# Being Inclusive in…

# Designing and Planning Teaching and Learning Activities

## About this guide

* This guide is aligned to Baseline Standard 1 and the UK Professional Standards Framework A1: Design Inclusively.
* The guide is compatible with the Microsoft Immersive Reader and can be downloaded from OneDrive in PDF or Word format.
* More guides and resources are available at [inclusiveteaching.leeds.ac.uk](https://inclusiveteaching.leeds.ac.uk/).

## Know your students

* Get to know the backgrounds and interests of your students to inform the activities you choose. An icebreaker activity could be used to enable you and your students to get to know each other.
* Activities and materials that are culturally relevant are likely to be more engaging and likely to promote deeper understanding.
* Use a skills audit to find out what your students’ learning needs are, and remember that some international students may be learning the course material alongside developing their English language skills.
* Knowledge about levels of maths anxiety and IT proficiency as well as your students’ proficiency in written English can help you to avoid making assumptions, and ensure students get supported to develop the skills they need.¹

## Check facts and assumptions

* Don’t assume prior knowledge of what you think your students should know, unless it’s something you have covered previously or is a prerequisite for the course. Be aware of knowledge that is implicit within your subject, and make this more explicit where needed.
* Students will have a variety of prior educational backgrounds and may not all be at the same starting point.

## Link learning

* Ensure that your students know how any newly presented content links to previous knowledge. Recap on what you have covered in a session.
* This will further embed the knowledge and give your students a deeper understanding of the whole context. It will also activate and refresh their previous learning. This is important for all your students, but particularly those on the autism spectrum or with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs).

## Vary activities

* Explore interactive, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic materials and activities.
* Your student cohort will include learners with a variety of needs and preferences.² Don’t assume that all of your students will learn from materials in the same way that you learn or were taught.

## Make learning active

* Design activities which enable your students to actively link theory to practice and where they are not passive recipients of information.
* Students learn more effectively when they are engaged in actively linking theory to practice.³ This is important for all students, particularly those who find reading challenging and effortful.

## Remember that your students are adults

* Design activities which enable your students to draw on their experiences and to practically apply new knowledge.
* Adult learners can be assumed to be self-directed but some teaching methodologies may be less effective at enabling learning to take place.4

## Consider the learning environment

* Think about the suitability of the venue and mode of delivery when planning activities. This will ensure that all students can fully engage in activities.
* To learn more, please refer to ‘Being Inclusive in…Small Group Teaching’ and ‘Being Inclusive in…Creating Inclusive Learning & Teaching Environments’.

## Make sure written materials are accessible

* Design your materials so they can be accessed by as wide a variety of students as possible, with differing learning needs.
* Always use sans serif fonts, such as Arial or Verdana.
* Design digital content for small screens and ensure it scales for bigger screens. This includes using an appropriate font size e.g. for Word and email use 12 point as a minimum (14 point is good practice). For PowerPoint and presentations, fonts should be no smaller than 24 point (28 point and above is preferable).
* Avoid densely packed pages of text, and provide plenty of space and numbering to aid navigation around documents.
* Use styles in Word and PowerPoint to correctly format and structure your content. This ensures all your students including those with visual impairments, can access and navigate the content properly.
* Provide off-white paper (if printing) to reduce the glare of black text on white backgrounds.
* Provide Microsoft Office files in Office file formats. This enables your students to modify formatting to meet their needs as well as annotate personal copies with their own notes.
* Write in plain English and only use complex terminology where it is appropriate for your discipline and your students’ learning.
* Ensure materials or websites that you are directing students to meet digital accessibility standards. This will enable students with a range of disabilities including visual impairments, to access the materials without needing to request additional support.
* Make some materials available in advance. This helps your students to be mentally prepared for new learning.5 Some students will struggle to read quickly in the session, which will exacerbate anxiety and reduce opportunities for full engagement. Some students may also prefer to print off materials in advance, rather than read them from a screen. To learn more, please refer to ‘Being Inclusive in…Lectures’ and [digitalaccessibility.leeds.ac.uk](https://digitalaccessibility.leeds.ac.uk/).

## Encourage Metacognition

* Explain to your students why you are asking them to engage in particular types of learning activities and how you expect learning to take place.
* This will enable students to take responsibility for their own learning and to think about their own learning strengths and weaknesses. This is important for all students and particularly important for those students with SpLDs or a condition that affects their cognitive processing. Also, learners from some cultural backgrounds may not be used to, or place value on, certain types of activities so may need these to be explained.

## Acknowledgements

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