

# Making materials (that) matter

Representing diversity in the ELT  
classroom

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Teaching in a diverse classroom means creating an atmosphere of belonging and inclusion where students feel comfortable. For that, we need to create an environment in which diversity is represented in materials. To represent diversity, we need images where visible diversity is involved, and stories where invisible diversity is involved that cannot be represented in pictures. This sub-plenary explores what materials already exist, and how teachers can easily create and adapt materials. In addition, we explore how storytelling can help our learners find their voice in English: without their input, no inclusive classroom will be possible.

## Where was I?



When we talk about representing diversity in the classroom, I'd like to tell you a story: the story of me, the story of my English lessons at school. Where was I? When I did English at school, we had an English school book, and that school book featured a boy. His name was Bob, and Bob had a dog, and the illustrations look pretty much like what you can see here in the left picture. I wasn't represented. I was a 12 year old girl with short hair wearing trousers all the time, someone that you would possibly have called a "tomboy". The only representation that I had was in the Famous 5 because there was this girl George, who was pretty much like me, and it is on purpose that I took a picture of the TV series and not the books because, as you may know, Enid Blyton has come under a lot of criticism because of racism and gender stereotypes. But George sort of saved my life. And, despite the fact that the UK was a multicultural society by then, there were no black people. That came later when we did American English, and then they were always related to problems. The same went for native Americans. The only gay person that was around was Oscar Wilde, but no-one talked about him as being gay.



## English books have moved on...

- Sometimes for the good (content/message), sometimes for the token (pure illustration)
- Examples from Handshake, 1996

Of course English books have moved on, and illustrations in the 1990s featured a lot more people of colour, black people, women and so on; sometimes the change was for the good, that is what you can see on the left where it's actually making fun of some typical mansplaining, and sometimes it was for the worst because it was just a bit of tokenism like let's just show some people out of context putting them together to say OK we've got people of colour we've got women we've got different age groups. Both pictures are taken from the same book, by the way, which is Handshake.

## English as a global language

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- Perfect vehicle for representation of race, ethnicity, and gender
- Women at work
- Working across cultures
- Leadership and entrepreneurship
- Communication styles



Market Leader, 2000



Now, of course, when we think about representation and diversity, English with its appeal as a global language is a perfect vehicle to teach different cultures and that means different ethnicities, different nationalities, race and so on. The fact that we have now more women at work also in a global context means that we have gender being represented more, and very often we also have different age groups. English books especially business English books show different leadership and entrepreneur styles they show success stories of business leaders and so on and they show different communication styles. But that's quite often where the representation stops and I was wondering: what does representation then mean in a wider context, and to what extent can we use English to represent diversity in our ELT classroom? Especially as a lot of publishers still follow the PARSNIP rule (i.e. do not mention politics, alcohol, religion, sexuality, narcotics, ideology and pork).



## Three questions

Why is representation important?

Who needs to be represented?

How can we establish representation?

In this sub-plenary talk means I would like to address these three questions: why is representation important not only in the ELT classroom, who needs to be represented, and how can we establish representation? Given the fact that teachers already have a lot on their plate, how can we use easy activities, available tools, and materials that help us create a feeling of inclusion and belonging in a diverse classroom.



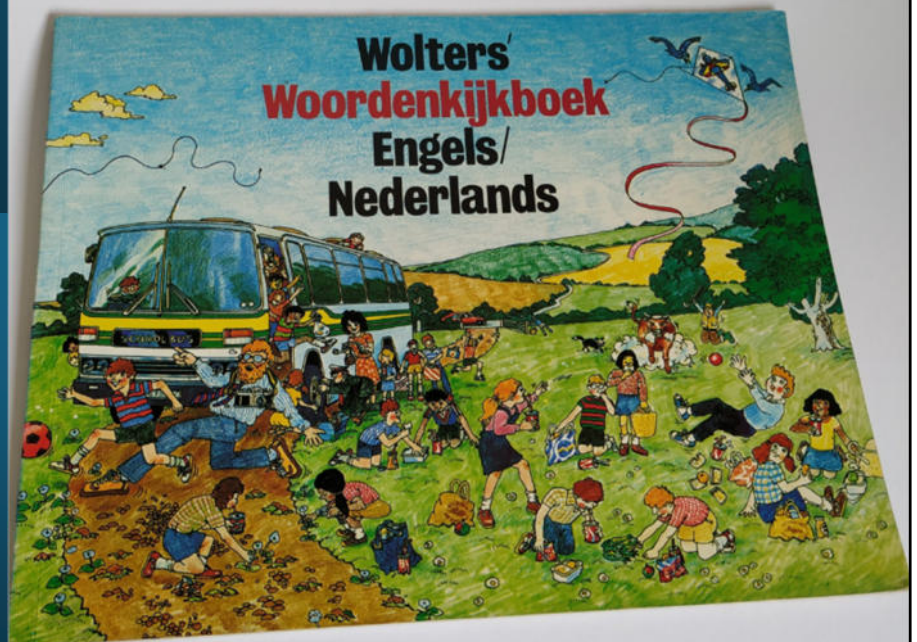
I'm going to talk about these six things. The first one is who's zooming whom: who's going to be represented who needs to be represented, and why do we do that; the second part is show me which means how we actually show people and how we show their worlds. After this visual representation, we're going to talk about stories: what kind of stories can help us build inclusion and belonging in the classroom. Then we talk about a couple of things that we should try to avoid: problematising, marginalising, and reinforcing stereotypes. I will also try ,even though that's quite a big step to look into, to address the recognition of special educational needs because very often inclusive classrooms means that you will have people with disabilities or learning issues in the classroom and I think there's something about recognition that we need to address in this context. I'm going to close with an appeal that we need to look at diversity from an all-inclusive perspective.



So let's have a look at who's zooming whom.

Teaching English in the  
Netherlands

Where were  
you?



At the beginning I asked you the question where was I? Now let me rephrase the question where were you? When I did some research for this sub-plenary talk then of course I looked at examples of Dutch schoolbooks. And one of the books I found was this, and what you can see here is that there is already a certain level of diversity: you do have kids of different skin colours, you have girls not behaving very girlish, there is this quite bossy girl in the skirt, you have girls wearing trousers, you have the female teacher assisting the bus driver changing the tyre and so on. That book came out in 1981, the same year as my school book, and it was definitely more diverse.



## What does your classroom look like?

- Social inequality for different backgrounds
- Growing cultural diversity
- Growing number of learners with special needs
- Inclusive classroom often primary school level
- Curricula require inclusion of certain 'topics' (e.g. sexual minorities)
- Lack of resources, expertise and staff



No I did some more research and looked a bit into how diversity and inclusion are addressed in different papers. The issues that have found we're very close to the issues we have in a German classroom. We have people from different backgrounds and there is social inequality. There is a growing cultural diversity and a classroom. In addition there is a growing number of learners with special needs. At primary school level there seemed to be more inclusive classrooms, but when it comes to secondary school it seems to be that inclusion isn't always possible as the classroom and the demands get more complex.

At this point I would argue however that we don't really have a growing number of students with special learning needs or education needs, it is more than we recognise more needs in people we recognise ADHD dyslexia are all these other SEN a lot sooner in our learners. Now for example regarding sexual identity or sexual minorities as it is called in the curriculum there are now rules that schools must include them in different topics in the classroom so they must be discussed and the problem that I think a lot of schools have even though the Netherlands seemed to have a very good school output in general, there is always a lack of resources there's a lack of expertise and there's never enough staff never enough teachers to deal with those issues.

## What does your classroom look like?

- Positive attitude to multicultural classrooms
- Strategies how to address cultural heterogeneity
- Strengthen positive intercultural relationships
- Additional support for SEN learners
- Degree of limitation
- Acceptance of LGBT+ strong in NL, still an issue of slurs and bullying



Research also shows that in general, Dutch teachers say they have a positive attitude to their multicultural classrooms but they often lack strategies how to address cultural heterogeneity or how to address the cultural differences in their classroom. They also often feel less secure about how they can strengthen positive intercultural relationships, and they wish for more support if they have learners with special educational needs.

There is of course a degree of limitation that plays a role in how much support these SEN kids actually need. We also have adult learners that are still diagnosed with certain learning issues and we need to deal with this at university or in a business English course in the company.

In general research shows that acceptance of LGBT+ people is very strong in the Netherlands, only 5% do have not a positive opinion, but at school it's still an issue of slurs and bullying, so here there's a lot less tolerance: sexual orientation is still used to marginalise people and most gay and lesbian teenagers report that they have already experienced negative sentiment.

## Why is representation important?

- School textbooks help shape students' social views through stories, characters and images
- Danger of stereotyping (e.g. competence and status)
- Feeling underrepresented = adverse academic and mental health outcomes
- Experiences of prejudice threaten quality of life and well-being
- Aware of stereotypes = negative evaluation of marginalised groups
- Starting early: six-year-olds aware of stereotypes



Daudi van Veen et al., *Ethnic representation and stereotypes in mathematics and Dutch language textbooks from the Netherlands* (Routledge, 2022), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23793406.2023.2219997>  
Fraukje Mevissen et al., *Systematic Development of a Dutch School-Based Sexual Prejudice Reduction Program: an Intervention Mapping Approach* (Springer 2018), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6208781/>

These are issues that we need to address in the classroom, and we have to think about why representation is so important. The research that I've found, and you see some of this here, also makes it very clear that textbooks help shape student social views. That's my experience, too, which is why it started with my school story, and textbooks do that through the stories, characters and images that they include. And that means if certain groups are not included they simply do not exist in the classroom, so people cannot form an opinion about them, and they can ignore those people. But if I start representing those people, I can raise awareness and I can build a different attitude towards different people. So people of those groups are often shown in textbooks as having less competence and lower status, there is a question about warmth. Which means whether these people feel included or not. We know from research that if our learners feel underrepresented, especially teenagers and university students, it really affects their academic outcome and their mental health.

The experience of prejudice that many people experience threatens their quality of life and it also threatens their mental well-being which is why we really need to address those issues if we want to have motivated students that feel calm and relaxed enough to perform well in the classroom. For white male straight people the awareness of stereotypes often means there's a negative evaluation of these

marginalised groups because they think that these behave according to the stereotype, and research also shows that forming stereotypes in your head starts very early, so 6-year olds are already aware of stereotypes and there's another kind of push when I reached the age of like 10 or 11 when it really starts shaping the way you think about yourself and the way you look at yourself. This can lead to real issues and that's why we have to think about how to best represent different groups of people.

## Why is representation important?

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- Recognition
- Appreciation
- Feeling accepted
- Feeling safe
- Calming down
- Belonging
- No fight for attention



School is supposed to be a safe place for adolescents, a university is supposed to be a safe place for students, a workplace is supposed to be a safe place for employees. Representation means recognition, it means appreciation, it means feeling accepted and that often means I'm feeling safe, then I calm down and I feel I belong to this place, and then I might actually stop this constant fight for attention, this constant fight of proving myself and that might also change the atmosphere in the classroom.

## Why is representation important?

We show our learners and their worlds

We open a window to their worlds

We make stories a part of our society

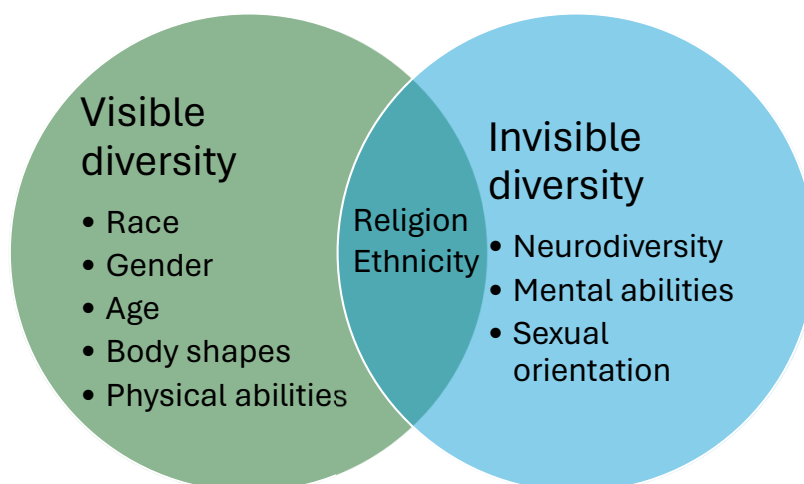
We allow for integration

We boost confidence and normalisation



So to end this part: representation is important because it allows us to show our learners and to show their worlds it also helps us to open a window to the world all the children's books and everything I read about other cultures and people in different countries helped me shape my world view. If it had always been typical German characters, my worldview would have stayed very narrow-minded. We make these story collections, the bundle of stories that everybody carries around, a part of our society, and then we can maybe start thinking about real integration. And we can boost confidence and normalisation in the classroom and explain that a bit later.

## Who should be represented?



Now, who should be represented? In general I would say we have visible diversity and we have invisible diversity. Visible diversity is what we can see on the outside so it would include race, gender, age, body shapes, physical abilities and so on. Invisible diversity means neurodiversity, from autistic to ADHD, it means mental abilities, it means sexual orientation because even though gender identity might be visible, sexual orientation actually is not. If you think so, that's the stereotype” In the middle because it combines both visible and invisible elements, there would be religion and ethnicity.

What people  
think diversity is  
about



Radboud Reflects  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Lecture and conversation

**Diversity in the Classroom:  
Befriend the Other**

Developmental psychologist  
**Sandra Graham**

**Mon 16 October 2023**  
20.00 - 21.30 hrs  
LUX, Nijmegen

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Now I want to show you 2 pictures: when I think about when people think about diversity they often think about this, right?



What people think inclusion is about



And when people think of inclusion, they often think about special needs they think about this: disabilities, special education schools, resource rooms, and so on. (Taken from a slide player website about inclusion in the Netherlands, introduction handout.)

What  
diversity is,  
too



But we need to think about this the other way round as well: diversity is also to include those special needs and people with disabilities

What  
inclusion is,  
too



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inclusion is also to include and to integrate kids of different origins and social and ethnic backgrounds in the classroom.

## Don't curry favour – offer real food

- Popular reading: People of Colour, rainbow flag and gendered language are enough
- If it is not real, it is not convincing (“social washing”)
- Represent what is there (or can be there)
- EU definition of diversity includes disabilities, age, body shapes etc.
- Images must be authentic and representative
- No need to show all to welcome all
- We make space for all kinds of people



No how are we going to do that? Well my first piece of advice is: don't curry favour, offer real food. At the moment everybody is talking about diversity and inclusion, and we have done so for a number of years, but there are certain pitfalls. The first one is tokenism: the popular reading is if we show enough people of colour, the rainbow flag, and use gendered language that would be enough. I say if it's not real, it's not convincing, it's some kind of social washing done just to create a kind of diverse and inclusive impression that you do not really live up to. We would need to discuss that you should represent what is there and what can be there so don't go for very outlandish forms of representation if they have nothing to do with your classroom or your teaching environment. Please remember that there is actually a definition of diversity in the EU, so we have several laws on anti-discrimination and so on, there's a huge range. If you're going to work with images make sure that images are authentic and representative. This is something that I'm going to do in most parts of this talk.

## How can we do that in the ELT classroom?

01

Using  
characters

02

Making  
people visible

03

Telling  
layered  
stories

04

Recognising  
your learners

I would say there's no need to show every type of diversity but if you start showing representations of diversity in the classroom, you will open the room to all kinds of diversity and make more people feel welcome and that's exactly what we need to do also in the ELT classroom. How can we do that in the ELT classroom? We are going to look now at 4 strategies that you will be able to implement very easily and practically. The first one is using diverse characters; the second one is making people visible through the imagery you can use; then we talk about layered, multiple stories, and in the 4th part we talk about recognising your learners.



Let's move on to show me: show me and my worlds, and show my worlds to others.

## Introduction

### What do you need English for Football for?

Read about five people who speak English in their football lives. These people will feature in the different chapters of the book. Then answer the questions about yourself.



**Name:** Takuma Iwara  
**Job title:** Professional football player  
**Profile:** Professional footballer for five years, moved from Japan to play for a club in Germany; possible transfer to other leagues in Europe  
**Biggest challenge in English:** To follow the coach's instructions through the interpreter

**Name:** Pierre Essomba  
**Job title:** Student, youth footballer  
**Profile:** Attending Douala football academy in Cameroon; finishes next year and wants to play in the Premier League  
**Biggest challenge in English:** As a native speaker of French, English pronunciation is quite difficult



**Name:** Helena da Silva  
**Job title:** Talent scout  
**Profile:** Former professional striker from Brazil, played in Europe and in the US; now working for a US club looking for new talent, both male and female; based in Brazil  
**Biggest challenge in English:** To understand the business aspects of football

**Name:** Steven Potter  
**Job title:** Manager  
**Profile:** Former professional footballer, then manager of clubs in Scotland and England; current team plays in the Premier League and European context  
**Biggest challenge in English:** To communicate clearly and understandably to his international team



**Name:** Natasha Rebić  
**Job title:** Blogger on #mygametoo  
**Profile:** Amateur player and football fan, blogs about all possible aspects of football and looks to increase her subscribers  
**Biggest challenge in English:** To be able to write in good English using all the football jargon

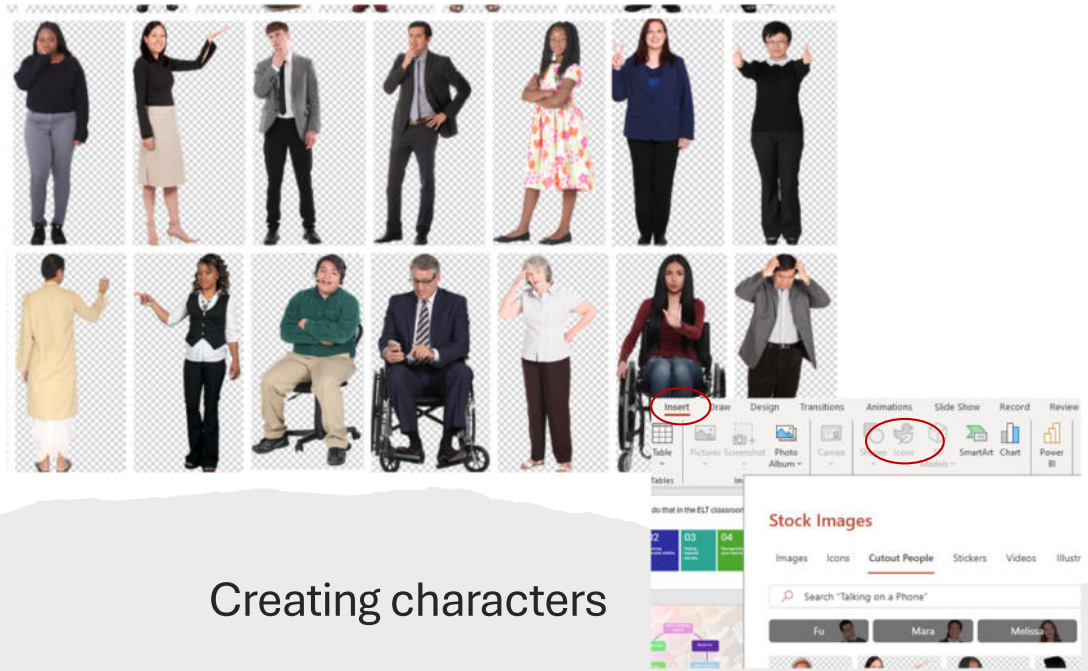
## Have a masterplan

- Who do you create the material for?
- What do you want to achieve?
- My football book:
- Create characters of different gender, age, nationality, race (visible representation)
- Combine these attributes

Five-minute preparation activity:  
transfer, write profiles, interview other  
students or people

Of course if we want to fully address diversity we need something like a master plan, so when you create materials, you need to ask yourself: who do you create the material for, what do you want to achieve? Some people may know that I wrote a book about on teaching English for football, and I needed characters, and the only material available really dealt with football as a boys' thing, like young boys who want to play in the Premier League, and that was not the kind of book that I wanted. I wanted a book for people all over the world, I wanted a book for football fans, and the women like me who are football fans, for young people, for old people, and also for people who want to play in Europe in the Premier League or maybe in the Dutch or German leagues. So I had to create those characters and had to make sure that they represent different kinds of visible diversity: we have two women, the football blogger and the talent scout coach; we have a male middle-aged football manager, we have a young black student from Cameroon who wants to play in the Premier League, and we have a Japanese player who plays in the German Bundesliga. It was very important to show these characters, that is to create these characters of different genders, different ages, nationalities, and to offer visible representation to people. And here comes your first five minute preparation activity: you can use this set of characters create this act of characters and then use a transfer activity; ask your learners why do you want to learn about English, what is your situation like is it similar to this or that person or situation; start building common ground with using diverse characters and asking your learners if they are in the same situation as those characters they may also want to interview other students about that.

Meet  
Fu, Christiania,  
Alfredo, Kesha,  
Elena, Noah,  
Carrie, Soham,  
Rachel, Melanie,  
Charles, Kevin,  
Nicole and Sherri



## Creating characters

Creating characters is no rocket science: creating characters is something you can easily do. If you open PowerPoint in your Microsoft Office package, go to insert and then go to icons: there you have the cut out people, and you can see different age groups. different body shapes. different skin colours, different ethnicities, people in a wheelchair and so on. Depending on the stories or the materials and content that you're creating in the classroom, you can use those characters for representation, i.e. for acting out or representing the content that you deal with.



# There is even an app for that

Pixton characters  
Add to PowerPoint



There's even an app for that: if you want to create characters, you can use an add-on in PowerPoint like Pixton Characters, and again they give you like a number of characters that you can create. Basically, you start with the gender and shape, then you can give them different hair colour and skin colour and different outfits, like a teenager or an astronaut. Then you can create different gestures or poses. As you can see, you can create female chefs and workers on a construction site, you can create older and younger people, so that's also an app that allows you to create characters very simply.

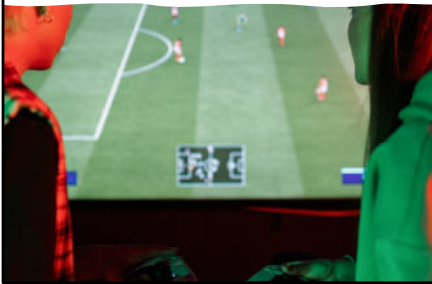
## Example: Bloggers

Visible and  
invisible  
representation



Textbooks often use characters

During my research of course looked at Dutch publishers of English language books and I found two examples that I thought were quite representative. One is Bloggers, published by Talenland, and you can see here that we have these diverse characters already on the cover, and the unit American family features a black boy in a wheelchair. So we have these more ambiguous characters that learners may identify with or be curious about. Behind the visible representation like race or gender there is always the invisible one, like sexual identity.



## Selecting images

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- My football book:
- Use background pictures the same way
- Avoid using images only for illustrational purposes (decoration status)
- Select databases with free or creative commons images

[www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

[www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

<https://www.freeimages.com>

Next, we have to think about the images that we select, and a colleague, in a talk about using images in presentations, said that it was very important to not use images only for decoration because it reduces the value of the image. We need to reflect what should the image show. Looking again at my football book, we had player profiles that included female players, so I really had to look for female players. It was important to show female referees as people with power on the and to show male and female football fans. so you really have to select those people with a certain purpose. There are quite a few databases , some examples are linked here, or you can search for Creative Commons images. All of that will help you to provide a wider range of images that will represent your learners. You might also want to try AI, but the problem is AI tools don't do people that well: they still have problems with the hands and the eyes.

## Then and now

### Five minute preparation activity:

- Typical question: Where are they from?
- Change it: Where do our elftal play?
- Assign research task to your learners
- Make them present in class



Of course images can also be used for activities not just for visual representation, and this is again football: I use football mainly because I think football is of such a strong appeal to so many people and especially that kind of people that may have difficulty with diversity in the classroom. Looking at these two images, you can just compare the elftal of 1988 and the male elftal of today. Of course, you can also do this with the men's and the women's team. I know the (stereo)typical question would be where the players are, from so you would look into the background and the parents came from this part of Africa or that part of Indonesia. But you need to change the question to where do our elftal play? Then you give this task to your learners and say research this player: Where does he play? What's it like playing abroad in another country (because a lot of them do)? What was his or her career like so far? Where are the players now (if it's an older photo)? Then you ask your learners to present their findings in class. Remember that especially with the players who play in the Premier League or other European leagues there is a lot of material available in English, tons of interviews, portrays, social media posts and so on, so that's again something where you learn this will willingly delve into English and they will do that on a diverse issue.

## Future Biographies:

### Five minute preparation activity

What became of these children?

Mix of visible and invisible representation

Amelia Earheart



Katherine Johnson



Alan Turing



Nelson Mandela



Another five minute preparation activity would be future biographies to fight off stereotyping. You can use childhood pictures of famous people and ask your learners to write up the biography of these people, e.g. what did these people want to become, what career path did they choose? I've done this with my learners and of course very often they come up stereotypes you know so the black girl would maybe become a famous singer, the black boy a famous boxer, the white boy would maybe become a doctor, and the white girl maybe become a rich wife or successful writer. Then you reveal the names and you see here pictures of Amelia Earhart, Catherine Johnson, Alan Turing, and Nelson Mandela, and again you have diversity in the classroom: a women as a pilot, a black woman who was one of the most important mathematicians (without her the original Apollo crew would not have landed on the moon), a computer genius who happened to be homosexual which was swept under the carpet for a very, very long time, and South Africa's first black president. Then you can challenge learners' ideas: why do we think that girls become housewives or singers or instead of pilots or programmers, why do they think that black boys would choose a career in sports etc..



Now we move on to storytelling. What stories can we actually tell?

## Tell diversity through stories

- Everyday stories
- Hero stories
- Success stories
- Constructed stories
- Experienced stories
- Involving stories
- Future stories



Here are some, and we will look at examples for these. We can tell stories of everyday life, we can tell stories of heroes, and that also means we need to define what we think a hero is, we can tell stories of success, we can tell stories that are fictional out because we want to share a certain message, but quite often we should we share stories that are based on experience with somebody really tells about what happened to them so we want to create stories that people can join in also that people feel they are involved.



## What are diverse stories like?

- Representing diversity: tell the story of a 60-year-old schoolteacher and the 9-year-old boy who won the reading prize
- Provide a voice and a face to people who have been marginalised or ignored
- Show openness and readiness to welcome these people to your world or classroom
- Address special groups who can identify with the story
- Show real lives: open new worlds
- Move away from the old norm to a new normal

We also need to ask: What do diverse stories look like? Again we need to be aware of the problem of tokenism: diverse stories are more than just the stories of women, of gay and lesbian people. Representing diversity means also that you tell the story of the 60-year old school teacher or the 9-year old boy who just won the reading prize. Diverse stories means that we provide a voice and a face to people who have been marginalised (which is an active process) and ignored. It shows openness and readiness to welcome these people to your world and into your classroom, and it means that we address special groups who can identify with the story. We shall show real lives and that means we open new worlds. So what we're trying to do with diversifying stories of the classroom is to move away from the old norm to a new normal.



# Example: Stepping Stone



Different characters from all over the world

Find a balance of characters learners can aspire to and identify with

Five-minute preparation activity:

use similar stories of children in the Netherlands



And here we're going to look at the second English textbook: Stepping Stones. They use characters to tell these stories like in this one chapter where they tell the stories of children around the world. They chose different characters, and that's again why English is such a fantastic vehicle because we expect people from different countries: English is supposed to be about the world. However as much as I like different characters from all over the world, you need to make the transfer you need to build some common ground and allow your students in the Dutch classroom to build a bridge are the kids in another countries: do we have the same interests?

It's always a good idea if you work with stories in textbooks to think about what could be a balance of characters: characters your learners may actually aspire to (I want to be like this so I want to get to know more about this person) and characters that they identify with (this person is like me and that helps me to feel like I belong in this classroom). So that would be the five minute preparation activity: use similar stories of children in the Netherlands which you can easily look up one example is given on the right : Countries and Cultures the number one girls' sport, based on an article reflecting on the success of the British football teams, and it could easily be the Dutch national team. So when we talk about storytelling then we have to think about which stories do help our learners

see the world differently.

# The danger of the single story

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, TED talk 2009



## What it means for us:

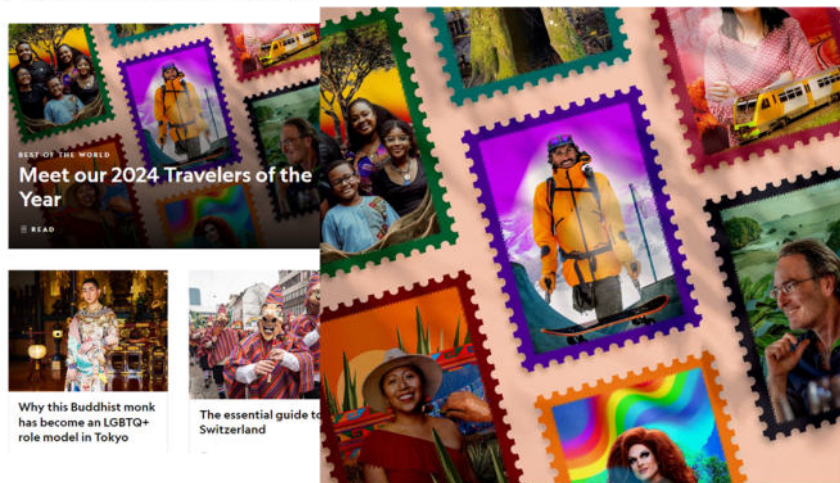
we are never only one attribute or one role  
not only Black or White or Asian  
not only gay or straight or polyamorous  
not only literate or dyslexic or into games  
not only young or old or in the middle  
not only male or female or gender fluid  
not rich or poor or just managing  
not walking or in a wheelchair or hobbling

[www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/)

One of the biggest risks, and that is where we need to address stereotypes and tokenism again, is the danger of the single story. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave this TED talk in 2009 (you can find a lesson plan based on this in one of National Geographic Keynote books). This is a great talk to understand what diversity can look like and how important it is never to reduce people to 1 attribute or one feature only. So if you listen to the talk, it means to us that we are never only this one attribute or only this one role. She said something quite important in this talk: she loved those American and British books that she read which portrayed a world totally different from her world, but they opened up these new worlds for me. The unintended consequence however was that she did not know that people like her could exist in literature, so the discovery of African writers for her of seeing people like her in books reading about them was that it's safe to from having a single story of what books are we got back to Adichie in a moment.

## Example: Voices

### LGBT-FRIENDLY TRAVEL



Five-minute preparation activity:  
preparing interview questions for these  
people (learner research)

Their travellers include

- an artist, environmentalist and drag queen
- an athlete, influencer and disability access advocate
- a female founder and cultural caretaker
- a middle-aged founder, food blogger and chef

Now here's another textbook example, *Voices*, a book in which we find a number of different characters, different stories, and this is accompanied by a blog. This is a blog for example which is about LGBT friendly travel and there you have this "Meet our 2024 travellers of the year". If you go to that part of the website, you see that their travellers include people with diverse stories so it is not one person equals one story. Each of these people have a bundle of stories, so we have an artist who's also environmentalist and drag queen, we have athlete who is also an influencer and advocate for disability access, we have a female founder who is also taking care of cultural preservation, we have a middle-aged female founder who's also a food blogger and a chef: you have to use multiple stories and that would be another 5 minute preparation activity you give your students to link they select a person and they prepare interview questions for these people.

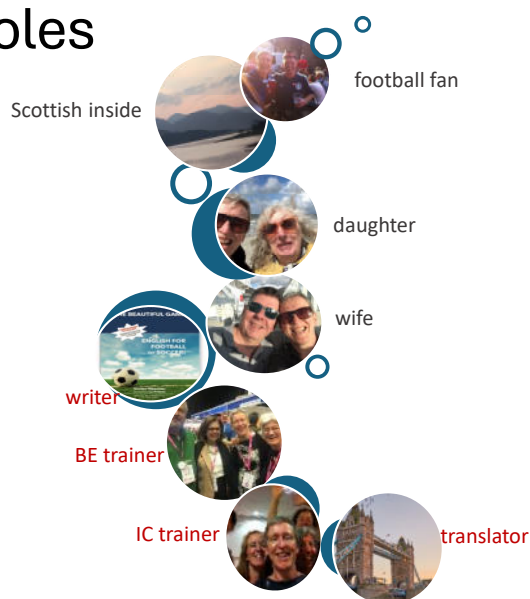
## My roles are also your roles

“All of these stories make me who I am.

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.

They make one story become the only story.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Five-minute preparation activity: story postcards

My roles are also your roles because that's what the teacher says so here you see some of my roles I spent a lot of time in Scotland I feel partly Scottish I'm a football fan as you already know I'm a daughter I'm alive I'm a trainer for British English business English have a trainer for intercultural issues I'm a writer, I'm a translator, and it's just some of my roles and all of these stories make me who I am. The single story create stereotypes and as Adichie has it, the problem is stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete they make one story become the only story but if we allow ourselves and our learners to tell this multiple stories these layered stories this bundle of stories they will also discover common ground and that is what we have to encourage in the classroom. Now that is another 5 minute preparation activity you can ask your student your learners to pre create those kind of story postcards where they put pictures after different roles together and present that in the classroom or write an essay about.

## Telling stories

- Create stories for your characters to make them authentic
- Remember: we are more than one single story
- Create stories that involve certain topics
- Example: Future of football fans as a story of inclusion



Telling stories means that you create stories for your characters because you want to make them authentic in the classroom you need to remember that we have more than or we are more than one single story and you should also create stories that involve certain topics So what we did here was in the football book we talked about the future of football fans and we talked to this as a story of inclusion so we addressed racism we addressed belonging because this is actually the Museum of migration in London that showed these poster series of England without immigration so they would only be able to field 3 footballers if they remove everybody whose parents or grandparents were not born in England and we also talked about activist groups about gay and lesbian football supporters and so on later on so that helps really to address the issue of what football fans are like in a very diverse way.

## van Dijk and Sari van Veenendaal 'Enough is enough'



## Speaking out: hero stories

- Guardian article from 2020
- National captains speak out against racist comments of long-standing pundit
- Advocating anti-racist action
- Breaking point reached when advertisers join in

• <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/22/dutch-football-captains-lead-boycott-tv-show-racist-remarks-virgil-van-dijk-sari-van-veenendaal>

Now one thing that we should really avoid is not that we avoid the problem of racism or homophobia. Here, we need to look at hero stories, at people who speak out and show solidarity. This is an article about Dutch football captains speaking out against Johan Derksen, who, on the Veronica Inside programme, made plenty of racist remarks and got away with it: this is just humour; was he ever at the receiving end of such “humour”? Derksen, you might argue, is also representing, yes, a group of people who assured their own position in society by putting other people into place, keeping them down, and treating them without respect: I am pretty sure that he made sexist jokes, too. If you think that people should not get upset, think about how often have jokes been made about you and you were told not to be so touchy? Especially women? But here, you need to ask yourself Do I sit with this side? Or will enough is enough also be good for me and others as we are discussing how we treat each other, talking about respect? I’d rather have a beer with van Dijk and not with Derksen.



We need to address those issues in the classroom but we should avoid displaying people from those groups as the problem.



## I'm not a problem

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- The original question had the word gay in it, and you wonder what the purpose is? But this is often how diversity is represented: as a problem.
- Peter J. Fullagar on LinkedIn

[www.peterjfullagar.co.uk](http://www.peterjfullagar.co.uk)

**Is it easier  
for a  
straight to  
live in a  
village or a  
city?**



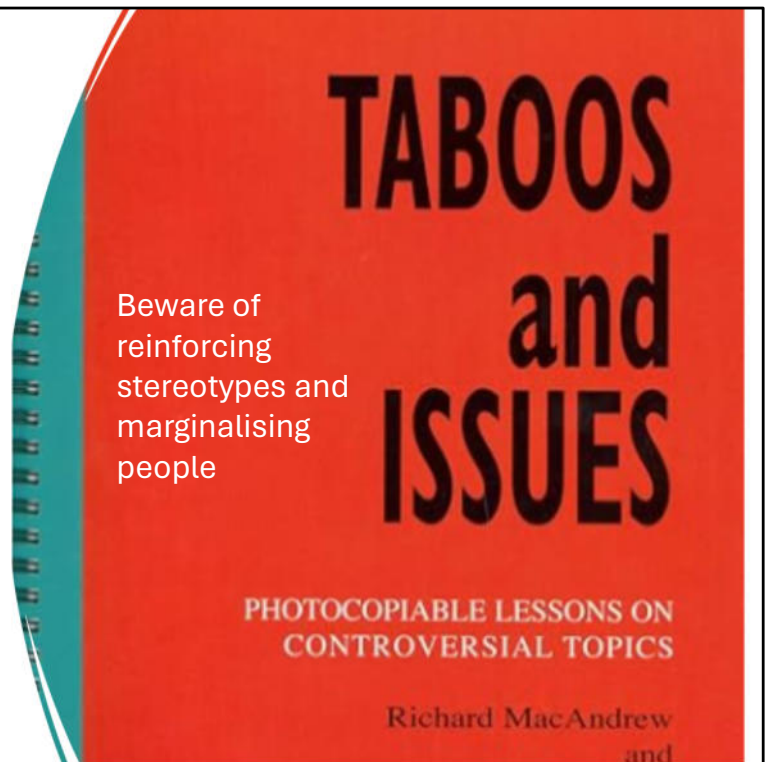
My colleague Peter J Fullagar does a great job on that. He's very active on LinkedIn and has his own website about inclusive materials for the ELT classroom. A while ago, he posted this on LinkedIn: the original question was is it easier for a gay to live in a village or city, and you wonder what the purpose is? Why would you discuss such a question? But this is often how diversity is represented: gay people are seen as a problem or they're having problems, like the black people in my English book. Now, we have to be aware that in in the Netherlands around 75% of gay or lesbian adolescents reported that they had experienced anti-gay sentiments over the last 12 months (a study taken in 2010) and that included suicidal ideas and victimisation; but the problem doesn't lie with the gays and lesbians: it lies with homophobic people.

## This book is from 2001

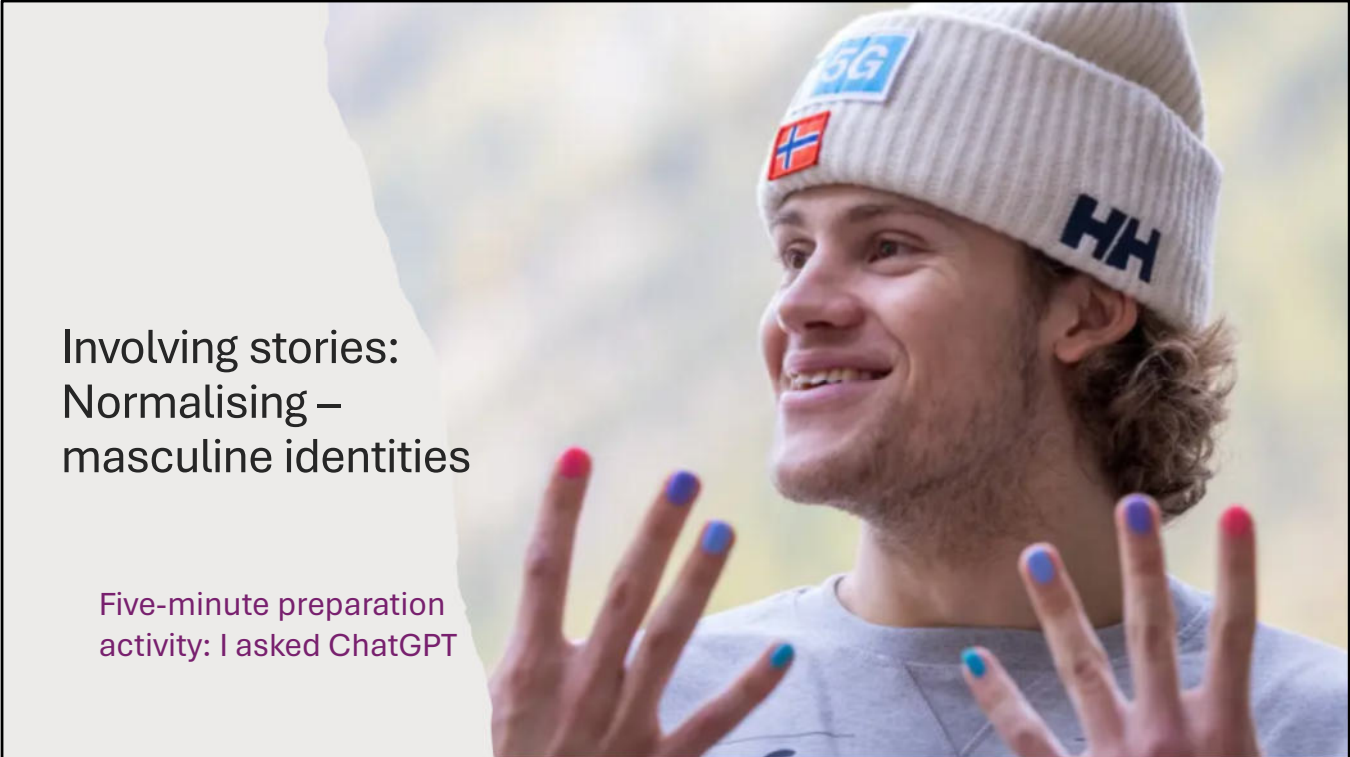
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- Included

- Gays and Jobs, Gay Families
- National Stereotypes
- Changing Sex
- Are You Happy With Your Body?
- Immigration and Racism
- Old Enough To Be Her Grandfather!
- Sexual Harassment



There was a book published in 2001, so about 20 years after my school book came out, which was called taboos and issues and was like photocopy a lessons or controversial topics and when you read about what's in the topics, you know which perspective the author is writing from, don't you? There are a lot of things that could produce opportunities about talking about diversity and addressing diversity, but they're seen as controversial topics, and we really have to move on from the problem thinking so the problem isn't with those people if you represent diversity in this way it leads to maybe inadvertent stereotyping and marginalising, and it reinforces the stereotype that these people are problems, and we don't want that.



## Involving stories: Normalising – masculine identities

Five-minute preparation  
activity: I asked ChatGPT

So what can we do instead? Well this is where I get back to my idea of normalisation and I chose this picture here: this is Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, and he is a world ski star he's one of the best skiers when it comes to slalom, and he is acting in a very masculine environment, but he presents a very different form of masculinity. What I like about him is actually that he kind of like he opens a diverse masculine identity in the world of skiers with his painted fingernails, with his colourful scarves and he's very popular among his fellow athletes and among ski supporters. Now in this case I asked myself what would I do? What kind of five minute preparation activity could I give you? So I asked ChatGPT.

# A lesson plan

Title: Exploring Masculinity Across Cultures

Objective: To examine and discuss various cultural perceptions and expressions of masculinity.

Materials Needed:

- Images depicting different cultural representations of masculinity (e.g., photographs, magazine ads, movie stills)

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Begin by briefly discussing the concept of masculinity with the class. Ask students to share their initial thoughts and perceptions of what it means to be masculine.
- Explain that masculinity can be expressed and perceived differently across cultures and contexts.
- Outline the objectives of the activity: to explore diverse cultural perspectives on masculinity and engage in critical discussion.

2. Image Analysis (20 minutes):

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Distribute a set of images depicting different cultural representations of masculinity to each group.
- Instruct students to examine the images closely and discuss the following questions within their groups:
  - What do you notice about the portrayal of masculinity in each image?
  - How do the images reflect cultural norms or values regarding masculinity?
  - Are there any similarities or differences between the representations of masculinity in different cultures?
- Encourage students to take notes during their discussions.

4. Group Presentations and Discussion (30 minutes):

- Invite each group to present their findings and insights to the class. They can use the images and textual excerpts as visual aids.
- After each presentation, facilitate a class discussion by asking probing questions and encouraging students to share their reflections, reactions, and questions.
- Prompt students to consider the implications of diverse cultural perspectives on masculinity for social norms, gender roles, and individual identity.
- Encourage respectful dialogue and active listening among students.

Involves learner research too!

This is what ChatGPT came up with: it gave me a lesson plan exploring masculinity across cultures, ranging from the objective and introduction to image analysis, group presentation and discussion and it all starts with a single picture. Again, you let your learners do the work.



## Everyday stories The story behind this picture?

Vivianne Miedema and Beth Mead



Five-minute preparation activity:  
newspaper articles (learner research)

- <https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/football/news/england-lionesses-romantic-rollercoasters-team-30558572>
- <https://girlssoccernetwork.com/lesbian-soccer-couples-stories/>

OK, let's look at another example: What is the story behind this picture? Some of you may recognise these two women, and you can see from the background that this picture was taken at Balloon d'Or Gala. The football player invited was Viviana Miedema from the Netherlands, and the caption of this picture simply read: Viviana Miedema arriving at the Balloon d'Or Gala with a guest.

What the caption did not reveal was that the guest was actually her girlfriend who is another world famous footballer, it's Beth Mead of the English national team. They both play in the women's premier league so in women's football, contrary to men's football, homosexuality isn't an issue, the Dutch national team, the English national team, the German national team have plenty of lesbian players and nobody cares. Now the Daily Mirror who reported about that picture got really upset about that Beth Mead was ignored, it's like don't they know that Viviana Miedema is together with Beth Mead, and how dare they not recognising her?

They were not upset about that these two women are in a relationship, actually this was part of a portray story when they show all the female players on the national team and they show who they are in a relationship with men or women. I think this is possibly as progressive, diverse and inclusive as the Mirror gets. So there's tonnes of stories out there and you can just combine the stories.

## Normalising: Success stories

- Enya on the cover of Glamour
- Influencer
- Businesswoman
- Model with Down syndrome
- Instagram:  
DownSyndrome\_Queen
- Don't talk about people
- Talk with them (interview)
- Let them speak (blog/SM)

<https://www.liveaction.org/news/model-down-syndrome-glamour-mag-netherlands/>



Make sure they're multiple stories and that's basically what we need to do we can tell diversity through stories we have here also a story of Enya, a model who happens to have Down syndrome, and she is a very successful model and businesswoman and that's her story. There is the interview and her own posts on Instagram, so we learn that we should talk with people and let them speak for themselves instead of talking about them.

**Dara McNulty is a multi-award winning autistic author, naturalist and conservationist from Northern Ireland.**

After writing his blog [Naturalist Dara](#) for over three years, he published his debut book, *Diary of a Young Naturalist*, which won the 2020 Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing, and was longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize – the youngest ever author to do so. Dara then went on to win The Booksellers Association 'Books Are My Bag Readers Award' for Non-fiction, the An Post Irish Book Awards Newcomer of the Year, and his last award (so far!) was the British Book Awards Narrative Non-fiction Book of the Year. Dara first began to make his mark in 2019, aged just 15, when he became the youngest recipient of the RSPB Medal for conservation.



## Involving stories

- He is a great writer and naturalist. He got a lot of people involved in nature activism through his blog and books. He just happens to be autistic.

To do that, you can also use blogs of course, and in this case here we look at Dara McNulty whose roles are autistic author, naturalist, and conservationist from Northern Ireland, so you can see here autistic isn't a noun it's just one of the adjectives. Being autistic is just one part of him but it's not the only part, and he is also active in supporting other forms of diversity (e.g. Rowling debate).

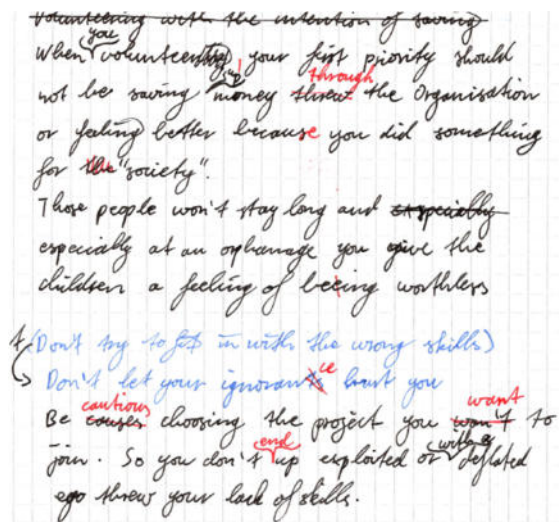


That takes us to the last part where we talk about the need to care for our learners, because we have people with special educational needs or different learning needs and what I learned and it was also a very long journey was it is very important to recognise those in your students because it means that you recognise your students.



## Recognise your students

- Dyslexia in the adult classroom
- Not acknowledged with adults
- Had little information
- Learners felt relieved when I addressed this
- Result: stopped faking, performance improved



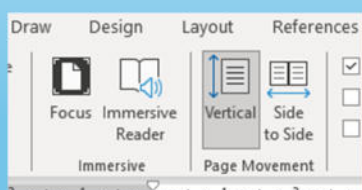
~~volunteering with the intention of saving~~  
When <sup>you</sup> volunteer, your first priority should  
not be saving money ~~through~~ <sup>through</sup> the organisation  
or feeling better because you did something  
for ~~the~~ "society".  
These people won't stay long and especially  
especially at an orphanage you give the  
children a feeling of being worthless.  
↳ Don't try to get in with the wrong skills.  
Be <sup>caution</sup> ~~careful~~ choosing the project you ~~want~~ <sup>want</sup> to  
join. So you don't ~~end~~ <sup>end</sup> up exploited or ~~deflated~~ <sup>with a</sup>  
ego throw your lack of skills.

I happen to have people in my family who are dyslexic so I learned a bit early but what dyslexic writing looks like, and at university and in my business English courses when I was teaching adults I looked at their written homework and I just talked to them, I said: "Look, could it be that you're dyslexic?" They looked at me and said: "You're the first person who spotted this apart from my schoolteachers", and I said: "Well it's quite obvious from the way you write", and I asked: "Do you have a doctor's certificate or something because then I will not judge your spelling mistakes in the written exam paper?" And then we discussed what help we could offer do they need more time in the exam and so on. That was all long before we had rules at university to do that, and today of course I tell them about immersive reader, the dictation function in Word, and all of these things, and that they can dictate their homework.

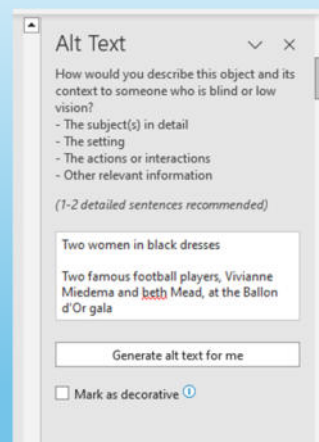
The moment that I talked to them about it you could feel the relief: "Somebody understands what's the issue for me when I have to write and read English or German", so they stopped faking because they've been faking all the time they pretend they can read they pretended can write and their performance actually improves.

# How to represent special learning needs?

- ADHD:
  - Prepare: why are we reading this text?
  - Organise the text in shorter units
  - Allow learners to engage with text
  - Use focus mode (for re-read what you have written)
  - Allow immersive reader via headphones



Show that you care

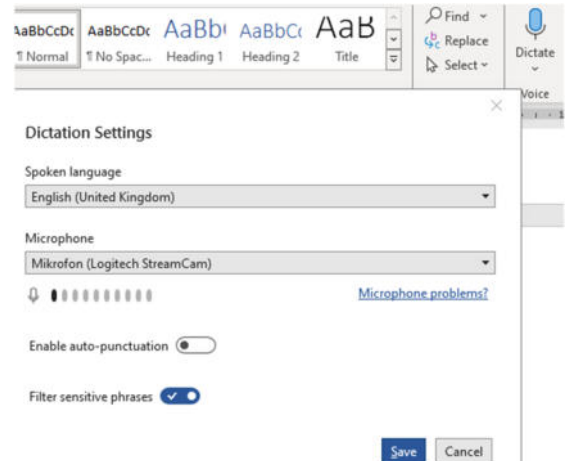


Vision issues:  
Provide alternative text of pictures

So for example with ADHD learners, I can think about organising reading tasks in a different way; I can allow them to use um headphones using the immersive reader, I can use special focus mode in Microsoft Word or organise text in shorter units. And if people have difficulty with viewing a picture, I can produce an alternative text and they can listen to the alternative text that describes the picture.

## How to represent dyslexia?

- Use fonts that are easier to read.
- Use fonts that are easier to read.
- Use fonts that are easier to read.
- Use fonts that are easier to read.
- Use fonts that are easier to read.
- Use fonts that are easier to read.



Allow them to do writing tasks by dictation

If their vision isn't that good, I can also use different fonts (very for your dyslexic students too) that are easier to read: Aptos, the new standard font in PowerPoint, Open Dyslexia, Comic Sans, Century Gothic and Avenir Bold which we used in my football book (we had the longer texts accompanied by audio files to help people with reading issues).

They can dictate their texts, and this actually relieves them a lot as it really helps them to simply produce ideas because they lose this fear of the white paper.

# How to improve inclusion of disabilities?



**Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker**

Before you send an email message or share a Word document, Excel spreadsheet, PowerPoint presentation, or OneNote notebook, run the Accessibility Checker to make your content easier for people with disabilities to read and edit.

Use the Accessibility Checker

1. Select the Review tab. In , you'll only see the Review tab when writing or replying to messages.
2. Select Check Accessibility to open the Accessibility pane on

**Accessibility** [Close]

Inspection Results

**Warnings**

- Hard-to-Read Text Contrast
  - Title 1 (Slide 2)
- Recommended Actions**
  - Font Color
  - Shape Fill

**In this topic**

- [Best practices for making PowerPoint presentations accessible](#)
- [Check accessibility while you work](#)
- [Create accessible slides](#)
- [Avoid using tables](#)
- [Add alt text to visuals](#)
- [Create accessible hyperlink text and add ScreenTips](#)
- [Use accessible font format and color](#)
- [Use captions, subtitles, and alternative audio tracks in videos](#)
- [Save your presentation in a different format](#)
- [Test accessibility with a screen reader](#)

So that are some things you can easily do and that are already done so, for example Bloggers which uses Open Dyslexia as a font in their dyslexic friendly edition. You can improve accessibility for different forms of special educational needs by actually using the accessibility checker offered in Microsoft PowerPoint where you get practical tips about this. This is great because we are normally not trained to do this unless we have training as a special education needs teacher which I don't.



And that's basically what representing diversity in the classroom is about, so let me sum up.

## Diversity is no bandwagon

- To give people who are diverging from the “norm” the feeling of belonging, we don’t need to show all
- We need to give them a voice in English
- What makes sense and what is feasible?
- If I see that diversity is appreciated, I will feel more welcome too and tell my stories
- We need “a balance of stories” (Chinua Achebe)



And that's basically what representing diversity in the classroom is about, so let me sum up. Diversity isn't a bandwagon. We should try to give people who are diverging from the norm the feeling of belonging, and to do that we don't need to show every single piece of diversity: we need to give people a voice in English, we need to give our learners a voice in English and a multiplicity of voices. We have to think about what makes sense in my context and what is feasible if it's outlandish don't do it if I see us learned that diversity my diversity is appreciated I will feel more welcome to tell my stories: we need this “balance of stories” as Chinua Achebe puts it.

## Leave no child behind

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- Include all of your learners
- Build common ground
- Treat each learner as an individual
- Reinforce unity and togetherness
- Be aware of tokenism



We should leave no child behind. Remember diversity is plurality, so we have to include all of our learners and that includes the straight white boys as well. We have to make sure that we can build common ground, that we treat each of our learners as individuals, and I know in a classroom of 20 or 30 or in a university classroom with 40 or 50 students that's almost impossible. Still, we need to try somehow to reinforce unity and togetherness, and we have to project that to our learners, and we have to be aware of tokenism. Remember that our learners are real people: we want to see the full human.