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Equality and Diversity in Further Education



Sheine Peart

Series Editor Susan Wallace

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Meet the author



Sheine Peart

I have worked in schools, colleges, local authorities and youth and community settings. I have taught on various vocational programmes, working with challenging students, within Further Education (FE) for 15 years. I held the post of the college equalities manager for eight years and also managed a local authority education team dedicated to raising the achievement of African and Caribbean pupils. In my current post at Nottingham Trent University I teach on the pre-service full-time PGCE, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, and the Certificate in Education for the Lifelong Learning Sector as well as managing the Masters in Education courses. I am currently engaged in supporting one large urban college in developing a dedicated in-house student support group for Black male students, called 'Black on Track'.

Meet the series editor

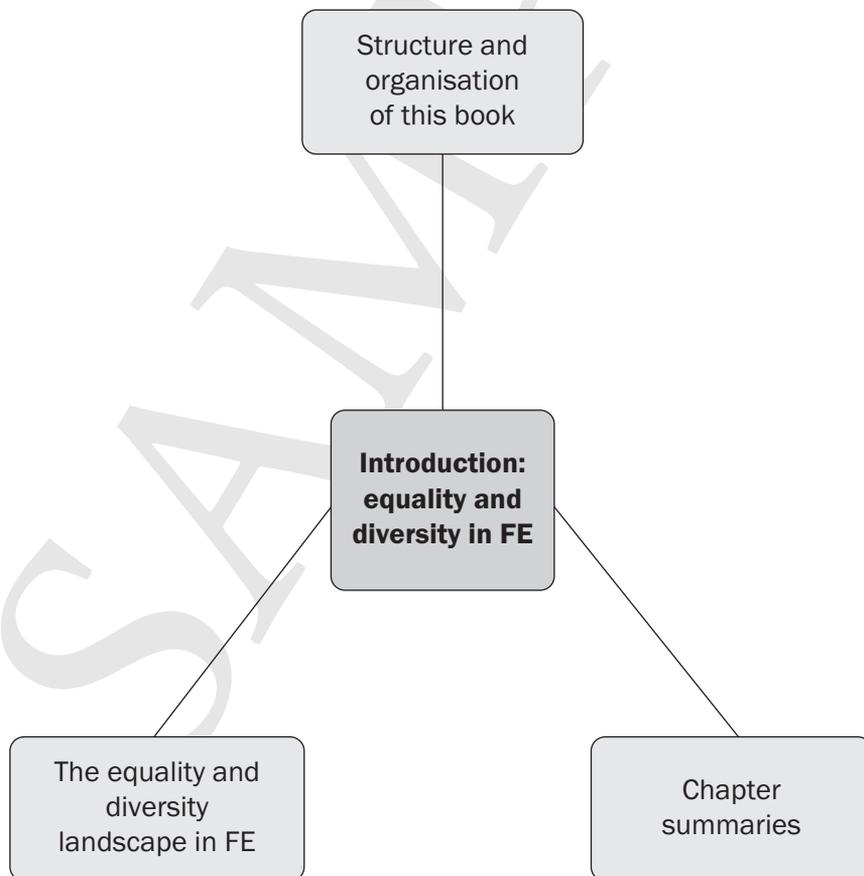


Susan Wallace

I am Emeritus Professor of Education at Nottingham Trent University where, for many years, part of my role was to support learning on the initial training courses for teachers in the Further Education (FE) sector. I taught in the sector myself for ten years, including on BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) programmes and Basic Skills provision. My particular interest is in the motivation and behaviour of students in FE, and in mentoring and the ways in which a successful mentoring relationship can support personal and professional development. I have written a range of books, mainly aimed at teachers and student teachers in the sector, and I enjoy hearing readers' own stories of FE, whether it's by email or at speaking engagements and conferences.

SAMPLE

1 Introduction: equality and diversity in Further Education



Chapter aims

This book has been written for all staff who work in a teaching, training or supporting learning capacity in Further Education (FE). The overall purpose of this book is to alert you to some of the historic and contemporary discussions regarding equality and diversity and to give you an opportunity to formulate your personal responses to these issues. This book cannot provide an answer to each and every situation you may encounter in your working life. However, the critical thinking tasks and case studies embedded throughout the book will help you to work through how you might manage these issues, where you could go for support and how to build yourself a firm ally base from which you can challenge inequality and discrimination.

The function of this chapter is purely to provide you with a map to navigate the rest of the book. While it is hoped you will want to read the entire book, it is almost inevitable that you will find some chapters more useful than others. Appreciating that FE tutors are busy people with multiple demands on their limited time, this chapter will enable you to make informed decisions regarding which chapters you will read and in what order you need to read them.

The equality and diversity landscape in FE

FE is the most diverse of all education sectors. It welcomes students of all abilities from those working at pre-entry level to students studying degree-level programmes; anyone over the age of 14 can attend college, including adult returners and students who have been excluded from schools, and there is no official upper age limit. This book examines the needs of these groups and extends the diversity debate to enable you to review your role as a tutor when working with different learners.

Effectively managing diversity and promoting equality (a legislative requirement of the 2010 Equalities Act) is a significant challenge for all teaching staff who have been given the responsibility of turning statute into reality, with very little advice. This book provides practical suggestions on how FE tutors can begin to meet these challenges.

Structure and organisation of this book

Each chapter in this book is organised in the same way. This is to support ease of use and to enable you to develop rapid familiarity with the text. All chapters begin with a visual map of the chapter contents. If you have very little time, simply consulting this map may be sufficient for you to decide whether or not you wish to read the chapter. However, the visual maps only provide the briefest information and do not give a detailed description of the chapter sections.

Directly following the map, specific chapter objectives are given. These chapter objectives list the skills you will have developed and knowledge you will have gained by working through the chapter contents. To support you in developing your skills and understanding, embedded throughout each chapter you will find a number of critical thinking tasks, case studies and discussions. Each of these different scenarios is drawn from a real situation or is based on an actual event. While some of these situations may be alien to you personally, they

represent the range of different incidents that can occur in a college setting. Reading these case studies and carefully considering how you would respond will equip you to effectively manage similar situations should you encounter them in the future.

The critical thinking tasks are a particularly important feature of each chapter. Based on the information you have been given, the tasks invite you to engage both practically and intellectually with how to handle a particular challenge; you are asked to consider the impact and outcome of actions and events; and, most crucially, what such situations mean for you in the context of your working life. For most of these tasks there is no single right answer. Each answer will be, and should be, contextualised. What may seem appropriate in a large, multi-site general FE college may not be suitable in a small, single site, specialist institution. However, regardless of the location, size or type of college, every FE tutor is legislatively bound by the 2010 Equalities Act to work to promote equality of access for all learners, and to promote positive relationships between different groups of college users.

Each chapter also has at least one discussion. The discussions provide a response to the critical thinking tasks. They are not the only response that could be made and there may be other suitable actions or replies. However, they provide a clear summary of an educationally suitable, equality relevant response.

Chapter reflections at the end summarise the key points of the chapter. You are then invited to assess your own learning using the learning review audit. This tool may also help you to plan your own professional development needs by highlighting any areas where you need to complete more work. If your college has an appraisal system you may choose to take copies of some of these audits to discuss with your managers or peers. To support and encourage your further development a short list of further useful reading and websites is given at the end of each chapter.

Chapter summaries

Chapter 2 begins by explaining the requirements on all tutors working in FE, the legislative requirements imposed on those working in the public sector and by organisations such as Teaching Unions and the Institute for Learning (IfL). The IfL is responsible for conferring Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS). While it is not obligatory for FE tutors to gain QTLS, it is advisable because it demonstrates professional commitment and competence, and *from the 1 April 2012, IfL members with QTLS status are also recognised as qualified to teach in schools* (IfL website). The IfL thus remains an important and influential organisation for all teaching staff in FE and its role is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 provides a contextual framework for diversity and equality. International and UK national perspectives and agendas are discussed, and pivotal events such as the Little Rock Nine dispute, the Swann Report, the Warnock Report and the Salamanca Conference are described. Historically it considers the impact of the US Civil Rights movement and the politicisation of race issues. It reviews how these arguments transferred to a UK context and charts how the United Kingdom has edged its way towards embracing a race equality agenda. It reviews the politicisation of organisations for people with disabilities and the changing representations of people with disabilities in education through the lens of empowerment, rights and entitlement.

Adults, that is anyone over the age of 18, form the majority student group in FE colleges. Additionally, many courses in FE are taught on a part-time basis. However, sometimes adult learners appear to be an almost invisible population, with their needs being prioritised below that of the full-time 16 to 18 year-old learners. Chapter 4 examines how you can work to ensure that the distinct needs of adult learners are not overlooked and they are not subsumed into a generic youth based culture.

Younger learners may be transferring to FE straight from school and may be used to a tightly structured environment where their time is strictly managed. Chapter 5 considers the support that younger learners might need in order to make a successful transition from being a child instructed what to do at school, to being a young adult capable of making reasoned, rational decisions. It reviews how to build appropriate professional relationships and your legal responsibilities when working with young people.

Chapter 6 examines the needs of transient student populations. In relation to students in this category, you could be working with a group in September who will have left by November. The very nature of being a temporary student means this group can easily be forgotten and as such is a vulnerable group. Three particular groups are considered in this chapter: apprentices, overseas students, and refugees and asylum seekers. The different needs of each are detailed and information which challenges popular reporting is presented.

Chapter 7 considers the implications of working with different cultural groups. It revisits the definition of a culture and provides contemporary examples of new and emerging cultures. It examines equality legislation and the different characteristics which are protected under UK legislation as well as the opportunities and challenges this poses for education.

Chapter 8 examines tutor responsibilities when working with offenders within a college environment. This chapter considers the organisation and structure of the judiciary and how college users may come into contact with different parts of this organisation. The chapter also considers how tutors might respond to potentially challenging or compromising situations.

Homophobic attitudes are still apparent in general society and in education. Chapter 9 examines how tutors can work in a positive way with college users to challenge negative gender stereotypes and to ensure that the requirements of the 2010 Equalities Act are adhered to.

Chapter 10 discusses managing equality and diversity in colleges. To achieve this task colleges need a fair and transparent management system where the needs of all college users are considered within the context of the legislative framework. This chapter evaluates what this means in practice for college users, how the senior management team needs to structure their response to equality issues, departmental action and individual tutor responses to diversity.

A glossary of all acronyms is provided at the end of the book which explains all abbreviations used in these chapters.

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