



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DISABILITY PRACTITIONERS

# **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2015**

# **SESSION DESCRIPTIONS**

*This information may be subject to change*

## Whole Conference Presentations

### **TZALWEL – a film documentary about studying with a disability in higher education**

**Evelyn Cloosen**, Support Centre for Inclusive Higher Education, Belgium

There are more students with disabilities in higher education than one might think at first sight. Sometimes their limitations are visible, but often they are not. Students frequently fear to be labeled and are reluctant to share information about their disability. But those students don't differ so much from other students. They want to study and obtain a degree with an outlook on a job, or just out of interest.

TZALWEL is a series of documentaries about studying with a disability in Flemish higher education. The documentaries focuses on the experiences, dreams and ambitions of ten students with a disability.

In order to promote a realistic and non-stereotypical image of students with disabilities six short and one longer documentary were made. The short thematic documentaries cover the following subjects: (1) prejudices, (2) introduction of the students, (3) exams, (4) internship, (5) outside the classroom and (6) fellow students and lecturers.

The longer documentary focusses on the profound portraits of four students. In this session, we will show and discuss the longer documentary.

These documentaries help to create a greater understanding, to raise awareness and increase contact between disabled and non-disabled students, teachers and other persons. TZALWEL aims to inform the general public: students, teachers, parents, the labor market.

TZALWEL is part of the equal opportunities policy of the Flemish Minister for education, youth, equal opportunities and Brussels

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### **Review of the provision and support for disabled students in HE 2014**

**Sarah Howls**, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

We last carried out a review of the provision and support for disabled students in HE in 2009, the evaluation study from which we set out what good practice in providing support for disabled students might include.

The HE system in England has undergone significant change since the 2009 review was published, particularly with regard to the increases to tuition fees introduced in 2012 and the consequent reductions to HEFCE grant. More recently, the

Government has announced changes to the support provided through the Disabled Students Allowance to take effect from 2015-16.

We have added considerably to the evidence base since the last review, particularly in regard to higher education attainment and outcomes for different student groups and to differing levels of satisfaction for different groups, within which disabled students have been an important concern.

Overall, the number of students declaring themselves as disabled is increasing at all points of the student lifecycle and there have been some significant shifts in the most commonly reported impairments:

- a. Mental health and social/communicative impairments (such as autism) have doubled since 2008-09, impacting quite significantly on institutional services and support structures.
- b. UCAS reports the numbers of UK accepted applicants declaring a disability increased from 23,772 in 2008-09 to 34,625 in 2013-14
- c. The numbers of students receiving DSA has risen from 36,000 in 2007-08 to 47,000 in 2011-12.
- d. HESA data shows increases in the number of disabled students studying at postgraduate level (PGT and PGR) and that the mode of study (full or part time) is broadly similar to that of PG students who are not disabled.
- e. Disabled entrants are more likely than non-disabled entrants to no longer be in HE after their first year of study.

Disabled students are less satisfied in five out of seven question categories of the National Student Survey

## Theme: Inclusive Practice, Universal Design for Learning

### **Academic Access for Diverse Learners through Universal Design for Learning Framework**

**Daryl Bruner**, Greensboro College, USA

This presentation elaborates on how an educational institution can work within the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. UDL is a model in which an educational institution recognizes that different students learn in different ways. It uses all necessary measures to ensure that students can achieve the same educational outcomes regardless of individual learning style. UDL was developed at North Carolina State University's College of Design in the 1980s and is based on deep research into the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience.

The workshop will provide participants with a brief overview the neuro and learning sciences on the variability of learning; an introduction to the Universal Design for Learning framework; and then apply these principles to the design of a college course. The presentation itself will be delivered using the UDL framework and provide opportunities for participants to engage with the material through a variety of means—question and answer, small group discussion, and a simple activity. By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to summarize the Universal Design for Learning framework and share at least one UDL technique with their institutions.

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### **Embedding accessibility in the curriculum: Reflections and challenges**

**Dr Annie Bryan**, The Open University, UK  
**Chetz Colwell**, The Open University, UK

In order to achieve disability equality in Higher Education, it is crucial to provide learning experiences that are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. The focus of this session is an ongoing initiative at a UK-based HE institution which aims to implement, promote and share good accessibility practices across the university. In particular, the initiative seeks to embed accessibility into curriculum design, using anticipatory reasonable adjustments. Modules are delivered in print or online (or a blend of the two). Whilst the shift to online learning offers significant opportunities for disabled students, it also brings with it complex and often unanticipated challenges for HE providers in terms of accessibility.

The session addresses the initiative in three parts. Firstly, we outline the model adopted by the accessibility initiative. This comprises a number of dedicated groups and resources, with staff from various faculties and units across the institution playing active roles. Secondly, we evaluate the impact of the accessibility initiative

since its inception in 2011. Drawing upon data from semi-structured interviews and surveys conducted with staff from across the institution, key themes are identified in terms of the initiative's strengths and weaknesses. Particular attention is paid to how the initiative has impacted on individual staff and units within the institution, and the ways in which its work has made a difference to the university's disabled students. Thirdly, we discuss future plans for the initiative, identifying areas for further development and improvement. Amongst the issues explored here are staff development, resource allocation, and embedding effective technologies into the institution's practices.

We adopt a global perspective to this topic at two different levels. On the one hand, we consider the diverse range of needs that must be met in order to make learning experiences accessible to all students, regardless of their (combination of) disabilities. On the other, we focus on how to advance positive and inclusive accessibility practices across the institution, which is a significant undertaking given its sheer size and complexity. In reflecting on these challenges, we seek to broaden our horizons further by inviting dialogue and discussion with colleagues from across the sector.

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## **Universal Design for Learning in Action: inspirational examples in higher education**

**Evelyn Cloosen**, Support Centre for Inclusive Higher Education (SIHO), Belgium

There is no such thing as an 'average student'. When education is designed to meet the needs of the average, it often fails to give all students equal opportunities. In reality, there isn't "one size fits all" formula and there is a need for alternatives. Diversity is the norm, not the exception.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) helps meet the challenge of the diverse student population. Students differ in learning style, abilities, preferences, interests, needs, ... UDL underscores the need for flexible, customisable content, assessment and activities for students. Flexible and inclusive alternatives help to give the students equal opportunities. UDL is about lowering the barriers and keeping high expectations for every student.

Three principles guide the UDL approach: (a) providing multiple, flexible methods of presentation that give students various ways to acquire information, (b) providing multiple, flexible methods of expression that offer students alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and (c) providing multiple, flexible options for engagement to help students get interested, and be challenged.

UDL is an appealing framework as it encourages a wide variety of technology and instructional approaches that can reach all students. This session highlights good practices of UDL implementation in Flemish universities and university colleges. Instructors may use various strategies to incorporate UDL in their education. For

example, they can use a variety of learning materials, provide flexible opportunities for assessment, provide cognitive support etc. Several good practices will be presented in this session.

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## **Equity or Advantage? The effect of receiving access arrangements in university exams on students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).**

**Helen Duncan**, University of Cambridge, UK

This research project aims to evaluate the granting of 25% extra time and use of a word processor in University exams for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). The research will investigate whether these access arrangements place students with SpLD on a level playing field with their non-disabled peers, so that they can demonstrate their knowledge in the exam (Runyan, 1991), or whether these adjustments confer an unfair advantage and compromise the comparability of exam results across the student cohort (Zuriff, 2000).

This is current area of debate among academic staff in University settings, who are concerned that, rather than achieving parity with their peers, students with SpLD who are granted additional time in exams, as well as those using a word processor, are gaining an advantage over their non-disabled peers and thereby undermining the robustness and 'fairness' of the exam process.

The hypotheses being tested are:

*i. Students with SpLD who are granted extra time in exams produce longer answers and achieve better exam results than their non-disabled peers who take similar exams under standard conditions.*

*ii. Students with SpLD who are granted extra time and use a word processor in exams produce longer answers and achieve better exam results than their non-disabled peers who take similar exams under standard conditions.*

The research will collect and analyse data from the Faculties of History and English (completed during the Easter term 2014 examination period) and, in order to establish any relationship between the variables cited above, the word count on the papers for SpLD students (who were granted exam arrangements) will be compared with the word count on the papers of students who did not disclose a disability and sat the same exams under standard conditions. In addition, the distribution of classifications of the students with SpLD will be compared to the distribution of classifications of the non-disabled students who were not granted extra time or use of a word processor when sitting the same exams.

The quantitative data will be analysed to see if any statistically significant differences exist and will include tests for correlations between:

1. time & word count
2. use of a Word Processor & word count

3. word count & degree classification
4. degree classification & 25% extra time
5. degree classification & 25% extra time with word processor

A brief survey of recent research in this field suggests that insufficient extant research on the impact of extra time on UK University examination outcomes for students with SpLD currently exists, with most studies demonstrating contradictory findings. This research aims to add to the body of evidence and consider alternative approaches to exam access arrangements, such as universal design principles (Thompson et al 2005).

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## **Incorporating Universal Design and Accessibility Features into Online Courses**

**Martha Garber**, University of North Texas, USA  
**Linda Holloway**, University of North Texas, USA

It is not true that one size fits all and this is especially trying for learning. The guiding principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focus on multiple means of representation; action and expression; and engagement (CAST 2011 Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.0, Wakefield, MA). References to UDL are woven into the public policy in the United States, yet many universities do not have a mechanism to provide support for faculty to ensure that courses are truly accessible.

In higher education we see that our student populations are becoming more diverse - diversity of culture, diversity of learning styles, and diversity of disability. At the same time, our faculty are pressured to offer more classes online to accommodate students and lower educational costs. This environment increases the need to ensure that all online courses are accessible; however, little attention has been given to this issue and many faculty are unprepared to address the needs of all learners.

This interactive session will focus on UDL in higher education. A review of the guiding principles of universal design will be discussed as well as the science behind the need for universal design. The session will focus on introducing strategies to participants that can use to address different learning styles and accessibility issues to make their coursework more accessible and more meaningful to all students. Examples will be provided that address multi-media including videos, PowerPoint, journal articles, and lectures. Just-in-time supports will also be explored. Student engagement strategies will be emphasized. Participants will be challenged to begin to think of UDL from the start of curricular development rather than adapting as student needs are revealed.

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## **Workshopping transformation – a case study in applying the principles of Universal Design for Learning in a Nursing programme periodic review**

**Deborah Gibberd**, University of Brighton, UK

**Dr Kathy Martyn**, University of Brighton, UK

Presenting a case study that charts the process through which the concepts of UDL are applied to the development of a BSc Nursing programme.

Using a workshop approach we will detail the methodology used in introducing inclusive practice which does not compromise academic or professional standards but embeds opportunities for all students to demonstrate their acquisition of the learning outcomes.

Discussing the means by which the concepts of UDL are being applied for the transformation of a nurse educational programme which is based within both a university and clinical settings.

The case study results from a collaboration between a Principle Lecturer within the faculty, and a colleague within a central department with a lead role in embedding inclusive practice in the institution's learning teaching and assessment.

The workshop describes and illustrates (with current examples) the challenges in engaging educators with a critical review of their own pedagogical practice.

Sharing the reference materials used, and some local resources generated for the review will be made available in the workshop.

The processes undertaken to engage individuals in revisiting and rethinking their pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population will be referred to, as illustrative of the challenges and successes of the study.

This case study demonstrates ways in which the formal regulations and processes within Higher Education may be used to provide an opportunity for engagement with a team of academic staff in the practical application of inclusive practice principles.

Despite national policy and high level institutional support for inclusive practice, the UK has few examples of extensive change occurring in the thinking and practice of academics constructing and reviewing course structures.

Like the allied health professions, Nursing training programmes are complex in structure, and regulated by professional body requirements, educating in the safe and effective delivery of nursing care through a variety of teaching and learning methods. Consequently there are special challenges in applying an inclusive practice approach to teaching learning and assessment.

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## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Accessibility for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Testing**

**Dr John Hosterman**, Pearson VUE, USA

High-stakes entrance tests are often taken by students who are either preparing to enter higher education or leaving higher education on their way to post-graduate studies. In the past few years, both the legal landscape as well as the accessibility landscape has changed for students with disabilities who will be taking high-stakes exams. Taking a global perspective, this session will provide participants with an update on these changes.

Accessibility is about fostering a testing experience for students so that the test measures what it is intended to measure, rather than measuring the effects of a person's disability. Many of the accessibility features of computer-based tests actually enhance accessibility for non-disabled test-takers as well, which is the essence of Universal Design. There are a number of practical considerations that must be kept in mind when developing tests and test-content so that accessibility is enhanced and test-takers with disabilities have access to the material. On the other hand, providing accommodations on tests may alter the validity of the test scores. Likewise, some accessibility options may present test security challenges that must be tackled. The legal obligations country-specific disability laws must be balanced with the fundamental objectives of the test—a balance that can be difficult to achieve.

This workshop will provide an introduction to the world of accessibility as it pertains to high-stakes testing. This session will focus on key areas to consider when innovating and developing exams with accessibility in mind, including a description and demonstration of commonly-used accessibility software tools that may enhance access for test-takers with disabilities, and the practical considerations of developing test content so that candidates can utilise this software. In addition, this session will include a discussion of psychometric concerns that may be raised about the validity of tests that are delivered with accommodations. Relevant research in this area will be discussed as well. Finally, the audience will be invited to discuss the prospect of balancing legal requirements with ensuring that the fundamental nature of the test is not altered.

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## Theme: Service Development/Support Strategies

### **Supporting Graduate Professional Students: An Overview of an Independent Disability Services Programme with an Emphasis on Mental Illness**

**Mitchell C Bailin**, Georgetown University Law Centre, USA

**Laura M Cutway**, Georgetown University Law Centre, USA

This programme offers a comprehensive overview of providing disability services at the graduate level from the perspectives of the Dean of Students and the Director of Disability Services at the largest law school in the United States. An overview of services will be covered leading to an in depth discussion of supporting students with mental illness.

This workshop will begin with an overview of the structure of the disability services programme. Because this institution's law school is geographically and administratively remote from the central university, its disability services function operates independently. It is one of the only law schools in the United States to have an administrator solely dedicated to the needs of students with disabilities. The Director of Disability Services will discuss the partnerships on campus required to make such a system work, including deans and staff from the Registrar's Office, Residence Life, Academic Services, Facilities, Public Safety, and the Library.

The presenters also will discuss the decision-making process to determine and approve academic accommodations, with a focus on what accommodations may not be appropriate at the professional school level. The presenters will share the factors that need to be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of accommodations in a high stakes environment, including preparing students for the rigors of a demanding profession, the restrictions imposed by the American Bar Association, the anonymity of the grading process, relevant academic policies, and the unique culture of an institution.

The workshop also will address the ever-growing and challenging need to accommodate and support students who are suffering from mental illness. At a competitive law school, the incidence of mental illness is statistically higher than in other professions and professional schools. Anxiety, depression, and alcohol and substance abuse are all prevalent and of great concern. This institution has worked hard over the last decade to lessen the stigma and talk openly about the struggles students are having. Students are realizing the substantial impact mental illness has on their studies and the ways that their studies can exacerbate stress and mental illness. The presentation will focus on the holistic approach this institution has implemented to reduce the stigma of seeking help, support students with mental illness (both from a disability and wellness standpoint), offer accommodations that are appropriate without being enabling (including attendance accommodations), and respond to concerned staff and faculty when they reach out to identify students in distress.

The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the process to take a medical or voluntary leave of absence. The presenters will describe the process to initiate a leave of absence, when leaves are appropriate, the requirements for return from leave, the impact on curricular planning, and potential employment ramifications.

The programme will be a combination of lecture and discussion, including two case studies focused on the challenges of accommodating students with mental illness. The audience will receive the case studies at the beginning of the presentation. Midway through the programme the audience will be asked to work through the case studies in small groups before discussing the issues raised in plenary. This workshop is designed to give an overview of an independent disability services programme at a large graduate school with a specific emphasis on the ways in which students can receive appropriate and necessary support for mental illness.

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### **From Word to Web - a three year journey of improvements to the 'travel arrangements' of Disability Access Plans from student to lecturer.**

**Susannah Doyle**, University of Bath, UK

This session explores some of the challenges being addressed during a three year action research project of improvements to the communication of Disability Access Plans in a medium sized university, where different stakeholders require varying levels of information and advice to fulfil their obligations under equalities legislation.

From a largely ineffective system involving wordy documents and complex email pathways, the project is moving toward a systematic approach which more actively involves disabled students in their learning and utilises the University's student information system (SITS/AAM) to securely transport Disability Access Plans to key staff in varying job families who need this information to meet the needs of disabled students.

After an introductory presentation and in the context of changes to DSA, participants will be invited to form two groups to brainstorm strategies for:

- Addressing similar challenges in their own university/college contexts
- Better supporting teaching and professional staff in moving towards more inclusive approaches which reduce the need for such individualised approaches.

These differing approaches will then be shared in a conclusion to the session

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## **Improving the retention of students with disabilities in higher education**

**Dr Nina Du Toit**, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

Many countries have policies in place to regulate education in alignment with values such as equity, non-discrimination and humanity. In higher education in South Africa, for example, the need for progressive access of previously disadvantaged students, including those with disabilities, is nowadays duly recognised in legislation and educational policies. However, although there has been an improvement in retention rates since 1994, a high percentage of so-called "at-risk" students are still dropping out in their first year of study. This situation has far-reaching consequences, not only for students themselves, but also for the economy of the country, amongst others.

It is, therefore, imperative that all factors, both internal and external, which affect the dropout-rate of first-year "at risk" students with disabilities should be addressed. This workshop will serve as a participative and interactive platform to identify and discuss procedures which could be established in order to improve the situation. New initiatives in this regard that have recently been developed by Support Services of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in South Africa, will be used as a point of departure for the discussion.

The following are examples of some of the topics that will be discussed in the group sessions:

- The transition of students from school to higher education.
- The holistic approach to identify aspects that influence academic performance.
- An early-warning system to identify "at risk" students.
- The development of supportive partnerships between role-players.
- The development of appropriate intervention mechanisms.
- The monitoring of "at risk" students.
- Periodic evaluation of the above.

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## **Thinking and Practicing Differently: How Disability Studies Can Inform Service Delivery**

Sue Kroeger, University of Arizona, USA

Cheryl Muller, University of Arizona, USA

***This workshop will run as a progressive session of two 90 minute sessions and delegates will be required to attend both sessions***

For over three decades, disability activists and scholars have asserted that disability is socially constructed, perpetuated by shared societal beliefs, behaviours, and values. They maintain that the environment disables people with impairments by design and challenge the idea that disability is an individual problem. Postsecondary

disability service (DS) professionals perceive our attitudes as progressive and believe that our services create equity. However, having been socialized in cultures that view disability as a personal tragedy to be fixed, hidden, or individually accommodated, we are challenged to make the paradigm shift necessary to operationalize the social model of disability (Thornton, 2007).

A review of DS office policies and practices across many countries demonstrates that disability studies and activist constructs are rarely translated into practice. We respond to barriers individually rather than systemically and frame access as a personal rather than a community responsibility. We establish policies that focus on legal requirements and maintain our status as experts, essential to ensuring student success. We translate a student's perceived need into deficiency and locate that deficiency in the student. We establish policies, procedures, and practices that perpetuate an oppressive narrative on our campuses. Under our leadership, most faculty, students, and administrators willingly engage in this system.

DS professionals have the power to be catalysts for campus and community change. However, for many disabled people, professional services contribute to the problem and the relations between service providers and service users are shaped by and formed within a system of power relations that is served by an individual model of disability." (Swain & French, p. 132, 2008). Practices that place emphasis solely on individual accommodation, rather than on removing environmental barriers, result in a higher education experiences for disabled students that are very different from their nondisabled peers. These practices put undue administrative burden on the student, send the message that disability is a personal problem, and ultimately promote a campus narrative that frames disabled students as needy, less competent, expensive, and problematic.

Presenters will use a large, public university in the U.S. as a case study to illuminate how DS delivery practices are disabling. We will recommend strategies for DS offices that show promise of aligning policies and practices with disability studies and activist constructs and that reflect the social model. The following questions will help facilitate that exploration:

- What do we believe about disability? How do those beliefs impact our behaviour?
- How is the disabled student experience different from the nondisabled student experience? Is the difference necessary and compatible with our beliefs about difference and equity?
- What messages about disability do we send to students, faculty, staff, and administrators?
- How can we change our practices to be compatible with disability studies scholarship?

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## **A Revolution in Israel: The Development of a Nationwide System of Centres to Support Students with Disabilities in Higher Education**

**Dalia Sachs**, Haifa University, Israel

**Sarit Moray**, National Insurance Institute, Israel

In Israel today, approximately 45% of Israelis (Jewish, Moslem and Christian) between ages 25 and 64, receive some post-secondary education. This rate is higher than in the United States (39%), Japan (37%) and Sweden (35%). One would assume that a large percentage of students with disabilities attend Israeli colleges and universities. But that is not the case. Only about 3% or 10,000 students with disabilities attend Israeli colleges and universities. In fact, the Israeli Commission on the Rights of People with Disabilities has reported that "[T]here is a broad failure of the Israeli social system in integrating people with disabilities in the education system ..." (Feldman & Ben Moshe, 2007). Of particular concern is the lack of inclusion of students with disabilities in Israel's institutions of higher education.

In 2010, the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) initiated a programme to address the problem of access to higher education for students with disabilities by allocating substantial government funding to develop centres to support students with disabilities who attend institutions of higher education. The programme was launched as a demonstration project, receiving professional and financial assistance from the Funds Unit of the NII for two to three years. Its aim is for these centres to become an integral part of the institutions of higher education. Since then, nearly half of all of Israel's colleges and universities have received funding to start such centres, and within the next few years, all of Israel's colleges and universities will have such centres. The centres vary in size, scope, and services offered; but all are designed to address the needs of current and potential students with all types of disabilities. This programme is perhaps the first in the world in which the public sector has developed a nationwide system of centres to support students with disabilities in higher education. The Israeli Parliament also recently adopted a law and implementing regulations requiring the establishment of these centres. The National Council on Higher Education also allocated approximately \$ 90,000 to ensure physical access to all of the country's colleges and universities, although the Council itself does not collect any data on the number and needs of students with disabilities. In addition, many barriers remain to the admission of students with disabilities to Israel's colleges and universities.

The presenters of this session will discuss the development of the support centres in Israel, which are designed to increase admission rates, facilitate student success, and improve their graduation rates. The presenters include the academic advisors who conduct trainings for the staff of the centres, NII representatives who oversee the programme, and researchers selected by the NII to study the efficacy and success of the programme during its first three years of operation. The presenters hope that Israel's experience of developing centres to support students with disabilities will be a model to other countries seeking to support their students with disabilities and will provide an opportunity to identify and discuss the many

challenges and opportunities in ensuring equal access to higher education for all students with disabilities in Israel and elsewhere.

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## **Facilitating Faculty Outreach and Support in Inclusive Instructional Practices: Strategies and Research Findings**

**Allison Lombardi**, University of Connecticut, USA

In this session, the development and validation of a measure intended to evaluate faculty support needs pertaining to disability and accessibility in university settings will be presented. The Inclusive Teaching Strategies Inventory (ITSI) may be used as a climate survey to target efforts in faculty outreach and support. The ITSI contains six subscales representing the constructs: (a) multiple means of presentation, (b) inclusive lecture strategies, (c) accommodations, (d) campus resources, (e) inclusive assessment, and (f) accessible course materials. The ITSI includes two response categories that allow for an evaluation of both attitudes and actions in the six areas.

In several different studies, faculty attitudes toward inclusive teaching practices *and* their self-reported actions were compared across universities in the United States, Spain, and Canada. For some universities, predictors of these attitudes and actions were identified and it was found that faculty who had received prior disability-related training or had prior experiences with disability were more likely to positively endorse positive attitudes on three of the six constructs even after controlling for relevant background characteristics (i.e., gender, teaching status, years teaching). However, similar analyses conducted on faculty “actions” were not significant. In this session, the discrepancies between attitudes and actions will be presented to demonstrate potential uses of the survey to plan for faculty professional development opportunities in inclusive instruction and disability awareness.

A major learning outcome for participants will be a better understanding of how to administer and interpret findings from climate surveys intended for university faculty. Climate surveys are an important aspect of assessing diversity on college campuses, and the ITSI is a type of climate survey. The presenter will demonstrate this process to show how disability services staff can use data-based decisions to target faculty outreach and support efforts. In addition, multiple recommendations for further faculty outreach and support will be provided, regardless of budget size. Thus, a second learning outcome will be the identification of at least one strategy to use at participants’ institutions that involves faculty outreach and support.

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## **The Study Support Plan**

**Rob Martin**, Birkbeck College, University of London, UK

The study support plan is an online learning agreement form. The form allows students to enter details of their condition and the effects of their condition. The university is then able to add standard adjustments, through mapping, and the specialist staff in the Disability and Dyslexia Service confirm the student's diagnostic evidence and add the non-standard adjustments. All students declaring disabilities on enrolment are invited to complete the SSP as part of the process they give to consent to share information and the SSP automatically emails appropriate staff in administrative and academic departments confirming the student has an SSP and inviting them to review it.

Birkbeck had a significant problem with learning agreements. Departments would often receive this late in the academic year as students had to book appointments to draft their learning agreement with the specialist staff. The primary benefit of the SSP is that students can complete this when they enrol and departments are informed of the reasonable adjustments they are required to make significantly earlier, in many cases even before the start of the academic year. The SPP also ensures a significant saving in specialist staff time, and the empowerment of the student, as much of the detail on the student's condition and effect are input by the student. An important additional benefit is that the system is secure with no risk of documents accidentally being circulated to the wrong staff. Future proposed developments include the facility for students to upload their own medical evidence and automatic reminders to students to do this. The production of the SSP involved extensive collaboration between the Disability/Dyslexia Service, professional services and academic departments at the college and Corporate Information Systems Team. DDS began by identifying all of the possible conditions the SSP should record, identifying and mapping all of the effects of the condition on the student's studies and identifying all the reasonable adjustments which the College may be required to make for students. Perhaps the most demanding aspect of the project was the mapping of conditions to affects and affects to adjustments. Consideration also had to be given to the import issue of student confidentiality both ensuring students had the required level of information on access to the SSP to ensure they could make an informed decision about the giving of consent. Once all the mapping had been drafted and reviewed, the DDS had to work closely with the CIS team who prepared the first version of the Study Support Plan. The DDS had to review this, propose modifications and pilot the SSP with student cases. An additional complication that the Disability Adviser had to address was that the SSP both had to be accessible to students with the full range of disability needs and also to staff with disability needs. Thus, considerable effort has been taken during the planning and implementation phases to consider accessibility.

At the workshop, delegates will receive a comprehensive briefing on how the disability adviser devised and implemented what is one of the largest projects the DDS has ever undertaken. He will provide a detailed demonstration of the SSP both



from the student's, specialist staff, administrators and academics in departments' point of view.

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## **Delivering Shared Services – The Benefits and Challenges of Delivering Shared Assessment and NMH Support Across 3 HEIs**

**Lyle Millard**, Access Summit Manchester, UK

**Nahida Shabbir**, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

**Elaine Shillcock**, University of Manchester, UK

The presentation will be delivered by 3 HEIs and a 4<sup>th</sup> key stakeholder (the delivery agent) who work together to manage and support a single not for profit organisation which delivers assessments and non-medical helper support across each of the HEIs.

It is proposed to **share effective practice**, and to:-

- Describe our delivery model.
- Compare and contrast the delivery model with alternative models.
- Share a frank and honest appraisal of our experience of our local model.
- To assess this model in the light of anticipated changes in funding.
- To allow delegates the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the merits of the approach.

Set out below are the key elements of the proposed presentation.

### **Purpose of Presentation**

It is proposed to describe and critically evaluate the activity and experience of a not-for-profit organisation delivering assessments and non-medical helper provision on behalf of 3 HEIs.

The key elements of the service are:-

- It is a well-established organisation with over 10 years of service delivery
- The service was established as a HEFCE funded project in 1997 and since then has become fully embedded as a provider of assessment and support to disabled students attending the 3 partner HEIs.
- It is independent of each of the HEIs but is managed by a strategic Policy Committee and a more operational Steering Group, both of which are made up of senior managers from each of the HEIs concerned.
- Delivery is informed by a Memorandum of Understanding among the stakeholders
- The service is subject to constant change and evolution as it responds and adapts to stakeholder demands.
- In 13/14 the service had 2744 registered students, completed 1807 assessments and delivered 54,286 hours of support. Support is delivered through a workforce of 150 staff.

The presentation will share our practice, providing a frank and honest appraisal of the benefits and challenges of the approach.

The service is about to undertake a comprehensive 3<sup>rd</sup> party review of provision and this will inform the presentation.

A presentation delivered by representatives of the 4 stakeholder organisations providing

- The history of the service.
- An account of the delivery and activity of the service.
- A summary/review/comparison of alternative models, including:-
  - In-house
  - Outsourced provision – full and partial
  - Our approach
  - Student led/self-sourced support
- The management structure – relationships between stakeholders.
- A review of the service :-
  - Benefits (including student benefits) – financial (benefits of scale), efficient use of resources, administrative, stakeholder influence, quality, cultural fit, agility of provision, and non-tangible benefits including information sharing between HEIs.
  - Challenges – control and influence (on the part of the HEIs), student experience (moving between different organisations), communication, information sharing, and managing expectations when responding to different procedures and requirements within the HEIs.
  - Enablers – shared culture, vision/mission and language, trust, stability, confidence, service specification and clarity of a service level agreement, shared systems.
- Looking forward – this will consider the future of the service in the light of funding changes. We await further information regarding funding.
- Opportunity for questions and discussion.

Delegates will:-

- Have an understanding of the nature of the service provided
- Understand the benefits and challenges of the shared approach
- Will be better placed to assess the possibilities/benefits/challenges of a shared service in their own institution, in relation to the provision of disability support but more widely in terms of student support provision.

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## **Inclusive HE Beyond Borders**

**Claire Ozel**, Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey

Support systems and services around the world are often recognised as being of a high quality, however many universities are far from offering such levels of provision.

In 2004, a week-long British Council study visit to disability units at seven British universities triggered a search for ways towards the establishment of similar structures in Turkey. Ten years on, all Turkish universities are required to have a disability unit, the Turkish Universities' Disability Platform has over 500 members and the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Turkish Workshop on University and Disability took place in May 2014.

In this workshop, following an analysis of the developments at Turkish universities, participants will reflect on how expertise and good practice developed over decades in countries with high quality support systems can begin to be transferred to other countries, where there is little or no infrastructure or legal framework for disability support in higher education, and where such concepts are not considered priorities by decision makers.

In the last five years, contact was made with some rare committed individuals attempting to establish some form of support for the occasional disabled students identified at their universities in countries including Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, and Indonesia. It has been seen that even small exchanges of information (success stories, alternative ways of learning or testing, etc) have allowed these lone pioneers to provide sufficient support for a student, who then continued their studies, resulting in ripples of hope within that particular student's community.

However, the isolation experienced by the unsupported and unrecognised volunteer advisers can become excessively wearing on their motivation. To counter this, this workshop will engage participants in a search for feasible possibilities for cooperation, considering content, frameworks, priorities, possible risks and challenges, ethical issues and benefits to all engaged in such exchanges. The outcomes may form the foundation of an exchange programme, to contribute to the development of more inclusive opportunities for disabled people worldwide

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### **Having no support system being an advantage and free education being a disadvantage? Lessons learned from Slovenian perspective.**

**Adrijana Biba Rebolj**, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The presentation provides a brief description of the provisions for disabled students in Slovenian higher education. Compared to the UK, there is no organized support system for students with disabilities. There is also no exact data available of how many students with disabilities participate in higher education. This is partly because there is no national law covering higher education that would define students with disabilities and would regulate how these students should be supported as well as who is responsible for their support. Most of the times, the students have to be on their own and have to pave their way through without institutional guidance and support. Further, the attitudes towards students with disabilities at the universities in Slovenia could sometimes be incredibly negative,

especially when it comes to questions such as maintaining academic standards, future employment and fairness over other students.

Because there is little or no guidance and recommendations of how to work with student with disabilities and how to provide and implement adjustments, Slovenian academic staff encounters number of confusions. Staff who express favourable attitudes try to solve these issues by being extra creative: A one to one approach with a student is necessary, collaboration among other stakeholders as well. However, with undertrained academic staff, lack of financial as well as human resources and students who lack information about their rights and possibilities, the situation doesn't look very promising.

This may well be seen as a disadvantage as it may cause some huge obstacles when it comes to claiming rights to reasonable adjustments, however, speaking from the student's perspective, sometimes having no system could also be an advantage in terms of human relationships and closer contact. Fortunately, the above description, although very real, has more layers. In the last few years, there has been some progress and steps towards more supportive atmosphere and they have not been achieved deductively. There were some important and precious lessons learned how the system could act as a burden and sometimes not having it, brings actually many benefits.

The second main difference when comparing Slovenian and UK higher education is that Slovenian public universities do not charge tuition fees, so there is still the ideal that education should be free for everybody. While this sounds appealing, there are some major disadvantages in having free education. They result in careless attitudes towards the responsibility students should have towards their development, studies, academic staff and institution. Another disadvantage in having a "light" and cosy student life is that the skills of self-advocacy and self-determination cannot develop, which results in passivity and little will in making decisions or having future ambitions.

By tackling these two main characteristics and differences among Slovenian and UK higher education, there is much space to share experiences from everyday work and lots of opportunities to learn from each other's perspective as sometimes things that sound good, may not be so and things that sound not as promising, may actually have some potential to develop into something worth further exploration.

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## Theme: Transition and Employability

### **Transition to employment: a supported standardised approach**

**Mary Clarkson**, De Montfort University, UK

**Tugrul Esendal**, De Montfort University, UK

**Leanne Herbert**, De Montfort University, UK

***This workshop will run alongside an additional presentation and delegates will be required to attend both sessions and will have an opportunity to discuss the different approaches presented by the speakers***

Disabled students in the UK are entitled to apply for Disabled Students Allowance, which could fund a tailored support package to suit the individual's needs. Not all overseas students studying in the UK receive this allowance, creating an imbalance in support for international students.

Disability is supported differently in different countries, and there are several aspects to this. Legislation varies from country to country, both in terms of equal opportunity expectations and legislation and in terms of employment law. Funding for disability support also varies across the nations. In addition, educational support provision and employment support provision will be different in different countries.

One suspects that support requirements of disabled employees do not vary all that much globally, although potentially the prevalence of particular disabilities may vary among student populations in different subject areas. For example, some institutions experience high proportions of students with dyslexia on practical courses such as nursing and policing, and high proportions of students with ASD on science and technology courses.

The research team has been investigating student disability and employability. When we look at supporting disabled students and graduates to get jobs, start businesses, or otherwise enter the world of work, we find they have the same challenges in applying and getting jobs as do their non-disabled peers, with the added challenges arising from the impact of their disability. This includes communicating with prospective employers about disability; in practical terms this means disclosing disability, in order to discuss workplace accommodations for interview and after.

The workshop presents an inclusive transition framework being developed that helps support professionals to work with students (disabled or not) and get communication going, to aid students in understanding what employability or career-readiness is all about, and what a student might be able to do to develop their own career-related skills. The framework is currently grounded in a UK environment; the workshop is invited to discuss whether it could work in other countries as well, and what amendments could be made to further that aim.

Participants are also invited to comment on its suitability for overseas students studying in the UK.

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**Understanding why disabled students are reluctant to be open about their disability and what employers, and other stakeholders, need to do to encourage openness.**

**Helen Cooke**, My Plus Consulting, UK

***This workshop will run alongside an additional presentation and delegates will be required to attend both sessions and will have an opportunity to discuss the different approaches presented by the speakers***

The reluctance of disabled students to be open about their disability with a potential employer remains one of the biggest barriers for disabled students in their search for employment. It is also a huge barrier for recruiters wishing to recruit from this talent pool.

In 2011, research found that 71% of students and recent graduates would either not, or prefer not, to inform a potential employer that they had a disability. However, without knowing that an individual has a disability or long-term health condition, an employer is unable to make the adjustments or provide the support an individual may require in order to successfully navigate the recruitment process. Consequently, applicants are potentially being rejected from roles that they are more than capable of filling and employers are missing out on talented individuals that could make a positive difference to their organisation.

In order to encourage disabled students to be more open, employers need to know the answers to the following questions:

- Why students are reluctant to be open about their disability or long term health condition.
- What would encourage them to be open.
- At which point in the process the student would feel most comfortable in being open.
- How they want to inform the employer.
- How the student wants the information to be used.
- Where students are getting advice from about this.

Capitalising on the peak recruitment season, research was carried out during the 2014 Autumn term to understand why disabled students are reluctant to be open about their disability with potential. It also looked at:

- Understanding the cause of this reluctance.
- Identifying what employers can do to encourage them to be open.
- Identifying the potential role of other stakeholders, including Disability Practitioners, in encouraging openness among disabled students.

The results of the research will be used to identify what opportunities exist to better encourage openness amongst disabled students. The results will be particularly useful for employers in encouraging openness from applicants and for careers advisers, disability practitioners, and other stakeholders, who provide advice to this group of individuals.

During this session, results from the research will be shared with the delegates. In small groups, the delegates will be asked to consider and discuss the implications of the results in terms of how they advise their students who seek advice about careers\*. Working in the style of the highly successful [Disability Cafes](#), delegates will be asked to move between tables in order to build and grow their conversations and have the opportunity to discuss the subject with a wide range of delegates. Following the discussions, feedback will be provided and captured during the plenary session.

My Plus Consulting will use the findings from the research to develop a toolkit for disabled students aimed at building their confidence to be open and to understand the benefits of being so. The outputs from this session will also be used to provide information and advice for disability practitioners.

\*In the 2011 research '[Understanding how disabled graduates search for jobs](#)' it was found that 92% of respondents sought careers advice from their disability adviser / co-ordinator.

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## **The experience of disabled and non-disabled students on professional practice placements: similarities, differences and implications for practice.**

**Dr Shirley Hill**, University of Dundee, UK

Research on the experience of disabled students in higher education has become increasingly prevalent in the UK, including studies investigating students' transition to higher education and barriers to learning. However, limited comparisons have been made between the experience of disabled students and their non-disabled peers, particularly on professional programmes of study; such as medicine and teaching.

This session will present the results of a research study that investigated the experience of disabled and non-disabled students on practice placements, across six professional disciplines: medicine, nursing and midwifery, dentistry, education, social work and community education. These particular disciplines were selected to enable comparison with previous research and to explore the dichotomy between the social and medical approaches to disability; and the potential impact of these approaches on the experience of disabled students.

The research utilised a mixed methods design, incorporating the use of an anonymous online survey followed by semi-structured interviews with a self-

selected sample of disabled and non-disabled participants in one institution. The results of the research were subsequently compared with the student placement feedback obtained independently by the individual disciplines involved, to identify any common themes.

The results revealed that both disabled and non-disabled students reported positive placement experiences, highlighting the importance of such learning opportunities for gaining an insight into the reality of professional practice and reinforcing their knowledge in a practical context. There were also some similarities in the challenges reported by both disabled and non-disabled students but notably some differences. In particular, difficulties that were experienced by both disabled and non-disabled students, such as travelling to placement and developing relationships with placement staff, were exacerbated for some disabled students. This appeared to be primarily a consequence of the nature of the student's impairment and attitudes to disability.

The results also revealed some differences in the experience of students in different disciplines and provided evidence for the prevalence of the medical model approach to disability, particularly in nursing and medicine. The results highlighted the need for a review of disability disclosure procedures in the placement context and for clarity in the role and responsibilities of placement staff.

This session will conclude by identifying recommendations for practice that aim to improve the placement experience of all students and to ensure disabled students are not disadvantaged in such contexts; promoting inclusivity in professional training and practice. Delegates will be invited to discuss the recommendations and to consider the extent to which the results of the research reflect their experience of supporting students on placement, or supporting the delivery of the practice placement component of professional programmes.

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## **Enhanced Employment Certification Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**

**June Justice Crawford**, Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York, USA

Higher education and trade schools now offer training for persons with disabilities who wish to become licensed in a particular occupation such as nursing, cosmetology, personal aide, welding, etc. Accommodations for learning are provided during the course of study and many persons with disabilities can complete the course requirements. Once the person completes the course of study, however, there is often no support for preparation for licensing exams given by government agencies. Students leave and if they do not pass the licensing exam, they join the ranks of the unemployed and often apply for government support as a person with a disability. The number of persons with disabilities unable to practice a trade is high because of lack of test preparation and guidance about how to get



accommodations for the exam. The cost to government programmes is high because this is often a lifelong situation.

This session describes a collaborative approach between a government agency and a private support agency that offers a tutoring programme to assist clients to pass the necessary exam and gain a license to work. The tutors are experienced programme employees who participate in a fifteen-hour tutor training programme that teaches them how to work with a person with a disability to provide confidence, discipline, and content mastery prior to the exam. Use of good teaching techniques and cell phone or computer technology is stressed. The clients are primarily those who have dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, but the programme may also includes many who have other cognitive disabilities.

Operated under a grant from a private foundation, this is a tutoring programme that was designed by a dyslexia and literacy consultant. Review of each client's diagnosis is done and the results utilized to plan a specific programme of instruction within a very limited number of tutoring hours. Payment for the tutoring is government funded and the agency receives a stipend to carry out the programme. Preliminary evaluations appear to indicate that a structured programme can make a difference in the employment rates of persons with disabilities. Employment leads to self-sufficiency and reduces dependence on government programmes for assistance.

The session will describe the following: the agencies involved; the content of the training programme; the legal and ethical issues addressed; the type of follow-up sessions and observations done; the results of a final evaluation; and, how to replicate this programme.

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## Theme: Technology

### **Lecture Capture Systems: Accessible Friend or Foe?**

**Beth Abbott**, Ai Media, UK

Around the world Universities are investing in lecture capture systems to modernise and digitalise the ancient custom of lecturers orating to a room of rapt students.

Online lectures, including MOOCs, present many exciting opportunities for disabled students. Used correctly, they make a huge difference both in both student attainment and satisfaction. For those who are physically disabled, or who have a disability that fluctuates, the ability to follow a course online, without missing out can be life-changing.

However it is important that all students can make full use of them, and online recordings of lectures are not universally positive. They pose unique challenges for students with communication issues, particularly those with a hearing loss.

Whereas these students could previously sit in a lecture theatre to lip-read, follow notes or perhaps even use an interpreter, online lectures do not provide any of these options. Students are left to decipher meaning from slides, missing out on any opportunity to participate and ask questions.

By failing to subtitle their lecture capture systems, Universities are also missing out on the ability to support their international students who benefit from the second chance to review information. Subtitling the recordings of lectures making the video searchable so students can optimise their revision time by going exactly to where their search terms are located in the lecture. Transcripts of lectures are also invaluable to the lecturers themselves, who can reflect on what they actually said – perhaps helping them to understand where and why students lose their way!

In this presentation, Beth Abbott from Ai-Media, presents several case studies from around the world to demonstrate the various ways in which subtitling has been integrated into lecture capture systems. She looks at major Universities in Australia who are having hundreds of hours of lectures subtitled live – to enable students to follow what is being said live in the lecture room – and then turning these words in subtitle files so that the online recording are accessible.

She reviews the Open University in the UK, who have pioneered online accessibility, and reflects on the diverse practices in Universities in the US.

Using these international case studies Beth will build a picture of the opportunity for lecture capture systems to be a force for inclusion as well as academic achievement.

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## **Note taking: the barriers, impacts and strategies for disabled students**

**Dr Abi James**, University of Southampton, UK  
**EA Draffan**, University of Southampton

Studies across educational systems have shown that the quality of the notes students are able to take during teaching sessions (such as lectures) is related to their performance in examinations and assessments. Those students who fail to capture salient points during lectures achieve lower grades than those who are able to create good quality notes. Note-taking is a time-sensitive activity. Disabled students who need longer to undertake day to day learning activities, such as writing, listening to discussions, lectures or tutorials and reading content from the screen are unable to keep up with the content being delivered without study skill adjustments and additional support. A recent survey of students receiving additional support due to their disability found that note-taking was the most commonly identified area of concern when discussing their difficulties and the impact of the support they received (Draffan et al, 2013). Recent policy developments within the UK have looked to streamline support with a move to provide note-taking support provision through institutions and using technology based support over non-medical helper support. Similarly, note-taking support provision varies widely between countries.

Recent technology trends towards tablet devices and cloud solutions have led to the development of many tools that can support note-taking and information capture. In particular, higher educational institutions (HEIs) have embraced the potential of lecture capture and streaming services, while personal note-taking solutions like Evernote have gained popularity with some teachers and students. While studies are starting to examine the impact of such tools on studying, few have examined their impact on students who have a cognitive barrier to effective note-taking and reviewing of traditional pen/paper notes. Similarly, little work has been undertaken on how note-taking strategies developed and widely used by disabled students compare to those available through these new technology tools.

This workshop will review current note-taking tools from an accessibility and student skill's perspective. The authors will report on the latest research into the effectiveness of some note-taking strategies, including a survey of students and HEIs across a number of countries, undertaken by the authors, to establish the latest trends in students' requirements and provision. Participants will be asked to reflect on their current provision and share effective practice.

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**Alternative Formats – More for Less. How to use technology and business processes to remove barriers, improve access to books and information resources in challenging financial climates.**

**Andrew McMahon**, University of Dundee, UK

The provision of teaching and learning material in accessible formats for print disabled and visually impaired individuals can pose great financial and logistical challenges to academic institutions but the absence of such provision creates barriers for disabled students. This presentation explores how a Scottish HE institution managed to provide significantly more accessible material whilst reducing costs, providing details of the methods used and the associated resource requirements.

“if I cannot read I cannot learn” RNIB student

New assistive technologies would be unrecognisable ten years ago. However, access to books and other learning resources is developing more slowly, lagging behind technological capabilities and student expectations.

Foundation knowledge on the provision of accessible formats in Scotland was established by the author in collaboration with colleagues in three other Scottish Universities and subsequently published in the Equality Challenge Unit’s (ECU) report “Digitisation and reformatting: recommendations from current provision in Scottish higher education” (ECU, 2012; <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/digitisation-and-reformatting-scottish-he/>).

Evidence from a Scottish Higher education institution, with input from ATANET (Assistive Technology Advisers Network in Scottish higher education; [www.atanet.org.uk](http://www.atanet.org.uk)), included an evaluation of different methodologies to achieve an increase in accessible formats provision for less cost. Users of the service gained improved access by offering 24/7 availability via VLE integration, allowing access on multiple devices, both fixed and portable, on and off campus.

Specifically, the institution investigated how to exploit and maximise the use of:

- Mainstream technology
- Assistive technology
- VLE (Virtual learning environments)
- Copyright legalisation
- CLA (Copyright licencing agreement)

Each component was evaluated using common management accounting and variable costing techniques to establish production costs, provision requirements and availability.

With the new UK and European legislation in 2014, ePub3 formats adoption and increasing focus on procurement, this session will highlight areas in which access to learning resources can be improved whilst minimising costs.

A key barrier to learning is inaccessible information. This session will arm disability practitioners with the language, knowledge and solutions you can take back to your institution to persuade libraries, IT departments and budget holders; highlighting that the provision of an improved accessible information service within the same budget is possible and that costs can be significantly reduced.

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## Theme: Disability Specific/Other Topics

### **What are the barriers to disclosing disability and facilitating disclosure, in EU and International student populations? An emancipatory research study**

**Toby Bristow**, Aston University, UK  
**Sally Holgate**, Aston University, UK  
**Lauren Morgan**, Aston University, UK

There is a concern that EU/International students with disabilities are under-represented in the numbers that disclose a disability to universities. This research will seek to ascertain why, and what could be done to encourage students to disclose in the future.

The aim is to understand the perception of EU/International students, in order to improve the student experience for students with disabilities, and achieve a greater awareness of culture-specific issues.

Students with disabilities involved in the preparation of focus group questions, to encourage ownership. The focus groups are divided by continent, so (if at all possible) to try and geo-locate culture specific issues. The focus groups include both students with disabilities, and students without disabilities so as many perspectives as possible can be captured.

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### **National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN) – Experiences from our Disabled Staff Networks across the UK**

**Hamied Haroon**, University of Manchester, UK  
**Linda Robson**, The Open University, UK

The University of Manchester (UoM) established its Disabled Staff Network (DSN) in 2006, one of the earliest in the country. From the beginning, the Network was run for and by disabled staff with autonomy and independence. One of the Network's first achievements was to secure the University's commitment to provide dedicated support and advice for disabled staff. UoM became the first of its kind to make this commitment, and built upon the excellent services it already provided to disabled students. Since then, the DSN grew from strength to strength, giving it a reputation for being active, supportive and successful. Over the years, the DSN was approached by disabled staff and Equality & Diversity representatives at various organisations in the sector around the UK wishing to learn from their experiences. These enquiries led on to the idea of holding a national event to bring disabled staff together and learn from each other.

UoM's DSN organised and hosted the first ever one-day national conference of the UK's disabled workforce, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in Manchester. The theme of this conference was reflected by its title, "What Are We Hiding?", focussing on staff with "hidden" disabilities and the "hidden" contributions of disabled staff to the nation's economy and society. The conference was targeted at disabled people working in higher education, but open to everyone interested. The event was a resounding success, attracting delegates from near and far and from all sectors (public, private, voluntary and social).

During the conference workshop on "Disabled Staff Networks", proposals were presented for a national super-network/association of disabled staff networks as an umbrella organisation to share experiences and good practice, to examine challenges and opportunities, to arrange activities and events, and to represent disabled staff on a national level. All attendees agreed with the proposals and were very keen to be involved.

Hence, the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN) was launched!

Though NADSN is open to all interested organisations, the Association is focused on institutions of higher and further education and their respective disabled staff networks (DSNs). The current membership includes universities, colleges, students' unions, NHS trusts and authorities, sports bodies, the BBC, charities, etc. Representatives of these organisations, from all corners of the UK, along with representatives of the Equality Challenge Unit and the National Association of Disability Practitioners have formed a Founding Steering Group to establish NADSN and decide its strategy.

In this session, an overview of NADSN will be presented. Then a few NADSN members will present case studies of their respective DSNs, reflecting a spectrum of realisation between aspiration and success. This will be followed by a panel discussion on the pros and cons of the approaches and practices of various DSNs. We will explore issues such as disclosure, confidentiality, whether or not to involve non-disabled staff, geographical spread of the organisation, home/distance workers, attendance at meetings and events, engagement of members, inclusion of staff with "invisible" impairments and those on long-term disability-related sick leave, influence on institutional policies and procedures, etc.

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## **Stammering – the unknown disability**

**Colin Marsh**, British Stammering Association, UK

Not for nothing is stammering called the "hidden disability" – although it affects a substantial number of people, and is covered by the Equalities Act 2010, it is not an obvious disability – indeed, many people who stammer are reluctant to consider themselves disabled. However, there is anecdotal evidence that people with a

speech or language problem do experience discrimination and can be at a disadvantage in both education and employment.

As stammering has no “pattern” in that a stammer can take many different forms, it can be difficult for Disability Advisers to support students with a stammer, or encourage them to seek support. Further, as access to Speech and Language Therapy can be patchy throughout the UK, there may be students starting HE who have a stammer but have never had therapy, and are understandably anxious about how they will cope in University. They may well have been bullied as children, and this experience may add to their apprehension. By leaving home to come to University they are moving out of their “comfort zone” where their stammer, if not entirely understood, is generally accepted. Higher Education brings fresh challenges – meeting new people, not all of whom will be understanding, taking part in tutorials, the need to deliver presentations, for example – all of which may make them anxious and may lead to under – performing or, at worse, withdrawal from their studies.

This Workshop, presented by a former University Careers Adviser who is himself a stammerer will attempt to help Disability Advisers to identify the support needs of students who stammer, and hopefully will give them a greater awareness of the anxieties that stammerers have about going to Higher Education. They may be worried about the reaction of their fellow students, or their tutors and such fears may make a stammer worse. Hopefully, too, the Workshop will help to highlight the fact that no two stammers are the same, and consequently, may need different approaches. The Workshop will also suggest ways in which Disability Advisers can cooperate with their colleagues in the Careers and Employability Services of their Colleges to support students who stammer through the complex processes around job applications, job hunting and interview preparation. Increasingly, employers rely on the telephone interview, certainly as the first stage of their selection process, and this can hold real terrors for the student with even a mild stammer. In a world in which high – level communication skills are highly valued, the student with any form of communication disorder needs to be able to compete on equal terms with his or her more fluent contemporaries. Too many stammerers find themselves in jobs in which their intellectual capacity is not fully utilised.

The British Stammering Association works for “a world that understands stammering” and this Workshop should enable Disability Advisers to better understand the needs of stammerers and equip them to provide the best level of support possible. This workshop will not be examining the CAUSES of stammering – far too complex an area – only the EFFECTS.

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## **Emergency preparedness: maintaining equity of access**

**Stephen Russell**, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, New Zealand

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, at 4.35am Christchurch New Zealand was hit by a magnitude 7.1 Earthquake. This was followed five months later, on the second day of the University year - the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011 at 12.51pm - by a magnitude 6.3 Earthquake. The epicentre was near the south-east of the centre of the city and the resulting devastation cost 181 people their lives and left the city's infrastructure damaged in parts beyond repair. Many people were forced to leave their homes, and those who stayed were unsure of their safety. Power, communication, and road networks were severely disrupted, leaving people without light, heat, potable water, working sewerage systems, cellphone or internet coverage, and having to deal with recurring grind of removing liquefaction from their properties. In the context of this disaster, and with the continued risk presented by ongoing aftershocks, tertiary institutions were forced to attempt to resume business as quickly as possible in order to salvage the academic year and avert financial ruin. This required the institutions to remodel their delivery of education, and necessitated the reconceptualization of the delivery of services to disabled students.

This presentation will highlight the changes which may be required at an individual, service, and institutional level in order to facilitate the swift resumption of business. Using the case study of Christchurch, it will encourage attendees to consider the fragility of services; the impact which threats may present; and the measures which might be taken to protect against such factors in order to increase the resilience of their services to external factors and ensure that disabled students are not unnecessarily disadvantaged in times of crisis.

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## **Developing a user-informed training package for a mentoring programme for young people on the autism spectrum**

**Damian Milton**, London South Bank University, UK

**Dr Tara Sims**, London South Bank University, UK

***This workshop will run alongside an additional presentation and delegates will be required to attend both sessions and will have an opportunity to discuss the different approaches presented by the speakers***

At the 2007 forum 'Successful Futures for Adults with Autism' participants highlighted difficulties they experienced with navigating social life, including: managing their own practical and financial affairs, accessing education and training opportunities, securing and maintaining employment, and maintaining good physical and mental health. There was a common feeling that existing models of support for adults on the autism spectrum, which often involve being part of a large group of people, were not helpful. Many described how they felt stressed or unsure in such surroundings, preferring a one-to-one relationship which could then be

broadened over time. Many said that they would only want this support on a time-limited basis, but that it should be goal-oriented, specialised and based on a socially valid personal life coach or mentor model. Many participants said they would like to use the allowances they received for personal support to pay for such services, but few had access to such services in their locality.

Specialist mentoring or coaching schemes for people on the autism spectrum are still rare, and research on the topic rarer still. A number of work training schemes, life-coaching and 'Access to work' mentoring schemes have been initiated, yet these have not been subjected to good quality evaluations. The only area of mentoring for people on the autism spectrum to have really begun to gain the attention of researchers has been student mentoring schemes for College and University students.

In light of this, researchers at London South Bank University are carrying out research on behalf of Research Autism to develop a mentoring programme for young people (aged 16-24 years) on the autism spectrum and to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

This session will present information on the training programme for mentors of young people on the autism spectrum that has been designed as part of this research. The training programme was designed with input from people on the autism spectrum. The session will reflect on the identified shortcomings of existing mentoring in meeting the needs of young people on the autism spectrum and share the approaches and methodologies that were used to involve people on the autism spectrum in developing appropriate training for mentors

It is intended that the session will also share findings about what information it is important to include in training given to mentors in order to encourage client-centred, positive and effective mentoring relationships with people on the autism spectrum.

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**Global Launch of a new resource freely available on best practice in supporting students with Autism to succeed in Universities.**

**Peter Quinn**, University of York, UK

**Simon Wallace**, Autistica, UK

**Leo Capella**, Ambitious about Autism, UK

***This workshop will run alongside an additional presentation and delegates will be required to attend both sessions and will have an opportunity to discuss the different approaches presented by the speakers***

The Resource consists of several films funded by a number of partners including the Department of Health, the University of Oxford and the University of York Alumni Fund.

Most importantly, the resource includes students with Autism from a number of Universities as well as leading experts such as Simon Baron Cohen, Nicki Martin, Joanna Hastwell, Leo Capella, Dr Robin Perutz.

The films have been developed overseen by a steering group chaired by Sir Christopher Ball. The project team lead by Pete Quinn and Simon Wallace have ensured that the training seminar delivered to academics and professional staff at the University of Oxford has been translated into a resource that can provide best practice for all Universities in the area of transition, mentoring, reasonable adjustments to science labs and other areas of best practice.

Drawing on the Cambridge University Asperger's Project and other examples of supporting students to success.

The outcome from this session would be an overview of the resource and the awareness of what use disability practitioners and wider student support and academic colleagues can do to create a level playing field for students with Autism in Universities whether they be Russell Group, Million+ or other providers

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### **Specialist Dyslexia Tuition – Why do Students Refuse Support?**

**Carolyn Wilson**, Institute of Education, UK

Dyslexic students are more likely to withdraw from their studies than other students although, with appropriate support, they have been shown to be able to match the achievements of other students (Richardson & Wydall, 2003). This small research study used thematic analysis of interview data to examine the experiences and expectations of students, academic staff and specialist dyslexia tutors at a UK campus-based, teaching and research university in 2011. Resulting data were related to an adaptation of a framework consisting of four, non-exhaustive, dynamic dimensions. This framework allowed the researcher to look at 'both the driving forces as well as the emergent patterns of change' (Miller and Slater: 2000:9). The study highlighted four priority areas for further research: academic self-concept; perceived control of support sessions; study support practices; and communication. Further research in these areas could inform university policy on the most effective use of dyslexia support at a time when there is a rebalancing of support between Disabled Students' Allowance and University responsibilities in the UK.

## Individual Presentations

*These sessions will consist of two 30 minutes presentations and delegates will have an opportunity to discuss the different approaches presented by the speakers*

### **Culture, stigma and shame: a moral model of dyslexia perspective**

**Dr Onyenachi Ajoku**, Equality Focus, UK

In many countries of the world, a disability is often associated with stigma, neglect, discrimination and social isolation. This presentation aims to explore the role cultural and religious perceptions of disability play in the stigmatisation of dyslexic adult learners from West African backgrounds. In so doing it builds on the moral/religious model of disability and proposes a moral model of dyslexia. The moral model of dyslexia posits that, dyslexics from cultural backgrounds where disability is seen to be resulting from sin, curse and retribution from God are disabled by these negative perceptions and not by their impairment. Historically, before the era of institutionalisation and the advent of science which eventually brought about the medical model of disability, the understanding of disability in the western world took on a moral model approach. Disability awareness in the western world has since advanced. The moral model of disability is a model is not at the forefront of disability discourse among disability, equality and inclusion activist in the UK. This is rightly so because it does not appear to be a model that has any advantageous focus in disability policy and legislation in the UK. At present as evidenced in the Equality Act (2010), the medical and social models of disability present a more valued and tangible framework on which disability policy in the UK is based. The findings of this study however show that historical, social, religious and culturally embedded linguistic values attached to the term 'disability' all play a role in changes to self-perception upon a diagnosis of a disability. This is because of the depth and significance of these perceptions of disability and the way values and beliefs manifest in constructed ideas of disability. Although the moral/religious model of disability does not appear to feature in modern day disability discourse in the UK this model however, prevails in many West African countries where disability status is relatively low and is therefore worthy of re-visitation in disability discourse. The verbal narratives of the participants used in the study shed light on how cultural and religious disability perceptions influence notions of dyslexia. The study also sheds light on participant experiences of the diagnostic process and how perceptions of self are altered upon a diagnosis.

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### **Disabled PhD Students: some reflections on living and learning in an academic pressure cooker and the need for a 'sustainable academia'.**

**Dieuwertje Dyi Huijg**, University of Manchester, UK

This presentation concerns the experiences of disabled PhD students and the academic and non-academic cultural and structural obstacles they encounter. I will specifically problematise the PhD as a pressure cooker and urge for a training that educates 'sustainable academics'.

In the absence of any other platform, recently disabled PhD students (including those with chronic illnesses) have found each other online on blogs and twitter. There have been conversations, opportunities to exchange experiences, to provide tips and to be in an environment where people can let their (academic) guards down and connect with people in similar situations. Clearly, this online contact addresses various needs; among others, a need to meet and not feel isolated, to have a sense of recognition, connection and empathy, to have a space to feel doubt, fear, anger, as well as desire, hope and pleasure. The most prominent questions are: How can I complete a PhD with (my) disabilities? And: How can I be(come) an academic with (my) disabilities? These are the points I would like to explore here.

Relying on online media, there are four points that I will address. First, I will focus on what doing a PhD means and will argue that a PhD is an academic pressure cooker and how this affects the physical and mental health and general well-being of PhD students. I will then look, specifically, at the position and experiences of disabled PhD students and how the idea and reality of an academic pressure cooker can be specifically detrimental for disabled PhD students. Second, I will look at the PhD in relation to the already qualified academic workforce (lecturers, research fellows and so forth). How the pressure cooker prepares students to desire academia, envision oneself as and become an academic. And how the pressure cooker does *not* prepare disabled PhD students equally to desire academia, envision oneself as and become an academic. Last, I will conclude with some reflections on the necessity for a PhD training that educates students to become 'sustainable academics'.

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## **Disabled leaders have your say. An emancipatory research study**

**Dr Nicki Martin**, London Southbank University, UK

The Leadership Foundation for HE commissioned me, as a researcher, and because of my NADP association, to write a stimulus paper about the experience of disabled leaders in UK HE. I used the NADP list to invite participation and got over 60 individual responses. The National Network of Disabled Staff (NNDS) helped with research development and conducted a focus group which added valuable ideas. I will present the findings which came directly from suggestions made by disabled leaders, including aspiring and frustrated leaders at NADP's international conference and the NNDS annual conference. . Contributors included people from beyond the sector and outside the UK, and some indirectly affected by disability (in parenting

roles). Helpful insights from beyond our borders are incorporated and the findings are applicable beyond UK universities.

The aim of this stimulus paper was to create a document which will be a useful resource in itself. It will therefore include straightforward recommendations which are informed by disabled people and, like most reasonable adjustments, relatively easy and cheap to implement, especially if actioned from the planning stage, rather than being retrofitted. Many barriers identified were attitudinal, related to systems which were difficult for everyone to navigate and poor infrastructure. Lack of visibility of disabled leaders at the very top of the tree was noted and exasperation was expressed about limited strategic level commitment to encouraging diversity in leadership.

Research evidence indicates that disabled people are creative entrepreneurial and problem solvers with the ability to see the big picture. Participants discussed being collaborative and supportive leaders keen to build teams and encourage everyone to be the best they could be. These are characteristics associated with effective leadership. This research will identify what it is that disabled people do and what it is that they need in order to be highly effective in leadership roles. Preliminary findings suggest that disabled staff feel that disabled students often get a better deal than they do. This gives rise to questions about how those supporting staff can learn from good student facing practice within their institutions.

The write up and dissemination of the project will be designed for maximum impact-i.e. to make recommendations about simple steps the sector can take to enable disabled leaders to blossom.

Part of the process will be to discuss draft findings with key people, with a view to finding ways forward to turn the research into something useful. Networks of disabled staff and people with expertise in supporting disabled students will be included in this process.

Currently hidden talent could well be wasted talent and this research will lead to recommendations and practical application designed to address this waste in and beyond the UK university sector.

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## **Bringing Disabled Leadership to the Forefront- The Calibre Programmeme**

**Kalpa Mistry**, Imperial College London, UK

**Leyla Okhai**, Imperial College London, UK

**Dr Ossie Stuart**, Ossie Stuart Consulting, UK

The topic of "Authentic Leadership" is one that is written and spoken about at great length. There have been over 1000 studies in an attempt to determine the definitive styles, characteristics, or personality traits of great leaders. However, when discussing leadership in a conventional context; disabled leadership is all too often forgotten about, often viewed as an aspect of a person that is to be put to

one side. The medical model preferred to that of the social model. Many disabled employees, to overcome the unique barriers they face in the workplace, utilise skills that are thought essential for leadership. Yet, many disabled people find the term 'leader' daunting, and struggle to apply it to themselves<sup>2</sup>. This session will look at how disabled people can reach their goals and attain what they want to post-university.

Disabled leadership is a topic that has been championed in the UK by disability rights organisations, in order to go beyond disability and towards an inclusive society. However, the concept of inclusive society has not been embraced and embedded fully in the workplace. In an attempt to address this disparity, a Russell Group HEI in London ran a pilot leadership programme for disabled staff entitled Calibre in 2013, followed by two subsequent cohorts in 2014.

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### **The Evolution of Disability Services – from Eugenics to Disability Studies: West Chester Normal school as a microcosm of debate in America**

**Dr Martin Patwell**, West Chester University, USA

This presentation, led by a disability services director and disability studies scholar, will provide via lecture and visual aids a succinct overview of disability history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century via a focus on the life and work of Henry Herbert Goddard, professor of education at West Chester University 1899-1904. Goddard's life reflects the evolution of debate about treatment and inclusion of people with disabilities in education and society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in America. Goddard was a product of his time: a pioneer in the use of Binet's IQ test, a student of G Stanley Hall and his 'child study teams', and advocate of integration of 'feebleminded' students into public schools. Yet at the same time he wrote one of the most damaging texts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, 'The Kalikaks', which influenced a generation of educators and psychologists and provided the science behind eugenics practices which swept the country and became incorporated into legislation in 36 states and affected Supreme Court decisions. The attendees will learn about the growth of eugenics rising from the early overlap of fears about immigration and 'feebleminded' citizens, the role of testing in the schools as a system of exclusion and the development of the legal efforts towards equality for people with disabilities. We will conclude with a discussion of the appropriate role of universities in the management of disability services in an era of disability studies.

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## **Great Expectations? Disabled Post-Graduate Students' Expectations for Disability Support**

**Carolyn Wilson**, Institute of Education, UK

Student satisfaction is an important measure for universities and it can be argued that universities have responded to government legislation and guidelines to produce improved service performance. However, student complaints are still rising, with disability complaints disproportionately high. It is proposed that a possible gap between student expectation and university performance can be used as an explanation for this phenomenon. This study used a phenomenographic approach (Marton, 2006) to disabled students' lived experiences of disability support and their expectations of support in post graduate education.

Phenomenography takes an ideographic perspective of focusing on individual cases to provide a deep analysis from an individual point of view and then assessing them for collective meaning. This 2014 study illuminates a range of disabled students' expectations; determines how these expectations may have been acquired; and relates these to initial satisfaction levels. The aim being to produce information to influence local policy and practice regarding managing expectation in initial communication with disabled students.

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## **A description and evaluation of a university peer group Intervention for LGBT students at high risk of mental health issues in a research intensive Australian university.**

**Glenys Wilson**, University of Melbourne, Australia

Australian researchers have found a disproportionate number of suicide attempts and ideation among Australian gay and lesbian youth (Beautrais, 2000; Cantor & Neulinger, 2000; MacDonald & Cooper, 1998; Nicholas & Howard, 1998). Gay and lesbian adolescents are vulnerable to the same risk factors for suicidal behaviour as their heterosexual peers, including low self-esteem, isolation, guilt, depression, poor problem solving skills, and stress (Capuzzi, 1994; Hunter, 1990; Proctor & Groze, 1994; Remafedi, Farrow & Deisher, 1991). However, these factors may become amplified for gay and lesbian students when they move to university due to the difficulties in socialisation and adjustment. In addition, many international LGBT students choose to move to, and study in, countries where their rights will be respected (British Council, 2014). The isolation and lack of social support from friends and family has been shown to be a significant predictor of depression among gay and lesbian adolescents (Dean *et al.*, 2000) and this group intervention aimed to be a safe social place for young people to get to know each other, ask questions and hold discussions whilst coming to terms with their sexuality