

## **InCurriculum: Developing the AchieveAbility of an inclusive curriculum in Higher Education drawn from learning and teaching strategies for students with specific learning differences**

### **Staff development materials**

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## Context

This three-year project will develop and disseminate materials for an inclusive learning environment for Higher Education students with SpLD and will demonstrate the value of this practice for all ability HE students. The project builds upon the AchieveAbility initiative, which developed materials and training for teaching SpLD learners in Schools and Colleges.

The project includes Norwich School of Art and Design (NSAD), (lead institution), the University of Westminster (UoW) and De Montfort University (DMU). All partners deliver a range of art and design courses, using a variety of complementary learning techniques. NSAD, with specialist institution experience, has informed the development of innovative approaches to assessment, curriculum design and teaching for students with SpLD. David Pollak (DMU), NTFS Fellow and principal investigator, has expertise in learning support and teaching practice for neurodiversity. The Media Art and Design School at the UoW has engaged in capacity building with AchieveAbility by reviewing the curriculum to match SpLD student needs.

The visual approaches to learning in art and design are known to be valuable for SpLD students in any discipline. The project will investigate such learning, and its assessment, to develop and transfer it to other areas of HE delivery for all students.

The pedagogic issue is concerned with the accessibility of the HE curriculum to the diversity of students, specifically as regards learning style and learning difference. There is a developing literature about learning and teaching approaches which support dyslexic students, particularly in pre-university education (e.g. the AchieveAbility project). Our research question is: 'Can HE teaching and assessment be made more inclusive and accessible to all students, by drawing upon practices developed for those with specific learning differences?' Sub-questions include: 'Are the recommendations of the AchieveAbility project transferable to HE?' 'Are the visual approaches often used in Art & Design transferable to other disciplines?' 'Does modifying courses to make them more accessible improve students' response?' 'What is the response of course tutors to such initiatives?'

## **Background and reference to relevant literature**

The British Labour Force survey states that 6.8 million people of working age have a disability (20% of the working population). In 2003-4, 4.8% of first year students declared a disability; of these 40% were Dyslexic and further 20% had an unseen disability.

The British Dyslexia Association states that up to 10% of the population have a specific learning difference, which causes difficulties with reading, writing, organisational skills and spatial awareness.

Such learners (often gifted in particular areas of thinking and learning) have difficulty in mainstream education, resulting in a substantial lessening of intellectual opportunity, although high achieving learners develop very effective coping strategies. Appropriate learning interventions can reduce the scale of this intellectual loss; leading to higher retention of these learners in education and subsequent employment.

Students with SpLD enrolling in HE have increased tenfold since 1994. The Disabled Students' Allowance supports such students, and the DDA (1995) provides legal protection. Regulations are being introduced to amend the FE and HE provisions in Part 4 of the DDA introducing refinements regarding reasonable adjustments. HEFCE guidance is that HEIs are individually subject to the requirements of the legislation and will individually need to meet the challenges. HEFCE's Equality Scheme will offer support and guidance.

The HEFCE funded AchieveAbility project investigated curriculum issues for SpLD students through the action research project, "Whole classroom practice for enhanced teaching". This pilot embedded commonalities of teaching practice drawn from teaching SpLD learners within the FE and School curriculum, ensuring that an inclusive curriculum met the needs of all students simultaneously, avoiding the need for "bolt on" provision for students with SpLD. An enhanced teaching practice toolkit was developed.

On evaluation the majority of students welcomed the changes to classroom delivery; reporting that they found the classes enjoyable and learnt more. 50% of teachers involved reported that they understood the signs of SpLD better, felt they had gained by participating and intended to continue to use the enhanced practice.

The AchieveAbility recommendations included:

- Transferring practice to the HE Sector,
- Focusing on active, autonomous learning; encouraging students share ideas and observe their peers,
- Embedding the good practice in PGCE and staff training opportunities
- Reaffirming the commonalities of enhanced teaching practice as good practice for all learners,
- Examining the use of alternative methods of assessment (e.g. multi sensory).

The HEA conference on Curriculum Innovation for Diversity (September, 2006) explored practical approaches to embedding equality and diversity in curricula to enhance SpLD students' learning experiences.

**Key questions were:**

- 1) How can a mainstreamed inclusive curriculum with embedded support be characterised and taught?
- 2) How can expertise in supporting dyslexics be extended from specialist support to academic staff?
- 3) How can the assessment framework be expanded?

This project will address these common questions, drawing on examples of practice (below).

The HEFCE funded Writing-PAD - 'Writing Purposefully in Art and Design' (2002) offers UK art and design institutions an arena in which to develop the notion of 'thinking through writing' as a parallel to visual discourse in art and design practice. Writing PAD has brought together tutors from across disciplines and roles: i.e. studio staff, theory staff, learning support, and learning and teaching coordinators. Based at Goldsmiths University, Writing PAD works in conjunction with 40 UK universities.

[www.BRAINHE.com](http://www.BRAINHE.com) is a resource website for students and staff. It aims to improve the HE sector's response to neurodiversity, including dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, Asperger's, and others. This project is run at DMU, where five recent national conferences have focused on dyslexia, or included it as part of neurodiversity. Pollak (2205) offers insights into students' views about their experiences of dyslexia and education, to inform inclusive learning and teaching approaches.

The University for the Arts project entitled 'Into Art with Dyslexia' used the Arts as a vehicle to develop a vision of progression for the participating student, to understand the nature of Dyslexia and realise it is not a barrier to academic success. This project introduced the SpLD learner to HE study through developing study skills and awareness of the culture of HE.

**Cadise** (Consortium of Arts and Design Institutions in Southern England) developed a set of support tools for inclusive learning in the Creative and Performing Arts. The teaching and learning tools cover themes such as: accessible curriculum, admissions, assessment, mobility of learners for experiential learning opportunities, professional relationships. **Cadise** also compiled a series of case studies which address how expertise in supporting dyslexics can be extended from specialist support to academic staff.

This proposal will draw on existing research and development work to identify best practices in inclusive curriculum development in HE. This will include previous work on learning and teaching strategies for students with SpLDs and research demonstrating that curriculum issues are common across the sector, such as the use of technology (Price, 2006); the need for attention to parity and flexibility in making reasonable adjustments, and staff development (Fuller, 2004); the concept of fair

assessment (Riddell and Weedon, 2006) and the University of Bath and Wiltshire College exploration of an integrated staff development approach focused on SpLD learner needs and progression.

### **The three project institutions: differences and similarities**

**DMU's** Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2004-2007 states: 'We understand that inclusive higher education entails designing curricula and preparing learning, teaching and assessment activities that meet different student needs and learning styles from the outset, and are also sufficiently responsive to the particular needs of individual students.' The DMU Art and Design course is led by Chipps (2006) who recently presented a paper on visual teaching strategies at the first international design management symposium in Shanghai.

A key principle of **UoW's** Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy is that: 'Teaching and learning methods are selected to meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students (including international students and those with disabilities), with attention to issues of fair access and equal opportunity'. The Disability Services, Disability Tutors (one academic per School) and Educational Initiative Centre have formed the Inclusive Curriculum Group to develop a curriculum approach which is equally beneficial to all learners.

**NSAD's** Learning and Teaching Strategy 2006-2010 underpins the School's aspiration to sustain a model of specialist learning and teaching in an academic community that values, promotes and celebrates diversity through an effective Equality and Diversity infrastructure and culture. The Strategy: 'reinforces the objectives set out within the School's policies on equality and diversity (including those on ethnicity and disability), admissions and widening participation. It will encourage diverse curricula and modes of attendance in order to support learner and teacher needs.'

The three partner institutions are both similar and contrasting; the key point is that the modules/units involved in the project are complementary. We have enthusiastic and able co-ordinators in each institution; through working with them, it has been decided that the project will not follow the original plan of developing and validating brand new modules in each institution; rather, it is modifying existing modules in terms of delivery and assessment. In each institution, the modules involved are from both Art & Design and another discipline. Through an Action Research approach, we will obtain detailed feedback from staff and students about each initiative, and reflect on this before moving to the next stage. We have learned that there is a great deal of good practice already in use; our expectation is that data analysis will show that staff and students both benefit from what might be summed up as 'dyslexia-friendly' practice, and that the 'mainstreaming' of this is beneficial to all.

## Purpose

The project will draw on the outcomes of the AchieveAbility project, and the experience of teaching and assessment in the Art and Design field, to develop an inclusive curriculum for HE, equally applicable to SpLD and other students. It will pilot and evaluate modules designed to meet these aims, developing new approaches to assessment, will develop materials to support staff development, and will disseminate these outcomes widely through the HE sector. It aims to have an impact on the application of inclusive curriculum approaches within HE teaching and learning policy and practice.

## **Objectives (O)**

- O1 To investigate effective teaching and assessment of SpLD students through analysis of the AchieveAbility Project and teaching in Art and Design.
- O2 To consult with the AchieveAbility network, and other stakeholders, and to develop guidelines and tools for all participating lecturers to incorporate these approaches.
- O3 To apply this understanding to module design in a wider range of subjects, piloting at least 3 modules in each institution, (one in Art and Design, two in other curriculum areas).
- O4 To design a range of aligned assessments in these modules, equally suitable for the needs of SpLD and other students.
- O5 To validate and deliver these modules and evaluate their effectiveness in the context of effective learning opportunities for all students.
- O6 On the basis of this evaluation, to refine the teaching, learning and assessment approaches for an inclusive curriculum and redesign the supporting materials.
- O7 To incorporate these materials into staff development provision.
- O8 To disseminate the outcomes widely in the HE sector.
- O9 To manage the project effectively and within budget.

## **The project will deliver:**

- At least nine modules modified to enhance delivery to SpLD students as an embedded part of the curriculum, including aligned assessments.
- Evaluation of the provision to provide a model for an inclusive curriculum for HE, suitable for all students.
- A report identifying good practice in HE teaching, learning and assessment for dyslexics.
- Staff development materials for use in HE, piloted and evaluated with a guide to using these materials with new and established staff.
- Interim and final dissemination conferences.
- An ongoing network of HE experts.

## **Listing of the Project Modules and description of the approach to practice (*to be included*)**

**The ethos of the work is that the HE curriculum should:**

- Provide stimulating, supportive and accessible learning, assisting all students in achieving their full potential, irrespective of disability.
- Ensure that all students are treated fairly (the three HEIs involved have long traditions of promoting disability equality).
- Adhere to the Social Model of Disability, not focusing on an individual's medical condition or impairment, but instead identifying the impact of disability in the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit people with disabilities from achieving equality and inclusion.
- Offer access to HE to everyone by creating barrier-free learning.

The coordinators have worked initially within art and design, where flexibility of approach has long been established to include accommodated assessment procedures. Other subject areas such as Law and Business Studies will be introduced at a later stage. Emphasis will be placed on visual, diagrammatic and audio alternatives to conventional text-based course materials and on innovative forms of assessment.

**Institutional Coordinator approach:**

- Audit existing approaches within own institution. Assess best practice
- Audit existing approaches in a wider context
- Survey students within a selection of courses in own institution to gain feedback on preferred assessment methods

**The coordinators will:**

- Oversee planning and development of new modules incorporate inclusive approaches
- Liaise with their member of PMG and Project Director.
- Coordinate the validation of the modules.
- 

The Manager and Coordinators work closely with the AchieveAbility Network Administrator to link project practice with the inclusive curriculum initiatives delivered by the Network.

Reflective work on these activities aim to establish a set of commonalities in teaching, learning and assessment that can be shared across subject areas, including a range of learning styles. It is intended to demonstrate that dyslexia-wise approaches benefit students of mixed ability and are applicable to all.

**Lessons learnt so far and Case Studies (*to be included*)**

### Intended project outcomes

- Increased ability among art and design staff to apply dyslexia-wise practice in course delivery and assessment
- Increased ability among staff in other disciplines
- Academic staff understand how to make reasonable adjustments in the curriculum
- Staff development regarding accessibility, learning styles and learning differences
- Improvement in the quality of student learning
- Improved student retention and attainment
- Enhancement of FE and HE collaboration in transition and pedagogy.

### **Practical approaches to inclusive practice: a crib sheet**

## Notes for coordinators

### **Approaches drawn from Achievability:**

- Aim = deep learning, not surface learning.
- Interactive sessions: students should not be passive. Dyslexic people often consolidate their ideas by talking.
- Discussion groups: peer learning – NB roles within discussion groups must be managed. Groups can present their work as mind maps.
- Use of trigger words and concepts: e.g. 'perspective' – use real life example and visualisation
- Demonstrate knowledge through practical examples: e.g. assessed explanation of process of producing a piece of work
- Reflect on own knowledge: this may be visual, e.g. in a video, sketches or diagrams
- Guidance on how to gather and source information: use colour coding (e.g. for library catalogue) and suggest internet search terms
- Make meaningful connections: e.g. diagram of how the course fits together; frequent contextualisation, i.e. 'how did we get to this point?'
- Learning by experience: receiving information in text format is not meaningful for many students. Have a dialogue with students about what they have achieved. Offer a checklist with which they can self-assess.
- Ensure interest in the subject: monitor students' engagement with the course. Use checklist for self-assessment.

### **Effective delivery of learning & teaching:**

- Clear information before the session
- Information available in different formats
- Link to students' prior learning
- Provide a clear introduction to set the scene by giving an overview
- Identify key learning outcomes (made clear to students) and review these at the end
- Provide a summary of the goals of the session
- Break down information into 'bite-size' chunks
- Enable the active learner (i.e. be aware of different learning styles)
- Create opportunities to recognise individual accomplishment.

### **Reflective work on commonalities:**

Four observation criteria for a session:

- Changes in on task behaviour
- Recall/sequencing of information

- Level of active participation
- Understanding of learning aims.

**Approaches to assessment drawn from A&D:**

- New approaches to T&L for curriculum wide work:
- Emphasis: visual/ diagrammatic/ audio/
- Focus on active learning

***Possible use of Case studies e.g. from QAA reports. The following list is drawn from the QAA reports on HE courses at Oldham College 2004 and Stockport College of F & HE 2004:***

**Mechanisms to engage with formative and summative assessment:**

- Dynamic portfolio
- Detailed oral feedback on performance own/ peer and staff
- Active engagement with live projects
- Professional focus and setting: external
- Multi media submission
- Working note books
- Oral commentary
- Student managed learning: research/ self directed study packs
- Personal tutorial system
- Studio practice/ technical skills
- Feedback sheets from students to staff
- Demonstrations
- Critical review/ consider own performance

***\*\*\*insert SPACE matrix of assessment modes***

**Outcomes:**

- to assess the developmental, analytical, and creative approaches to the production of work
- A deep approach to learning: T&L is to enable the learner to understand
- Personalise learning
- Well structured knowledge base to enable sense of new concepts

## Tips for teaching materials

### **Teaching: making course materials accessible**

- Make presentations as diagrammatic as possible
- Encourage the use of sound recording (in individual meetings as well as lectures)
- Indicate key items on reading lists (and key chapters)
- Provide glossaries of technical terms
- Provide handouts (see below for points on presentation)
- Provide handouts on disk if possible
- Use non-book source material (e.g. tapes, videos, CDs) where possible
- Use at least 36 point text size in OHTs.

### **Tips for paper-based materials**

- Use a sans serif font such as Arial, in at least 12 point
- Justify text on the left only (to keep word spacing even)
- Use plenty of bullet points
- Keep blocks of text short
- Use boxes and diagrams
- Avoid sentences or headings in capitals
- Consider using two columns of text (short lines can be easier to read)
- Use wide spacing between characters and lines
- Avoid black text on white paper: cream paper reduces 'glare' and eyestrain.

### **Website design**

- Ensure navigation is easy. A site map is essential
- Ensure downloaded web pages can be read off-line
- Avoid mobile text. It creates problems for people with visual difficulties. It also causes a problem for text-reading software
- Offer a facility to change the background and font colours. If this is impossible, use dark lettering on a pale yellow or pale blue background
- Keep the layout simple.

## Tips for Assessment

### **Coursework: giving feedback to the student**

- . Assess work against learning outcomes, which will reflect your subject priorities
- Correct selected spellings only (e.g. technical vocabulary)
- Use two different pens, neither red: one for the material, one for spelling etc.
- Write comments legibly. Many students struggle to read handwriting
- . Correct English by talking to the student along with written comments. This will contribute to the long-term effectiveness of your feedback
- Do not say 'please use spell-checker.' The student is probably using it a lot, and choosing the wrong options
- . Ask for a skeleton plan (or a draft) first, if time permits.

### **Exams**

Helpful approaches [Check with Faculty Disability Co-ordinator] include:

- . Extra time (10 or 15 mins per hour)
- Questions on tape.
- An amanuensis.
- Questions printed on coloured paper.
- . Questions printed in large font size.
- Use of a computer.
- Working in a separate room.
- . Provision of a spelling list.
- Oral examination

### **Group sessions**

- Minimise copying from boards and flipcharts
- . Make reading aloud voluntary
- Make all handouts on coloured paper, rather than just for dyslexic students
- Write up difficult spellings for all, rather than indicating who they are for
- . Leave OHTs on long enough for slow readers/writers

## Alternative assessments

### **Projects**

Bound sketch books, models, boards

#### Alternatives

Web based virtual project portfolio

Video based presentation of creative elements

Viva/critique presentation of the work allowing student staff interaction

Supported with written narration

### **Presentation**

20 minute team presentation with handout

#### Alternatives

Team written assignment with viva

Video presentation

Group viva

### **Portfolio**

Loose leaf / bound visual and written material

#### Alternatives

Web based portfolios could include narrative

Cumulative project portfolio (patchwork)

Critique

### **Report**

Written document supporting the project rationale

#### Alternatives

Patchwork report

Web based wiki > report

Presentation with summary document

### **Role play**

Enactment of a given scenario

#### Alternatives

Written case study

Presentation of process and written summary

Video of enactment

### **Career plan portfolio**

Reflective evaluation of value in workplace.

#### Alternatives

Virtual web based wiki / blog

## Additional resources

Additional sources for staff Development work:

TQEF project at the University of Westminster: \*\* insert title

AchieveAbility intervention materials: [www.achieveability.org.uk](http://www.achieveability.org.uk)

## **Appendix: Projects on Inclusive Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

### [Strategies for the Creation of Inclusive Programmes of Study](#)

A project aiming to support academic staff to improve access to the curriculum for disabled students:

<http://www.scips.worc.ac.uk/>

### [The Open University's Inclusive Teaching Website](#)

The site has practical advice about teaching inclusively and will also help you meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It gives an insight into what study is like for disabled students, and what you can do to make a difference. The site encourages you to adopt an anticipatory and proactive approach, recognise and meet the learning needs of individuals, and thus create a learning environment that is inclusive by design.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/inclusiveteaching>

### [Accessible Assessments - Staff Guide to Inclusive Practice](#)

Practical support to academic staff in the design and delivery of inclusive academic assessments.

<http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/accessibleassessments/>

### [Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation](#)

One output of this project is an Alternative Assessment Toolkit, applicable to the six disciplines of Arts, Education, Humanities, Human Science, Science and Technology:

<http://www.space.ac.uk/index.php>

In 2007, it also published 'Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: a resource for change' which includes case studies and provides raw materials for exploring the equity, validity and reliability of assessment regimes:

<http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=10494>

### [Promoting Enhanced Student Learning \(PESL\)](#)

By making small adjustments and speaking to the students about the implications of their disability in the learning and teaching environment, many difficulties faced by students can be greatly

alleviated and the effectiveness of teaching for all students can be enhanced.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/teaching/resources/issues/disability/>

#### Making research education accessible (PREMIA)

The Premia resource base offers awareness and development materials for research supervisors, managers, administrators, examiners, research and generic skills trainers, disabled students and graduates, staff developers, non-disabled researchers, careers advisers and others. The aim of all the materials is to make the research environment more accessible to disabled postgraduate students.

<http://www.premia.ac.uk/>

#### Teachability Project

The Teachability project at the University of Strathclyde promotes the creation of an Accessible Curriculum For Students With Disabilities through making freely available informative publications for academic staff.

<http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/>

#### Accessible Curricula - good practice for all

A quick-reference manual for curriculum-related disability issues. Includes field trips, work placements and laboratory practicals.

<http://www.techdis.ac.uk/resources/files/curricula.pdf>

#### Inclusive Curriculum Project

The project aims to develop, disseminate and embed resources for supporting disabled students studying geography, earth and environmental sciences in higher education and to transfer the generic lessons widely to subject-based academics, educational developers, learning support staff and disability advisers.

<http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/gdlist.htm>

#### South West Academic Network for Disability Support (SWANDS)

A useful staff development resource which may be reproduced for auditing and training purposes. It covers a wide range of accessible learning and teaching practices:

[www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=3243](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=3243)

#### [Raising Aspirations, Inclusion, Success and Employability \(RAISE\)](#)

This project produced a framework of support for students in Higher Education with specific learning difficulties, especially dyslexia. It includes a self-assessment tool that HEIs can use to assess their own provision with reference to the framework:

[www.raiseproject.co.uk/site/index.cfm](http://www.raiseproject.co.uk/site/index.cfm)

## Evaluation Strategy

This three-year project will develop and disseminate materials for an inclusive learning and teaching environment for Higher Education students, drawing upon successful strategies for those with SpLDs. It will demonstrate the value of this practice for all ability HE students.

The evaluation strategy investigates whether the project is meeting its objectives and outcomes. These are:

- O1 To investigate effective teaching and assessment of SpLD students through analysis of the AchieveAbility Project and teaching in Art and Design.
- O2 To consult with the AchieveAbility network, and other stakeholders, and to develop guidelines and tools for all participating lecturers to incorporate these approaches.
- O3 To apply this understanding to module design in a wider range of subjects, working with at least 3 modules in each institution ( in both Art and Design and other curriculum areas).
- O4 To design a range of aligned assessments in these modules, equally suitable for the needs of SpLD and other students.
- O5 To validate and deliver these modules and evaluate their effectiveness in the context of effective learning opportunities for all students.
- O6 On the basis of this evaluation, to refine the teaching, learning and assessment approaches for an inclusive curriculum and redesign the supporting materials.
- O7 To incorporate these materials into staff development provision.
- O8 To disseminate the outcomes widely in the HE sector.
- O9 To manage the project effectively and within budget.

The project will deliver:

- At least nine modules modified to enhance delivery to SpLD students as an embedded part of the curriculum, including aligned assessments.
- Evaluation of the provision to provide a model for an inclusive curriculum for HE, suitable for all students.
- A report identifying good practice in HE teaching, learning and assessment for dyslexics.
- Staff development materials for use in HE, piloted and evaluated with a guide to using these materials with new and established staff.
- Interim and final dissemination conferences.
- An ongoing network of HE experts.

Evaluation requires detailed feedback from staff and students. It will consist initially of the following activities (more will be added in stages two and three):

### **1 - Focus Groups**

PMG agreed that there will be 1 focus group in each module;

- to include 10 students
- running an third of the way through each module and at the end of the module
- including the same 10 students each time
- organised by the module leader
- facilitated by the academic coordinator

### **2 - Learning style questionnaires**

PMG agreed that the learning style questionnaire would be distributed and completed by students at the beginning of the module.

### **3 - Open ended questionnaires**

PMG agreed that open ended questionnaires will be distributed and completed by all students a third of the way through the module, before the midway focus group.

### **4 - Scale questionnaires**

PMG agreed that scale questionnaires will be distributed and completed at the end of the module, before the last focus group.

### **5 - Staff Questionnaires**

PMG agreed that staff involved will complete a staff questionnaire.

### **6 - Tracking student marks**

PMG agreed that the academic coordinators will track the marks of the 10 students in the focus group for each module. PMG agreed that the student tracking results sent back to PMG must be anonymous.

### **7 - Student In-depth Interviews**

PMG agreed that 1 student from each module should have an in-depth interview. The interview will be conducted the Academic coordinator in June/July of year one. The recording of this interview will be sent to the project administrator for transcription.

### **8 - Staff In-depth interviews**

PMG agreed that all staff involved in the first year of the project will be interview by KH or DP in June/July of year one. The recording of this interview will be sent to the project administrator for transcription.

### **9 - Student Self Assessment**

One module from UoW and one module from NSAD

The module leaders will log the active engagement each week of 10 students from each group on a scale of 1 - 5; the 10 students involved must not be part of the focus group.

In stages two and three (which will evaluate the second and third years of the project), evidence will be sought of any changes in the student learning journey. The outcomes of action research in each institution will be examined, along with the synergy between the three partners. Project events (such as staff development sessions) will be evaluated, as well as project publications.

Evaluation time line

Module time	Evaluation method	Target	Action	Notes
<b>Start of module</b>	Learning Style Questionnaire	All Students	Distributed by module leaders	
<b>1/3 way through module</b>	Open ended questionnaires	All students	Distributed by module leaders	
<b>½ way through</b>	Student focus group	10 students	Organised by module leader  Facilitated by academic coordinator	Transcribed by module leader or coordinator
<b>2/3 way through module</b>	Scale questionnaires	All students	Distributed by module leaders	
<b>End of module</b>	Student Focus groups	10 students (same group as previous focus group)	Organised by module leader  Facilitated by academic coordinator	
	In-depth student interviews (recorded)	1 student from each module	Conducted by academic coordinator	Transcribed by Project Administrator
	Staff questionnaires	All staff - module leaders and coordinators	Distributed by PMG	
	In-depth staff interviews (recorded)	All staff - module leaders and coordinators	Conducted by Project Director and/or Project Development Manager	Transcribed by Project Administrator

### Evaluation schedule of events at DMU

- Week 3 (w/b 13 Oct)** Learning styles questionnaire – we propose to use the VARK, but suggest people use their own favourite (the main purpose being to encourage students to think about the issues)  
Individual student interviews ('Individual student interview pre course')
- Week 10 (w/b 1 Dec)** Open-ended questionnaires ('Student feedback form 1')  
Student focus groups ('Focus group questions')
- Week 25 (w/b 16 Mar)** Scale questionnaires for students ('Student feedback form 2')  
Student focus groups (new question list to be devised)  
Staff questionnaires ('Staff feedback form')
- Weeks 26 and 27 (w/b 23 and 30 Mar)** Individual student interviews ('Individual student interview post course')  
Staff interviews (question list to be devised)

The two items listed as 'to be devised' will be drawn up in the light of research data analysis and circulated to all.

Students may need support after the learning styles session. It is important to be able to supply a pointer as to where to find it (e.g. your learning support or study skill team).

Individual student interview for before module

**Module:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student name (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type/s of learning difference (if any):** \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why did you choose this module?

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2. Are you expecting it to make you want to study? If so, why?

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3. How would you describe your learning style (see notes below if needed)?

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4. Are you familiar with the expression “an active learner”? If so, does it apply to you?

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How important is it for the teaching style to match your learning style?

5.

6. Have you got a clear idea about how this module fits in with the whole course?

7. Have you got a clear idea about how this module is structured?

8. Please comment on the way the module is going to be run (such as by lecture, group activity, seminar, workshop, student presentation, set reading, self-directed study etc). Which approach/es do you prefer and why?

9. What do you think of the module materials so far (handbook, online documents etc)?

10. Does any type of module material seem to be missing?

11. What kind of module material do you like (and why)?

12. What kind of module material do you dislike (and why)?

13. What kind of assessment do you prefer, in order to express your ideas effectively?

14. What should module tutors do, in order for you to feel supported?

15. How important is it to be able to link this module with your previous knowledge?

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16. What are you most looking forward to about this module?

17. What are you not looking forward to?

18. Have you any other comments?

Learning styles:    visual    auditory    kinaesthetic and tactile

Activist    Reflector    Pragmatist    Theorist

Holist    Serialist

**Student feedback form 1**

**Module:**

**Student name (optional):**

---

**Does the course make you want to study?**

**Does the teaching style match your learning style?**

**What do you like about this module?**

**What do you dislike about it?**

**Have you got a clear idea about how the parts of the course fit together?**

**Please comment on the way the module is run (such as by lecture, small group etc)**

**What do you think of the course materials (handbook, online documents etc)?**

**Is there any type of course material missing?**

**What kind of course material should be used more?**

---

**What kind should be used less?**

**Does the course assessment enable you to express your ideas effectively?**

**What kind of assessment do you prefer?**

**Do you feel supported by the course tutors?**

**Do you think all students are treated fairly?**

**What does it mean to be an “active learner”?**

**How does this module compare with the last course you did (before you came here)?**

**Are you able to link this course with your previous knowledge?**

**Please add any other comments here**

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your ideas will be very useful to the project.**

### Prompts for student focus groups

Were you aware of your own learning style before you started the course?

What attracted you to the degree course you're doing?

Did you have a choice whether to enrol for this module?

What do you like about this module?

What do you dislike about it?

Any comments on the way it is delivered?

Any comments on the way it is assessed?

What is your favourite style of course delivery?

What is your favourite style of assessment?

What do you think of the module handbook?

What do you think of the online materials?

**Student feedback form 2**

**Module:**

**Student name (optional):**

**1  
strongly  
disagree**

**2  
somewhat  
disagree**

**3  
neutral**

**4  
somewhat  
agree**

**5  
strongly  
agree**

**The course made me want to study**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**The teaching style matched my learning style**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**I had a clear idea about how the parts of the course fitted together**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**The course materials (handbook, online documents etc) were good**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**The course assessments enabled me to express my ideas effectively**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**I felt supported by the course tutors**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**All students were treated fairly**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**I am able to link this course with my previous knowledge**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your ideas will be very useful to the project.**

**Staff feedback form**

**Module:**

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**What have you learned from delivering the module this time?**

**What are the most innovative features of this module?**

**In what way do these features benefit students?**

**Please comment on the students' level of engagement with the module:**

**Did you find any aspects of the module difficult to deliver?**

**What does the expression 'inclusive learning and teaching' mean to you?**

**To what extent is the module inclusive of all students?**

**Please comment on the process of delivering inclusivity:**

**What do you believe to be the core features of Higher Education?**

**Does inclusive learning and teaching conflict at all with these features?**

**What approaches to assessment are you using?**

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**Are these approaches effective? Please comment:**

**How do you see this module developing in the future?**

**Please add any further comments:**

**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

Individual student interview for after module

**Module:**

**Student name (optional):**

**Type/s of learning difference (if any):**

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1. Why did you choose this module?

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2. Did the module make you want to study?

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3. Did the teaching style match your learning style?

4. What did you like about this module?

5. What did you dislike about it?

6. Did you have a clear idea about how the module fits in with the rest of your course?

7. Did you have a clear idea about how the parts of the module fitted together (e.g. lectures, group activities, seminars, workshops, student presentations, set reading, self-directed study etc)?

8. Please comment on the way the module was run (such as by lecture, small group etc)

9. What did you think of the module materials (handbook, online documents etc)?

---

10. Was there any type of module material missing?

11. What kind of module material should be used more?

12. What kind should be used less?

13. Did the module assessment enable you to express your ideas effectively?

14. What kind of assessment do you prefer?

15. Did you feel supported by the module tutors?

16. Do you think all students were treated fairly?

17. Would you say you are an “active learner”?

18. If not, what kind of learner are you?

19. Did you feel that the module tutor/s understood the way you learn?

20. How did this module compare with the last course you did (before you came here)?

21. Were you able to link this module with your previous knowledge?

**22. If you were asked for one key piece of advice about future delivery of this module, would it be?**

**Have you any other comments?**

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## Progress at institutions

- The pedagogic issue is concerned with the accessibility of the HE curriculum to the diversity of students, specifically as regards learning style and learning difference. There is a developing literature about learning and teaching approaches which support dyslexic students, particularly in pre-university education (e.g. the AchieveAbility project).
- Our research question is: 'Can HE teaching and assessment be made more inclusive and accessible to all students, by drawing upon practices developed for those with specific learning differences?' Sub-questions include: 'Are the recommendations of the AchieveAbility project transferable to HE?' 'Are the visual approaches often used in Art & Design transferable to other disciplines?' 'Does modifying courses to make them more accessible improve students' response?' 'What is the response of course tutors to such initiatives?'
- The project has developed in several ways. The three partner institutions are both similar and contrasting; the key point is that the modules/units involved in the project are complementary. We have enthusiastic and able co-ordinators in each institution; through working with them, it has been decided that the project will not follow the original plan of developing and validating brand new modules in each institution; rather, it is modifying existing modules in terms of delivery and assessment.
- In each institution, the modules involved are from both Art & Design and another discipline. Through an Action Research approach, we will obtain detailed feedback from staff and students about each initiative, and reflect on this before moving to the next stage. We have learned that there is a great deal of good practice already in use; our expectation is that data analysis will show that staff and students both benefit from what might be summed up as 'dyslexia-friendly' practice, and that the 'mainstreaming' of this is beneficial to all.

## Case study information

### **NUCA**

Staff interview key points that came out of the interview were as follows;

- There were a number of students whose SpLD was unidentified and through the module four more students were identified with having a SpLD.
- The need for staff development
- The boundaries on how to give feedback on written work for students
- The need for more summative assessment rather than formative assessment. One of the key recommendations across HE should be to have more summative assessment. If there is going to be an increase in none classification of degrees this could be a potential possible recommendations.
- Independent learning plans did not work as unit was too short. Suggested that this should be included in PDP for the course over the whole year. This would also give the learner responsibility for their own learning.
- Clarity with the definitions of learning styles
- 'Desire of the tutor': Multi-sensory teaching and learning approaches challenge the desire of the tutor. As many tutors have a 'desire' to share and impart their knowledge and passion for a subject to the students, however this whole inclusive approach to teaching and learning challenges this going against the traditional transmitting of knowledge/research style of teaching.

Teaching lead HEI or Research Leader HEI, and it is important to recognise that many HEI are pushing for research lead approach. However evaluation has found that teaching lead approach is what undergraduate students want.

### **UoW**

The questions that were asked to KHY at the Teaching and Learning Symposium where KHY presented the InCurriculum project. The questions were as follows;

- Why is there not more mutual benefit across other subjects?
- Is this not similar to the concept of 'Situation Learning'?
- What is the material coming out of this project and where are they?
- Why is this so art and design focused?
- Is the project just for students with SpLD?

**PMG agreed that from these questions asked it is clear that the project needs more clarity about its approach of taking good practice from work with students with SpLD and disseminating and delivering this into the mainstream to students of all abilities. PMG agreed that the website content should be looked at to ensure the project approach is clear**

## Rationale for selecting the modules in DMU

The following modules have been selected from the Faculty of Art and Design and the Leicester Business School

Design Management and Innovation DMCM 1504 Process and Practice

Design Products DESP 1050 Visual Communication

Business CORP 1520 Business Communications and Creativity

The selected courses and modules allow the research to explore a wide range of practical and pedagogic issues that the provision of an inclusive curriculum must address. The researchers intention is to facilitate a cross fertilisation of good practice between the different modes of delivery. It is hoped that this will enable the lecturers involved to benefit from the knowledge and practical experience of other fields of teaching within the university.

### Art and Design

- **Design Management and Innovation DMCM 1504 process and practice Level 1 60 credit year long module.**

**Description:** this entry level module explores the foundational issues relevant to the application of design within the business context. The work develops visual verbal and written communication skills required to be a Design Manager embedded within a creative project.

#### Module aim:

This module forms an introduction to the subject of Design Management & Innovation and its application at level 1. Students will have the opportunity to develop innovative and creative solutions to the projects set and report on their findings. Concurrently you will also undertake computer aided visualisation and information technology workshops and visualisation workshops

As a manager of design we must have an understanding of, and a feel for, the issues surrounding a company's communication. Much of the role of the design manager in an industrial context will involve the management of communication. Through the exercises you will gain knowledge of the underlying theory of communication and its application in business. We must be able to discuss coherently with practitioners, managers and consultants involved in managing design outcomes. We will begin to develop this understanding. The module will look at how businesses communicate themselves, their products and services to its target audiences. A key tool to your effective communication is the successful use of computer aided visualisation and information technology, hard and software, you will undertake workshops and sessions designed to develop your skills in these areas.

The issues raised in the module will be explored through Group, Team and Individual design projects, where ideas will be translated into visual solutions. The work will also allow you to apply the practice of managing design projects taught in your other level 1 design management modules.

#### Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate a developing engagement with the design process;
- Communicate effectively through a range of computer aided visualisation and information technology and visualisation skills;
- Conceptualise, articulate and present creative solutions;
- Demonstrate developing skills in team working;
- Engage in project management tools and techniques.

#### Assessments

Formative assessments

Project portfolio

week 18 22

Presentation

week 24

Summative assessments

Computer aided visualisation and information technology project

Individual

30% week 15

Portfolio

Individual

30% week 26

Project report and design

Team

40%

week 34

- **Design Products DESP 1050 visual communication  
Level 1 30 credit year long module**

**Description:** the module focus is on the development and exploration of the key visual skills required to be effective designers. The work explores 2D and 3D visual communication and develops the skills required to manipulate 2D and 3D space.

**Module Aim:** This module is undertaken in two sections. Section one provides an introduction to the means by which designers communicate, explore and develop their ideas and communicate these with other professionals on paper and gives consideration to

- Techniques for the effective presentation of visual images as used to communicate design thinking to a client.
- Techniques used to construct drawing of objects viewed in three dimensions.
- Freehand drawing as a means of initiating, exploring and developing design thinking.
- Techniques for the construction of drawings used to present concepts and ideas to clients.

The student will consider the appropriate selection of related images and layout options to maximise visual impact and effective communications. The difference between literal and lateral thinking will be explored and related to design thinking.

Following this initial project the student will have an opportunity to develop their freehand drawing skills. The student will be provided with a series of demonstrations which will consider

- 3D and 2D perspective drawing and construction
- Techniques and media used to explore line, shade and the application of colour.

Following these demonstrations the student will have an opportunity to practice and develop their drawing skills in a series of workshop sessions guided by tutors.

The next project will consider presentation drawing techniques for the effective communication of ideas and information. Consideration will be given to

- The rationale behind the presentation and the order in which information needs to be presented.
- The development of a personal style.

In the second section of this module the student is able to practice and develop the skills introduced in section one by undertaking two projects that use these techniques to facilitate the exploration of the visual appearance of two simple products.

Although an emotional issue product aesthetic is one of vital importance to the commercial success of any new product and here you will have an opportunity to consider what makes one product more appealing than another and how designers effectively control a viewer's emotional response.

A series of lectures will introduce the student to

- The appeal of products to differing consumer groups, image and the perception of quality.
- The manipulation of shape and form, scale and proportion, colour, surface, pattern and texture to evoke a desired response from an observer.

The student will have an opportunity to undertake one simple exercise to create an object which will evoke a prescribed response from the viewer and one slightly more complex project which re-visits an existing product with the aim of manipulating the appearance of the product to achieve a response that will appeal to a different consumer group.

Finally the student is introduced to soft materials and simple techniques for the constructing of models which allow the transference of ideas from two to three dimensions and provide an alternative format upon which design judgement can be made.

**Learning outcomes:**

- 1 Select and present visual images to communicate information.
- 2 Effectively communicate design ideas using freehand drawing methods.
- 3 Produce basic presentation drawings which communicate design outcomes.
- 4 Manipulate and determine a product's appearance with the aim of evoking a chosen response from a viewer.
- 5 Use soft models to visualise, evaluate and refine design ideas in three dimensions.

## Assessments

### Formative

Project 1	week 6
Project 2	week 6
Project 3	week 20
Project 4	week 31

### Summative

Project 1	30%	week 11
Project 2	20%	week 11
Project 3	50%	week 20

## Leicester Business School

### Business

- **Business CORP 1520 Business Communications and Creativity  
Level 1 30 credit year long module**

**Description:** an introductory module that explores the issues of business communications written, verbal and visual. The work in the module has an emphasis on embedding creativity into the business curriculum.

### Module aim

'whether you are planning to be self employed or employed by others, good communication skills will be needed in order to be successful. Effective communication is an important life skill which we all need to continually develop, to help our work and personal lives improve. During this module you will be studying and experiencing different levels of verbal written and visual business and personal communication. Reflection will help you to formulate personal life. Creativity is the key force in the future of business competitiveness globally as reported in the Cox review 2005 so it is an important skill which once developed will help you to become more competitive in your job search and your future business' extract from module handbook

**Learning outcomes:** extracted from module handbook 2007/8

- Demonstrate by application, a range of written, oral and visual business communication skills
- Understand and demonstrate techniques for overcoming barriers to communication in individual and group situations
- Demonstrate through application the importance of organisational culture when participants design and communicate a career plan
- Understand the value of different types of communication and be able to choose appropriate communication methods.

Learning strategies taken from Module handbook

- Lectures to provide the theoretical aspects of learning
- Tutorials to provide more practical aspects of learning particularly with group work
- Background reading and research to provide a more personal learning platform

### Assessments

#### Formative

#### Summative

Report	Individual	10%	week 6
Presentation	Group	25%	week 16/17
Crisis meeting & reflection	Group	25%	week 20/21
Career Plan	Individual	40%	week 29

### **Summary of teaching approaches**

The three modules represent a cross section of the types and approaches to teaching found within the University. These include modules with 700+ level 1 students in business and at the other end of the scale a module with 30+ students in art and design.

The teaching practice within the business module is primarily a traditional lecture based approach followed by seminars and tutorials. The lecture is repeated up to seven times in a week to accommodate the number of students taking the course. The module is supported by hardcopy support material a comprehensive handbook with substantial use of Blackboard the Universities Virtual learning environment VLE. In contrast the Design Products module employs a traditional art and design teaching approach of studio work supported by key note lectures and practical workshops, tutorials and seminar activity. The teaching is supported by a comprehensive handbook, and a plethora of web based material on the VLE. The teaching approach adopted by Design Management sits somewhere between the two, with lecture, tutorial and workshop based teaching supported by a limited amount of studio work augmented through the use of VLE.

The researches hope that reviewing this material will provide a breadth to the studies that will be useful in capturing best practice in different teaching contexts.