

**SAILS 2019 Conference: An inclusive experience for disabled students
in higher education?**

Session Information

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10:20-11:00 Opening Keynote

Inclusion - an owner's manual

Paddy Turner, Director, NADP, the Professional Association for disability and inclusivity practitioners in further and higher education

There are many drivers to support the development of inclusive practice in higher education, whether it is guidance from national quality and teaching standards agencies, research or simply individual university missions or strategy statements. There's a solid business case, a strong teaching quality argument and most importantly there are the unarguable moral and ethical standpoints.

Indeed, ask anyone and you'll be hard pressed to find someone who doesn't support the principles of inclusive learning and teaching practice. What then stands in the way? Why does research still show attainment gaps for disabled students and other groups most notably, those with a BAME background (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015)? Why are events such as this still held in order to move the agenda forward?

Is it time to take stock of what we mean by the terms inclusive practice/inclusion and accessibility? If we don't fully understand what we are aiming for there can be little real progress. In this keynote, engagement with key hidden barriers may unlock thinking and free it to focus on ways in which we can transform deep structural barriers to change rather than attempting to assimilate or accommodate individuals into an essentially unchanged system of educational practice.

Whilst strategy is in the gift of executive management, our responsibility to influence remains critical. Harnessing the power of experiential learning and the student voice enables ripple effects and the gradual shift in cultural thinking and behaviour that eventually leads to the tipping point for embedded and irreversible change.

Biography

Paddy Turner (SFHEA; PGCLTHE; BA (Hons))

Paddy has over 20 years' experience in higher education and has held a passion throughout for improving access and inclusion to the academic and cultural environment. He began in Disabled Student Support, supporting students, developing and managing services and working to enhance inclusive teaching practice for many years before moving into education development. Paddy is now a qualified HE teacher and Senior Fellow of the HEA and works to support academic professional recognition and AdvanceHE Fellowship whilst continuing to promote and develop inclusive learning and teaching practices at Sheffield Hallam University.

Paddy has also gained a national profile, helping form the first professional association for disability officers in 1999 (NADO, now NADP) and as Convenor of the Consortium of HE

Support Services with Deaf People (CHESS) 2000-2003. NADP is now a successful membership organisation with some 1300 members from all major UK universities. Paddy has been privileged to serve on the Board of Directors since 2005 and held the position of Chair for a maximum two terms from 2011-18. As such, alongside actively supporting the professional development and enhancement of disability practitioners and services nationally, he also engages with Government, SLC and a wide range of other stakeholder groups to influence operational decision-making and policy.

The depth and breadth of this experience led to becoming a member of the Inclusive Practice sub-committee of the Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group and convenor of the RAISE Inclusive Practice SIG (<http://www.raise-network.com/>), as well as many national and international speaking engagements on inclusive practice.

11:20-12:20 Morning parallel sessions

Workshops

Your Class of 2020: How to anticipate & meet its students' inclusive learning needs through practical mainstream interventions

Ben Watson, University of Kent, and Ivan Newman, Royal Agricultural University

Participants will be asked to design mainstream interventions and a supporting action plan for their delivery taking account of their particular institution's current approach and maturity in relation to inclusive teaching and learning practices. The session sets the scene using HEFCE statistics, PhD research findings that include in depth analysis of inclusive practices at all 133 English HEPs and considers the University of Kent's Inclusive Practices as a case study to encourage participants to consider and develop their own models.

Target audience: We feel that a genuinely inclusive approach necessarily involves everyone within an institution playing their part. Therefore we believe that the session's message of inclusive design and focus on developing practical and prioritised mainstream interventions to the benefit of all our students will be relevant to all groups within HEPs.

Going beyond the label: reframing the narrative of disability support and inclusive practice

Abby Osborne and Robert Eaton, University of Bath

This 1 hour workshop will provide an opportunity to critique current definitions of inclusion by going beyond the labels often associated with specific disabilities. The session will support practitioners to move beyond notions of 'individual difference' and instead to identify patterns which exist beyond such labels. Drawing on disabled students' experiences, the session will explore a range of practical strategies which will benefit not

only students with disabilities, but also the wider student community. Workshop activities will introduce participants to a range of practical transferable interventions which can be embedded in a variety of learning contexts. Staff will be able to explore these interventions and strategies within the context of their subject discipline. Through engaging with the framework presented, participants will be better placed to understand how they can address the diverse needs of their students within the wider context of inclusion in their own institution. Participants will have the opportunity to explore a range of tools and strategies for implementing inclusive teaching and learning practice which are designed to be transferable and sustainable for staff with an increasingly heavy workload.

Target audience: This session will be particularly relevant to both academic and professional services staff who either directly teach or support students with their learning. The session will provide a solution-focused approach to meeting the diverse needs of learners through the embedding of inclusive practice in a way that is effective for students and sustainable for staff. The session will also be relevant to anyone with a research interest in disability in education or the effective mainstreaming of inclusive teaching and learning.

The Facilitated Learner

Kristina Addis, Swansea University

Inclusive teaching and learning within a higher education environment allows for increased engagement of students, and consequently improved retention and progression. The workshop will explore student-led learning, or facilitated learning and how this can benefit students with disabilities. The workshop will provide a theoretical grounding of student led learning, including Landmark's Six Teaching Principles, Active Learning and the theory of Neuroplasticity, followed by an open discussion around how these concepts can be implemented within the learning environment. While the focus of discussion will be upon disabled students, the concepts are equally applicable to the student population. The workshop aims to provide advice on practical application of literature and policies surrounding inclusivity, suggested implementation of theory and dissemination of good practice.

Target audience: The session will introduce theoretical concepts which would be familiar to most support staff from the centre for academic success for example, but may be new to some academic staff. Definitions, additional information and resources would be provided for further exploration of attendees. The content of this session would be of interest to anyone working with students in a teaching capacity or those that work in an administrative manner but have an influence on the structure of a course. This would include teaching staff, support staff and course leaders.

Personalised learning tools to support your higher education students

Nicole Reid, [Texthelp](#)

In this session, we'll be exploring how Texthelp tools such as Read&Write, EquatIO® and Browsealoud work together to build a technology 'toolkit' to support students from the moment they consider attending your institution right through to attaining their degree. Whether students are studying English or humanities, to maths, sciences and technology, Texthelp tools make reading, writing and maths on digital devices easier and more rewarding. This session will demonstrate how these tools work across all platforms and can be personalised by students to deliver the best support in all areas of their university career, delivering a richer and more inclusive learning experience.

Nicole joined Texthelp in 2016 and looks after the higher education and Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) sectors within the company. Whilst working within DSA she is heavily involved in the work of the British Assistive Technology Association (BATA) to ensure all students have access to the AT they rely on while undertaking their studies. As part of this work she does with BATA, she has been involved in campaigning to remove barriers to entry into higher education (including the widely criticised £200 Government levy against student laptops).

Nicole believes every student can benefit from AT during their degree and beyond and by Universities taking a Universal Design for Learning approach they can facilitate this to ensure no student is left behind, regardless of their need.

Lightning talks

Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education: The Curriculum Equality Audit Tool

Alys Einion, Swansea University

The Swansea University Curriculum Equality Audit Tool directly addresses core concepts of inclusivity, equality and diversity within HE pedagogies, curriculum design and delivery, and assessment. It can be used to audit existing curricula as part of service evaluation and improvement, and as a framework and benchmark for curriculum design and development. This paper will discuss and explore the tool, its uses and challenges, exploring the wide and diverse landscape of inclusive Higher Education.

Target audience: This is particularly relevant for teaching staff, but all staff would benefit from a better understanding of equality, diversity, inclusivity and intersectionality.

Accessible study space: moving away from a dedicated Assistive Technology room towards a more inclusive approach to disability support in the library.

Sarah Fleetwood-Florey, UWE Bristol

A short presentation on how removing the assistive technology room during a recent library refurbishment has led to improved provision for disabled students. We will share our experience of the consultation process involved, the changes we have made to our service as a result, the benefits to students and the lessons we have learned. The focus of this session is on creating a library space that meets the needs of individuals whilst ensuring specialist support is available at point of need.

Target audience: Library staff, support staff, and anyone with an interest in accessible study spaces.

Development of Geography and Geology Terminology in British Sign Language (BSL).

Rhian Meara, Swansea University

The BSL Glossary Project, run by the Scottish Sensory Centre at the University of Edinburgh focuses on developing scientific terminology in British Sign Language for use in the primary, secondary and tertiary education of deaf and hard of hearing students within the UK. Thus far, the project has developed 850 new signs and definitions covering Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Astronomy and Mathematics. The project has also translated examinations into BSL for students across Scotland. The current phase of the project has focused on developing terminology for Geography and Geology subjects. More than 189 new signs have been developed in these subjects including weather, rivers, maps, natural hazards and Geographical Information Systems. The signs were developed by a focus group with expertise in Geography and Geology, Chemistry, Ecology, BSL Linguistics and Deaf Education all of whom are deaf fluent BSL users. Attendees will be introduced to the BSL glossary and its free to use resources as well as being given a brief overview of deaf education in the UK.

Target audience: The session is open to anyone with an interest in British Sign Language and communication with d/Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Dyslexia, Entrepreneurship and education: What do Students who experience Dyslexia say?

Margaret Meehan, Swansea University

A short introduction about the current research on Dyslexia and Entrepreneurship will be outlined. Some basic traits and difficulties experienced by individuals who experience dyslexia will also be discussed. 17 students from two universities, a Welsh city university and an English rural university, participated. The main themes from semi-structured interviews with university business students who experience dyslexia will be presented. In particular, what would help students at university level to become entrepreneurs. 10% of the population experience dyslexia and at university level about 1-2% of students experience dyslexia.

Target audience: If you teach (or intend you teach) or support students, this talk may give you more insight into designing courses and lectures or supporting your students.

13:30-14:30 Afternoon parallel sessions

Workshops

Using VR to aid disabled students learning of accounting and taxation

Terry Filer and Marc Holmes, Swansea University

This workshop will focus on providing delegates with an experiential virtual reality (VR) learning experience through case studies in accounting and taxation. Delegates will be able to experience for themselves the benefits of using this technology and be able to adapt for use in any subject.

Target audience: This session would be of interest to all delegates involved in teaching and learning in any subject.

Embedding Inclusive Course Design via an online Module/Course Design Checklist

Daniela de Silva, University of Westminster

The workshop will familiarise the audience in detail with the Inclusive Module/Course checklist developed at the University of Westminster. The focus of the session is to get a first-hand experience of the online inclusive checklist and to have the opportunity to discuss the different aspects of the checklist via Lego creative play. The benefits of attending this session will be discussing course design in a highly interactive manner and taking home valuable feedback on module/course design.

Target audience: The intended audience is academic members of staff but all staff are welcome (library, registry, support staff).

An Inclusive Practice approach to enhancing the student experience

Ian Carter and Debbie Gibberd, University of Brighton

The workshop describes the route adopted for developing Inclusive Practice at the University of Brighton. The session outlines key concepts and milestones and ask attendees to compare this with their own experience and share ideas for future development within their areas. We will illustrate how Inclusive Practice approaches involve considerations for all departments in HEIs and how this enhances individual support of disabled students.

Target audience: The workshop will benefit university staff from all fields including academic, professional and managerial roles as we will show how Inclusive Practice is a strategy which works best when all parts of the institution are involved.

Strategies to support students with anxiety. Projects for use in Practice Environments and University Settings

Deborah Rowberry and Shelly Hill, Swansea University

The department of nursing (like many other departments) is dealing with increased numbers of students who deal with anxiety on a variety of levels. Both the Buddy Scheme and The Lighthouse Club Projects offer an opportunity to support these students, signposting them to the appropriate resources, or by allowing them to share their experiences in order to find resolve and solutions.

Student mental health is a growing concern in all departments and colleges (this does not include diagnosed mental health conditions or more serious issues). The aim of these projects is to address some of the stressors that students experience but don't always know where to turn to.

Target audience: Anyone can attend. The projects are beneficial in many settings and could be replicated if appropriate. People are invited to attend if only to raise awareness of what students are going through on a daily basis.

Study Strategies for Effective Note-taking with Sonocent Audio Notetaker

Helena Harrison, [Sonocent](#)

The world revolves around information and as technology advances, we're moving away from text being the primary source of information, to spoken language, video and audio.

To help students learn from this information, effective note-taking is crucial but traditional methods of taking notes often pose challenges, resulting in poor quality notes that are insufficient for study. Sonocent aims to solve this problem by giving students the tools they need to work effectively with spoken language in any learning environment, enabling them to learn more and study successfully.

In this session, we'll show you how Sonocent breaks down the process of taking notes into manageable steps, enabling students to focus on listening and understanding in class, rather than being distracted by the process of writing.

Helena from Sonocent has been training and supporting a wide range of neurodiverse individuals with different learning challenges for nearly 20 years. Currently, Helena's main role is to deliver study strategy demonstrations and training on Audio Notetaker and the Sonocent Link app to Universities, Colleges and Needs Assessment Centres across the South of England. Alongside this, Helena also provides 1-2-1 training and IT support to help disabled students and employees get the most from the Assistive Technologies they've received through the Disabled Students Allowance and Access to Work schemes.

Lightning Talks

Best practice for Accessible Resources

Martina Webber, Swansea University

This short session will provide a simple best practice guide on how to create accessible MS Word, PowerPoint and PDF documents. The focus will be on the principle of "universal design" - the creation of resources that are designed from the onset with inclusivity and accessibility in mind to benefit a wider range of learners. Resources that are designed universally will require less alterations to make them accessible for users with specific needs. Participants of this session will leave equipped with simple style tips on how to be more inclusive during the creation stage of their resources.

Target audience: This session is beneficial for anyone creating resources for students and staff.

Hidden treasures: the assistive technology you didn't know you had

Martyn Hoskins, UWE Bristol

Many of the devices we carry around with us, such as computers, phones and tablets have excellent accessibility options built in. What's surprising is that many people don't realise they are there. During the session we'll take a brief look at some of these, and hopefully inspire you to explore further afterwards.

Target audience: This session would prove useful for anyone.

Getting the message across: working towards an inclusive reading experience through accessible documents (a UWE Bristol library case study)

Anja Badock, UWE Bristol

Being able to effectively read learning, teaching, and library materials is fundamental for a HE student to succeed. In spite of this, ensuring all resources are accessible to disabled students with a range of requirements can be difficult. This talk will offer a brief case study of how a small library disability support team who run an established alternative formats service are working to disseminate their knowledge and passion for accessible documents with the aim of establishing a more consistent inclusive reading experience for students on a university-wide level. This talk should offer an opportunity for you to reflect upon your own understanding of accessible documents and how best practice can be achieved on a large scale.

Target audience: Anyone who creates documents that are shared with students (for example, handbooks and guides, library materials, presentation notes, teaching materials). It may particularly interest staff who are working to share best practice in producing accessible documents within their team, department, or on an institution-wide scale.

A Community of Practice, and resources for Staff Supporting Students with Disabilities

Paula Row, Swansea University

The session will explain the benefits to Staff and Students of having a Community of Practice for staff supporting students with disabilities, give an overview of what happens at the Community of Practice meetings that are held several times per year, and introduce the resources that have been developed for staff.

Target audience: Anyone who has a role or an interest in supporting students with disabilities, including disability coordinators, staff from inclusive student support services, teaching staff, library staff, professional services staff and researchers who interact with students.

14:45-15:25 Closing Keynote

When rights are not enough: conflicts with Inclusion and best practice developments.

Suanne Gibson, Associate Professor and Associate Director Teaching and Learning, Plymouth University, Institute of Education

'Widening participation', 'inclusive pedagogy', 'access', 'diversity', 'raising aspirations', are widely-occurring policy terms and academic discourses within the international education community. They are drawn on when referring to, or engaging with, questions of social justice and equality within and across international university institutions. What translates into practise is known to be problematic, in many cases unsuccessful, and reflect mis-interpreted notions of inclusion.

In the past 20 years the world of HE in the UK has experienced many changes, not least those linked to the ubiquitous term: 'inclusion'. My paper will historically locate this expression, reflecting on why it became a popular reference in the world of education. Its growth in use, as partly linked to policy's misuse, its colonisation and various revised forms will be articulated. Stemming from the critical disability studies field, a critique of 'inclusive' teaching 'almanacs' will be made alongside critically considering the discourse of wider access to university and its connection to neo-liberalism.

We are living in changing and challenging times, even more so if we openly connect ourselves and our work to that of 'social justice'. Giroux (2003, 11) argues any form of education intent on addressing social justice is both 'a moral and political practice'. The work of Ahmed (2012) moves this on, suggesting best practices involve pushing against the flow of institutionalised, top down misinterpreted forms of inclusive thinking and/or practice.

A fresh political discourse for inclusion is needed, one that enables HE stakeholders to reflect on and re-consider how 'other' is constructed, the problematics of a 'diverse' and 'normal' binary and the way these terms become manifest in our work alongside the impact they have. Published research and student views on best practice developments will be presented.

Biography

Dr Suanne Gibson is an Associate Professor at Plymouth University, Associate Director of Teaching and Learning in the Institute of Education and also co-lead of the BA Education Studies degree. Her specialist areas of teaching and research are 'disability', 'special educational needs' (SEN), 'inclusion' and critical pedagogy. She tutors and lectures undergraduate, masters and PhD students and has published widely in the area of Special Educational Needs, critical disability studies and teaching and learning in higher education.

Dr Gibson has been awarded four teaching fellowships at Plymouth University, in 2011 she was named 'Outstanding Personal Tutor' by UPSU, in 2012 her work was recognised at a national level when she received her National Teaching Fellowship from the HEA, in 2013 she was awarded an International Scholarship with the HEA entitled: *Developing a critically inclusive pedagogy of relationship for the retention and success of 'diverse' undergraduate students or 'undergraduate students at risk of exclusion'* and in 2014 the Royal Society of the Arts invited her to become a Fellow (FRSA). She conducts research and teaching with colleagues in the USA, Cyprus, New Zealand and Australia addressing questions of social justice and 'diversity' and works as a 'Writing Program Mentor' on the [Australian Writing Programme for Equity and Widening Participation Practitioners](#).

Suanne is currently writing with Professor Alison Cook-Sather on the subject of politicised compassion and student partnership in higher education.

Posters

Investigation of the effectiveness of support services, within Swansea University, which aim to improve the employment prospects of students experiencing an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Alison Willock, Swansea University

Students attend university for many different reasons, often it is to increase knowledge and skills in order to improve employment prospects. The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which records the outcomes of students six months after qualifying from their HE course, suggests that students experiencing Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) have poor employment outcomes compared to students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). Of those that are employed, studies suggest that many individuals are likely to be underemployed. This investigation aimed to understand the barriers and consider the strategies which may help to improve the prospects of students experiencing ASC. The findings suggest that employability provision would benefit from becoming even more individualised as students experiencing ASC have specific and unique needs.

Target audience: All staff, as each individual contributes to improving the prospects of students with disabilities.

ADHD and Inclusivity

Kristina Addis, Swansea University

This poster will explore the key elements of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and identify some of the main challenges students with ADHD have to overcome. Pulling from literature and first-hand student experiences, recommendations and evidence of good

practice will be shared with the intent on demonstrating how further inclusivity could be achieved.

Target audience: Primarily this poster would be beneficial for academic staff who teach students, however, an understanding of how to support students with ADHD really applies to everyone. For example, it may be library staff who help students' everyday with research or referencing that could benefit from an improved awareness of how to help students.

Guiding CoS students through the early days of University life

Sarah Roberts and Connor Abraham, Swansea University

For new students, coming to a new place, meeting new people and possibly living away from home for the first time, can be overwhelming and scary. Pastoral support is vital in helping students cope, and for signposting to the many resources available in the University. One of the aims of the 360 degree tours described in this poster was to enable all students to virtually visit the campus before arrival so they could familiarise themselves with the surroundings, routes to buildings and lecture rooms. The tours include accessible routes to the lecture rooms for those students who use wheelchairs. Thus, hopefully, at least one of the stresses of being in a new environment is alleviated for students by the creation of this inclusive, accessible resource.

Target audience: This poster will be of interest to teaching and support staff, and any other staff who help design student information guides or support the induction and pastoral support process.

Free Money (or How to Support Diversity with Student Employability Bursaries)

Simeon Smith, Swansea University

There are so many hidden costs for students with additional needs when tackling the jobs market, from getting to interviews to accessing support. At Swansea Employability Academy we're aiming to level the playing field with our Student Employability Bursaries available for all students.

Target audience: Teaching staff involved with work-based learning. Student support staff. Anyone with line manager responsibilities.

Stands

Sonocent Audio Notetaker

Tools to help students to work effectively with spoken language in any learning environment, enabling them to learn more and study successfully.

Texthelp

Support tools to make reading, writing and maths on computers, laptops and tablets easier and more rewarding.

Wyvern Business Systems iView Learning

Comprehensive tutorials on Assistive Technology, Microsoft Office and G Suite for Education.

Specialist Tuition, Swansea University

Specialist Tuition provides an holistic approach to study support for students who have been identified as experiencing Specific Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Conditions, sensory (vision, hearing), mental health, medical and physical conditions.