

3. Diversity sensitivity

By taking into account students' different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, you can create **diversity-sensitive OER**.

Please consider the following recommendations to ensure that your materials do not reinforce or suggest prejudices and stereotypes regarding age, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, socio-economic status and religion.

In this dimension, a mindful and thoughtful approach to diversity, regarding role models, gender stereotypes, norms and values, is required. It is important to ensure that the aim here is not to reverse stereotypes and prejudices (e.g. overrepresentation of men or women), but to strive for balance and to encourage questioning of stereotypes. Even if it will not always be possible to implement all of the following recommendations, the goal is to use them in the best possible way.

To provide more freedom in implementation, the following openly licensed image pools could be used: cocomaterial.com, arasaac.org or search.creativecommons.org

Note: The following recommendations focus on selected aspects of diversity and are intended as exemplary. They can be adapted or extended to address other dimensions of diversity as relevant to your specific teaching context.

DIVERSITY-SENSITIVITY	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>If possible, the materials should reflect the diverse body of students in class. Offer variety in the illustrations of characters, lifestyles, language, etc.</p>	<p>For example, a comic could include superheroes with different body features and culturally diverse backgrounds.</p>

Recommendations

GENDER-SENSITIVITY	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>Ensure that there is no predominance of one gender in visual representations.</p>	<p>In a picture of a group of 4 students, there could be 2 girls and 2 boys. Not in each picture are boys in the centre or in front of the picture, and the girls are behind them or to the sides, but vary the picture you present.</p> <p>If you cannot find a picture with an open licence respecting this criteria, try using artificial intelligence tools.</p>
	<p>Avoid gender stereotypes in texts or images when depicting professional activities or social roles.</p>	<p>Avoid undue use of the combination of male doctors and female nurses or stay-at-home mothers and working fathers.</p>
	<p>Make sure not to use sexist language and images in terms of clothing depicted, accessories, attitudes, hobbies, etc.</p>	<p>Girls in a photograph could appear both in skirts and trousers, with short and long hair. Avoid stereotypes, e.g. boys always play football and girls always wear pink.</p>
	<p>Avoid using masculine generalisations and singular masculine terms to refer to people of different genders.</p> <p>Use nouns that are not gender specific.</p>	<p>Instead of saying, "Each student should complete his homework," say, "Each student should complete their homework" or "All students should complete their homework."</p> <p>Use "officer" instead of "policeman" or "policewoman".</p>
	<p>Ensure that contributions made in different fields (e.g., art or biology) by women and men are equally visible.</p>	

Recommendations

GENDER-SENSITIVITY	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>Offer activities and examples that promote the critical analysis of gender inequalities. Discuss and analyse gender roles in different contexts, such as household responsibilities, careers, or media representation.</p>	<p>For example, students can explore why certain tasks, like cooking or caregiving, are often associated with women, while others, like home repairs or financial management, are linked to men. Encourage students to question these stereotypes, share personal experiences, and propose ways to challenge and redefine traditional gender roles.</p>
CULTURAL-SENSITIVITY	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>Ensure that there is variety in the visual representation of people (e.g. different physical characteristics) so that each student feels represented.</p>	<p>If there are people of colour in your class, include different graphic representations.</p>
	<p>Use examples in the text or other media from various cultures and traditions.</p>	<p>For example, traditional music or preparing food for Christmas and Eid.</p>
	<p>Provide intentional possibilities to get to know different cultures.</p>	<p>Include activities regarding traditions from other countries, which might occur around the same time of the year. For example, there is Christian Lent and Muslim Ramadan.</p>
	<p>Ensure that content is objective as much as possible and respectful, free from ideological bias.</p>	<p>For history lessons, make sure to include reading texts that show the points of view of the different populations involved.</p>

Recommendations

CULTURAL-SENSITIVITY	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>Ensure that contributions made in different fields of knowledge by people from different cultures are equally visible.</p>	<p>When applicable, name different people related to a topic from different ethnicities (e.g., Nobel Peace Prize winners).</p>
	<p>Ensure that content, visuals, and instructional strategies are culturally sensitive considering differences of students according to their ethnics, religions and cultures.</p>	
	<p>Ensure that the language of the OER is accessible to all students: try to take into consideration their family language and familiarity with the teaching language or multilingualism.</p>	<p>If you have students who speak Spanish and Arabic, translate the OER into both languages, adapt the difficulty of the language or add an automatic translation tool (e.g. Microsoft Immersive Reader, Google translate) to the OER.</p>
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>Highlight stories of individuals achieving success or happiness through various means, not solely through their socioeconomic status. Talk with your students about privilege awareness.</p>	
	<p>Use images or illustrations that do not only imply wealth or privilege (e.g., luxurious homes, expensive brands). Instead, choose visuals that reflect diverse and everyday environments (e.g., public parks, shared spaces, or community settings).</p>	

Recommendations

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS	RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE
	<p>When referring to products in your materials, avoid luxury brand names or expensive items.</p>	<p>Example to avoid: “John bought a pair of (brand name) sneakers for €120.”</p> <p>Alternative: “John bought a pair of sneakers for €50.”</p>