

The University of Sheffield, Library Learning and Teaching Services in partnership with Sheffield Students' Union Book Society, Amy Haworth and Sheffield Students' Union Book Society, [a.c.haworth@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.haworth@sheffield.ac.uk)

The Library collaborated with BookSoc, Sheffield University's Book Society, to create a programme of Reading for Diversity reading groups. This programme provides an opportunity for students to come together to critically engage with, reflect on, and discuss books from diverse and often underrepresented voices and perspectives.

The groups are timed to celebrate awareness months and/ or complement exhibitions in the Digital Exhibition Space in our Information Commons. Chosen by students, all shortlisted books are added to our Reading for Diversity Leganto Reading List.

This programme supports our Information and Digital Literacy offer (see our IDL Framework), supporting the literacy of Understanding, through academic reading, and Questioning, through enhancing critical literacy.

Events have included 'Purple Hibiscus' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to celebrate Black History Month, 'On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous' by Ocean Vuong to celebrate LGBT+ History Month, and 'Call Me Ahab' by Anne Finger to celebrate Disability History Month.

The Reading for Diversity programme supports the Library's role in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED &I) across the institution, particularly as we promote this alongside other events taking place on the same theme.

This programme provides a transformative learning opportunity for students, enabling critical engagement in an informal, neutral setting outside of the curriculum. By developing this programme through reflection, we have learned lessons that we can feed into the development of other discussion-based learning opportunities that cover sensitive topics (see: Decolonising your Bibliography case study).

Working with Student Union Officers (Liberation Officer, LGBT+ Student Officer, Disabled Student Officer, BAME Student Officer, Women's Student Officer, Mature Student Officer) and the University's Book Society has developed our approach to effective collaboration and co-production with students, strengthening links that we have built on in other areas of work. The Book Society now use Library spaces for their regular meetings and the Library provides financial support for inclusive book purchasing.

Effective collaboration and co-production takes time. There were challenges in ensuring the right stakeholders were involved, in working with student officers who have limited time and high workloads, and in navigating different priorities and working towards ensuring that the aims and objectives of all parties involved align.

Sourcing the books chosen by students in both electronic and print formats has been challenging on some occasions. Given the preparation time required to read a book, getting the timing of these evening events right has been key. There have also been challenges in promoting a programme that is new for the Library, and in reaching students we may not normally reach.

It has been important to find and strike the right balance in co-facilitating the sessions with the Book Society, in creating an informal, supportive and respectful environment, and in providing appropriate support when discussing potentially triggering topics.

We use participatory action research methodology to work in a Plan, Act, Reflect cycle, collaboratively using reflections to continuously modify our plans. Library staff and members of the

Book Society reflect on events, ensuring that all views are included. We consider this programme still to be in a stage of development and will continue to reflect and develop.

We evaluate student engagement qualitatively, by asking the following questions: Did participants connect with the book? Did they contribute to the discussion in a critical way? Did students engage honestly and respectfully? Did the reading give them new perspectives? Many of these questions are answered in the sessions themselves and we also give students an opportunity to feed back after the session itself." "By embracing a new and different way of working with students and engaging with critical literacy we have enriched our library offer and developed a programme that provides students with a different kind of engagement with the Library.

Embracing change and a new approach has sometimes been challenging, but also a positive experience for us. Developing our ideas over time through a small scale pilot gave us the opportunity to innovate and develop in an iterative and reflective way.

This is also an example of working together with students to achieve a goal, taking into account differing commitment levels, perspectives and aims to effectively co-produce and co-deliver a new initiative.