

Delivery: How we teach and the learning environment

This section looks at the ways in which we deliver teaching and the need for supportive learning environments which feel safe and inclusive for both students and teachers. See also 'creating safe learning environments'.

Remember that establishing a safe and supportive environment for students – and staff - is as important as developing a diverse and inclusive curriculum. The questions below have been designed to help you think about actions you can take to help create this environment.

Reflective Questions:

- Are you aware of the background of your students?
- To what extent does the content of your programme presume a particular profile / mindset of the student and their orientation to the world?
- Are students aware of potentially sensitive topics of discussion as they come to the session? (E.g. discrimination, bullying, transphobia, racism). Is there opportunity for students to voice any concerns to you outside of the group setting?
- If topics are being discussed that are potentially sensitive for individual students, are you clearly signposting support and debrief opportunities?
- Does your session/task/assignment invite consideration and appreciation of different approaches to the subject?
- Are students given opportunities in their learning to widen their circles of contact or experience?
- Have you suggested your students learn from anything other than the written word?

Suggested actions:

- Ensure you have time at the beginning and end of the session to create a supportive learning environment and allow for individual support where needed (see also 'creating safe learning environments').
- Reflect on the profile, mindset, orientation to the world and approach to learning that your teaching may be presuming. E.g. If you are talking about a specific diagnosis, are you assuming none of the students in the room have personal experience of this diagnosis? Who is represented as an 'other' in our teaching and how? Is this potentially problematic and for whom?
- Consider ways of finding out more about your students' questions, apprehensions, aspirations, challenges etc (e.g. via an anonymous poll or anonymous post-its or notes used in the session) and factor these in to your teaching. When choosing to use "anonymous" options, make sure you have thought about filtering inappropriate words using technological solutions.
- Consider whether your sessions and materials can include diverse speakers and guest lecturers, consider options such as video recordings to include diverse voices.
- Are there opportunities to introduce discussion through medical humanities? (Use of art, films, songs and other culturally relevant artefacts that speak to individual experiences of healthcare).
- Acknowledge within your classroom that knowledge in some cultures is passed through oral traditions; this means in the Western world we have more knowledge about some groups than others.

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