of paper to represent the world, you choose what you represent and omit what is not important in that particular vision. And so it is with curriculum. We are in a very powerful position when we create curriculum…we define **whose knowledge is important**, whose experience is relevant and privileged and a failure to engage with the diversity of our population is a failure to include...and we will not in that way attract, engage or sustain our students…this is simply bad teaching."
>
> Professor Alan Tait, Pro-Vice Chancellor Curriculum & Awards, March 2008

About this tool

This tool has been created to support members of course teams and critical readers to assess the extent to which diversity has been embedded in the content of the course. It can be used for new courses in development as well as courses being revised.

Diversity may include a wide range of identity and cultural characteristics, including but not limited to; age, disability, gender, language, race, religion and sexual orientation.

The following represents some ways of embedding diversity into your course content. It will not be appropriate or relevant in every case to use all of these methods. They are intended as a guide to some of the ways that it is possible to embed diversity. The template overleaf includes fifteen questions which help to explain and expand these brief descriptions.

W – Writing with the audience in mind

O – Opportunities for exchange of experiences

R – Representation through different lenses

D – Drawing on different student experiences

D – Diversity as the subject matter

Filling in the template

Opportunity – use the headings and questions in this section to guide your thinking.

Good practice identified – use this section to record details of where diversity has been successfully embedded in the content.

Issues for consideration – use this section to record issues of concern and opportunities that have not yet been fully exploited.

A word about critical readers

There will always be cost and time constraints when selecting critical readers. However drawing on a sufficient quantity and diversity of critical readers can greatly enhance the quality of course materials, helping to make your course relevant to a more diverse audience. If students can relate to and identify with materials, they are likely to engage more fully in the learning process. Guidance on identifying a diverse pool of critical readers is contained in the document 'Equality, Diversity and Accessibility in the Curriculum' in the Curriculum Management Guide (see below).

Further resources

Diversity in the curriculum case studies website: http://intranet.open.ac.uk/casestudies-diversity/index.shtm

Equality, Diversity and Accessibility in the Curriculum guidance notes: http://intranet.open.ac.uk/cmg/docs/E&DCurriculum.doc

Equality and Diversity in Language and Image: http://intranet.open.ac.uk/strategy-unit/offices/equality/keytools/documents/EqualityandDiversityinLanguageandImageJan2008.pdf

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Date:	Course details:	Person completing:

Opportunity	Good practice identified in the text	Issues for consideration
Writing with the audience in mind 1. Have idioms, colloquialisms and other culturally specific references been avoided? 2. Is the use of English language appropriate to the level of study? 3. Have assumptions about the lived experience of students been avoided? 4. Have a wide range of case studies been used to portray the diversity of the audience? 5. Do case studies avoid limiting assumptions or stereotypes?		
Opportunities for exchange of experiences 6. Are there opportunities to bring students together to share ideas and experiences and to enrich the understanding of other students? 7. Are there opportunities to create respect and appreciation of the value of difference?		
Representation through different lenses 8. Are there authors with different viewpoints? 9. Are there experiences from other countries, including outside of Europe? 10. Are there experiences from different UK contexts where appropriate? 11. Do authors acknowledge their standpoint and its limitations?		

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Opportunity	Good practice identified in the text	Issues for consideration
Drawing on different student experiences 12. Are there exercises or activities that bring the student experience to the forefront? 13. Are students made aware of how their experience and viewpoints are shaped by their cultural, historical, geographical, economic and other contexts?		
Diversity as the subject matter 14. Are there opportunities for direct discussion of age, culture, disability, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation or other aspects of identity? 15. Are there opportunities for direct discussion of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, etc?		