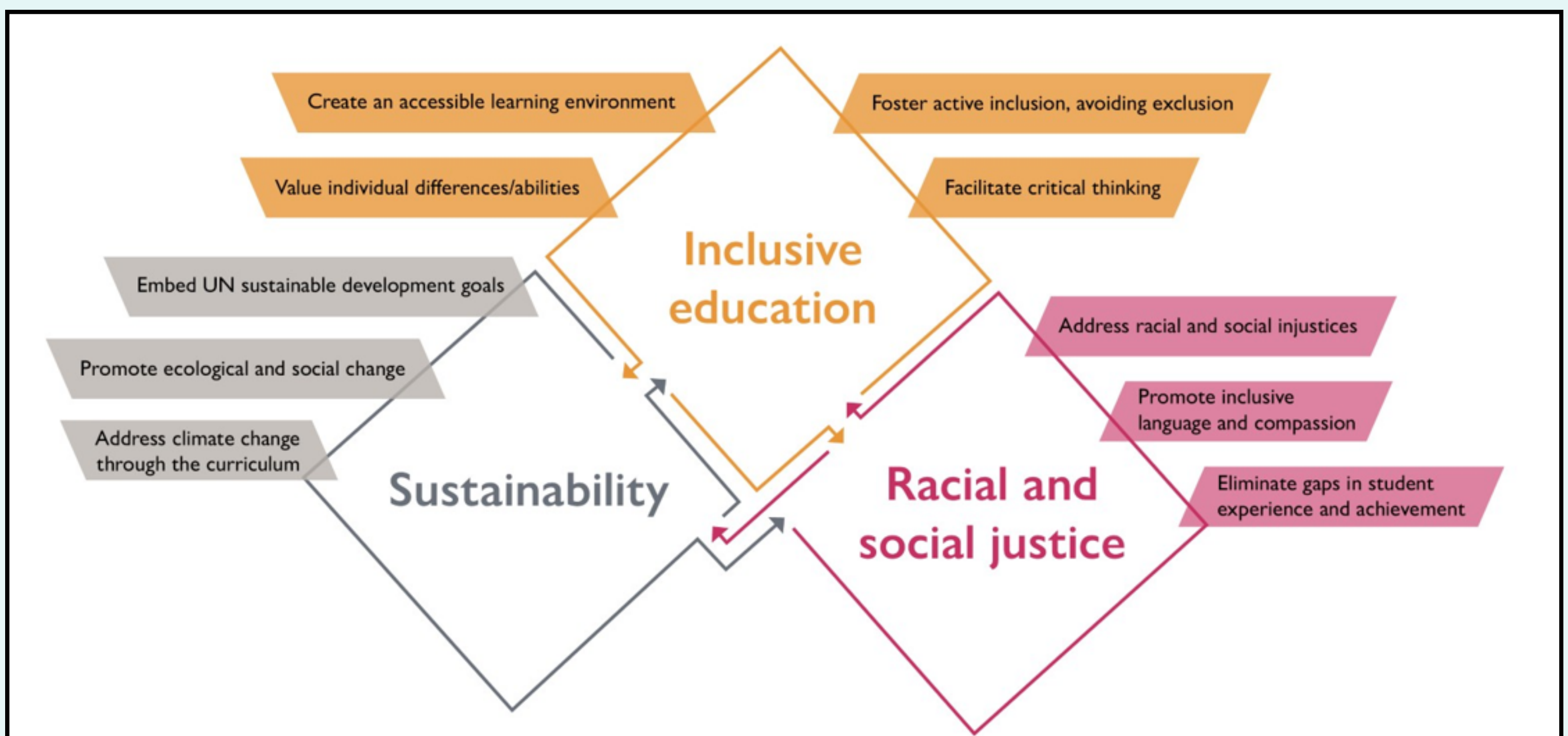# Transformative Education Curriculum Enhancement Resource

This guidance focuses explicitly on **curriculum course content**, which we have defined as the **arguments, concepts, perspectives, evidence, and voices** that make up the material of modules and programmes. This is with a view to ensuring that students encounter a **diverse and inclusive body of knowledge.** It is advisable to use this resource alongside any other discipline specific guidance on curriculum enhancement or review (e.g. the guidance given by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies).

Transformative Education Framework

Create an accessible learning environment

Foster active inclusion, avoiding exclusion

Value individual differences/abilities

Facilitate critical thinking

Inclusive education

Embed UN sustainable development goals

Address racial and social injustices

Promote ecological and social change

Promote inclusive language and compassion

Address climate change through the curriculum

Sustainability

Eliminate gaps in student experience and achievement

Racial and social justice

The Transformative Education Framework (TrEF) supports educational initiatives related to **inclusive education, racial & social justice,** and **sustainability.** Through these initiatives, we hope to enable students and educators alike to apply their knowledge and create a **sustainable, healthy and socially just future.**

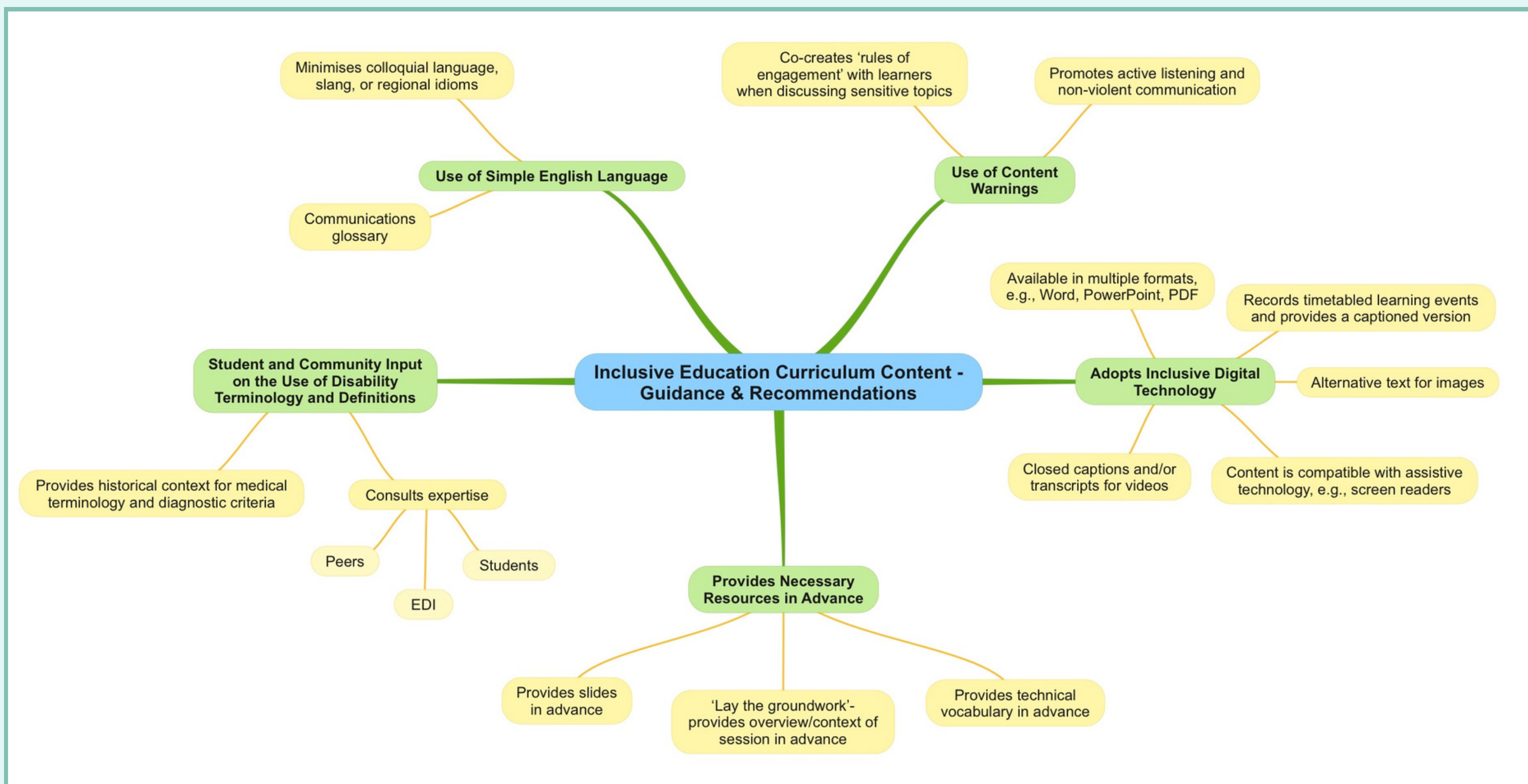# Transformative Education Curriculum Enhancement Principles

A Transformative Curriculum refers to an approach to learning and teaching that aims to **empower individuals and communities** by fostering connection, promoting social change and expanding intellectual understanding of the world and oneself (1).

The table below comprises some main themes that run across the three pillars of Transformative Education and serves as **reflective assistance** for educators and learners to **consider the alignment of the curriculum with these principles**, allowing for adaptations that cater to the specific needs and context of curriculum designers. You're encouraged to think about how these guiding principles can **"bring to life"** the curriculum descriptors across the three pillars.

TrEF Curriculum Principles	Curriculum Principles Explanations
Democratising Knowledge	The curriculum attempts to find opportunities to move beyond hierarchical teacher-student relationships, **by promoting dialogue and active participation, where learners become co-creators of curriculum content**. Moreover, **through the development of accessible learning materials**, the curriculum fosters greater and more inclusive participation in the learning process.
Embodying Knowledge	The curriculum honours the embodied knowledge that learners bring to the educational setting. **The curriculum understands that knowledge is not only a scholarly experience, but is deeply rooted in personal experiences, cultural contexts, and lived realities.** By integrating and valuing diverse perspectives and narratives, the curriculum becomes more inclusive, meaningful, and relevant, fostering a deeper engagement with the learning process.
Connection and Social Change	Transformative education emphasises building connections and fostering meaningful relationships among learners, educators, and communities. It recognises that **learning is not purely an individual pursuit but a collective endeavour that can be a catalyst for social transformation.** Through dialogue, collaboration, and participatory practices, transformative education encourages learners to address pressing social issues and work towards positive change.
Expanding Intellectual Understanding	Transformative education aims to challenge and transcend narrow frameworks and expand perspectives and worldviews. By **integrating diverse and alternative theoretical frameworks and approaches, transformative education promotes a deeper understanding of complex issues** and encourages learners to question existing and authoritative paradigms.

Inclusive Education Curriculum Content Guidance

This section focuses on how teaching content is mindfully created to recognise learners' **differences and diversity** and how teaching is designed to **promote accessibility for all learners**, representing the **crucial first step in transforming the curriculum.**

Minimises colloquial language, slang, or regional idioms

Co-creates 'rules of engagement' with learners when discussing sensitive topics

Promotes active listening and non-violent communication

Use of Simple English Language

Use of Content Warnings

Communications glossary

Available in multiple formats, e.g., Word, PowerPoint, PDF

Records timetabled learning events and provides a captioned version

Student and Community Input on the Use of Disability Terminology and Definitions

Inclusive Education Curriculum Content - Guidance & Recommendations

Adopts Inclusive Digital Technology

Alternative text for images

Provides historical context for medical terminology and diagnostic criteria

Consults expertise

Closed captions and/or transcripts for videos

Content is compatible with assistive technology, e.g., screen readers

Peers

Students

EDI

Provides Necessary Resources in Advance

Provides slides in advance

'Lay the groundwork'- provides overview/context of session in advance

Provides technical vocabulary in advance

● = TrEF Pillar   ● = Curriculum Criteria   ● = Examples of how criteria can be addressed

Criteria

☐ Curriculum uses simple and clear English.

☐ Curriculum employs the use of content warnings for sensitive and/or controversial topics.

☐ Curriculum adopts the use of inclusive digital technology.

☐ Necessary resources are provided to learners in advance.

☐ Curriculum values student and community input on the use of disability terminology and definitions.
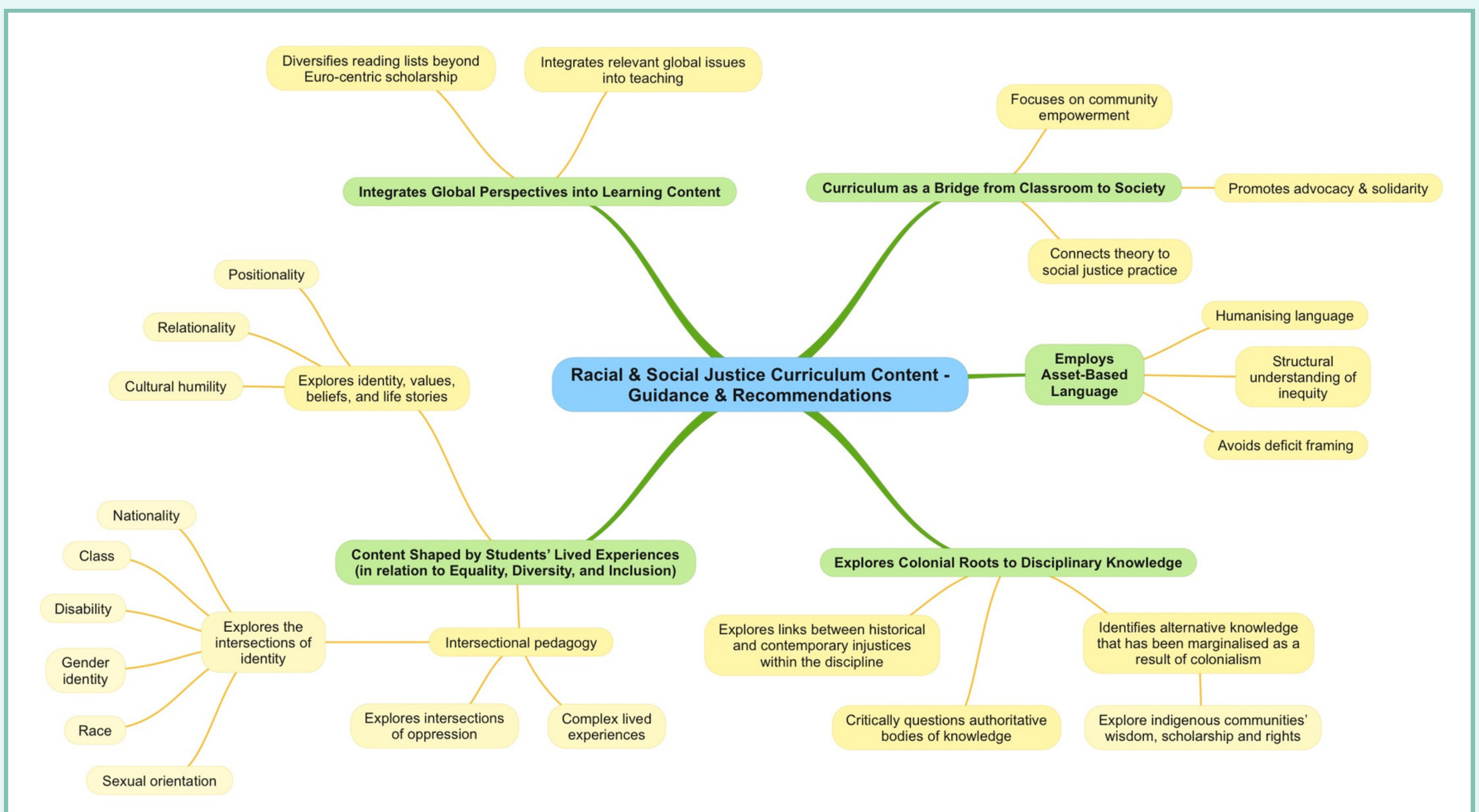
Inclusive Education Curriculum Content Glossary

Key Term	Definition
Active Listening	Active listening is a communication technique focused on **truly understanding the speaker** by giving full attention, using techniques like paraphrasing, reflecting, asking clarifying questions, summarising, and non-verbal cues.
Non-Violent Communication	Non-violent Communication (NVC) is a communication approach emphasising **observation, feelings, needs**, and the intention to **promote understanding and empathy** via dialogue.
Colloquial Language	Colloquial language refers to **informal, everyday language** that is used in casual conversation rather than formal contexts. It is the language that people typically use when speaking with friends, family, or in relaxed social settings. Colloquial language often includes **slang, regional expressions, and informal grammar** that may not make coherent sense to a non-native speaker.
Technical Vocabulary	**Specialised language and phrases** used within a particular discipline. It is characterised by terms and expressions that have precise meanings and are commonly understood by professionals or experts in that specific area.
Content Warnings	Refers to communication to learners about **potentially sensitive or distressing content** that may be encountered in academic materials, such as lectures, readings, discussions, or visual presentations. The purpose of a content warning is to give learners the opportunity to **prepare themselves emotionally and mentally** for the material and to make informed decisions about their engagement with the content.

Artwork by Grace Lee

Racial & Social Justice Curriculum Content Guidance

This section focuses on developing curriculum content that explores **diverse global perspectives**, fostering an expanded understanding of subjects and disciplinary canons, whilst **addressing social injustices** and promoting **real-world change** via the curriculum.

Diversifies reading lists beyond Euro-centric scholarship

Integrates relevant global issues into teaching

Focuses on community empowerment

Integrates Global Perspectives into Learning Content

Curriculum as a Bridge from Classroom to Society

Promotes advocacy & solidarity

Connects theory to social justice practice

Positionality

Relationality

Cultural humility

Explores identity, values, beliefs, and life stories

Racial & Social Justice Curriculum Content - Guidance & Recommendations

Employs Asset-Based Language

Humanising language

Structural understanding of inequity

Avoids deficit framing

Nationality

Class

Disability

Gender identity

Race

Sexual orientation

Explores the intersections of identity

Content Shaped by Students' Lived Experiences (in relation to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion)

Intersectional pedagogy

Explores intersections of oppression

Complex lived experiences

Explores Colonial Roots to Disciplinary Knowledge

Explores links between historical and contemporary injustices within the discipline

Critically questions authoritative bodies of knowledge

Identifies alternative knowledge that has been marginalised as a result of colonialism

Explore indigenous communities' wisdom, scholarship and rights

● = TrEF Pillar   ● = Curriculum Criteria   ● = Examples of how criteria can be addressed

Criteria

☐ Curriculum content integrates diverse global perspectives into learning content.

☐ Curriculum content acts as a bridge from classroom to society.

☐ Curriculum content employs asset-based language and framings.

☐ Curriculum content explores colonial roots to disciplinary knowledge.

☐ Curriculum content is shaped by students' lived experiences.
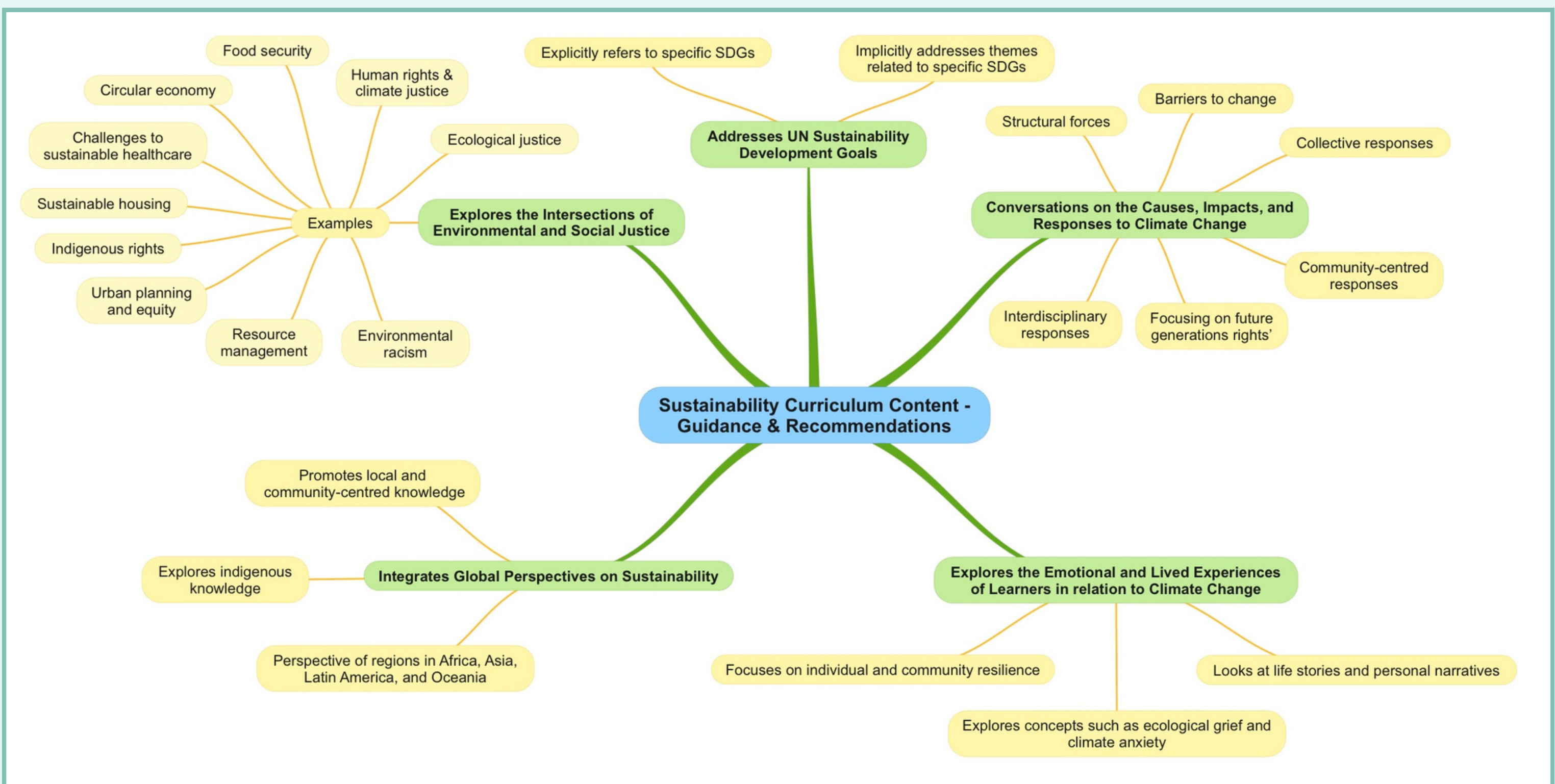
Racial & Social Justice Curriculum Content Glossary

Key Term	Definition
Euro-Centric Scholarship	Refers to scholarship that predominantly focuses on and prioritises **European history, culture, and viewpoints, often to the detriment or exclusion of other world regions and perspectives.** This can result in an imbalanced or biased understanding of global issues and history.
Asset-Based Language	Communication that focuses on emphasising and valuing the **strengths, capabilities, and positive qualities** of individuals, groups, or communities.
Relationality	The recognition of the importance of **relationships and interconnectedness** in social, cultural, and ecological contexts.
Positionality	A person's social and cultural location, including their **background, identity, and experiences**, which shapes their perspective, biases, and understanding of the world.
Intersectionality	The concept that **multiple social identities (e.g., race, gender, class) intersect** and interact to shape a person's experiences and access to resources and opportunities.
Lived Experience	Refers to the **firsthand, personal encounters and events** that shape an individual's unique perspective and understanding of the world.
Colonial Knowledge	Information and understanding **shaped by colonial powers**, that has historically marginalised and distorted other forms of knowledge.
Cultural Humility	Cultural humility is a process that extends beyond mere acknowledgment of cultural differences. It involves fostering a **deeper understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds.** This reflective process encourages individuals to **examine their own cultural biases, assumptions, and prejudices**, allowing for a more open and empathetic stance towards others.

Artwork by Grace Lee

Sustainability Curriculum Content Guidance

This section focuses on ensuring that curriculum content holistically addresses the **climate emergency**, emphasising an approach that explores **critical and global perspectives** on both structural and interpersonal dimensions of sustainability.

- = TrEF Pillar
- = Curriculum Criteria
- = Examples of how criteria can be addressed

Key elements shown in the mind map:

Sustainability Curriculum Content - Guidance & Recommendations

Explores the Intersections of Environmental and Social Justice — Examples: Food security, Circular economy, Human rights & climate justice, Challenges to sustainable healthcare, Ecological justice, Sustainable housing, Indigenous rights, Urban planning and equity, Resource management, Environmental racism

Addresses UN Sustainability Development Goals — Explicitly refers to specific SDGs; Implicitly addresses themes related to specific SDGs

Conversations on the Causes, Impacts, and Responses to Climate Change — Structural forces, Barriers to change, Collective responses, Community-centred responses, Focusing on future generations rights', Interdisciplinary responses

Integrates Global Perspectives on Sustainability — Promotes local and community-centred knowledge, Explores indigenous knowledge, Perspective of regions in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania

Explores the Emotional and Lived Experiences of Learners in relation to Climate Change — Focuses on individual and community resilience, Explores concepts such as ecological grief and climate anxiety, Looks at life stories and personal narratives

Criteria

☐ Curriculum content explicitly or implicitly addresses specific UN Sustainable Development Goals.

☐ Curriculum content includes conversations on the causes, impacts, and responses to climate change.

☐ Curriculum content explores the emotional and lived experiences of learners in relation to climate change.

☐ Curriculum content integrates diverse global perspectives on sustainability.

☐ Curriculum content explores the intersections of environmental and social justice.

Sustainability Curriculum Content Glossary

Key Term	Definition
Climate Anxiety	The heightened feelings of **fear, stress, and unease** experienced by individuals in response to the **growing threats and uncertainties related to climate change** and its potential impacts on the planet and society.
Ecological Grief	The **emotional and psychological distress** experienced when individuals or communities confront the loss, degradation, or disruptions to ecosystems and the natural environment.
Indigenous Knowledge	The **collective wisdom, practices, and worldviews of Indigenous communities**, often rooted in traditional ecological knowledge and passed down through generations.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	A **set of global objectives adopted by the United Nations** to address pressing issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and peace, with the aim of achieving a more sustainable and equitable world.
Environmental Racism	The practice of placing **toxic waste sites, pollution sources, and other environmental hazards in or near communities predominantly inhabited by people of colour.**

Artwork by Grace Lee