Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum: lessons from Scotland’s colleges

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1. Introduction

This report has been produced as an outcome of the one year change programme, Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum, involving eight further education institutions and led by Scotland’s Colleges.

1.1 Background

In 2010 the Higher Education Academy embarked on a three-year programme of work focusing on equality and diversity in the curriculum. Led by the Higher Education Academy in partnership with Scotland’s Colleges and the Equality Practitioners’ Network, the Programme is funded by the Scottish Funding Council as part of their support for the delivery of the equality and diversity framework.

The aim of the programme is to work with both higher and further education institutions to further embed equality and diversity within curriculum design, delivery and assessment, building on the diversity of experience and current practice in Scotland to further the development of inclusive institutional cultures which promote the success of all students.

The programme has offered a wide variety of activities and resources to those involved in learning and teaching at institutional, departmental and individual levels. These have included:

- Survey of individuals to better understand the strengths and priority concerns across the sector
- Self-evaluation framework to enable the review and evaluation of progress
- Strategic review and planning workshops to facilitate institutional planning and promote cross-sector partnerships
- Special interest groups to facilitate networking and the co-ordination of initiatives on inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment
- Workshop series to build the capacity of the sector to address common emerging themes
- One year change programme to help HE institutions develop an inclusive culture
- One year change programme to help FE institutions further embed equality and diversity in the curriculum
- Regular newsletters to signpost upcoming opportunities, key resources and examples of practice

The programme worked with individual academic staff, discipline groups and senior managers in institutions to identify and share effective teaching practices in order to provide the best possible learning experience for all students.
1.2 Programme

The programme involved Scotland’s Colleges working with eight further education colleges over 12 months.

In June 2011, colleges in Scotland were invited to identify an area within their own organisation where they could plan, implement and evaluate changes to their policy and practice within curriculum design, delivery and/or assessment to further embed equality and diversity. They were then asked to create a small 4 person team to work on this programme. Team members were to reflect a diversity of roles including:

- A senior manager with responsibility for learning and teaching, the students experience and/or equality and diversity;
- A member of teaching staff;
- Two further members. These could be: a student; an external stakeholder; other teaching staff; a curriculum manager.

All team members were expected to attend planning and progress meetings and provide regular updates throughout the programme. Teams would then present a summary report on their progress and the outcomes and impact of their activity which would be shared across the HE and FE sectors.

Institutions were asked to complete a brief expression of interest form and eight colleges were selected in August 2011 to participate on the basis of the potential impact and benefit of changes proposed and reflecting cross-sectoral representation in terms of size, location and activity.

The programme was structured around college-based activities and attendance at three events over the 12-month period in October 2011, March 2012 and June 2012. It sought to support colleges on multiple levels, recognising the different ways to approach equality and diversity in the curriculum. Each team was at a different starting point on entering the programme: some had only recently begun to look at their curriculum in relation to equality and diversity; others had already commenced initiatives. Therefore, while, there have been various outputs to date, as the programme was time-limited many of the initiatives are still ongoing and/or in the early stages of evaluation. The participating colleges continue to learn from their initiatives and to refine and develop their approaches to further embed equality and diversity within the totality of the curriculum.

1.3 Profile of participating institutions

The participating colleges represented a wide diversity in relation to size, geographical location, learner profile and project area chosen. Colleges were located in Glasgow, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Falkirk, Dunfermline, Aberdeen, Elgin and Thurso.
1.4 Programme outcomes

Each college team produced a case study report at the end of the programme, documenting their experiences; successes and achievements; impact of programme and lessons learnt for sustainable change. This report draws upon these case study self-evaluations. The aim is not to provide definitive solutions or ways of embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum but rather to showcase the breadth of approaches being used by colleges in order to help other institutions to develop their own work in this area.

2. The current context for further education in Scotland

2.1 Equality legislation

This programme was set in the context of the requirements of the UK equality legislation (Equality Act 2010).1 As public bodies, colleges are required to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equality legislation. These requirements are designed to protect and uphold the rights of groups with certain protected characteristics, including the right to equity of access and success in further education. To meet equality legislative

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1 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
requirements colleges have to adopt a whole institution approach, eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. In addition, the public sector equality duty in Scotland requires equality to be considered in all functions of public bodies, including decision-making, in the design of internal and external policies and in the delivery of services.²

### 2.2 Quality assurance and enhancement

Institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes and procedures have been recognised as a factor driving the development of inclusive practice in relation to embedding equality and diversity into curriculum design, content, assessment and feedback. All the colleges in the programme have self-evaluation frameworks which incorporate these elements.

In addition, colleges are subject to inspection and review by Education Scotland through their external quality arrangements for colleges.³ Colleges are currently reviewed with regard to three areas of college operations:

- The extent to which equality and diversity is promoted and embedded in all college operations and activities, including self-evaluation, marketing, admissions, monitoring, CPD and guidance and support amongst others.

- The extent to which teaching staff plan for equality and diversity and promote it in their delivery and assessment. In addition, consideration is given to how well the curricular provision of the colleges meets the needs of learners, communities and stakeholders in terms of equality and diversity.

- Although colleges are not judged in terms of compliance with equality legislation, they are reviewed in relation to the extent to which they have taken steps to meet their statutory obligations.

### 2.3 The student experience

Although colleges in Scotland do not participate in the National Student Survey, they are all engaged in a variety of mechanisms related to the student experience including surveys, forums, student engagement groups and networks. In relation to learning and teaching the student voice is a key factor for addressing inclusive policy and practice. Sparqs (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) assists and supports students, student associations and institutions to improve the effectiveness and engagement in quality assurance and enhancement in further and higher education institutions across Scotland.⁴

### 2.4 The national policy environment

In September 2011, the Scottish Government introduced its plans for the reform of post-16 education, with an emphasis on ensuring that all 16-19 year olds have access to learning opportunities in education or training.

In terms of colleges they envisaged a move from 41 separate college entities to 13 college regions which would allow the sector to “be more efficient and responsive to the

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⁴ [http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/index.php)
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needs of students and local economies. This will result in a number of colleges merging or working together in closer collaboration.

Outcome agreements with college regions will form the basis of funding via the Scottish Funding Council.

In addition, in June 2012 the Scottish Government set out the way forward for college governance.

The timetable for all this change has been very rapid with the deadline for regional outcome agreements being June 2012 and the new structures aiming to be in place by the end of the academic year 2013/2014.

The majority of colleges have also now agreed either plans for merger or a federated approach.

All of these impending changes in addition to funding cuts added a degree of uncertainty in the sector which created a number of challenges for staff throughout the year-long programme. It is to their credit that they have continued to successfully focus on the programme as a means of bringing about sustainable change in the best interests of not only the institution but also the learners themselves.

3. Institutional approaches

3.1 The Initiative

The eight colleges interpreted the project brief quite widely. Four of the colleges worked on college-wide initiatives related to learning and teaching whilst the remaining colleges worked with specific groups of students in discrete curriculum areas. One college partnered with another college on a joint project whilst another worked with an external stakeholder to deliver their project.

Cross-college initiatives included introducing equality impact assessment across all curriculum areas; the development of an equality and diversity resource to support curriculum staff in programme content, delivery and assessment; reviewing internal verification and self-evaluation processes related to planning for equality and diversity in the curriculum and a project to raise the retention and attainment of 16-19 year olds on non-advanced courses.

The specific initiatives included working to support women students in engineering; using co-operative learning and intercultural methodologies to embed equality and diversity within Social Sciences programmes; a partnership project with Glasgow Museums and Pathway students in Science and ESOL HN Business students to explore cultural differences through personal development and working with Enterprise/Core Skills students to develop training sessions covering equality and diversity to be used by lecturers in guidance and support sessions for all students.

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/post16reform/intro
3.2 Strategies and practice

The diagram above captures the various components in the self-evaluation framework created by The Higher Education Academy in collaboration with Scotland’s Colleges which were utilised by project teams as a source of guidance to plan and implement their strategies and actions and reflect upon their effectiveness in addition to identifying future priorities.6

**Institutional management and co-ordination** was vital for all eight college teams and offered the ability to inform and articulate the vision and get “buy in” and commitment from across the college for some projects.

In Forth Valley College an effective cross-college approach consisting of the involvement of Heads of Teaching Departments, Curriculum and Quality Leaders enabled them to progress the aims of their project from an institutional and operational viewpoint.

In Aberdeen College, close management of their programme allowed them to plan effectively and put key interventions in place in relation to advice and support for learners.

For Carnegie College whose project was aimed at “Shifting the Balance” in relation to gender imbalance in engineering, it was important that both the Assistant Principal and Head of School were involved both as female role models for the project and in the initial development of the programme.

For some colleges the **development of inclusive policies and procedures** offered a starting point for their initiatives and provided the infrastructure for facilitating and

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6 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/embedding_eandd_self_evaluation_framework](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/embedding_eandd_self_evaluation_framework)
promoting the embedding of equality and diversity within the curriculum. Some colleges sought to instigate change at the institutional level affecting internal policy and procedures with a view to strengthening and implementing existing equality and diversity policies and practices whilst others sought to introduce and embed new strategies in relation to equality impact assessment and learning and teaching approaches and materials.

Both Cardonald College and Forth Valley College concentrated on their learning and teaching strategy. They used this to develop inclusive learning and teaching practices throughout the college and develop online training tools and resources to provide staff with practical information and resources to embed equality and diversity into programme content, delivery and assessment.

James Watt College decided to launch their equality impact assessment process across all curriculum areas and implement it within learning, teaching and assessment.

For other colleges, involvement in their projects led to changes in institutional policy and practice. In Stow College, where they worked with an external partner to facilitate change by focusing on exploring culture and cultural differences with learners, this led to recommendations for more inclusivity in college approaches between ‘international’ and ‘home’ students.

In Moray College, their emphasis on the retention and attainment of 16-19 year olds highlighted the need to change some key policies and processes in relation to student recruitment and selection and induction.

Aberdeen College focused on their supportive pre-entry and induction procedures in the introductory level full time social science programme to identify potential issues that might impact on learning later and so require support, advice or referral.

Colleges approached **curriculum design and delivery** in a variety of ways, but central to all of them was the aim of taking into account the learner’s entitlement to access and participate in a course whatever their educational, social and cultural background and experience including any protected characteristics.

In Aberdeen College they sought to develop a range of learning and teaching approaches within the Social Sciences curriculum relevant to their student profile and which were founded on the acceptance of diversity in the classroom including the wider perspectives of social class, the urban/rural divide, care leavers, gender, age, disengaged students, and those with mental health issues. In order to support this they utilised intercultural methodologies and co-operative learning within a project-based approach.

In Cardonald College they introduced a range of accessible materials across the college, allowing learners to alter and adopt materials on screen according to need. Online technologies were also used in Forth Valley College to develop an equality and diversity resource area on Moodle which included online training resources and toolkits on protected characteristics, various teaching and learning approaches, links and a list of specific subject areas.

Kilmarnock College decided to incorporate an equality and diversity approach into the Personal Employment Zone (PEZ) programme through a local investigations unit where learners identified, investigated and filmed different real life case studies in relation to race, sexual orientation, disability and age. These were then developed into a DVD with accompanying lesson plan and leaflet.
Carnegie College and Moray College both used their curriculum delivery to support the particular needs of the students with whom they engaged. Carnegie College had a particular emphasis on female engineering students and set up a private Facebook page to create a safe place for students to discuss issues related to their course. In addition, they used female guest speakers from industry to inspire and motivate students and partnered with careers and business development staff in college to provide sessions on CV and interview techniques.

Moray College focused on supporting their young learners by giving time and attention to the learning and teaching approaches practised, particularly in the first few weeks. It was important for them to ease the students into learning by focusing on the practical relevance of their courses without too much initial theory and allowing them time to develop as independent learners.

Another approach by Stow College was to work with an external partner, St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, who delivered a CurioUS Learning Programme for a mixed group of home and international students. This programme was based on a self-awareness approach to increasing empathy and cultural respect between people from different cultural backgrounds through active participatory practice. The project encouraged self-reflection on attitudes to cultural assumptions and citizenship by using museum objects as the basis for exploring learners’ own culture, to consider other cultures and to discover strategies for intercultural dialogue.

A range of assessment and feedback approaches were used by colleges to maximise the opportunities for learning and to provide more than one way to demonstrate learning outcomes or competence standards.

In Aberdeen College there was open dialogue between staff and students around assessment schedules and topics. Whilst learner participation in Stow College’s programme was voluntary and not formally assessed they used surveys and interviews with each of the groups involved both to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme but also to encourage self-reflection and personal development.

New and existing staff and student engagement opportunities allowed colleges both to receive feedback on the projects but also for learners and staff to engage in the planning, design and delivery of the programmes, offering their own personal contributions and perspectives.

In Cardonald College students are directly represented on the Learning and Teaching Committee and the regular Student Programme Forum meetings now include specific discussion and debate around equality and diversity.

For Moray College their involvement in the project in itself highlighted the need for better dialogue with students and specific focus groups for 16-19 year old students were formed.

Both Stow College and Carnegie College found that student engagement led to increased levels of confidence and trust as students felt comfortable talking about their experiences openly but also how they viewed the curriculum and felt able to give recommendations for improvements. Participation in the project led two students at Stow College to join the college equality, diversity and inclusion committee as student representatives.

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7 http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/projects/curious/Pages/home.aspx
Staff were able to work collaboratively at both the institutional and department level to further the aims of their projects and enhance their understanding and application of equality and diversity in the curriculum. Project leaders used various words such as ‘enthusiastic’; ‘fully engaged’ and ‘committed’ to describe how staff responded to working on and with the various projects.

In Cardonald College the highest impact on staff engagement was through the college self-evaluation system. As part of the project specific questions are now included about ‘Equalities Practice’ in all self-evaluation paperwork, so every area within the college including teaching and learning, management, corporate services, student support and services has to engage in reflection on this and make considered evaluation of their current practices and service level leading to change and improvement if necessary.

Forth Valley College used a small team of staff to work with every teaching department to signpost their new Moodle resource and to integrate the learning activity planning tool into everyday practices. From this engagement they found out that more equality and diversity content in the curriculum was being delivered that they had at first anticipated.

However, sometimes the balance between staff and student engagement was not always equitable and one college admitted they had some work to do with some course teams who felt their views were not taken into account as much as those of the students. Another college found it difficult to move beyond their core group of committed individuals out to every curriculum and programme team.

Some of the colleges used the project to develop learning resources that sought to embed equality and diversity across the college whilst others focused on specific learning resources in their subject areas. Aberdeen College used citizenship projects, global exchange events and enterprise and employability activities to look at equality and diversity in the classroom as part of their Introduction to Social Sciences programme.

Kilmarnock College developed a range of one hour sessions as a useful induction resource for teaching staff to introduce equality and diversity issues across the college. Forth Valley College developed an equality and diversity resource area on Moodle, providing all college staff with a range of teaching and learning resources and links to national campaigns and events as well as a list of subject specific ideas for embedding equality and diversity.

3.3 Key successes and achievements

All college projects felt that they had achieved successes at both the institutional and the individual levels. For students and staff that included:

- Increased awareness of equality and diversity within the curriculum and their responsibility towards that (Stow College, Kilmarnock College, Cardonald College, James Watt College, Carnegie College)

- Increased confidence, self-esteem and capacity in dealing with equality and diversity in the classroom (Stow College, Forth Valley College, Kilmarnock College, Carnegie College, Aberdeen College)

- Increased engagement, teamwork and support (Stow College, Kilmarnock College, Cardonald College, James Watt College,)

- Increasing commitment and buy-in from staff on use of equality and diversity in teaching and learning (Aberdeen College, Forth Valley College)
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- External validation and recognition from bodies such as NUS Scotland and Education Scotland (Cardonald College, Forth Valley College)

Other achievements related to specific outputs or ways of working such as:

- The value of working with partners and employers to achieve results (Carnegie College, Stow College)

- Establishment of pre-course visits for all 16-19 year olds leading to enhancement of induction (Moray College)

- Early warning system put in place to target support for young learners (Moray College)

- Increase in student retention and numbers of students progressing to next level of programme (Aberdeen College)

- Learning resources and workshop materials developed (Forth Valley College, Kilmarnock College, Aberdeen College)

- Online private support networks for specific groups of students (Carnegie College)

3.4 Key enablers

All of the project participants identified factors which enabled the projects to work. There was considerable overlap between the factors identified although the specific nature of the issues varied. Those identified most commonly as impacting upon the work to embed equality and diversity in the curriculum were the following:

- Pro-active, motivated and committed staff

- Commitment and support of senior management

- College commitment to equality and diversity

- Cohesive team approach

- Supportive supervision and direction

- Willingness of students to be involved

- Lead person or champion for equality and diversity

These will be developed further in the section on characteristics of effective initiatives and approaches.

3.5 Issues and challenges

The colleges participating in the programme varied in their reasons for wanting to address embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum. There was more than one driver in
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relation to the current context for post-16 education in Scotland but all of them shared a commitment to taking action to enable change within their institutions.

Irrespective of the national landscape each project team was also operating within its own internal landscape and they identified a range of issues and challenges that impacted to a greater or lesser degree on the success and achievements of their projects. These are:

- Time constraints and practicalities of timetabling, accommodation and teaching materials
- Resources :: both staffing, financial and technological
- Difficulties with some subject areas (construction, engineering and maths)
- Geographical distance
- Limitations of projects delivered in one department or faculty
- Students seen as “problem” rather than college systems and structures
- Industrial action by staff
- Loss of project team members

Kilmarnock and North Highland College were unable to work together effectively on a joint project due to the unreliability of their video-conferencing links, which also meant that plans for the two colleges to meet in a central location had to be abandoned.

In some colleges cross-college working was more challenging on both a strategic and practical level. Whilst colleges had seen successes in the specific projects on which they were working, it proved difficult to disseminate that success throughout the college. There were still pockets of resistance in some colleges both in terms of the wider ethos and culture of the college but also in relation to learning and teaching practice.

However, some colleges saw these challenges as opportunities where both a national and regional period of change in the sector could be conducive to risk taking and new approaches within curriculum teams. In addition, institutional efficiencies and ever expanding agendas and demands mean that curriculum teams need to be innovative, creative and establish ‘smarter’ ways of delivering learning and teaching programmes to meet these agendas and demands.

3.6 Lessons learnt

Some key lessons emerged from the teams’ experiences of developing and implementing their projects, including the need to:

- Set more realistic targets
- Engage with students earlier
- Develop more case studies and marketing material
- Measure the difference
- Involve more teaching staff
- Fundamental change needs more than a stand-alone project
- Equality and diversity activity needs to be built into every layer of college life
Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum

- The concepts and principles of equality have to be embedded as part of everyone’s job
- Need for better communication
- Tap into what already exists: it might surprise you!

3.7 Sustainability

All of the colleges plan to undertake more work beyond the life of this project in order to sustain momentum and create lasting change within their institutions. For many the initial success of their projects has spurred them on to continue and develop, whilst others want to learn from the challenges they faced to improve and enhance their work.

Project teams identified a range of specific actions and strategies they had already undertaken and were planning to undertake to maximise the chances of their work being sustained in the medium and long-term. Their recommendations included:

- Collaboration with other college curriculum teams to roll out equality and diversity in learning and teaching
- Integrate equality and diversity into staff development training from induction through to TQFE\(^8\) (Teaching Qualification for Further Education) and Professional Development Award\(^9\)
- Development of college audit team to look at equality and diversity in the curriculum
- Development of revised policies and procedures in relation to recruitment and induction across college

Sustainability in a period of change was seen as a challenge for some colleges, particularly those facing mergers with other colleges locally. How to ensure a unified system of best practice in managing equality and diversity when faced with different approaches and cultures within institutions in relation to equality was an area of concern but also hope that the best of these approaches and practices would emerge.

3.8 Key messages for others

What is the wider message for others from these specific projects? College teams were keen to reflect on their learning and its wider implications for other institutions. Messages included:

- Partnership works and offers a different approach and environment
- The importance of taking time to meet with learners and listen to what they have to say
- The importance of measuring and evaluating with a focus on personal development

\(^8\) [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/04/19113746/2](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/04/19113746/2)

• Engagement with learners prior to the start of the course and during the first few weeks of the course is crucial

• A college wide project requires a college wide commitment

• Face to face contact is crucial

• Real, practical ideas are more useful than the creation of another toolkit which may be too complicated and contrived

• Feedback from current students can be used to attract new applicants and to understand what the barriers might be

• Active, co-operative learning works and provides a clear focus for embedding equality and diversity in the classroom, delivering evidence in terms of personal development and achievement.

4. Conclusions

This report has identified the experiences of the different college project teams in implementing change and the journey travelled by each of them throughout this process. It is hoped that the sector as a whole can benefit from the learning of those who took part in the programme. The programme ran for an academic year but most colleges saw this as part of a much longer-term initiative. The outcomes already achieved have helped to pave the way for further work either to consolidate what has taken place or to expand across other departments within the colleges.

Their conclusions can be grouped under the following headings:

Leadership and responsibility
Colleges were clear that equality and diversity is the responsibility of everyone and needs to be taken on board by all members of staff. However, it is important to have a lead or a champion to co-ordinate activities across different college functions.

Building relationships
Relationships with staff, students and partners were crucial for building effective support across the institution. In addition to the value of working together, it increased capacity and built confidence in both staff and students to take responsibility for promoting good relations between equality groups.

Developing expertise and sharing practice
The projects delivered tangible teaching and learning resources and materials which can be used to disseminate equality and diversity in the curriculum and share the expertise of those involved in the projects. This helps to devolve responsibility for future work in this area. Continuing professional development was highlighted as a means of continuing to raise staff awareness of the equality and diversity agenda across the institutions and to build understanding and knowledge in order to effect further change in practice and procedures.

4.1 Characteristics of effective initiatives and approaches
Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum

An evaluation of the project reports has highlighted a number of common characteristics that have made their initiatives and approaches to embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum effective.

Developing an institutional strategy

For many of the colleges their project was part of an overall strategic framework which encompassed learning and teaching or formed part of their overall Equality Scheme or Strategy. This provided coherence and a direction for the projects which contributed to a cross-college ethos and commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity and the practice of inclusive learning and teaching.

Reviewing performance and process

Involvement in the project for some colleges started with a review or audit of current practice and procedure. For some colleges anecdotal evidence and their own data about student retention, engagement and achievement was the spur for a new way of working and the development of more inclusivity in teaching and learning approaches and materials. For other colleges, their experiences as the projects progressed led them to make changes in key policies and processes directly affecting students or to plan for further audits and impact assessments.

Securing senior management engagement

Senior manager leadership and support was crucial for many of the colleges at both an institutional and individual level. Communication with senior staff across different college departments and faculties helped create “buy in” and commitment and helped to progress the aims and objectives of the various projects from an institutional and operational viewpoint.

Engaging staff and students

Staff engagement was central to developing inclusive learning and teaching practices within the projects. Colleges used a wide range of methods to engage their colleagues through face to face meetings, team work, electronic communications, working groups or committees, staff development, self-evaluation processes, resources and guidance.

Student engagement was important on a variety of levels. It was important for teaching staff to hear what students were saying and what their experiences were through feedback sessions, forums, Facebook pages and other mechanisms. This helped staff to understand the diversity of their students and suggest improvements to their learning and teaching experience. In addition to the improvement of staff and student understanding in class, the projects also showed a clear increase in student – student understanding in relation to equality and diversity. Creating safe, inclusive spaces, whether virtual or real, allowed students to increase their confidence and speak freely about their experiences, as well as providing a support mechanism for certain groups.

Employing equality and diversity champions or leads

Many of the colleges used staff as equality and diversity champions or leads to drive forward the project initiatives. These were individuals with an understanding and commitment to equality and diversity and inclusive learning and teaching. Some had formal roles as equality and diversity managers or co-ordinators while others were key staff who were willing and able to promote the issues to colleagues in their department, school or faculty. The investment of time and energy of these people was key to the projects’ completion.
Being relevant in learning and teaching activities

Allowing students to draw on their knowledge, interests and experiences, whilst also encouraging the sharing and application of different knowledge, experiences and perspectives was an important characteristic of many of the projects. Stow, Aberdeen, Kilmarnock and Moray Colleges all made sure that they were connecting with students’ lives and made their learning and teaching activities relevant to their students’ backgrounds and future employment or life prospects. Teaching staff were culturally aware and sensitive to differences and used resources and materials appropriately. They were able to anticipate, prepare and respond in a flexible manner to the requirements and needs of their students.

These characteristics of effective initiatives and approaches which have come out of this programme mirror the work of Professor Christine Hockings in looking at the principles of inclusive and engaging learning and teaching.  

4.2 Strategic implications for institutions

What can we learn from these projects and what are the implications for policy and practice in colleges?

1. Equality and diversity is everyone’s responsibility in an institution and effective communication and co-ordination between departments is essential in order to get everyone on board.

2. However, somebody needs to be able to see the ‘big picture’ and have enough responsibility and commitment to drive equality and diversity forward within an institution.

3. Committed individuals or champions are important for getting the message across in their own “small corner” and motivating their colleagues.

4. Effective change and action comes about with a two-pronged approach, working from the top down and bottom up. An imbalance at either end can lead to frustration and lack of trust.

5. Equality and diversity in the curriculum needs to be mainstreamed as part of an ongoing process within effective teaching and learning strategies and frameworks.

6. Effective change works when individuals are able to critically reflect on and learn from their own and each others’ practice as well as looking at institutional systems and procedures.

5. The Projects

The following is a summary detailing the projects undertaken by institutional teams:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/EvidenceNet/Syntheses/inclusive_teaching_and_learning_in_he_synthesis_200410.pdf
1. Embedding equality and diversity in an introductory level programme through co-operative learning and intercultural methodologies.

Aberdeen College

Project Lead: Brian Dunn, Team manager: Social Sciences, Highers and Core Skills
b.dunn@abcol.ac.uk

This project was introduced within an introductory level (SCQF Level 4 and 5) full time social science programme with the aim of:

- Building on the achievement success of the Introduction to Social Sciences programme
- Further improving KPIs on the programme
- Raising student awareness of aspects of equality and diversity to encourage positive attitudes and tolerance
- Developing confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Placing a key focus on active/co-operative learning as a methodology for embedding equality and diversity within learning and teaching

2. Inclusive practice for curriculum design and delivery

Cardonald College, Glasgow

Project Lead: Maureen Meeke, Head of School, mmeeke@cardonald.ac.uk

This project aimed to develop a model of inclusive practice by reviewing internal verification and self-evaluation processes in order to inform curriculum design and delivery which could be contextualised for all subject areas. Specific equality outcomes would be identified and reflected in the learning and teaching strategy.

3. Shift the Balance

Carnegie College, Dunfermline

Project Lead: Sandy Murray, Assistant Head of School, Engineering
smurray@carnegie.ac.uk

This project had the aim of:

- Identifying women studying engineering at the college
- Researching their experiences
- Obtaining employer views
- Ascertaining student and Modern Apprenticeship progress to date
- Devising marketing literature and marketing career opportunities to prospective recruits as a means of increasing the ratio of female to males undertaking engineering
- Promoting engineering, particularly the new renewables branch of engineering as a career for school leavers
4. Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum

Forth Valley College, Falkirk

Project Lead: Caroline Storey, Diversity Co-ordinator, caroline.storey@forthvalley.ac.uk

This project aimed to:

- Develop a meaningful template to integrate equality and diversity along with other curriculum considerations into planning for learning and teaching
- Develop an online resource to provide staff with practical information and resources to embed equality and diversity into programme content, delivery and assessment
- Build on the sharing of practice across college to examine what works and what does not
- Improve staff confidence in embedding equality and diversity into learning and teaching

5. Introducing EIA within all areas of the college

James Watt College, Greenock,

Project Lead: Anne Campbell, Director of College Operations, annecampbell78@hotmail.com

The aim of this project was to launch their Equality Impact Assessment tool across all curriculum areas, to implement the impact assessment process with learning, teaching and assessment across the college and to evaluate how well embedded the process had become.

6. In their shoes

Kilmarnock College and North Highland College, UHI, Thurso

Project Lead: Carol Nisbet, Head of Access and Inclusion, nisbetc@kiomarnock.ac.uk

The aim of this project was to develop a range of one–hour sessions in partnership with students covering aspects of equality and diversity which could be used in guidance and support sessions by lecturers across the college for all students.

7. Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum- Retention and Attainment of 16-19 year olds

Moray College, UHI, Elgin

Project Lead: Tom McGarry, Assistant Principal, tom.mcgarry@moray.uhi.ac.uk
The aim of this project was to identify good pre-course, induction and learning and teaching practice in areas where retention/attainment for 16-19 year olds was good, understand what and how it worked and seek to implement that learning and experience across college where relevant.

8. CurioUS Project

Stow College, Glasgow in partnership with St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art

Project Lead: **Margaret Cairns, Transitional Projects Manager**, mcairns@stow.ac.uk

This project aimed to explore culture, cultural differences and provide an opportunity for personal development.

By providing a platform for individual s and groups of students to consider cultural awareness through inter-active and participatory learning; discussion; self-reflection and the interpretation and response to intercultural objects and curios.

**Links**


