



Listening to Student Voices: Exploring Undergraduate Understandings and Expectations of Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) has become an increasingly prominent focus within higher education policy and institutional practice (Advance HE, 2024; Universities UK, 2024). A substantial body of research demonstrates that inclusive educational practices are associated with improved student belonging, engagement, and academic success (Thomas, 2012; Healey et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2025), yet comparatively little research has explored how psychology students themselves conceptualise EEDI and what they expect from staff, curricula and learning environments. While existing work (e.g., Hashmi et al., 2024) provides valuable educator-led examples of inclusive pedagogy in psychology curricula, less attention has been given to how students themselves conceptualise EEDI and articulate expectations for its implementation across teaching and academic support. This study addresses this gap through a student-partnership approach. Informed by Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) principles of student partnership and student voice (Cook-Sather et al., 2014), this project investigated undergraduate perspectives on EEDI in learning, teaching and academic support. Conducted in partnership with the Institute of Social Sciences EEDI Working Group, second-year BSc Psychology students adopted a student-led qualitative research design to explore three areas: understandings of EEDI; expectations of Academic Advisors and tutors; and perceptions of how EEDI should be embedded within curriculum content and teaching practice. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Findings revealed considerable variation in students' understandings of EEDI, highlighting the need for clearer communication and more explicit dialogue around inclusive practice. Participants identified authentic curriculum representation, culturally responsive teaching, accessible academic support and learning environments that recognise diverse identities and experiences as central to meaningful inclusion. Students also emphasised the importance of staff–student relationships, partnership and co-creation in fostering belonging and engagement. These findings support existing evidence linking inclusive educational practices with student belonging and success, supporting previous literature (Thomas, 2012), while contributing a discipline-specific perspective on how undergraduate psychology students conceptualise EEDI and identify priorities for embedding inclusive practice within teaching, learning and academic support. The study demonstrates the value of engaging students as partners in generating evidence to inform

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inclusive curriculum development and academic practice, contributing to ongoing SoTL discussions of student voice, partnership and EEDI implementation in higher education.

Keywords

Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI), student voice, inclusive learning, student partnership, academic advising

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