WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED TEACHING & LEARNING

SMLC
EDI TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been co-created by SMLC students and staff as part of the project 'Decolonising Babel: Multilingual and Inclusive Language Pedagogies at Warwick and Beyond', led by Dr Valentina Abbatelli and Dr Leticia Villamediana González and funded by IATL at Warwick University.

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Introduction

This work-in-progress toolkit has been co-created by SMLC students and staff. It aims to help SMLC teaching staff make our teaching and learning more inclusive and create learning environments where all students can thrive as they develop their translingual and transcultural capabilities (Parra and Faria, 2024: 157). It includes some general advice as well as some tips and resources from Warwick and beyond. While we recognise that many resources on inclusive pedagogies and decolonising the curriculum already exist, our goal is to create a simple toolkit that gathers key ideas, questions, and resources for use at various points in the academic year: designing or amending our curriculum, preparing classes and materials, and teaching or marking. This toolkit is also complemented by gender-neutral language guides that can be found on the IATL project website. We would like to thank all the critical friends who have provided us with very valuable feedback.

Top Tips on Student Support.
At the end of the document, students offer some answers to these points and questions

Supporting BAME students:

- Be respectful of how to pronounce different names and try to avoid anglicising them or asking someone for the 'English version' of their name.
- Embrace other cultures into the classroom and use the correct racial terminology in all languages.
- Be prepared to acknowledge how racism can look different in various cultural settings and be proactive about starting these conversations and about listening and responding to concerns as they arise.
- Understand the impact of lived experiences of race and racism.
- Tackling Racial Inequality at Warwick (TRIW)
- Report + Support - Report + Support - University of Warwick (if staff witness / are informed of incidents that have taken place during teaching or during groupwork)

Supporting disabled students:

- Be mindful that disability can take many forms and therefore your teaching may need to be adapted in different ways for different students.
- Disability is not a disadvantage but a different way of working.
- Make sure you get to know your students beyond just knowing their name and their face.

→ Code of Practice for Disabled Students

Supporting LGBTQUIA+ students:

- Create an open atmosphere which normalises the discussion and use of pronouns to refer to ourselves or others.
- Be respectful and avoid making assumptions by using more inclusive language.
- Familiarise your students with different LGBTQ+ related issues that they may encounter throughout the course and on their year abroad.

    → LGBTQUIA+ Inclusion - Getting Started

Supporting neurodiverse students:

- Clear consistent language which is explicit can reduce confusion and support neurodivergent students in achieving in assessments and engaging in teaching and learning.
- Engaging in different learning styles such as visual supports (charts, mind maps, diagrams, etc.) or audio (videos, podcasts) can support learning by offering different engagement techniques.
- Neurodivergent students often require more time to process and engage in material. You can support this by allowing for processing speed in group discussions, providing materials in advance, and splitting up large chunks of information to prevent students from becoming lost.

    → Neurodiversity Toolkit

Supporting students from Widening Participation backgrounds:

- Try not to make assumptions about your students' financial or family backgrounds.
- Be familiar with the resources offered by the university and be prepared to signpost these to your students.
- Be aware that your students will come from a variety of backgrounds and embrace this in order to enrich your classroom discussions.
    - **Social Mobility Student Research Hub**
    - **Widening Participation Student Network** (includes the criteria for WP students).

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROMPTS

We invite you to reflect on the following aspects

A) When planning sessions or revising the curriculum:

- Do I try not to always equate language with nation and/or ethnic group?
- Am I favouring a particular variety or accent or presenting it as more prestigious?
- How can I include a variety of linguistic voices and accents in my materials?
  - → Sascha Stollhans (2020), 'Linguistic variation in language learning classrooms: considering the role of regional variation and 'non-standard' varieties'
- Do I avoid or confront stereotypical topics and images about native speakers and their communities/countries?
- If using a language textbook, am I aware that they tend to include prototypical and mainstream linguistic and cultural forms, symbols, and pictures? How can I promote critical reflection on this among students?
  - → Ofelia García (2019), *Decolonizing Foreign, Second, Heritage, and First Languages. Implications for Education*
- How can I incorporate social justice themes in my curriculum?
  - → J. Wooten, L. J. Randolph & S. M. Johnson (2022), "Enacting Social Justice in Teacher Education: Modelling, Reflection and Critical Engagement in the Methods Course".
  - → L. J. Randolph & S. M. Johnson (2017), "Social Justice in the Language Classroom: A Call to Action".

- Does my reading list encompass authors from different backgrounds/ethnicities/genders?
- What accessibility support may I need to anticipate and include? How do I ensure the lecture or seminar is designed in an accessible manner? (PowerPoint accessibility guidance or Accessible Moodle Design).

  → Creating Accessible Resources
- Are instructions and communications clear?
- Which students could this activity potentially privilege and which students may face barriers? How do I mitigate the imbalance?
- Is diversity of students acknowledged and reflected in the curriculum?

  → K. Hines-Gaither & C. Accilien (2023), *The Antiracist World Language Classroom*.
- Do I assume that all my students have the same previous knowledge of a subject?

B) Is there any space for co-creation in my module?

Although there is an overlap between co-creation and students being active participants in their learning, Bovill (2020) argues that co-creation requires a 'deeper relationship' where education is recognised as a shared enterprise.

> ***"Students increasingly desire to be active learners, by being more inquisitive, participating in module reviews, assessment designs, co-creating policies and regulations that enhance the learning environment." (Theresa Ogbekhiulu, Student Partnerships in Assessment)***

Useful resources:

- Damien Homer et al. (2023), 'Taking off the academic 'armour': Exploring notions of co-creation within a selective UK university via a student-staff partnership'.
- Co-creation Workbook

B) In the classroom:

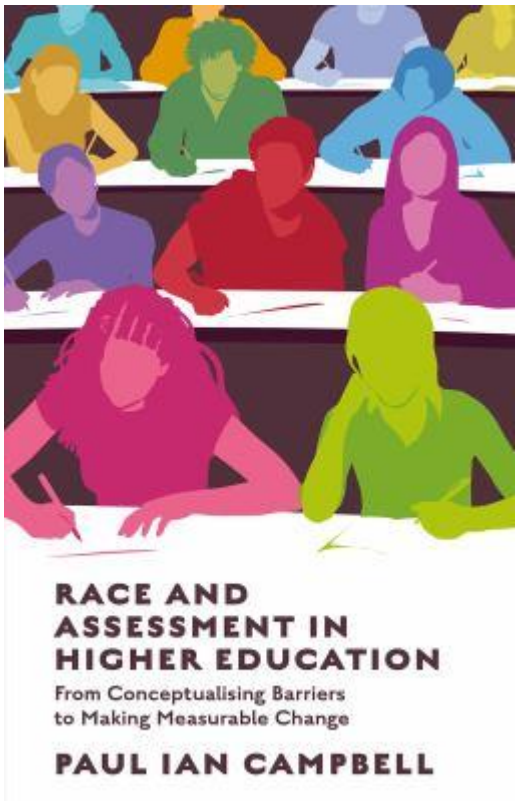
- Do I know my students' preferred pronouns? Do I try to use gender-neutral language in English and in the TL?
- In a language module: how can I explain inclusive language in the TL? For example, do I provide resources about gender-neutral language so that my students can use them if they want?
- Do I know whether any of my students are disabled or neurodiverse? And if not, do I know how to find out?
- In a language module, how can I make my students aware about my accent or variety of the TL that I use? How can I welcome/acknowledge/teach different accents and varieties of the TL in the classroom?
    - Sascha Stollhans (2020), 'Linguistic variation in language learning classrooms: considering the role of regional variation and 'non-standard' varieties'
- Are the objectives of my course clearly conveyed? Do I provide a course overview? Do I set clear expectations? Do I read the marking criteria with the students?
- Do I speak clearly and succinctly, providing clear step-by-step instructions for any tasks that students need to accomplish?
- How can I create/promote an inclusive and welcoming environment and adapt to the needs of my students? Am I mindful of anxiety issues around directing questions at specific students? Do I try to find different ways to include all students in discussions?
- For group activities/discussion: how can I provide guidance and set expectations on inclusive and respectful conversation (and model this myself?)
- Can students participate in the class in different ways?
- Do I include different formats of material in the classroom (written, visual, audio)?
- Are there any issues with accessibility in the teaching room? If so, it should be reported to Estates.

D) When designing my assessment. Is my assessment inclusive?

- Inclusive and equitable assessment should ensure that tasks and procedures do not disadvantage any group or individual. Across a programme, students must have the opportunity to engage with multiple modes of assessment, so as to avoid inequalities between students resulting in uneven recognition of abilities. Ideally, one of the assessments should allow for creativity or reflection on the learning process.

  Example: I have a diverse assessment pattern in my module (not 100% on only one assessment) that allows students to play to different strengths (e.g. oral and written assessment).

- Students are familiar with learning outcomes of the module, the assessment pattern and marking criteria (e.g. they went through them in class with the tutor / did some peer assessment of their formative work). Marking criteria are clearly reflected in the feedback students receive. Feedback is transparent and areas of improvement are clearly highlighted. During the module there is at least one form of formative opportunity for students to get feedback before submitting their assessed work.
- If the assessment is new, I provide clear guidelines to the students and am available for support to clarify any doubts.



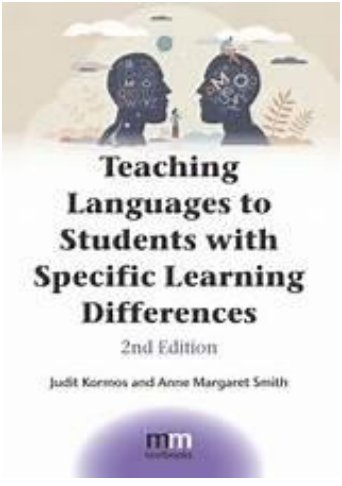
→ Principles of Assessment Design, ACD, Warwick

→ Paul Ian Campbell (2024), *Race and Assessment in HE* (link embedded on the image).

→ WIHEA Learning Circle: Inclusive Assessment (warwick.ac.uk)

E) When marking:

- Does my feedback link to the marking criteria and explain mistakes or shortcomings with practical examples taken from text? Does my marking include clear and practical suggestions for improvement?
- Acknowledge the student's use of an SPLD label on their assessed work in the feedback. These labels are supplied by Disability Services and highlight that the student has a specific learning condition – this may be placed at the start or at the end of the assessment.
  - → Marking guidelines here: Marking (warwick.ac.uk)
- Avoid abstract terms – stick to clear, specific concrete points for students to work on. Some students may find it easier to use their feedback if it is provided in a concise format, such as a bulleted list, with key areas to work on highlighted.
- For students with ADHD, rejection sensitivity (difficulty with receiving negative feedback) can be a particular barrier to engaging with feedback. You can mitigate this by framing your feedback with compassion and a positive tone.
- Students with neurodiversity may have more issues with organisation and time management which may affect the presentation of their work – compassionate comments on how to work on these issues is advised, and it may be helpful to signpost to the library's Productivity Tools.
  - → Some of these suggestions have been taken from 'Assessment and Feedback', in the Neurodiversity and Student Experience Toolkit, where you can find more guidance and resources.
  - → J. Kormos & A. M. Smith (2023), *Teaching Languages to Students with Specific Learning Differences*.



Students Q&A for Teaching Staff

Supporting BAME students

- *How do I make my classroom a safe space for BAME students?*

  Providing a space in which all students feel not only safe, but also comfortable is absolutely vital. Students will have come from a variety of backgrounds and no single person will have had exactly the same experience. Hypervisibility (the feeling that all eyes are on you as the single representative of a minority group) is a really common feeling. We can try to avoid this by allowing for more group discussion and asking for more contributions from the group so that no one feels singled out.

- *How can I be inclusive of BAME students?*

  A common microaggression that BAME students often face is the incorrect pronunciation of their names. Therefore, making the effort to learn how to pronounce a student's name properly will make them feel valued and included. If you don't know how to say someone's name, the best solution is to simply just ask them. They would much rather like you ask them instead of guessing!

- *Why is it important to explain the differences in racial terminology between different languages?*

  Racial terms are a complex issue across different languages, and these terms carry long histories with a lot of pain. Over time, society has adapted and changed which means that terms to describe racial groups have also changed with society. However, some terms that may be considered inappropriate in the UK may still be in use in other countries.

- *How can I prepare my students for their Year Abroad?*

  The Year Abroad can be challenging for everyone, but there are certainly more challenges to be aware of as a person of colour. Not all students will be aware of how people of colour are treated in the countries they are travelling to. For example, racism is much more prevalent in some countries or regions than others and it is worthwhile making sure that students are aware of this. Moreover, there are some culture references that should be considered that extend beyond explicit racism. It can be a shock to travel to a new country and find very few people that look like yourself whether that be in the actual place you are living or in the media displayed there. Issues such as Blackface are treated differently outside the UK, and this can be distressing for students. Having honest conversations with your students about these topics can help them to feel much more prepared and accurately make decisions about where they would like to go on their Year Abroad.

- *Where can I direct my students for more support?*

  The Black student Network is run by students and offers a place for black to students to connect and share their experiences in order to make the department a more inclusive place. The SMLC Students' Network Leads is another network that can offer support on this (see the SMLC EDI webpage).

Supporting disabled students

- *How can I offer appropriate support to my disabled students?*

  It may be necessary to have conversations with your disabled students about what support they may need. However, they may feel nervous to single themselves out and reach out to the tutor. A class-wide email offering students the opportunity to reach out about the support they need can help make the tutor seem much more approachable. There is such a wide range of disabilities and therefore the support needed by each student will be different. For example, a neurodivergent student will have largely different support needs to that of a student with a physical disability.

The Disability Team provides guidance on disability to staff supporting students and welcomes staff enquiries and discussion on disability related issues. You can find information about specific disabilities and the support offered to students on our Specific Support Services page. There are several links to staff resources on this page and information on disability is also available through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pages.

- *Where can I direct my disabled students if they need more support?*

  There are many places that offer support for students with disabilities. This includes Wellbeing Services, Disability-based societies such as Autism at Warwick or Warwick Enable, and the student-run SMLC Disability Network.

Advice for staff supporting disabled students

The Disability team also provides advice and information to staff supporting students. Staff enquiries and discussion on disability related issues are welcome. Additional information and guidance for staff can be found on the Information for staff supporting students web page.

- *How do I explain my tasks clearly so that they can be understood by students with disabilities?*

  Explaining tasks so that they can be understood by neurodivergent students is something that is really important but can be challenging. The best way to make tasks more disability friendly is to keep it as simple as possible whilst ensuring that you have communicated all of the relevant information. For example, open ended tasks can be difficult for neurodivergent students. Separating the task itself from any preamble or context can make this easier. This means that students are able to access the most important information without having to read through lots of text. Also, providing information on how many sources may be considered appropriate for the task size is really helpful in enabling neurodivergent students to recognise how much work needs to be done. Many neurodivergent students can feel the need to overwork themselves if they are unable to recognise when a task is complete. Finally, leaving time at the end of a lesson for questions is a good way to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and ready to tackle the task.

- *How can I make my lessons accessible to all students?*

  Ways to support your students will look different depending on their individual needs. However, there are some general questions to consider when approaching the topic of inclusivity for disabled students. For example, when providing audio resources for your class, it is important that the option for transcriptions or subtitles is available. This is particularly important for students that have auditory processing disorder and are unable to follow the audio alone or for students with fatigue issues. Similarly, always making yourself visible to your students so that they can lip-read and follow your body language is really helpful. Other ways you can help include categorising documents and readings in terms of priority and providing content warnings for material that has the potential to cause upset.

- *How can I make my classroom a safe space for disabled students?*

  This means calling out bullying or unnecessary comments (e.g. comments about someone's mobility aid can be distressing). It involves making sure that all of your students have the same opportunities for success regardless of disability.

Supporting LGBTQUIA+ students:

- *How can I be inclusive of all students regardless of their gender identity?*

  For example, do I ask my students what name and pronouns they would like to use both in English and in the target language? A good way to do this is by making your own name and pronouns known to your students so that they may feel more comfortable introducing their own pronouns. Also, asking your students to introduce themselves either in a physical or virtual space (if they feel comfortable doing so!) avoids signaling out individual students and normalises talking about pronouns. There are different ways to do this, and one way would be to send a general email to the class before the first lesson to ask them to provide their name and pronouns alongside any additional information they require you to know. Alternatively, you

could create an online forum where students can introduce themselves using a website such as Padlet.

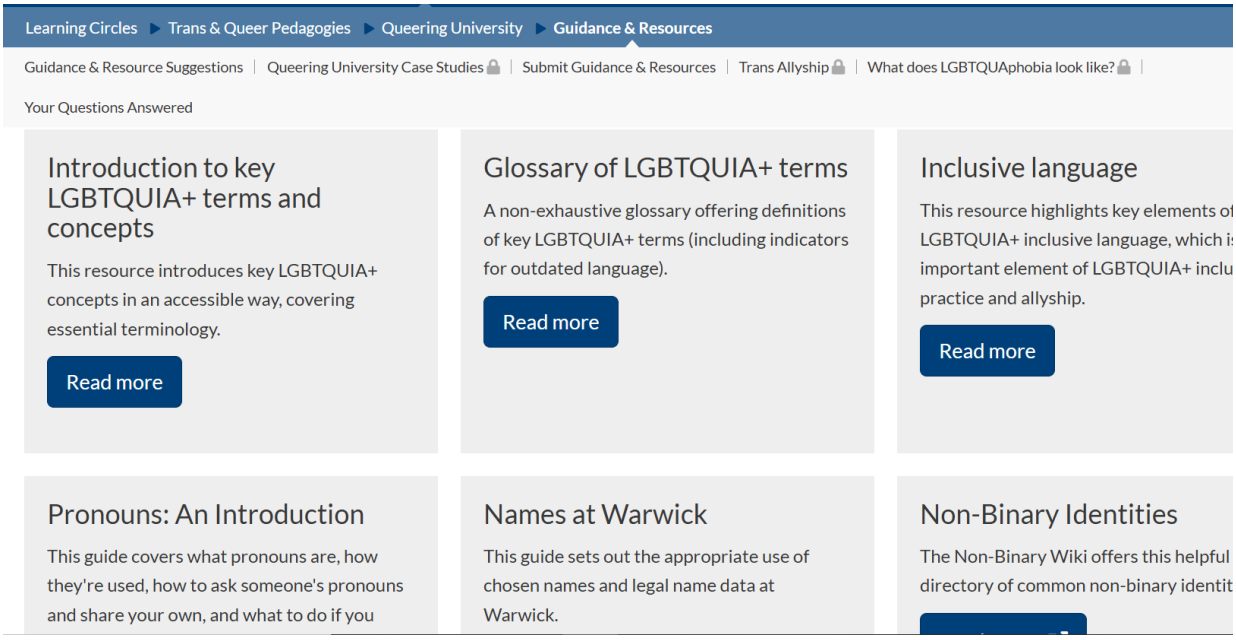
- *Why is it important to normalise pronouns?*

  Appearance does not always equate to pronouns or gender identity. Some people may not be able to come out and therefore may have to dress in a way that they don't feel comfortable with. Others might simply prefer to dress in a particular way regardless of what gender they identify as. Therefore, we can never be sure of someone's pronouns unless we ask them. Asking someone what pronouns they use is the best way to be respectful of everyone's gender identities. Moreover, through normalising the discussion of pronouns, we are able to destigmatise the trans community and make it easier for trans people to be their authentic selves.

- *Do I know how to use inclusive language in the language that I am teaching? And do I actively teach this in my lessons?*

  → Please see our inclusive language guides on the IATL webpage.

  → Visit the WIHEA 'Trans & Queer Pedagogy Learning Circle'



- *How do I make my classroom a safe space for LGBTQUIA+ students?*

  This might include talking about a wide range of LGBTQUIA+ topics or simply just calling out microaggressions or other forms of discrimination when you come across it. Students like to feel seen by their tutors and course content! However, it may also be helpful to give your students a warning before the class is going to be tackling difficult topics such as homophobia or transphobia since recalling painful past and present could cause considerable distress.

- *How can I prepare my students for their Year Abroad?*

  For LGBTQUIA+ students, there are more factors to consider when approaching the Year Abroad. Homophobia or transphobia may be particularly prevalent in certain countries or regions, so it is important that students are prepared for what they may experience or are able to choose a safer place to live. Approaching the topic of how LGBTQUIA+ people are treated in the countries where the target language is spoken allows for honest conversations and helps students know what to do if they were confronted with this type of problem.

- *Where can my students receive more support?*

  The SMLC LGBT+ Network is a group run by students that helps to connect like-minded people that can support each other in the creation of a more inclusive department.

Supporting Students from Widening Participation Background:

Please watch the following video, '<u>What I Wish my Professor Knew</u>', that could help understand how our classroom practices and statements could contribute to First-Generation and/or Low Income (FLI) students feeling alienated or welcomed.

- *Do I understand what is meant by the term 'widening participation'?*

  The term generally encompasses students from backgrounds which may make their experience at university more challenging. Find out more at the <u>Widening Participation Student Network</u>.

- *How can I best support students who may identify with this label?*

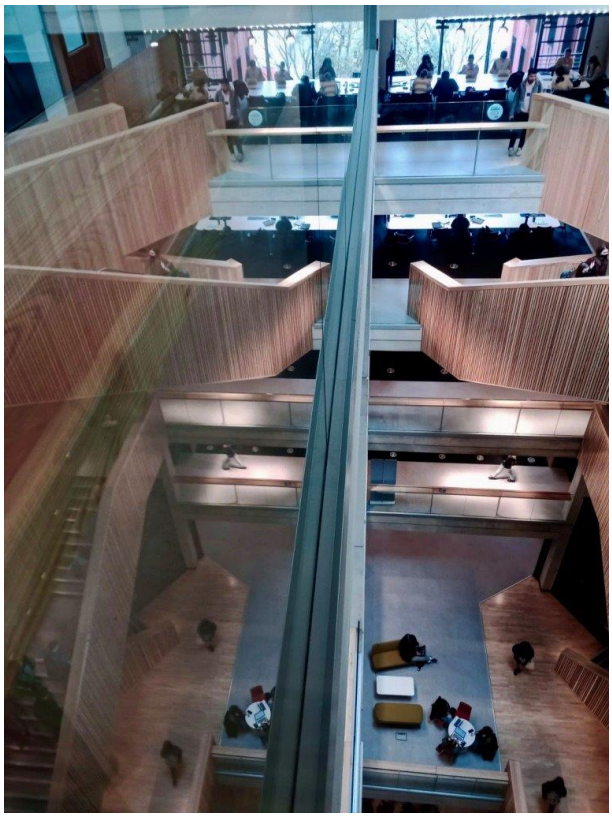
  During group work in seminars, be mindful of the way that you split students so that consideration may be given to mature students, disabled students, or anyone that may feel

isolated. For example, allowing students to work with people they feel comfortable with is a great way to ensure student productivity whilst considering their wellbeing. On the other hand, some students may find it difficult to make friends, especially towards the beginning of the year, and it may be necessary at times to pick groups for the students so that no one is left out. Generally speaking, a mix of tasks where students are allowed to choose their own groups combined with tasks where their groups are chosen for them may be a good idea. Each class will have a unique dynamic, so it is important to try your best to make sure everyone feels included. Also, students come from a variety of backgrounds and approaching the topic of families may be sensitive. It is important to include vocabulary in language lessons that destigmatises various types of homelife and accurately reflects the vocabulary needs of all. For example, do you teach the words for 'guardian' and 'caregiver' as well as 'mother' and 'father'?

- *What resources are available to help students financially? Do I actively promote these resources?*

  Cost of Living (warwicksu.com) is a useful website for students and staff concerned by the cost-of-living crisis.

  Hardship Funds (warwicksu.com) provides information for students that may be struggling with financial issues. Also, the Widening Participation Network is a support group run by students for students which provides an opportunity to meet similar people and work together towards making the department a more inclusive place.



- *How can I support my students if they also have jobs alongside their studies?*

  Some students have to work long hours to financially support themselves at university. They may not get support from their family, and this may be their only option in order to pay rent and all the bills that come with being a student. Loans from student finance often only cover rent alone or just enough for food and general expenses. This may lead to poor attendance or lack of concentration in class. They may also require more extensions or more support from their tutors.

Further Resources

- Alim, H. S., J. R. Rickford y A. F. Ball, eds. 2016. *Raciolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anya, U. 2021. "Critical Race Pedagogy for more Effective and Inclusive World Language Teaching". *Applied Linguistics* 42 (6): 1055–1069.
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- Decolonising languages: Ways forward for UK HE and beyond
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- Macebo, Donaldo. 2019. *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education,* Routledge.
- IATL Co-Creation Resources
- Inclusive Education at Warwick.
- Inclusive Pedagogies at Warwick.
- Lacorte, M. and J. Magro. 2022. "Foundations for Critical and Antiracist Heritage Language Teaching". In *Heritage Language Teaching and Research: Perspectives from Critical Language Awareness*, eds. S. Loza and S. Beaudrie, 23–43. Routledge.
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    - Turner, I., Norton, S., & Moody, J. 2020. #52etc – *a toolkit for student engagement.* Advance HE.
    - WIHEA Neurodiversity Toolkit