Making seminars inclusive: group activity

Collection: Inclusive teaching

Resource: Inclusive seminars

Approximate duration

1.5 - 2 hours

Learning outcomes

To become aware of key accessibility requirements for seminars and thus be able to plan seminars that will be easy to follow for as many different types of students as possible.

Introduction

This activity will give participants the opportunity to explore the issue of accessibility in English seminars by engaging in detail with video examples of inspiring seminars led by lecturers unaware of guidelines for inclusive seminars to which your group will have access (the guidelines are contained in the same folder as this activity in HumBox). The guidelines are adapted from the English Subject Centre's seed guide *Inclusive Teaching*. You may like to supplement your preparation for the session by looking at the inclusive teaching guide and perhaps also at the report, *Staying the Course: The Experiences of Disabled Students of English and Creative Writing*, which contains the research which underpins the guide. These materials will provide you with ways of responding to questions (and perhaps objections) from the group about the rationale behind the guidelines.

The activity

You may like to combine this activity with one or more of the related activities in the Small group teaching resource in The Pool (http://humbox.ac.uk/2929/).

1. Download the guidelines on inclusive seminars by clicking on the link in this sentence, print them out, and distribute them to the group.
2. Tell everyone to read the guidelines.
3. Start a plenary discussion by asking everyone if they have any immediate reactions to any particular recommendation. (Usually, one or more of the recommendations will produce some opposition.) Discuss the rationale behind, the desirability of, and the practicality of implementing the controversial recommendations. (See the note on preparation for the session in the 'Introduction' above.)
4. Show one of the videos below, or part of it, to the group, explaining that the seminar leader was not aware of the guidelines. Ask everyone to note down any ways in which the seminar does not put the guidelines into practice, and any ideas about how the seminar might be redesigned to incorporate the more important recommendations from the guidelines.
5. **Greg Tate, Seminar on *Oliver Twist***

Oliver Twist seminar
(http://vimeo.com/20107021)

Beth Palmer, Seminar on *Oliver Twist* by Amy Tan

The Bonesetter's Daughter seminar
(http://vimeo.com/21071502)

You can find more information about these seminars in the Small group teaching resource in The Pool (http://humbox.ac.uk/2929/).

6. Divide the group into subgroups of 3-4 participants each. Ask each group to prepare a very short (2-3 minute) playlet staging a version of what might have happened in the seminar if one or more of the recommendations in the guidelines had been implemented.

7. Go round the groups in turn, asking them to perform their playlets. Follow the performances with a plenary discussion about the practicality of, desirability of, and rationale for the alterations to the seminar that the groups have staged.

Links & References

- *Inclusive Teaching*. English Subject Centre seed guide. A short guide to how to teach in the most helpful way possible for the largest possible number of undergraduates.

- *Staying the Course: The Experiences of Disabled Students of English and Creative Writing*. The English Subject Centre report which formed the basis for the seed guide. This report contains many vivid quotations from disabled students about their experiences when studying our discipline.

- *Small Group Teaching: A Good Practice Guide*. An English Subject Centre Report with more ideas about seminar teaching.

- Seminar Teaching. An area on the English Subject Centre website: gateway to Subject Centre resources on seminar teaching.

Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 1:** Respect for individual learners
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox. http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/

Resources in the inclusive teaching Collection

- Inclusive teaching: introduction to the collection
- Imaginary students: resource overview
  - Imaginary students: individual activity
  - Imaginary students: group activity
- Inclusive lectures: resource overview
  - Making lectures inclusive: individual activity
  - Making lectures inclusive: group activity
- Inclusive seminars: resource overview
  - Making seminars inclusive: individual activity
  - **Making seminars inclusive: group activity (*you are here)**
- Inaccessible documents: resource overview
  - Making 'PowerPoint' more accessible: individual activity
  - Making 'PowerPoint' more accessible: group activity
  - Making 'Word' documents accessible: individual activity
  - Making 'Word' documents accessible: group activity

- Students, comments, conditions: resource overview
    - Inclusive teaching quiz: individual activity
    - Inclusive teaching card sort: group activity
- Departmental audit: resource overview
    - How inclusive is your department?: individual activity