

Decolonisation, Inclusion and the Biological Sciences: Getting Started

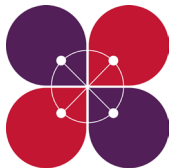


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The Project: An inclusive and Decolonised Curriculum in the Biological Sciences

Project aim: to develop and decolonise the biological sciences curriculum to create programmes more inclusive and empowering for our students



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Getting Started



- Prioritised a student-staff partnership approach (Higgins et al., 2019)
- Thought 'small-scale'
- Agreed to focus on the development of inclusive reading lists
- Initiated the conversation of decolonising science within the programme team
- Piloted the use of EDI materials in Immunology BMS09100



Inclusive Reading Lists

- Agreed a process for auditing module reading lists and completed a pilot exercise, based on Schucan Bird and Pitman (2020) and Taylor et al. (2021)
 - Developed a protocol for searching catalogues, databases and other resources with search terms sensitive to the intersection between programme and EDI related themes
 - Filtered the searches to create inclusive reading lists for the biological sciences
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Inclusive Reading Lists



- Created a Library Guide to support staff and students with auditing their reading lists and finding inclusive sources





Introducing EDI and Decolonisation into the Curriculum (learning from others)



Equality and Diversity
in the Life Sciences

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Decolonising Immunology
Zara Gatt, University of Glasgow



University
of Glasgow

Student Feedback

[...] very valuable opportunity to be given the option whenever we felt comfortable to share examples, challenges, uncertainties and what needs be better in terms of safety and inclusivity in the both the social, academic and professional setting etc.

[...] how to openly discuss issues around discrimination and colonisation

It opened up my eyes to how people have been and still are treated unfairly...


It made me realise that there is lack of diversity in the science field and from my experience so far there is a lack of diversity on the education part of science.

I am more aware of the different struggles an individual can face.



- Building Inclusive Reading Lists LibGuide available for colleagues and students across the University (over 700 visits in first three months)
- Biological Sciences Subject Recommendations List generated for staff and students
- Developed knowledge of EDI themes, in relevant subject areas, enabled the identification of 'points of enhancement' in the programme suite delivery
- Literature identified is available as an online reading list



- Module enhancement, including curriculum change, on three core modules delivered across all five programmes and four route specific modules
 - Developing an interactive tool to highlight scientists from around the globe
 - The team have shared practice internally at a programme team event; EDI Celebration at The Business School; Digital Library Skills Programme; DLTE Global Focus Workshop
 - The team have shared practice externally at the AdvanceHE, Students as Co-Creators Symposium; Edinburgh Napier Students Association Decolonising the Curriculum panel discussion; Association for Learning Technology, ALT-ELESIG Scotland event
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Lessons Learned

- Personal commitment and professional aspect to this work
- Student-staff partnership is essential
- True decolonisation requires bottom up, top down and all-round activity
- Our work is just the early beginnings of decolonisation



Lessons Learned



- Adopting an experiential learning approach and focusing on student enhancement and facilitating personal transformation rather than only focusing on tangible outcomes was in line with the spirit of decolonising work



Practical Tips



- Planning for time to build trust and respect between members of the team is important when considering timelines
- Funding for students should consider and mitigate against invisible labour



Practical Tips



- Create teams with 'local' knowledge of subject area and programmes
- Growing body of literature can help with understanding diversifying/decolonising work in HE
- Use the tools other universities have made available



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Steering Group

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Thank you

