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About the Toolkit

Statement of Purpose

Teaching that includes students from diverse backgrounds and with a range of life experiences is important for student-retention and success. The Library’s toolkit has straightforward guidelines about how to teach inclusively within the library context, identifying strategies and bringing together resources to ensure teaching material and educational interactions are inclusive of the diverse student body at Monash.

This website is a tool to assist in the development of inclusive practices and an inclusive mindset, rather than a comprehensive guide to all aspects of inclusive teaching or student diversity.

Introduction

Inclusive teaching is a pedagogical approach which acknowledges and values the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all students. Diversity exists across many dimensions, including differences in socioeconomic status, educational background, cultural background, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, mode of attendance (full time, part time, on campus, off campus), and ability or disability. In viewing diversity as a strength, inclusive education increases participation and engagement.

“My definition of inclusive teaching would be make sure that every student in the classroom regardless of their individual needs … circumstances … aren't disadvantaged in any way, or the student is kind of left behind or singled out in any way and the teaching is done in such a way that everyone is included and that everyone actually benefits equally.” – Library staff member
The toolkit builds on existing Monash University guidelines, the literature on inclusive teaching in higher education, and data gathered in 2017 from library staff focus groups on inclusive teaching. Inclusive teaching is a dynamic area of research and practice, and the toolkit is an evolving resource. We welcome feedback, and the ‘contact us’ link below provides toolkit users with a space to suggest revisions or additions to the website.

Background

Monash University Library’s Inclusive Teaching Toolkit Project Charter was drafted in early 2017 by Zachary Kendal (Subject Librarian, Social Inclusion), in consultation with Lisa Smith (Director, Education) and Linda Kalejs (Manager, Peninsula and Berwick Libraries), and was approved by the Information Resources and Services Committee (IRSC) in June 2017.

Staff from across Monash University Library were invited to participate in focus group interviews. In total, 27 library staff participated in the focus groups. Each interview lasted 90 minutes, and all conversations were recorded, with all participants signing a consent form. Each session followed the same structure with 10 guiding questions. The ideas, experiences and recommendations of library staff expressed in the focus groups form the backbone of the principles and guidelines set out in this document. Academic literature regarding inclusive teaching practices was also consulted in the preparation of the toolkit, and has been quoted and referenced throughout.

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• Members of the Diverse Genders and Sexualities Subcommittee (DGSS)
• Access Monash (particularly Jackie Rudd and Kate Duyvestyn)
• Disability Support Services (DSS) (particularly Matthew Salas)

References


Additional Resources

This collection of resources will assist in expanding your understanding around key areas of inclusion and diversity, and can be used to develop your professional practice of inclusive teaching.

Gender and sexuality

Monash University. Queer 101
Monash University. Ally Network training
Monash Student Association, Queer Officers
University of Birmingham. LGBTQ-inclusivity in the higher education curriculum: a best practice guide

Indigenous students

Monash University. Indigenous cultural safety program
Monash University, Yulendj Indigenous Engagement Unit
Indigenous Cultures & Histories: Indigenous Engagement at Monash University (Library Guide)
Universities Australia. Indigenous Cultural Competency Framework
National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students”
Victoria Government. “Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners”
Reconciliation Australia
**Students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds**


**Culturally and linguistically diverse students**

SBS’s Cultural Atlas

IEAA. Learning and teaching across cultures.

Faith Communities Council of Victoria, “Multifaith Calendar”

**Students with disabilities**

Monash University. Mental Health First Aid Training


Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). Inclusive Teaching.

NCSEHE. Students with disabilities

Inclusive Teaching Practices

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)
UDL On Campus. Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education.
Active Learning Strategies. Berkeley Centre for Teaching & Learning.
PRINCIPLE: Be aware and informed

Awareness of the diversity of our students and the pathways they have taken to university helps us avoid making assumptions about their attitudes or existing knowledge, or stereotyping them according to preconceived categories.

Be informed about different student cohorts and their needs and take responsibility for your professional development by addressing knowledge gaps through formal and informal learning opportunities.

Inclusive teaching is “not assuming the same level of experience or the same blanket level of skills, or ways of processing information” – Library staff member

STUDENT COHORTS

Genders, sexes and sexualities

A lot of progress has been made over the years in terms of gender and sexuality inclusivity in the university environment, but as the Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2017 report into sexual harassment at Australian universities indicates, more can be done to make university culture safe and welcoming for all students. Whenever we interact with students or engage in educational activities, we can play a role in changing cultures within the university by demonstrating and promoting respect for students of all genders, sexes and sexualities.
In 2016, Monash University released its 'Inclusive Education Guidelines – Diverse Genders and Sexualities,' a document that reflects on some of the direct and indirect discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) students in the university environment. These guidelines seek to address heterosexism and heteronormativity, which the document defines as follows:

**Heterosexism** is defined as a set of individual, group or institutional norms and behaviours that result from the assumption that all people are heterosexual. It is the practice of assuming that heterosexuality is inherently normal, rendering the experiences of others – such as LGBTIQ people – invisible, unacknowledged or ignored.

**Heteronormativity** is the normalisation of heterosexist ideals and behaviours in our everyday lives on an institutional, interpersonal, and personal level.

This toolkit also seeks to address **cisnormativity** which:

assumes that everyone is [cisgender]** and that all people will continue to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity erases the existence of trans and gender diverse people (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2017).

Heteronormativity and cisnormativity can permeate our language and practices, often in ways we don’t expect, so it can be challenging to recognise, examine and adapt our behaviour. Unintentional heterosexism and cissexism can be harmful to LGBTIQ+* students, who may be made to feel inferior or abnormal. The reinforcement of stereotypes concerning gender and sexuality can also make students feel unwelcome in their courses of study, ill suited for their desired career, or increase their feeling of isolation.

*Note: LGBTIQ is the initialism used by Monash University, and is not intended as definitive. This is explained in Monash University's LGBTIQ glossary of terms thus: 'Monash uses the acronym LGBTIQ to be as inclusive as possible. We acknowledge that other variations of this acronym exist and are also valid'. This is under review,
with some students and staff at Monash using the initialism LGBTQIA, where the A stands for asexual and/or aromantic. In this toolkit we use LGBTIQ+ to signal that there members of the community who are not explicitly covered in the LGBTIQ initialism.

**Defined as ‘a term used to describe when a person’s gender identity matches social expectations for their sex assigned at birth’ in Monash’s LGBTIQ glossary.**

**Indigenous students**

Indigenous Australians comprise just over 1% of all students enrolled in Australian higher education institutions (Pechenkina, 2015). A lack of awareness of Indigenous cultures among university staff can have a significant impact on Indigenous students’ access to, and retention in, higher education (Evans, 2017). When teachers don’t understand the importance of Indigenous cultural practices and ceremonies, they may not be in a position to respond appropriately during interactions with Indigenous students.

At Monash University, the Yulendj Indigenous Engagement Unit coordinates support for Indigenous students and staff at Monash University. The unit provides a range of programs and services for students, including subject tuition, skills programs, pathways programs, and assistance finding accommodation or applying for scholarships or bursaries. At the Yulendj building on Clayton campus, students also have access to a lounge, study spaces, and computers. The Wurundjeri Tribal Land Council gave the unit approval to use the word Yulendj, which means ‘sense, intelligence’ in the Woiwurrung language.

**Students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds**
In recent decades the higher education sector has moved toward a “joint venture” approach to bridging the incongruity experienced by low-SES students and those from non-traditional pathways. This acknowledges that while students may need to adapt to the new requirements of the university environment, there is also much that universities can do to be more inclusive of such students.

Some of the issues faced by these students can be understood through disparities in social capital (social status and networks) and cultural capital (the student’s familiarity with the dominant cultural codes and practices at university). Core to addressing this incongruity is recognising the unique discourse, or language, used at Australian universities, and the unspoken assumptions and expectations that students often face. This can then allow us to appreciate the diverse pathways, experiences, and discourses of students from different socio-cultural and socio-economic situations, and more clearly articulate the expectations and required knowledge of university study.

Improving access, retention, performance, and outcomes for students from low-SES backgrounds is a major focus of the government’s recent equity-focused higher education initiatives. The 2008 Review of Australian Higher Education (the Bradley report) noted significant gaps in accessing higher education between high-SES and low-SES individuals and recommended targets for dramatically increasing low-SES representation at Australian universities by 2020 (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). In response, the federal government’s Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), operating since 2012, has sought to fund programs and initiatives for domestic low-SES students to improve access and retention and help universities meet these targets.

Low-SES cohorts often overlap with other underrepresented groups, including first-in-family, mature-age, and part-time students, and the guidelines and resources in this toolkit take a broad and inclusive approach which can benefit these cohorts.
Culturally and linguistically diverse students

Monash University is an international university with a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Over a quarter of students enrolled at Monash University are international students (Monash University Planning and Statistics, 2017). Additionally, there is a significant population of domestic students who were either born overseas or have a culturally and linguistically diverse ancestry.

Therefore, developing intercultural competence is essential to be able to incorporate and respond to the cultural diversity at Monash appropriately. This involves learning about other cultures, worldviews, and ways of knowing, whilst simultaneously examining your own culture and assumptions.

It should be noticed that the development of intercultural competence is a lifelong process (Lundgren, 2005), and its development entails having continual interest in upskilling oneself in effective intercultural communication, exposure to multiple intercultural encounters, and gaining intercultural knowledge through education and training. The key factor in becoming an interculturally competent teacher is openness to view the world through others’ lenses and understand the world from their viewpoint (Deardorff, 2009).

Students with disabilities

People with disabilities and mental health concerns can face many challenges in the education environment which range from physical barriers, to obstructive policies, practices and attitudes. Fundamentally, it is important to understand that disability, mental health conditions and neurodiversity are normal part of human diversity and should not be viewed as a ‘problem’ for which allowances or alterations need to be made. Instead, barriers to access and participation should be seen as a result of
social and environmental factors which need to be made more inclusive, locating the ‘problem’ within society rather than individual.

These health concerns are not always visible or obvious, making it important to teach in a way that includes students with a range of abilities and health statuses, even in circumstances where you are not aware of teaching students with disabilities or impairments.

Additionally, although there are a growing number of students registering with Monash Disability Support Services (DSS), many student choose not to disclose conditions due to a fear of stigma and discrimination (Li, Denson & Dorstyn, 2017).

Mental health can impact student’s education in a number of ways, from attendance and physical well-being to issues with concentration, self esteem, and decision making ability. As a particularly vulnerable population, university students are five times more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health issue than the general population (Usher & Curran, 2017), and 86% of students with a mental health disorder do not complete their course of study (Hughes, Corcoran & Slee, 2015).

A generally inclusive approach to education will benefit students with disability and mental health conditions, however DSS provides teaching tips and advice regarding specific student cohorts as well as an inclusive teaching toolkit for student with disability.

GUIDELINES

❖ Engage in an ongoing reflection about your culture and assumptions.

➢ Be mindful of your own culture and the basic assumptions and norms that are informed by your background. Your culture and experiences will shape your assumptions about gender, sexuality, other cultures and ethnic groups, students with disabilities and low-SES students.
Take opportunities to reflect on your assumptions, particularly when they are challenged.

➢ Be open to learning about other cultures as much as possible, through self education and through participating in cultural safety training.

❖ Without stereotyping, consider non-western approaches to education and the impact this may have on students’ learning.

➢ For example, many Asian countries with Confucian worldviews, students primarily learn through repetition and memorising. These students may need more encouragement and guidance in engaging in critical thinking or creative expression (Merriam & Kim, 2008).

➢ Take into account that some non-Western cultures privilege the collective good over individual rights, which can impact on how students are motivated to learn and how they understand and interpret knowledges.

➢ For more information about incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledges into your teaching, see the Great Guide to Indigenisation of the Curriculum.

➢ Some cultures discourage speaking out of turn, or even speaking without being asked, impacting on how students engage in collaborative learning (Maringe & Sing, 2014). Seek ways to encourage all members of a group to participate (ie. you could assign each member a task to complete).

➢ Understandings around the role of the teacher and authority vary from culture to culture. Talking in the presence of elders, or questioning the teacher or their knowledge can be considered highly disrespectful.

➢ Some students come from cultures without copyright laws and that have different approaches to referencing and academic integrity. You may mention when discussing plagiarism that the concept of ‘owning’ knowledge, as currently understood by Australian Universities, largely
stems from the historical development of copyright laws in Australia, Britain and the USA.

➢ Include group or pair work to assist students establish intercultural relationships and recognise the value of diversity (Edmead 2012).

❖ Be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are diverse, and their heritage may not be obvious to you.

➢ It is not appropriate to make assumptions about students’ heritage, and rarely appropriate to ask students about where they’re from.
➢ Do not ask questions like ‘is anyone in this class Indigenous?’ or ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to provide an ‘Indigenous perspective’ on discussions in class. This singles out students and suggests that Indigenous students are ‘outsiders’ in your classroom.

❖ Remain aware that conventions around personal names differ between cultures, and in some cultures naming conventions might be different from western conventions.

➢ When teaching citing and referencing, for example, it might be worth clarifying what we mean by “first name” and “surname,” and how to cite non-Western names that may not neatly fit into such a breakdown.

❖ Take the time to learn about Indigenous cultural practices, such as smoking ceremonies and Sorry Business, so you can respond with understanding when these are mentioned by students.

➢ Spend some time browsing the Additional Resources page, and consider signing up for an Indigenous Cultural Safety workshop.
For larger classes, or ongoing series of classes, you may wish to make an Acknowledgement of Country. Anyone can make an Acknowledgement of Country, though note that a Welcome to Country ceremony can only be performed by a person who is a Traditional Owner of the land you are on.

➢ At Monash University campuses and sites in Melbourne we acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations, as this is inclusive of all Indigenous peoples in the area. At the Parkville campus, we acknowledge the Wurundjeri people.

- At Peninsula, the Traditional Owners of the land are the Boon Wurrung people.
- Suggested wording: "I wish to acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose land we are gathered today. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging."

➢ Note that an Acknowledgement of Country should always be made at formal library events, such as exhibition openings and conferences, preferably by the first speaker in their welcome or introduction.

- Find out more on the Victorian Government's "Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners" website.

➢ You can also acknowledge Traditional Owners in official documents or your email signature—for example: “I wish to acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose land Monash University operates. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present."

➢ Note that an Acknowledgement of Country should always be made at formal library events, such as exhibition openings and conferences, preferably by the first speaker in their welcome or introduction.
Learn about the software available in the library’s adaptive technology rooms (ATRs), so you know the kinds of assistive tools available to students and how these programs can impact use of e-learning resources, so that you can provide accessible documents.

➢ The assistive software available includes screen readers (JAWS), screen magnifiers (MAGic), dictation software (Dragon), learning and literacy support tools (texthelp read&write, inspiration) and optical character recognition (OCR) software (ABBYY FineReader).
➢ Knowing how screen readers work, for example, is important when designing online resources, as it helps you recognise the importance of proper page structure, appropriate use of headings and hyperlinked text, and the necessity of alt text for images and icons. Further details about creative accessible documents can be found in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines website.
➢ To use the ATRs, students must be registered with DSS. For more information, contact Disability Support Services (DSS) or talk to one of the library’s Disability Contact Officers.

Become familiar with the services offered by the library’s Disability Contact Officers, and the university’s Disability Support Services (DSS), so you can refer students on as required.

➢ There are useful resources on the DSS intranet, including an Inclusive teaching toolkit for students with disability and an Inclusive teaching checklist.
➢ Try to face students when you’re talking—following your mouth movements while you’re speaking is essential for students with hearing impairments who might lip-read.
Examine the teaching space beforehand to determine the best place to stand to increase your visibility, though in some classrooms there are no obvious places to stand. Note that students learning English may also benefit from seeing your mouth as you’re speaking.

**PRINCIPLE: Reflect on your teaching practices**

Reflecting on your teaching performance is essential to improving and refining inclusive teaching practices. Think critically about your experiences and explore your behavior, thinking, and emotions, identifying opportunities for improvement. Develop a structured approach to reflective practice, utilising reflective writing, peer learning, and feedback as tools to explore and assess your work analytically.

It is essential to remember that everyone can make mistakes. What is important, is to deliberately evaluate your teaching to recognise and reflect on these mistakes in order to improve your teaching practices.

“Inclusion is core business in education, it's not some add-on social policy … it's what we're always aiming to do” – Library staff member

**GUIDELINES**

- Collect feedback from students and staff, and use this to assess and redesign future classes or resources.

- For classes and workshops, consider using a Google Form to facilitate student feedback. These can be filled in on laptops or devices, or they can be printed and handed out for completion at the end of the class.
➢ For embedded classes, it is also worth following up with the lecturer or tutor after the class for additional feedback.
➢ For e-learning resources, make sure there are feedback avenues in place, so users can let you know if they found something unclear.
➢ Remember to gather feedback during the class or consultation as well as at the end, and adjust your teaching as necessary.

❖ Engage in an ongoing reflection about your culture and assumptions.

➢ Be mindful of your own culture and the basic assumptions and norms that are informed by your background. Your culture and experiences will shape your assumptions about gender, sexuality, other cultures and ethnic groups, students with disabilities and low-SES students. Take opportunities to reflect on your assumptions, particularly when they are challenged.
➢ Be open to learning about other cultures as much as possible, through self education and through participating in cultural safety training.

❖ Use reflective writing as a tool for analysing both your positive and your negative teaching experiences.

➢ Keep a journal in which you record teaching or consulting experiences.

Remember that critical reflection involves four stages:
  ■ Description of event
  ■ Personal opinion
  ■ Linking to previous experience or knowledge of pedagogical theory
  ■ Critical understanding of implications for future practice

  ● (Lane, McMaster, Adnum, & Cavanagh, 2014, p.886)
  ● (Further information on practising reflective writing)
Engage in peer observation activities by inviting a colleague to participate in your class and offer constructive feedback.

- Alternatively, observing others allows you to see how techniques you use are experienced by the learner, and develop new ideas or practices for your teaching.

**PRINCIPLE: Use inclusive language and resources**

The language and resources used in teaching and learning are central to making students feel welcome and included in academic study and university culture. It is therefore important to avoid using gender-exclusive language and be mindful of preferred terms for different social and cultural groups. Inclusive communication also involves avoiding colloquialisms and other culture-specific means of articulating information, and being aware of what kinds of examples, images or anecdotes might be culturally insensitive.

Creating inclusive resources requires being aware of and incorporating elements such as universal design, accessibility and cultural competency into all aspects of resource design.

“I think we fail to recognise when something is either so colloquial or so cultural that it has become normal at a level when it should not be.” – Library staff member

**GUIDELINES**
Avoid using slang, colloquialisms, and other culture-specific references or language conventions.

These may not be understood by students from other cultures, or unfamiliar with the conventions of Australian English. If using cultural references, provide some context so they can be understood by all students.

Use gender neutral language where appropriate.

When referring to generic or unknown persons, use gender neutral pronouns, such as “they” and “them.” For example, an assessment task that requires students to “interview a researcher about his practices” assumes that all researchers are men – replacing “his” with “their” avoids this gender exclusive language.

Avoid using gendered terms or phrases when referring to groups of students. ‘Men and women’ and ‘ladies and gentlemen’ are gendered phrases, and using this language can exclude non-binary students. ‘Guys’ is a masculine term yet it is often used to refer to groups of diverse genders. Although it remains a common practice in university culture, saying ‘ok guys!’ to bring a class to attention privileges this male-gendered term and can lead to feelings of exclusion or invalidation on the part of women and those of non-binary genders. Try out different terms instead, such as ‘ok everyone,’ ‘ok people,’ or just ‘let’s finish up our conversations.’

“Somewhere along the way I got used to groups being referred to as ‘you guys’ … and when I started teaching I’d do it as well … and then I had some students ask ‘could you please not refer to us as guys?’” – Library staff member
Where appropriate use ‘people first’ language, as this puts the person first, rather than the condition or characteristic.

➢ For example, use ‘people with disabilities’ rather than ‘disabled people’. Try to be as clear and specific as possible. In some contexts ‘people with disabilities’ may be more accurate and more respectful of people as individuals.

➢ Not everyone uses people first language to describe themselves for a variety of reasons. Respect how people wish to refer to themselves and don’t correct the terminology of others.

Avoid using language that implies having a disability or mental illness is inherently negative.

➢ For example, avoid saying ‘that’s so nuts’ or ‘this is crazy’, as comments like these suggest that you think mental illness is a synonym for ‘bad’. Similarly, ‘that’s so lame’ is a common phrase that suggests mobility issues equate to worthlessness.

➢ Using language that affirms the stigma about having a disability and/or mental health concerns can exacerbate other forms of prejudice. For example, LGBTIQ+ people disproportionately experience anxiety, depression and poorer physical health outcomes resulting from the additional stress caused by discrimination (Meyer & Frost, 2012).

If you have to identify a student during a class, do not use racial or gendered terms. It is best to use names whenever possible, otherwise find neutral descriptors.

➢ For example, if you’ve asked for volunteers and several hands have gone up, you could call upon “the student at the back” or “the student in
the red shirt,” as opposed to identifying the student by assumed race or gender.

➢ *Note that spotlighting students for individual contributions to a class is not generally good practice, as this can make more introverted students highly uncomfortable – such students could contribute in other ways, such as in written exercises, electronic polls, or pair-based activities.

❖ When discussing a specific Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, it is best to refer to the specific nation or language group that individual belongs to.

➢ For example, Reuben Berg, who runs the Cultural Safety workshops at Monash University, is a Gunditjmara man.

➢ There is some debate within the community about terms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For example, Indigenous Australian (with a capital ‘I’), First Australian, First Nations Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are all terms applied to the community but there are a diverse range of opinions about whether these names are appropriate or accurate. Ultimately, referring to the specific nation an individual belongs to is the best approach.

❖ Avoid using ‘female’ (or ‘females’) as a noun; where you can use ‘women’, ‘woman’ or ‘girl(s)’, do so.

➢ For example, avoid writing or saying things like ‘there are so few females in this class’. Instead you can write or say ‘there are so few women in this class’. One reason for this is that ‘female’ is a term that can be applied to animals and objects. ‘Women’ and ‘girls’ are terms reserved for humans, and it is important to emphasise the humanity of women, given the broad historical and cultural context.
❖ Respect students’ gender pronouns.

➢ Avoid hastily assuming genders of students, and be mindful of using their correct pronoun* when it is indicated. Using the wrong gender pronoun is called ‘misgendering.’ If you misgender a student, correct yourself and apologise briefly, as emphasising your mistake may make the student feel uncomfortable.

➢ You can list your pronouns in your email signature, or in opening slides along with your name, which can signal to transgender/gender diverse students that they are in a safe space. For example, in an opening slide you can put your pronouns next to your name thus: ‘Jo Kovacic (she/her/hers).’

➢ To find out more about transgender/gender diverse people, you can access the videos in the Trans 101 Gender Diversity Crash Course. For more about trans-inclusive language, see Alex Kapitan’s Radical Copyeditor’s guide for writing about transgender people.

➢ *Note that it has become common practice to talk about people’s ‘preferred’ pronouns. There’s increasing controversy around this phrasing, however, as it suggests that a person’s pronouns are a preference or a choice, rather than a fact about them. We suggest it is better to avoid this phrasing. You might ask ‘which pronoun do you use?’ instead of ‘what’s your preferred pronoun?’, for example.

❖ Use resources that reflect diversity. Avoid using stock images and creating examples that reinforce stereotypes around gender, sexuality, people of colour and people with disabilities.

➢ When selecting images or taking new photos—whether it’s for slides, websites, or promotional material—aim to represent diversity wherever possible. For example, if using pictures of families or couples, consider including pictures of LGBTIQ+/rainbow families.
➢ Consider gender diversity in images as well. Stock photos in which all doctors are men and all nurses are women, for example, reinforce gender stereotypes around these professions, which can make women studying medicine or men studying nursing feel isolated or uncomfortable.

➢ Cultural diversity is similarly important, as stock photos can reinforce stereotypes about people of colour. Media representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for example, are consistently negative and it is important to avoid reinforcing those stereotypes.

❖ Ensure that resources are accessible to students with visual impairments or reading difficulties.

➢ To make visual information clear to visually impaired students in your classes, describe and explain images, and avoid using images alone to convey meaning (Mortiboys, 2010). Conversely, adding images to text explanations aids in comprehension.

➢ Wherever possible, avoid putting text in images. When text is necessary (in flow charts, for example), ensure “alt text” is provided, or produce alternative text-only versions. Students with vision impairment or reading difficulties often use screen reading software, such as JAWS, NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access), or VoiceOver for Mac, and unless alternative text is provided for images, or text-only versions are produced, visual resources can be inaccessible. In particular, avoid using Piktochart to generate text-heavy resources. Piktochart exports images, which will not be accessible. Presenting text in images also means that text cannot be resized (to become more readable) without losing quality.

➢ Provide handouts in electronic form.

➢ Make sure that Powerpoint slides;
Have limited text
- Use Arial or Calibri fonts
- Have maximum contrast
- Use a large font
- Further guidance on creating accessible materials can be found here.

❖ Be mindful of colour blind users and don’t depend on colours alone to communicate meaning in your resources.

➢ Colour blindness affects approximately 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women worldwide (Colour Blind Awareness, n.d.). Yet a lack of awareness around colour blindness means that many visuals – particularly graphs, charts and maps – aren’t designed with colour blind users in mind. To avoid producing inaccessible visuals, consider the following:
➢ Use symbols, as well as colours, to convey your message.
➢ When using colours in charts or graphs, consider using textures as well.
➢ Avoid colour combinations that are indistinguishable for some colour blind users (e.g. red and green, blue and purple, light green and yellow, etc.)
➢ For more recommendations, see Collinge (2017).

PRINCIPLE: Be flexible and responsive

Be flexible in your approach by creating a variety of activities and resources that allow students options in how they access and demonstrate their learning. Be ready to adjust activities or class plans depending on student needs—whether it's the needs of a student with a vision, hearing, or mobility impairment, or the learning
needs of the class. Incorporate opportunities for student feedback throughout your teaching and respond by adjusting content accordingly.

Teaching inclusively means "allowing for different levels of ability in the class; being flexible enough to change your teaching as you go, if you see that people are struggling with the level you've pitched it at." – Library staff member

GUIDELINES

❖ Create activities and resources which present information in multiple ways using a mix of visual, aural, verbal, and kinesthetic approaches, allowing for different kinds of student engagement and abilities.

➢ Be ready to change activities or formats if the one you are doing is not working.
➢ You may have a text information passage for students to read, then a video or activity which explains that information in another way, or in more depth.
➢ Disability Support Services can assist in developing materials for students with specific conditions.

❖ Mental health conditions and neurodiversity may cause students to behave in a variety of ways. Be flexible in accommodating student needs so that they feel comfortable.

➢ Some students with anxiety, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (for example) may not wish to work in a group, or may ask to work with specific people. Giving students choices is a flexible approach which can make them feel more comfortable and accepted.
➢ Students may need to leave the room during the class. Be understanding if a student asks to leave the classroom, or if a student leaves abruptly. It can be helpful to mention at the beginning of a class that this is acceptable.

❖ Frequently check students’ comprehension levels so that you can better respond to the skill levels of the students.

➢ Consider surveying or polling students (anonymously) at the beginning of the class to check their confidence levels with different skills or concepts. This can be used to set students at ease (knowing there are others struggling with new concepts) and guide you during the class (indicating what topics need further explanation). Online platforms such as Google Forms, Poll Everywhere, or the Monash Audience Response System (MARS) can be used for this kind of anonymous survey.

➢ Ask comprehension questions regularly to check students’ understanding. Be aware that acquiescent response bias means that yes/no questions are more likely to be answered “yes,” meaning that asking “do you understand?” is more likely to meet a “yes” response, although this may not reflect the student’s actual understanding level. Try asking questions where “no” answers reflect comprehension, such as: “Would you like further clarification on any point?”

❖ Allow short breaks in your classes to give students time to process information and rest.

➢ This can mean planning breaks between activities, or factoring in time for reflection. Time for processing information and rest is particularly useful for a neurodiverse group of students.

➢ Some students require more time to answer questions or complete tasks for a variety of reasons. Build flexibility around activities into your planning.
When talking to students about their work, ensure your feedback is constructive.

➢ Be clear and explicit about how students can improve their work, providing them with some practical advice for the future.
➢ When providing feedback on assignments, refer to assignment rubric/marking guide if available.
➢ Comment on what the student is doing well. Focusing only on where the student is going wrong can be demotivating (Sarkany & Deitte, 2017).
➢ Encourage the students to ask questions about your feedback, and regularly check their comprehension and understanding of your advice.
➢ For more ideas on how to provide constructive feedback, see the University of Melbourne’s “Providing effective feedback to students” guide.

Where appropriate, privately discuss students’ learning needs and adjust your lesson or approach accordingly (Mortiboys, 2010, p. 112).

➢ If students disclose a condition to you, ask them what approaches are useful and, if appropriate, refer them to DSS. Be careful not to doubt or question their condition.

When possible and appropriate, address student displays of exclusion and intolerance directly when they occur, but use these as educational opportunities.

➢ From the example provided in Monash University’s “Inclusive Education Guidelines: Diverse Genders and Sexualities” (2016, pp. 6-7): during a group-based class activity, you hear some students use demeaning language as they proclaim, “That’s so gay!” A preferable
way to respond to this scenario would be to ask the students why they're using the term “gay” in such a way, then explaining why such use could be hurtful and offensive. This addresses the poor behaviour in an educational way, and signals to students who belong to the excluded group that discrimination is not normal or acceptable.

➢ For more guidance on how to handle poor student behaviour, refer to the Resolution of Unacceptable Behaviour – Conduct and Compliance Policy.

❖ Strive to be flexible in your consultation times and when scheduling library workshops, especially if you know a student (or a group of students) struggles to be on campus within certain hours due to work or family commitments.

➢ Students from low-SES backgrounds, as well as mature-age students and those studying part-time, are often “time poor” due to “balancing financial pressures, family responsibilities and/or significant hours of employment” (Devlin, et al., 2012, p.4). Empathising with this experience of time poverty, and understanding when students struggle to complete assignments due to these circumstances, can facilitate better teaching and learning experiences.

➢ “Why are they not coming [to classes]? Does it come down to the fact that they have to go and work from 5:00 till 10:00, ... or do they live ages away and they have to travel and don't have their own car and they're limited to the campus bus … sometimes you're simply not aware of what the issues are for them, and you try, as much as possible, to schedule things at times that are a bit more inclusive.” – Library staff member

❖ Make arrangements for support workers (e.g. notetakers, assistants, interpreters) who might accompany a student with disability.
➢ When teaching a student who is assisted by a note-taker, scribe, or interpreter, direct your conversation to the student, not their learning assistant.
➢ Check if you need to pause, or repeat the information, for the support worker to catch up (Mortiboys, 2010).

**PRINCIPLE: Be proactive and intentional**

Consider the ways in which students with different backgrounds and abilities approach and interact with their education, and proactively strive to make your teaching and educational environment inclusive from the outset.

Non-traditional university students are less likely to be aware of the implicit expectations of university teaching staff, making those expectations explicit is key to inclusive teaching. This means intentionally designing learning activities and resources in which take into account a wide range of skills, experiences, learning preferences and ways of knowing.

“Why are we running this class? Let's make that really clear, so then we can make it clear to the students.” – Library staff member

**GUIDELINES**

❖ Be explicit in all aspects of your teaching. Telling students how they can address you, clarifying the learning aims and outcomes and articulating class structure is all part of inclusive practice.
➢ Clearly articulate the purpose, aims and expected outcomes of the class or e-learning resources. For embedded classes or resources, these should reflect the unit objectives. The Research Skills Development (RSD) framework (Willison and O'Regan, 2006, 2016) can be useful when articulating and scaffolding these objectives.

➢ At the beginning of each class, it is a good idea to give a brief outline of the structure and expectations for the session so that you make your expectations about student-participation in your class explicit. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, in particular, can have different expectations of how classes will run, so it's important to articulate your expectations.

➢ Students have varied understandings of what to expect and how to behave in the classroom and clarifying expectations reduces anxiety and encourages participation.

➢ Be consistent with terminology and make links between topics/parts of the lesson clear through ‘signposting’.

➢ Signposting is language which helps learners navigate though the lesson more easily. It can indicate the kind of information being discussed (is this an important point, a divergence, or an example), transitions between topics, and how ideas are related. Examples could be ‘This is a key point’, ‘This is an example of…’, or ‘This relates to…’

➢ Whilst useful for all learners, this is particularly useful for neurodiverse students and students with mental health concerns who may have trouble with concentration, memory, or processing information.

❖ Scrutinise what assumed knowledge is reasonable, for first-year cohorts in particular, and take time to explain the basics.

➢ Take the time to explain library jargon as many students have never encountered such terms before. Examples of terms and concepts not widely understood outside academic environments may include: peer review, academic literature, scholarly literature, primary and secondary
sources, academic journals, scholarly databases, critical thinking, argumentation, contention, and so on.

➢ “There are a lot of subtle ways where we can unintentionally ‘other’ people – making people feel like ‘others’ – by any kind of assumption that the students that are in our class have the same knowledge that we have, or came into being a student the same pathway we did.” – Library staff member

❖ Design classes so that they involve active learning.

Active Learning means that students are actively engaging with and thinking about the learning material through tasks or discussion, as opposed to passively listening or reading. This increases critical thinking skills and improves retention and student motivation (Prince, 2004).

➢ Examples of active learning activities include brainstorming, case studies, debating/discussion, peer feedback, quizzes or polls, and jigsaw activities.

➢ Students with less confidence or who are more introverted, for example, may be uncomfortable contributing to a whole-class discussion—working in pairs might provide them with a way to get involved and share their ideas that is less intimidating (eg. Think, Pair, Share).

➢ Explore ways of making the most of the teaching space. If there are large whiteboards around the room, for example, they might provide a way to get students active during group work.

➢ Find ways to make database and software demonstrations interactive, to keep students involved and engaged. When demonstrating the use of Search, for example, consider having students volunteer topics or keywords—get them involved in finding and combining search terms. Alternatively, ask the students to perform their own search on topics
relevant to them, then ask them to discuss the problems they encountered in pairs.
➢ Learn more about Active Learning.

❖ Scaffold students’ learning, so that it gradually introduces and progresses their knowledge and skills.

A “scaffolded learning” approach begins by providing students with a support structure or framework that is gradually removed as they become more independent (Devlin et al., 2012). This technique helps to alleviate the frustration and discouragement students can feel when encountering new and difficult concepts.

➢ Break up complex concepts or skills into smaller tasks, giving students time to practice and give feedback at each stage of the lesson.
➢ The Research Skills Development (RSD) framework was designed for this purpose—to scaffold the different aspects of skills development—and can be a very useful tool when teaching research and learning skills and progressing students/researchers to greater levels of autonomy (Willison, J., & O'Regan, K., 2006, 2016).
➢ Articulate complex concepts in multiple ways. This may involve rephrasing key concepts, or using visual aids or images to represent them differently.
➢ Create vocabulary or concept guides for specific topics and give students a chance to look this over before and after class. This is particularly useful for students who have English as a second language.
➢ Begin with a simple task, followed by learning tasks of increasing complexity. Using Bloom’s taxonomy can help with this.
➢ Model the task for the students. This involves working through the task yourself, whilst verbalising what you are doing and why you are doing it, including any mistakes you may make along the way.
➢ Learn more about scaffolding techniques.

❖ Look for opportunities to integrate learning about, or representation of, Indigenous cultures and traditions into your classes.

➢ “Embed Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in all university curricula to provide students with the knowledge, skills and understandings which form the foundations of Indigenous cultural competency.” (Universities Australia, 2011, p.9)

➢ This could involve using positive examples involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, or using works by Indigenous authors or artists when drawing on items from library collections.

❖ Be aware of potential gaps in computer literacy and digital skills.

➢ In her report into digital skills among Australian high school graduates, Sue Thomson (2015) notes the significant gaps in digital skills between students from high- and low-SES backgrounds, with schools in low-SES and regional areas reporting a lack of access to skilled IT training and reliable, up-to-date IT resources.

❖ Do not plan classes assuming that all students will have their own laptop or mobile device. If your class requires the use of computers, for example, make sure there are some available for students who do not have their own laptop, or have students work in groups so that only one is needed between multiple students.

➢ It can be tempting to assume that all students have a laptop and smartphone on them at all times, but this is not always the case. A student may only have access to a computer at home, or may be using an older laptop or smartphone of limited capacity. And on any given
day, a student may be without their device due to technical failure or personal circumstances. High expectations of technology ownership can also create barriers for low-socioeconomic students, who may struggle to afford high-quality devices. Try to factor these considerations in when planning a technology-heavy class.

➢ “Some students may not have access to technology. ... [I treat] the use of technology ... as a facility, instead of an aim. And I've witnessed some people falling into that trap, as treating technology as the main point.” – Library staff member

❖ If providing treats (or catering) during classes, be aware of dietary requirements and eating restrictions, and try to provide alternatives.

➢ Whenever possible, provide gluten-free, dairy-free, nut-free, vegan, halal, kosher alternatives, such as Skittles.

❖ Promote help-seeking behaviours and ensure students are informed of where to go for support.

➢ Include contact information, links to relevant content, or information about the R&L point where possible.

❖ For embedded classes, try to find out ahead of time whether any students will need special accommodations due to disabilities, and plan your class accordingly.

➢ This may involve asking the lecturer or unit coordinator if they are aware of any students with special needs.

➢ Check physical teaching spaces before classes begin, to ensure there are no obstacles that would impede accessibility for students in wheelchairs or with other mobility impairments.
➢ If you have administrative access to the unit’s Moodle site, you can generate an AAA (alternative arrangements for assessments) report. Although some information will be of limited relevance, it may still indicate whether classroom accommodations need to be made for any students.

**PRINCIPLE: Display empathy and understanding**

Being empathetic to students and making the effort to understand their needs and frustrations is essential to good teaching and learning practice. Empathy builds awareness of individual and cultural perspectives and assists in developing teaching that is relevant and accessible for students.

This is of particular importance in the Library setting due to the unique type of teaching undertaken by the library staff, who often undertake single instance classes and workshops or consultations. An empathetic approach establishes trust and assists in building a spirit of collaboration between staff and student.

“There are a lot of subtle ways where we can unintentionally 'other' people...by any kind of assumption that the students that are in our class have the same knowledge that we have, or came into being a student through the same pathway we did." – Library staff member

**GUIDELINES**

❖ Make an effort to listen empathetically to students when they tell you about their educational experiences. Consider the ways their experiences might differ from your own and adjust your teaching approaches accordingly (Walton, 2015).

❖ Avoid being judgemental about students' work.
➢ For example, avoid making assumptions about how much time a student has spent on a task or how much effort they've put in. A student’s work does not always reflect the time or effort involved in its creation, and it can be very discouraging to hear that they haven’t worked hard when they have.

❖ Strive to be empathetic and understanding of time-poor students, who may have difficulty making it to class in person or meeting assignment deadlines.

➢ Being time poor is a common aspect of the student experience today, but this can be an even greater issue for students from low-SES backgrounds or non-traditional pathways, who may have no choice but to juggle work or family commitments with their studies.

➢ If during a R&L Point consultation a student mentions not having attended class, or not having time to do the required readings, try withholding judgement and understanding the challenges the student might be facing. Such a scenario might also provide an opportunity to discuss time management and efficient reading skills, and coming from a place of empathy, rather than judgement, will likely make the student much more receptive.

❖ Be mindful of the expenses involved in university education and take opportunities to promote library copies of textbooks and other cost-free resources available to students.

➢ Academic textbooks can be prohibitively expensive for low-SES students, so if a student mentions not having bought the textbook, try not to respond with, “You would buy the textbook if you were serious about your studies,” but with, “Let’s look at how to use Search to find library copies of the textbook.”
➢ If a student is expressing serious concern about the cost of textbooks, it might be appropriate to encourage them to look at the university’s equity scholarships.

❖ Remember your own experiences of learning complex new things, and strive to be empathetic to students who are learning skills that are familiar to you, but may be unfamiliar or difficult for students.

➢ For example, the research process can be broken down into the actions a student or researcher takes, but also by the emotions experienced (Kuhlthau, 1993). The Research Skills Development (Willison and O'Regan, 2006, 2016) stage, ‘Embark and Clarify’, might evoke uncertainty, ‘Find and Generate’ might inspire optimism where the ‘Evaluate and Reflect’ can involve feelings of doubt or frustration. If you convey that you understand the range of emotions people might experience during the research process, and that this is normal, it can make it easier for students to ask questions and admit to difficulties.