

AHEAD (ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AND DISABILITY)

AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to, participation in, benefit from and contribution to third level education by people with disabilities in Ireland.

AHEAD undertakes research in areas relating to disability and third level education and acts in a consultative capacity to the Higher Education Sector, educational institutions and other bodies in the education sector. AHEAD lobbies to improve access to and increase the participation of students with disabilities in third level education in Ireland. It also strives to inform and change national policy in the areas of the education of students with disabilities and the employment of disabled graduates.

Established in 1990, the central objective of AHEAD is to ensure full access to and full participation of people with disabilities in higher education in Ireland and to ensure access to employment for graduates with disabilities. The principles of AHEAD are firmly rooted in a rights philosophy, recognizing the rights of people with disabilities to a third level education and to meaningful employment.

A central role in the work of AHEAD is to share expertise and information on how professionals can include people with disabilities in their services. To this end, AHEAD has published a number of handbooks aimed at teachers and guidance counsellors working with students with disabilities. The demand for these handbooks has been high and feedback would indicate that they are a useful resource for their users and an important source of information concerning disability issues.

The number of adults returning to education is increasing at a significant rate and many of these are adults who were excluded from availing of educational opportunities in mainstream education in their youth. As a result many of these adult learners seek the services of guidance counsellors and information officers in further education on their career options. This handbook will serve as a useful tool for guidance counsellors and information officers which they can use in their work with adult learners who have a disability.

AHEAD would like to take this opportunity to thank NCGE for their collaboration in the development of this handbook. Sincere thanks are also due to the guidance counsellors and information officers who gave so willingly of their time and expertise and to the various VECs who made it possible.

Ann Heelan
Executive Director
AHEAD.

NCGE (NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION)

It was towards the end of NCGE's tenth anniversary year in 2005 that AHEAD suggested a possible collaboration with NCGE in producing a handbook which would assist guidance counsellors and the Adult Education Guidance Initiative in working with adults with disabilities. If freedom to make decisions about our own lives is a basic human right, then guidance is pivotal to individuals' self-management of their lives. The National Centre for Guidance in Education, since its establishment, has played an important role in promoting a vision of quality lifelong and life wide guidance for all.

Guidance for all is perhaps the key concept, when we give consideration to this new Handbook. As the author of *Charting Your Course*, Connie McKernan states "guidance counsellors will already have all the interpersonal and work skills they need to work effectively with students with disabilities". One of the most important messages emerging from this Handbook is to always see the ability first and give everyone the opportunity to share their dream or goal with you. In this work, it is essential that guidance counsellors have a clear vision of a quality guidance service. NCGE promotes a definition of guidance which The National Guidance Forum adopted as follows:-

Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.

I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating AHEAD and Connie McKernan for the production of this excellent Handbook which I think will make a significant contribution to adult guidance. The quality of this publication is indicative of a spirit of collaboration between AHEAD, AEGI Staff and their VECs. I wish AHEAD every success with the Handbook.

Eileen Fitzpatrick

Director

NCGE

CHARTING YOUR COURSE

A HANDBOOK FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS AND INFORMATION OFFICERS
WHEN WORKING WITH DISABILITY ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

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ie

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FOREWORD

This handbook was prepared by Connie McKernan.

Grateful thanks are due to the members of the advisory sub-committee who gave so generously of their time and expertise.

AHEAD, NCGE and the author gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the following:

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Grateful acknowledgement is also due to the various VECs for their support of the work of the sub-committee.

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Introduction

Many people go through their lives having little or no contact with people with disabilities. As a consequence, they may feel apprehensive or uncomfortable when confronted with disability in a work situation. Some people feel that they may not be able to cope, that they will say or do the wrong thing. Many imagine that they need a background knowledge of the medical aspects of disability.

The reality is however that guidance counsellors will already have all the interpersonal and work skills they need in order to work effectively with students with disabilities. Strong communication and interview skills, an awareness of what students need, a knowledge of assessment techniques, contacts within education and the workplace all contribute to the guidance of students towards fulfilling their potential. Guidance counsellors have an important role to play in helping lay foundations for the future and are in a strong position to influence the direction a student takes.

Like their non-disabled peers, many students with disabilities face challenges and obstacles as they make the transition to college, vocational training or work. The process of making career choices can be challenging and confusing. Career guidance can make a tremendous difference to students by providing them with an awareness of their strengths and abilities and the range of opportunities available to them. Guidance counsellors provide an invaluable support to students in guiding them through the process of exploration and decision-making involved in finding suitable education or career options.

Students with disability have the same need to access careers guidance services as other students. There may be some variations in the type and format of information sought and in some cases, there may need to be some flexibility in the time allocated. Like their peers, students with disabilities need to identify their strengths and interests and find out about education and employment opportunities, which build on their strengths. They also need to identify the kind of supports they need and know where to find them.

With growing numbers of students with disabilities entering adult education, career guidance professionals are increasingly being called upon to provide counselling services to this client group.

This handbook has been developed in close collaboration with guidance counsellors and information officers working in the field of adult education. It aims to support career guidance services in providing a better service to all its users but with a particular emphasis on assisting those students who have a disability.

USING THIS HANDBOOK

You will find three types of activities included in the Career Guidance Handbook.

For easy reference, these activities have been allocated an icon, which appears at the beginning of each activity.

The different types of activities are:



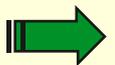
CASE STUDY



ACTIVITY



KEYPOINT



FEEDBACK SHEETS (At end of the chapter)

MODULE 1: CONTEXT AND THEORIES OF DISABILITY

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Understand some of the barriers faced by people with disabilities
- Explain the historical context of the status of people with disabilities
- Differentiate between the medical, social and human rights models of disability in the context of education and work

1.1 WHAT IS DISABILITY?

One of the most important and influential documents to emerge in Ireland in the last decade was the **Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (1996)** which estimated that approximately 10% of the Irish population have some form of disability. (More recent research indicates that in any one year, 20% of the adult population report having a chronic illness or disability) (Gannon & Nolan 2006)

The Report of the Commission stated that ‘People with disabilities are the neglected citizens of Ireland...they want equality, to move from a reliance on charity towards establishing basic rights....’

The Commission’s stance on education can be summed up as follows:

‘Education is a process of sharing, developing, building, strengthening, encouraging and recognising the abilities of people.... Education respects diversity. It aims to enhance and enable the person to achieve his or her own goals.’

This landmark document and its view of disability was very much influenced by the social model of disability. This model proposes that inaccessible environments are the main barriers to people with disabilities fully participating in society.

Some of the areas highlighted in the Report include access to such fundamental rights as health care, housing, education, training and employment.

1.2 Recent research

Recent research on disability and social inclusion carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute (2006) also revealed that people with disabilities face significant barriers in accessing education, work and social inclusion.

Research findings revealed that:

Half of those who are ill or have a disability have no formal qualifications compared with one-fifth of other adults

About 38% of adults with chronic illness or disability are found to be at risk of poverty, more than twice the rate for other adults. The risk of poverty is associated with a person's dependency on Social Welfare benefits

People who have a chronic illness or disability are less likely to participate in social activities and are more likely to be socially isolated

Chronic illness or disability substantially reduces the likelihood that an individual will be in work and may also affect the earnings of those who are in work

If people with chronic illness or disability are hindered in attaining the level of education they might otherwise reach, this can impact on their participation in the labour market and on their participation in society in general

Gannon and Nolan, Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland (2005)



1. What, in your opinion, are some of the barriers which might prevent more people with disabilities from accessing adult education?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.18)

1.3 History and myths

There are numerous myths and misconceptions about disability. These misconceptions can cause fear and confusion and can make us uncomfortable in our dealings with people with disabilities.

Western culture places great value on physical fitness and attractiveness and the lives of people with disabilities are considered by some to have less value than those of people without disabilities.

People with disabilities:

- Are often viewed as objects of pity or revulsion and are considered to be sick, childlike or special.
- Are frequently assumed to be unable to do the same sort of things as other people.
- Are sometimes viewed as placing an unnecessary burden on families and society.

Many of the myths surrounding disability are rooted in how people with disabilities have been treated by society in the past. People with disabilities have, historically been treated with a great deal of cruelty and superstition.

In the Middle Ages, physical deformities were considered to be a punishment for sin and those suffering from them were subjected to persecution. Disability was frequently associated with witchcraft and evil.

Throughout history, people with disabilities have effectively been hidden away in some form of institution. During Victorian times, most people with disabilities were housed in institutions such as Bedlam where they were treated as objects of amusement and ridicule.



CASE STUDY

"On each of the two main floors, huge galleries, 16 feet wide ran the full length of the building, broken only by iron grilles which separated the men's wing from the women's. Opening off them were individual cells, each measuring just over 12 by eight feet.

The galleries were the day rooms for those who were considered fit to walk about in them, though dangerous or violent patients would be kept locked in their cells even by day. These galleries became notorious for the sightseers who thronged them during most of the 18th century, until the habit of indiscriminate public visiting was ended in 1770".

The Bethlem Hospital, An Illustrated History



2. What would happen if people were treated like this today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.18)

The First and Second World wars saw many young men become disabled and there was a gradual movement towards treating people with disabilities as objects of care. This growth in the rehabilitation of injured soldiers led to an increasing involvement by medical and allied professionals in defining and managing disability. The growth in the number of specialised services and schools, again effectively segregated people with disabilities from the rest of society.

People with disabilities gradually became objects of charity and recipients of specialised services. The image of these service users was one of passivity and helplessness and the approach was both paternalistic and patronising. This image was often successfully used by service providers in advertising and fundraising campaigns often to the dismay of the very people they purported to support. Services to people with disabilities were therefore dependant on the benevolence of donors rather than on the rights of the individual.

During the 1960s in the United States, people were increasingly encouraged to view disability as a rights issue. The US tradition tends to view disabled people as a minority group, with ethnic membership rather than class forming the structure of US society. The experience of disability in the US has also been greatly influenced by the civil rights movement in the sixties and by the disabled war veterans returning from Vietnam.

Disability groups have gradually become more organised and there has been a steady growth in awareness and self-advocacy.

Since the 1980s, people with disabilities have become increasingly more visible and disability is now firmly considered to be a social and human rights issue. People with disabilities are now more aware of their rights as consumers of services rather than its passive recipients.

The emphasis in the disability movement today now rests on human rights such as:

Civil rights

Advocacy

Self-determination

Integration and social inclusion

Some of the significant factors for change in Ireland over the last decade have included:

- Social policy for the mainstreaming of education and the resulting reduction in specialised services
- The 3% quota for the employment of people with disabilities within the public sector
- Advances in assistive technology which make learning and educational materials accessible
- The introduction of Disability Support Services and support planning in education
- Staff training and the adoption of a much more structured approach to the delivery of educational services
- The Establishment of a National Access Office within the Department of Education and Science and the setting of educational targets for all establishments
- The process of auditing the quality of educational services



3. Can you describe some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding people with disabilities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.18)

1.4 Models of Disability

People with disabilities have been characterised in many ways throughout history and a number of models of disability have emerged. These models have had a significant influence on our thinking, attitudes and treatment of people with disabilities.

Some of these models portray people with disabilities in a negative or disrespectful way, as:

- Special
- Patients
- Charity cases
- Objects of care

There are currently three models, which predominate in the field of disability.

- The Medical Model
- The Social Model
- The Universal Human Rights Model

1.4.1 The Medical Model

The most dominant model emerging in modern times has been the Medical Model, which grew out of scientific and medical advancements.

‘I propose that we name the mid-twentieth century ‘The Age of Disabling Professions’, as the age when people had ‘problems’, experts had ‘solutions’ and scientists measured imponderables such as ‘abilities’ and ‘needs’. (Illich, 1977:11)

Medicine and its allied professions have played an important role in defining and regulating disability. In order to gain access to essential services such as education or medical care, people with disabilities are assessed and defined by medical categories, which carry with them all the social stigma of disability. This process has given professionals great power and control over the everyday lives of people with disabilities.

According to the Medical Model, the problem of disability lies firmly within the individual who is considered to be incapable of making decisions in relation to his or her life. As a consequence, the medical and allied professions have become the adjudicators as to who gains access to services and resources. The emphasis is very much on dependence with the focus on the person's disability rather than on his or her abilities and needs.

Some of the assumptions made by this model are that people with disabilities:

- Have medical problems
- Require treatment
- Cannot live independently
- Need institutional care
- Are not 'normal'

The Medical Model views disability as a medical issue. It fails to look at the causes of exclusion or at the reasons for the existence of social barriers but rather attempts to 'fit' the person with a disability into existing systems. This means that people with disabilities are generally segregated within specialised services rather than participating in society like other citizens.



4. What does the Medical Model say about people with disabilities? What sort of image of disability does it portray?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.19)



Until recently, the Medical Model of disability was the major influence in directing social policy and the provision of services for people with disabilities in Ireland.

1.4.2 The Social Model

The Social Model of disability was constructed by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. Although there are many variations of this model, each recognizes that disability is a social construct. Although disability is a reality, this model makes a clear distinction between disability and impairment.

Impairment is defined as the loss of a limb, organ or physical or psychological function

Disability is defined as the societal restrictions and barriers caused by not taking into account peoples needs and requirements
(UPAIS, 1976)

Societal constraints can sometimes impair a person with a disability. The social and physical environments within our society cater predominantly for those with ability and fail to recognize individual differences and the range of human diversity.

People with disabilities are frequently discriminated against and are often excluded from many aspects of society. The Social Model argues that this has little to do with their disabilities and more to do with how society is constructed and organised.

These are some of the disabling factors affecting people with disabilities in our society:

- Segregated education
- Inaccessible transport
- Poorly designed buildings
- Poverty and low income
- Discrimination

The fact that someone has a disability does not mean that they are not able to participate in society but prejudice, social and physical barriers and discriminatory practices serve to further disable people. For example, a student wheelchair user is only disabled if his school building does not have ramps or lifts. A student with dyslexia is only disabled in the classroom if the teaching methods used are not suitable.

The presence of these types of barriers ensures that people with disabilities are excluded from many normal, everyday activities such as education, work and recreation.

'If society were organised on a more equitable basis, many of the problems associated with not being 'perfect' (if such a concept had any logical basis) would disappear'.
Brisenden, S.J. 1986

The Social Model clearly recognises that individuals have different needs and that people with disabilities should have their needs addressed on an individual basis.

Proponents of the Social Model do not necessarily reject the Medical Model. The person with a disability however is considered to be the expert on their life, their disability and their needs.



The Social Model of disability now greatly influences the development of policy and the provision of services for people with disability



5. Identify which of the following statements are true or false:

1. People who are blind cannot cope with study or work because they cannot read materials or produce written work
2. People who are deaf cannot use the telephone
3. People who have a physical disability cannot go to college because most of the buildings have steps
4. People who have a mental health disability should not be placed in stressful situations such as sitting examinations or meeting deadlines at work

(See p. 19)

1.4.3 The Universal Human Rights Model

The Human Rights movement developed as a result of the atrocities enacted during the Second World War. A universal moral code emerged after the war which recognised the right of every individual to justice, equality and protection against abuse or discrimination.

From a Human Rights perspective, continuing to leave people with disabilities outside the normal mainstream of life violates their human rights.

In 1998, the UN Commission on Human Rights passed a groundbreaking resolution (1998/31) confirming that disability is a human rights issue. This resolution stated that inequality and discrimination related to disability are a violation of a person's human rights.

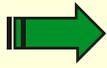
The Human Rights model recognises that people with disabilities are entitled to enjoy the full range of internationally guaranteed rights and freedoms without being discriminated against on the grounds of their disability.

It accepts that the state might have to take unique steps to ensure that people with disabilities can fully enjoy those rights. Although the mode of realising those rights may vary, essentially the rights remain the same. Generally, services and facilities for the inclusion of disabled people into society are closely linked to Government's and society's willingness and ability to allocate resources and services to excluded groups.

Legislation has been enacted in many countries to guarantee the rights of people with disabilities to education and to ensure that they have the same right to education as those without disabilities.



A United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Norms and Standards relating to disability considered that the human rights perspective is the correct approach to the rights of people with disabilities.



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 1

Activity 1

Some of the issues you may have raised might include the following;

Lack of support and encouragement

Inaccessible buildings

Inaccessible transport

Inaccessible curriculum

Negative attitude

Low expectations

Poor communication

Lack of accessible information

Activity 2

You may have mentioned some of the following:

Would cause an outcry

Wouldn't be allowed

Place would be closed down

Legislation would protect people

Legal action would be taken

Activity 3

You may have included some of the following in your list

Deserve pity

Cannot learn

Dependant

Helpless

Require care

Dangerous

Courageous

Chip on shoulder

Use wheelchairs

Should not have children

Special

Lack intelligence

Contagious

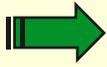
Asexual

Need to be cured

Tragic

Cannot work

Invalid



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 1

Activity 4

You may have included some of the following in your list:

- People with disabilities are not necessarily ill
- Medical treatment cannot cure disabilities
- This model stereotypes people with disabilities
- Most doctors have no training specifically related to disability

Activity 5

False. Most people who are blind have some residual sight. The use of large print and magnifying devices can be helpful to many people who are visually impaired.

Materials can also be presented in Braille, on disc or on tape for people who have no sight.

False. Most people who are deaf have some residual hearing and can use a telephone by switching their hearing aid to telephone function, by using a loop fitted to their earpiece or by using a Minicom system, which translates the information into text, which is viewed, on a computer screen.

False. Buildings with steps are easy to access when there is a ramp and lift in place.

False. Stress is a factor for only a minority of people with mental health difficulties. People who have a mental health disability are more likely to be able to identify stress triggers and may be more aware of how to manage their stress responses.

MODULE 2: LEGISLATION AND DISABILITY

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Outline the core elements of equality legislation in Ireland
- Explain the meaning of a 'reasonable accommodation' in light of statutory requirements
- Discuss the main Irish legislative provision on the education and employment of people with disabilities

2.1 Key legislation

Guidance and information services frequently act as an important link between students and colleges and between employers and prospective employees.

It is important therefore to have information available on current legislative requirements in relation to the education or employment of people with disabilities.

There are a number of key pieces of relevant legislation. These are:

- The Employment Equality Act 1998
- The Equal Status Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2004
- The Disability Act 2005

2.1.1 The Employment Equality Act 1998 (EEA)

One of the most significant pieces of legislation to be enacted in recent years is the Employment Equality Act 1998. (The Act) The Act has significant implications for both providers and recipients of education and in 2002 there was a 69% rise in people referring claims of discrimination under the EEA on the grounds of disability.

The EEA prohibits discrimination on nine distinct grounds, including disability. The definition also provides protection for people with a history of a disability. For example, a person who has a history of psychiatric illness but who no longer suffers from that illness may still be subject to discrimination because of their past medical history. Once a person has been brought within the definition of a disability, then the legislation prohibits direct or indirect discrimination or harassment on the basis of their disability.

The EEA includes in its definition of employers colleges and universities, which offer courses with a vocational emphasis, including medicine or dentistry.

Under the Act, it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against an employee with a disability in relation to job advertising, recruitment, training or employment conditions.

2.2 Reasonable Accommodation

Section 16 (3) of the EEA states that an employer:

'Shall do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person who has a disability by providing special treatment or facilities...'

The Act included a provision however, that accommodations for people with disabilities should not give rise to more than a 'nominal cost' for employers. This was a result of the constitutional challenge to the Employment Equality Bill, 1996 when it was held impermissible to impose cost burdens on employers. As a result, employers were able to discriminate against employees with disabilities if the cost involved in making accommodations or adjustments to the workplace was anything more than 'nominal'.

In 2004, The Employment Equality Act brought about changes to previous employment legislation placing a higher burden on employers to provide facilities for employees with disabilities. The 'nominal cost' issue was revised so that an employer could only now refuse to provide facilities for its disabled workers if doing so would involve a 'disproportionate burden'. This change now makes it easier for people to make a successful legal claim on the grounds of disability.



There is funding available to assist with the costs of accommodations or supports in both education and the workplace



6. What sort of 'reasonable accommodations' do you think are important for the inclusion of students with disabilities in adult education?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.29)

2.3 The Equal Status Act, 2000 - 2004

Prior to 2000, legislation in relation to discrimination was concerned primarily with the workplace. The Equal Status Act (2000) (the Act) promoted a wider equality by extending the legislation to cover the provision of goods and services being offered by businesses, public authorities and educational establishments.

All educational establishments are now covered by the Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

1. Gender
2. Marital status
3. Family status
4. Sexual orientation
5. Religion
6. Age
7. Disability
8. Race
9. Membership of the Traveller community

Anyone providing services such as transport, health care, financial services, entertainment or education and training must now make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. In 2002, there was a 178% increase in claims on the grounds of disability under the Equal Status Act. (ODEI, The Equality Tribunal)



CASE STUDY

Two former Leaving Certificate students with dyslexia recently won their claim of discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 against the Department of Education and Science in relation to the annotation of their Leaving Certificates.

The Equality Tribunal found that the Department of Education and Science discriminated against the students in relation to their disability. The student's Leaving Certificates contained an explanatory footnote, stating that they had been assessed on all parts of the examination except spelling and some grammatical elements in other language subjects.

The Department of Education and Science have been ordered to:

- Issue new Leaving Certificates to the claimants without the relevant notations
- Investigate the feasibility of creating and implementing a system of accommodation which can meet the needs of each particular student applying for accommodations based on their individual assessment
- Pay each claimant €6,000 compensation

Equality Authority Press Release – 22 Nov 2006.

2.4 What is discrimination?

Direct discrimination, for the purposes of the Act, is defined as treating one person less favourably than another on any of the discriminatory grounds, including disability.

Educational establishments are prohibited, under the Act from directly or indirectly discriminating against people with disabilities in relation to:

- Admission
- Terms or conditions of admission
- Access to any course
- Access to any benefit or facility provided
- Expulsion of a student or any other sanction against a student

The legislation states that an educational establishment discriminates against a student with a disability when it fails to do all that is reasonable to accommodate that student.

This accommodation can include the provision of special treatment or facilities without which support it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service provided by the establishment.



**7. Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement
'Integration is a human right and segregation is equal to apartheid'**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.29)



The Equal Status Act provides protection for students with disabilities who are studying in any type of educational establishment



CASE STUDY

Grainné is about to undertake a diploma course in economics. Because she has a visual impairment, Grainné would like to tape record her lectures and tutorials. Her tutor however is uncomfortable with the idea of having his lectures recorded and also feels that it would be disruptive for other students.

8. How is Grainné covered under the current legislation and why?

(See P.30)

2.5 The Equality Act 2004

The Equality Act brought about a number of changes to both the Equal Status Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The most significant of these changes was to extend the scope of the Employment Equality Act to include self-employed people, partnerships and those in domestic employment.

The Act also requires that employers take appropriate steps to enable a person with a disability to access and participate in employment, undergo training and seek promotion. Some of these measures might include the adaptation of premises or equipment, additional training or greater flexibility in the allocation of time or tasks – unless doing so imposes a ‘disproportionate burden’ on the employer.

(www.equality.ie)

2.6 The Disability Act 2005

The Disability Act (2005) (the Act) is part of a framework of government legislative steps to improve the participation of people with disabilities in everyday life.

The Act defines disability as follows:

‘Disability’ in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation within the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.

The Act establishes a statutory basis for:

- Independent assessment of the health and educational needs of people with disabilities and the provision of resources to meet those needs
- Access to mainstream public buildings, facilities, information and services
- Sectoral plans to be developed in six key Government Departments to ensure that accessibility is included in service planning and provision
- Obligations on public bodies to be proactive in employing people with disabilities
- A Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

The Act was designed to improve access to a wide range of public services and facilities for people with disabilities and states that all public bodies must ensure that their services are both integrated and accessible. This includes information as well as public buildings and premises, which should be provided in a manner, which is accessible. The act places an obligation on all public bodies to make their buildings and services assessable to people with disabilities by 2015.

What this means in practice is that public bodies will have to:

- Ensure that accessibility is a key criterion to be considered throughout the entire purchasing process. So if a public body wishes to purchase vehicles, computers, machinery, equipment or services, it needs to ensure that they are accessible, as far as is possible, appropriate and affordable
- Make relevant information accessible in a range of formats such as Braille, Plain English, large print or audio
- Appoint at least one Access Officer to provide assistance as required
- Draw up and publish a policy on how to deal with complaints in relation to failure to comply with these sections of the Act.

(NDA Code of Practice)

**9. What sort of impact does this type of legislation have on your work?**

1. _____

2. _____

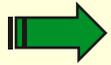
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.30)

(Footnote: Please also refer to your employers policies and regulations in relation to equality legislation)



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 2

Activity 6

Some of the most common accommodations provided for students with disabilities in third level education include:

- Sign language interpreters for students who are deaf
- Note takers for students who have difficulty with dexterity of movement or pace of writing
- Personal assistants for students with physical disabilities
- Specialised equipment for students who have visual impairments such as JAWS text to speech software package
- Training in using new equipment and software
- One-on-one learning and study skills support for students with learning disabilities
- Examination arrangements such as additional time or alternative locations

Activity 7

The UN World Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education states:

‘The education of persons with disabilities should as far as possible take place in the general school system’.

A key recommendation of the Commission for the Status of People with Disabilities was that legislation should be enacted setting out the rights of people with disabilities to enjoy equal access to effective education services in the least restrictive environment possible.

Activity 8

Grainne needs to be assessed in order to establish what accommodations she needs.

If it is established that she cannot access lectures without the aid of a tape recorder then Grainne is covered under the Employment Equality Act, which states that, an employer:

'Shall do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person who has a disability by providing special treatment or facilities....'

Grainne needs to be aware, however of her ethical responsibility to respect the rights of her tutor and those of other students.

The use of specialised equipment such as tape recorders needs to be negotiated between students and tutor and a contract needs to be agreed regarding the ground rules about using such equipment.

Activity 9

Some of the issues you may have identified could include the following:

- Lets me know where I stand
- Creates a working structure
- Creates more work
- Ensures that everyone is treated equally
- Gives some people an unfair advantage

MODULE 3: DISABILITY AWARENESS

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the communication needs of people with disabilities
- Outline a number of strategies for working with people with a range of disabilities
- Be aware of the appropriate language and behaviour to be adopted when working with people with disabilities

3.1 What is disability?

There has been much debate surrounding the issue of defining disability and definitions of disability vary from country to country throughout Europe.

The Report of the Review Group on Access and Participation of students with disabilities in Higher Education proposes a definition, which may be useful for the purpose of this handbook.

The report states that:

‘A student is disabled if he/she requires a facility which is outside of the mainstream of the college in order to participate fully in Higher Education and without which the student would be educationally disadvantaged in comparison with their peers’

www.ucc.ie

Many people prefer to keep the fact that they have a disability private. This can sometimes make it difficult to identify what an individual needs.

Visible disabilities are noticeable through casual observation – An immediately recognisable physical impairment, for example, or the use of a cane, a wheelchair or guide dog.

Other people may have what are known as **hidden disabilities**, which may be more difficult to identify, by casual observation.

Some of the hidden disabilities encountered might include:

- Hearing impairments
- Learning disability
- Diabetes
- Brain injury
- Epilepsy
- Mental health difficulties.

Some people may have **multiple disabilities**, which can be caused by such primary conditions as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy or multiple sclerosis.

Depending on the nature and progression of the condition, it may be accompanied by a secondary impairment (in mobility, vision, speech, or co-ordination), which may, in fact, pose greater difficulties than the primary disability.

People who have **acquired disabilities** from an accident or illness may face additional challenges in making physical or psychological adjustments to their new situation. Eighty percent of people with disabilities live in the developing world and unsafe working conditions; poor housing and sanitation are strong influencing factors. Violence and war are major cause of disability with 95,000 civilians having become disabled by landmines in Angola and Mozambique alone in recent years. Medical advances have led to the eradication of diseases such as Polio and many former life-threatening conditions can now be easily treated. These advances have meant that many disabilities are now acquired rather than congenital and there are now many more people with 'invisible disabilities' such as mental illness.



10. Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement.

'Adult education courses should accommodate students with all types of disabilities'

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.54)

3.2 Language and Etiquette

The segregated nature of disability in Ireland means that some people have little or no experience of relating to a person who has a disability. This lack of exposure can sometimes lead to people feeling uncomfortable when they confront disability for the first time.

Interacting with a person with a disability requires the same approach that would be used with any client: commonsense, courtesy and respect. The best source of information about a person with a disability is the person himself or herself. So, if there is something you are not sure about, ask. The most important thing to remember is that people with disabilities are all different so need to be treated as individuals. People usually prefer that the focus be on their individuality, not on their disability. The preferred term 'person with a disability' stresses the essential humanity of individuals and avoids depersonalising them.

3.2.1 Language

The language around disability provides a multitude of opportunities for political incorrectness and many people worry about causing offence. Disability language and terminology is increasingly being directed by people with disabilities themselves rather than by professionals. For example, terms such as 'educationally subnormal' and 'mental handicap' are no longer considered to be appropriate. The generally accepted term in use is now 'learning disability' or 'intellectual disability'.

Language is important in the construction of disability and can be used in a positive or a negative way.

Here are some examples:

Appropriate

People **with** disabilities

The person **has**.....

Wheelchair user

Has a physical disability

Has Downs Syndrome

Seizure

Person **with** a learning or intellectual disability

Person who **has**...

Person who **has** epilepsy

Congenital disability

Person **with** a psychiatric disability

Person who **is** blind or has a visual impairment

Inappropriate

The handicapped or disabled

Suffers from.....

Wheelchair bound

Crippled, lame

Mongoloid

Fit

Mental handicap

Victim

Epileptic

Birth defect

Mental patient,
psycho, neurotic

The blind

Think of the person first and the disability second



11. Read the following article and underline instances of inappropriate language.

'It is time to suggest that these so-called Paralympics, the athletic games organised in Sydney for the lame and the blind, are – well, one hesitates to say 'grotesque'. One will only say perverse.

Surely physical competition is about finding the best - the fastest, strongest, highest and all that. It is not about finding someone who can wobble his way around a track in a wheelchair, or who can swim from one end of a pool to the other by Braille. Yet we are supposed to imagine that there is some kind of equivalence in value between what the cripples do and what the truly fastest, strongest, highest do. There isn't.

Which is not to say the lame and blind ought not to do whatever they please. Carry on I say, though if they were to ask my advice, I would give the same advice I would give to anyone: play to your competitive advantage. (In other words, Stephen Hawking shows his wisdom by staying out of the three-legged race.) One must question the propaganda that says one ought to applaud the physical performance of the lame as we applaud the physical performance of the fit. Of course, such propaganda is all of a piece. It is part of the propaganda that wants to convince you that all cultures are equal in value, that all lives are equal in value, that all philosophies are equal in value.

It is the propaganda that says, 'Do not judge, embrace all equally.' Yet if all cultures, all lives, all philosophies and all athletes were equal in value, then no culture, no life, no philosophy and no athlete would be worth much.'

M.E Synon, Sunday Independent, 22/10/00

Discuss this article from the point of view of a person with a disability

If language creates boundaries, which define what is 'normal' and what is not, the media reinforces these boundaries in a very powerful way. Its preoccupation with images of perfection relies on our understanding of what is not attractive or perfect, the physical markers that signify 'difference' and which frequently provoke feelings of curiosity or discomfort.

Images of disabled people are generally portrayed in stereotyped ways by the media; 'triumph over adversity' (My Left Foot), 'childlike innocence' (Forrest Gump), 'noble savage' (Children of a Lesser God). Charitable advertising frequently uses people with disabilities as objects of pity to elicit donations. Children's stories are filled with such frightening images as giants, dwarfs and monsters. Adults are both fascinated and repelled by freakishness and curiosities, which perhaps explains their fears and anxieties around difference.

3.2.2 Good Practice Behaviours

People with disabilities are all individuals, each with their own particular approach to life and their own particular way of dealing with problems. Having a good support structure in place can really make a difference. So family, counsellors and peers can all be valuable sources of encouragement and positive reinforcement.

How we behave in relation to students can have either a positive or a negative effect. The key word is respect.

Here are some pointers:

- Focus on abilities and potential rather than on inabilities
- Ask the person and listen to what they say.
Don't assume that you know what is best
- Do not assist unless your offer of assistance has been accepted
- If a person has difficulty in understanding you, give them time and be prepared to explain something more than once
- Treat people in a manner that is appropriate to their age

- Be a sounding board and not a therapist
- If a person has a speech impairment, listen carefully and let them finish what they are saying. If you are unsure, ask the person to repeat that they said or ask them to write it down.
- Try not to fuss. Over praising a person for completing a task is patronising
- Speak directly to the person and not through a third party such as a personal assistant
- Resist the temptation to ask intrusive questions. It is more constructive to ask positive questions about the person's abilities and strengths
- Be natural and don't force enthusiasm. Being overly solicitous is inappropriate
- Do not be embarrassed about using everyday phrases such as 'I've got to be running along'. Watching your language too carefully indicates that you are not at ease with the person.
- Use the same active listening skills and results focus that you would with other students

3.3 Communication

Good communication is a key requirement in any working relationship, and is particularly important when working with students who may need to use alternative methods of communication.

The same skills sets and professional approach are needed when working with people with disabilities:

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Respect
- Facilitation
- Encouragement
- Boundary management

- Confidentiality
- Planning
- Assessment
- Guidance
- Ongoing support
- Individualised, holistic approach
- Consultation

There may also be additional communication issues to be borne in mind when working with students who have a disability.

3.4 Students who are blind or have a visual impairment

Some of the most significant effects of vision loss include the person's ability to perform such everyday tasks as reading, writing and driving. The difficulties with reading can substantially affect a person's ability to manage and absorb detailed or complex information.

Since sight is one of the most used senses in learning, its loss may affect the person's capacity to acquire new skills. Mobility restrictions may also affect the person's ability to physically access and negotiate the learning environment



12. Can you identify any other difficulties, which students with a visual impairment might encounter?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.54)

3.4.1 Communicating with a student with a visual impairment

The following pointers may be useful when communicating with a student who is blind or visually impaired:

- Introduce yourself and address the person by name so they know you are speaking to them
- Ask the person if s/he would like to sit down and, if necessary, offer guidance to a chair. Indicate where the chair is by placing the person's hand on the back of it.
- Speak clearly and in a normal voice. Most people with a visual impairment can hear perfectly well. There is no need to speak loudly, slowly or with exaggeration.
- Let the person know when you are entering or leaving the room
- Guide dogs are highly disciplined animals and should not be petted or distracted while working.
- If you are asked to guide a blind person, you should:
 - Offer your arm rather than taking hold of theirs
 - Allow the person to take your arm above the elbow
 - Explain where you are going and describe any obstacles in the vicinity, such as desks or steps



With the use of assistive technology, students with visual impairments can compete on an equal footing with their non-disabled peers

3.5 Students who have a physical disability

Access is a major issue for students with reduced mobility. There may be difficulties in gaining access to college buildings, particularly if they are old, and getting from place to place to attend classes or tutorials can be problematic.

The physical energy required to access and negotiate the learning environment can be exhausting and students can lose valuable time just getting from A to B.

Some people may have reduced use of their hands and can experience difficulties with note-taking or page turning. Concentration can also be affected by pain relief medication.

It is important to know exactly what sort of barriers a student with a disability might encounter when trying to access an adult learning environment.

The following is a simple checklist, which could be used, as appropriate, when assessing a student's access needs.

Access Audit

	Yes	No
1. Is there a ramp or level entrance into the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are the footpaths around the building?		
Even	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Well lit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free from obstructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is there easy access to all facilities within the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are doors easy to open & wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is there a lift to each floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are they large and strong enough to accommodate a wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there clear signage within the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do floors have non-slip surfaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are toilets wheelchair accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
10. Are classrooms easy to negotiate by a wheelchair user?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are there auditory and visual fire alarms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is there a hearing loop available in lecture theatres & classrooms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Is course and career information and materials available in accessible formats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it available at a height that the student can reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are emergency exits usable by people with limited mobility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Are emergency exit doors clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Are they easy to open and wide enough for a wheelchair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Are classroom switches, tables, sinks and benches at a height suitable for all users?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Are public telephones at a height for all users?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Are staff aware of how to facilitate students with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Is accessible public transport available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Adapted from Building for Everyone, National Disability Authority)

3.6 Communicating with a student who has a physical disability

The following points should be noted when communicating with a person who is a wheelchair user:

- Seat yourself at the level of the person's wheelchair when you speak to them
- Do not lean on the wheelchair, as it is part of a person's personal space
- Do not assume that assistance is needed – always ask
- If a person needs assistance, ask them for directions as to how to assist. There is a correct way to manoeuvre a wheelchair
- If the person has a personal assistant, don't ask him/her questions, which are intended for the person with the disability



CASE STUDY

John is a young wheelchair user who wants to apply for a degree course in Science and Sports in university. He has made some enquiries and has been told that there is a fitness requirement for entry to the course. He is reluctant to pursue the issue in case he will be disappointed with the outcome.

Having spoken to his information officer, John has decided to contact the college to find out exactly what the entry criteria are and what points are needed. Are there alternative entry criteria for course applicants with disabilities? He also wants to find out what core skills are required. Could he perhaps teach sports using instruction and would the college accept a wheelchair race as a measure of fitness?

3.7 Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a condition that affects up to eight per cent of the population. More significantly, it affects over 30 per cent of third level students with disabilities.

The Government taskforce on Dyslexia 2002 defined dyslexia as:

'A continuum of specific learning difficulties manifested by problems in acquiring one or more basic skills (reading, spelling, writing, numbers).'

People with dyslexia can assimilate and understand information but can have difficulty transforming what they know into written language. The learning deficits at the core of dyslexia are persistent from early age through adulthood.

Dyslexia cannot be cured but with proper intervention, many people with dyslexia can develop strategies to enable them to cope and to be successful in their chosen field. The majority of people with dyslexia will have developed their own learning strategies and will be able to cope with the demands of everyday life.



Dyslexia is commonly found in people of average or above average intelligence



13. Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement.

'Most students with dyslexia require more support and guidance from their tutor than people without disabilities'.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.54)

3.8 Implications for Education

The underlying problems for a person with dyslexia relate to:

Reading: People with dyslexia have problems learning to read. They are likely to be slow at reading and sensitive when it comes to misreading. They are likely to experience difficulties with low frequency words and word recognition.

Spelling: Most people with dyslexia spell words as they sound without having a visual image of the word

Memory: Almost all of the characteristics associated with dyslexia are associated with poor short-term memory

Note-taking: Because of the above difficulties, people with dyslexia may find it difficult to keep up with classes and can experience problems in taking notes quickly



People with dyslexia frequently demonstrate particular aptitudes in the areas of science, engineering, draughtsmanship and generally in areas requiring good spatial skills. A person with a good level of intelligence can reach high levels of achievement in these areas



CASE STUDY

James has recently joined an evening course for adult learners who are interested in photography. Most of the course work is practical so it suits James because he has dyslexia. He is, however embarrassed when he has to take notes during class. He never has enough time to copy things down from the board and tends to get lost easily. It is particularly difficult when the tutor uses the white board and a black marker.

When James tries to read his notes at home, he cannot make sense of them and there are always lots of grammar and spelling mistakes. James is enjoying the course too much to give up but is sometimes frustrated in class. He has decided to check with his tutor whether he could tape record the verbal presentation parts of his classes.

When made aware of these issues, James's tutor was able to organise a study skills course to include note-taking and mind mapping techniques. He is now investigating assistive technology alternatives to help James with his written work.

3.9 Deafness and Hard of Hearing

Around 17% of the population in Ireland have some form of hearing loss, ranging from mild to profound. Students who are hard of hearing are more likely to wear hearing aids and may use spoken language to communicate. Profoundly deaf people will not use spoken language and are likely to communicate through Irish Sign Language.



People who are deaf are members of a linguistic minority whose first language is Sign Language

3.9.1 Implications for Education

The inability to communicate with ease is the most notable of the functions, which are significantly affected by hearing loss. This has a considerable impact on all aspects of a person's life, including their education.

People who are deaf must function in an environment, which is geared to sound and are also required to communicate in a second language.

Access to information, which is communicated through sound, can be greatly restricted. Safety can be an issue in environments where only standard alarm systems are fitted.

3.9.2 Communicating with a Person who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The following points should be noted when communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always face people when you are speaking to them, don't turn away or cover your mouth with your hand
- Slow the rate at which you speak and use natural pauses.
- Use gestures and communicate in writing if necessary
- Allow enough time for the person who is deaf to receive information being conveyed through an interpreter
- The interpreter needs to stand beside the speaker and close to any visual displays that are being used
- Translation will be made considerably more efficient if both interpreter and student are given advance information such as a copy of the text being used
- Unfamiliar names and terminology should be written down
- Never engage an interpreter in discussion while s/he is working

3.10 Mental Health Disabilities

According to the annual report of the Mental Health Commission in 2002, mental health is a key health issue in Ireland. It is estimated that there are more than 700,000 people in Ireland with a mental health disability. (The Irish Psychologist, Aug. 2003) This means that between 20% and 25% of the Irish population will be affected by a mental health problem at some stage of their life.

Unlike other disabilities, mental illness can be episodic and intermittent throughout a person's life. An individual who can function effectively when well may need to temporarily disengage from a course of study when ill. It is also the case that some people can experience just one episode of mental illness and go on to make a full recovery.

3.10.1 What is Mental Health Disability?

Mental ill health is both a common and a complex occurrence. It is not known exactly what triggers the onset of a mental health difficulty and a number of factors may be involved.

Some of these might include the following:

- Significant loss such as a bereavement
- Genetic factors
- Traumatic life events

Mental illness is one of the most misunderstood and stigmatising of conditions and many people feel threatened by its presence in our society.

People with mental health difficulties can be socially disadvantaged through:

- Limited choice due to low income
- Loss of social status
- Low expectations of others
- Fewer opportunities to learn new skills
- Interruptions to education or employment
- Stigma

Loss of confidence and self-esteem are significant compounding factors of mental health problems.

The stigma attached to mental illness is significant and many people experience isolation and rejection.

Public Attitudes to Disability in the Republic of Ireland NDA 2004



Improvements in the treatment of mental health problems mean that many people are able to lead normal lives in the community.

3.10.2 Types of Mental Illness

There are four major categories of mental health difficulties:

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders such as phobias or panic attacks
- Personality disorders which may affect a person's behaviour
- Major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bi-polar disorder



14. Outline some of society's prevalent myths and misconceptions about mental illness and how these can affect a person with a mental illness.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.54)

3.10.3 Implications for Education

The impact of a mental health difficulty can vary greatly from one person to another. Some students may have no difficulty in coping with everyday student life whilst others may need certain accommodations to make things more manageable.

Some people with mental health problems need to take medication. Some of the common side effects of medication include, drowsiness, poor concentration, thirst and blurred vision.

Some students may have difficulty in meeting assignment deadlines and stressful conditions such as exams, may affect a student's academic performance. The person can lose confidence in their ability to perform tasks and it may be difficult for them to sustain motivation for long periods. Some students may already have achieved educational qualifications in the past and may now need to focus on dealing with the structures, demands and routines involved in studying.

Some students may experience the following difficulties:

- Remaining focussed for extended periods
- Maintaining concentration and attention
- Managing multiple tasks
- Maintaining stamina
- Prioritising tasks and meeting deadlines
- Handling change
- Dealing with negative feedback



15. Identify some of the stressful situations and events, which students may encounter in adult education.

Are there any steps that can be taken to reduce some of these stressors?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.54)

3.10.4 Communicating with a Person with a Mental Health Disability

Participating in adult education can provide the structure and stability needed by students with mental health difficulties. Learning and achieving can be a force for positive change in the person's confidence and self-esteem. Being part of a group can provide a network of support and a social outlet which is an important part of being a student.

There are a number of points to be noted when communicating with a person with a mental health disability:

- Focus on the positive
- Ask the person how you can best help
- Be clear about what you expect
- Avoid becoming a therapist
- Check that the person understands what is required
- Set clear, achievable goals
- Eliminate, where possible, physical stress triggers, such as excessive noise or crowding
- Agree targets and timeframes
- Try to be consistent and let the student know if any significant changes are planned
- Be prepared for setbacks
- Create a safe place for time out

3.11 Intellectual Disability

Approximately 10% of Irish people have an intellectual disability, three quarters of whom fall into the mild range of disability. Many people with a mild intellectual disability can cope with the demands of everyday life without the assistance of any particular supports or services. Some people are not identified as having a learning disability until they are adults. By this time, they may have additional responsibilities, such as a family and may have educational and vocational goals, which differ from those of other students.

An increasing number of adults with intellectual disabilities are entering adult education and there is no reason why, with support and information, they cannot achieve their educational goals. Education and employment are key elements in ensuring social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. Both give opportunities for the development of skills and competences in a non-segregated, adult environment.

People with intellectual disabilities may find it more difficult to learn certain things and may learn things more slowly but there is no reason why, with additional guidance and educational support, they cannot make progress in adult education.

3.1.1.1 Implications for Education

The adult education environment is much less structured than a school setting and students are required to take a much greater deal of responsibility for their own learning.

Students with intellectual disabilities can experience difficulties with new or complex information and they may also have problems organising and remembering information. These students will require a much more planned and structured approach to choosing and participating in adult courses.

Some of the issues to be taken into consideration by information officers might include:

- What type of support is available to the student
- Which courses are most accessible
- What kind of tutoring is available
- Is literacy and numeracy support available

Students with intellectual disability may also have another disability and are likely to:

- Have poor reading skills so may be unfamiliar with vocabulary, sentence structure and reading comprehension
- Have difficulty with abstract concepts
- May not be able to see the relationships and connections between events
- Present as having good ability but demonstrate underachievement in class
- Have cognitive difficulties such as with attention, concentration and organisational skills, all of which interfere with learning
- Have difficulty processing new or complex information
- Require much more time to learn new skills
- Have difficulty in identifying the sort of social verbal and non-verbal cues that most of us take for granted
- Have difficulty communicating or making themselves understood

3.11.2 Communicating with a person with an intellectual disability

There are varying degrees of intellectual disability and individual capabilities will vary from person to person. It is important, therefore not to generalise from one person to another.

There are, however a number of key points to remember when communicating with a student with an intellectual disability:

- Use simple language and short sentences
- Introduce one concept at a time
- Check the person's understanding by asking them to repeat what you have said in their own words
- Break information down into small, manageable chunks
- Make use of visual materials whenever possible when presenting information
- Be prepared to repeat or simplify information to achieve understanding
- Give the person time and encourage them to ask questions
- Avoid open-ended questions



CASE STUDY

Helen is 22 and she has intellectual and cognitive difficulties. In the past she attended a special school and is about to enrol on a part time course for students with intellectual difficulties in her local FE College. The course she has enrolled in offers mainly life skills and an introduction to basic computer skills.

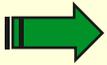
Helen understands simple instructions, has good practical skills and can read well at a basic level but her verbal responses are limited. She had some supported employment experience last year, working in a local supermarket and this worked out very well. Helen would ultimately like to get a job and move out of home so that she can live independently

Helen will probably have little difficulty managing her course since it has been specifically designed with students with disabilities in mind and it will teach her the skills she needs in order to live independently. She will, however need a lot of guidance and support in securing employment when she graduates.

Helen has met with her Guidance Counsellor who plans to make links with local supported employment and disability organisations who may be able to help Helen with her transition into employment.



Education and employment are key elements for the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream society



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 3

Activity 10

You may have included some of the following reasons for including students with all types of disabilities:

- Fulfils legal requirement
- More diverse student group
- Good business
- Good public relations
- Greater range of talent and skills
- Fulfils educational remit

Activity 12

Some of the difficulties you identified may have included the following:

- Accessing the library
- Carrying out research
- Field trips
- Making friends
- Reading without aids
- Accessing materials

Activity 13

These are some of the issues in relation to students with dyslexia:

Not all students with dyslexia require assistance

- Those who receive support at primary school level are less likely to require it later on
- The most common assistance required is tutor support
- Students with dyslexia benefit from guidance on study methods e.g. independent learning strategies, use of mind mapping
- Some of the most common aids used by students with dyslexia include personalised dictionaries, laptop computers and computer learning packages, personalised dictionaries

Activity 14

You may have identified some of the following myths and misconceptions

- Unpredictable
- Dangerous
- Permanent condition
- Abnormal
- Not to be trusted
- Can't work
- Unable to cope
- Unreliable
- Need to be segregated

Activity 15

You may have identified some of the following stressful situations:

- Examinations
- Negative feedback
- Admission
- Submitting assignments
- Assessments
- Tutorials, group involvement

MODULE 4: THE ADULT IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you will have an appreciation of:

- Some of the key characteristics shared by adult learners
- The range of environmental and systemic barriers experienced by adult learners
- The importance of memory in the learning process

4.1 The Adult Learner

In July 2000, the White Paper on adult education, Learning for Life, defined adult education as:

'..... systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training'

'....as such it includes aspects of further and third level education, continuing education and training, community education and other systematic, deliberate learning by adults both formal and informal.....'

Adult learners come from all walks of life and bring with them a richness of experience and social complexity. Their educational backgrounds can range from very limited schooling to third level education.

Some people with disabilities return to education because they missed out on educational opportunities when they were younger. Many women return to education after raising a family.

Some people enroll on courses for reasons of personal or professional development. Many see educational advancement as a means getting a foothold on the employment ladder or as a way of changing career direction.

Adult learners share some of the following characteristics:

- May have fallen through the net or been failed by the educational system
- May not have had an opportunity in the past to explore their unique abilities and potential
- Have had negative experiences of education in the past
- Are involved in a life long learning process
- See education as a fresh start
- May be embarrassed about being involved in adult literacy classes

4.2 Barriers to learning

Adult learners may face greater challenges and barriers than other learners and need a high degree of motivation in order to succeed. Attending classes may have to be organized around family or other commitments, some of which may place limitations on a person's range of choices. Having a disability can add to these difficulties.

Adult learners may have to deal with some of the following **situational barriers**:

- Low income and financial constraints
- Multiple roles and demands: parent, student, employee
- Finding affordable childcare
- Lone parenthood
- Transport difficulties
- Care of elderly parents
- Disability
- Social isolation
- Benefits constraints
- A much longer and slower learning process

The educational system, to a large extent, operates on a traditional, school-based model, which lacks the sort of flexibility that adult learners need.

Some of the **systemic barriers** faced by adults might include the following:

- Further Education courses are often not modularized, making them more difficult to access
- Full-time free fees structure at third level limits access
- Lack of funding for part-time courses
- No time flexibility for full-time education
- Benefits trap which does not allow learners to study full-time
- Progression routes blocked because students do not have access to grants for part-time third level education
- Lack of knowledge about accommodations available



CASE STUDY

Joan became involved in adult education after she was made redundant from her job in a factory. She undertook a number of short computer courses in the evenings and went on to become the first person in her family to sit her Leaving Certificate.

Although Joan is very positive and enthusiastic about adult education, things have not always been easy. She is a lone parent of two small children and relies on benefits to get by. Joan would love to go College to do a Diploma in computer studies but feels that it is probably not practical. Full-time study is not an option because she would lose her benefits and there are no part-time courses available in her locality.

Having developed a taste for education, Joan can see how gaining qualifications would greatly enhance her future job prospects and is very frustrated that she cannot find a way to progress with her studies.

4.3 What makes adult learners different?

Adult learners are a diverse group with a broad range of life experience. Adults become part of the educational process on a voluntary basis. Unlike school pupils, they are in the educational system because they want to be.

Adult learners may therefore share some of the following characteristics:

- Highly motivated
- Results focused
- Build on past experience and knowledge
- Expect class time to be well spent
- Lack confidence in their abilities
- Learn experientially
- Want to be involved in the learning process
- Have a greater deal of autonomy
- Are self directed

4.4 Learning and Memory

Memory and learning are intrinsically linked and memory difficulties will have an impact on a person's ability to learn basic skills. In order to understand the results of this for the learner and the learning process we need to look at how our memory works. This is particularly important when working with learners who have difficulty with short-term memory recall.



People with dyslexia, intellectual disability, brain injury and epilepsy may experience cognitive difficulties such as with attention, processing or memory.

There are three different types of working memory, which are important for learning:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinaesthetic

Learning is most effective when we use all three types of memory, for example reading a passage (visual), repeating it aloud (auditory) and highlighting or underlining key points (kinaesthetic)

4.4.1 Memory and Learning Style

Learners with memory difficulties may find it difficult to follow a sequence, manage multiple tasks, retain information and follow instructions. It is therefore important to identify which type of instruction suits the learner best.

4.4.1.1 The Visual Learner

This person finds it easier to learn when they can see the information they need to learn.

This may be through:

- Reading
- Film or video
- Graphics or images
- Charts or diagrams
- Face to face interaction
- Group discussion
- Mind mapping
- Internet
- Group work

The visual learner will remember faces rather than names and will prefer to be shown rather than told what to do when experiencing difficulties.

4.4.1.2 The Auditory Learner

This student finds it easier to absorb new information through the spoken word.

This might include:

- Lectures or seminars
- Listening to or making audio tapes
- Reading aloud
- Verbally summarising
- Explaining the topic to someone else
- Group work

The auditory learner will remember names rather than faces and may like reading. They prefer to have things explained rather than demonstrated.

4.4.1.3 The Kinaesthetic Learner

This type of learner finds it easier to learn new things if they are actively involved in the learning process.

This might include:

- Underlining or highlighting key points
- Making a presentation
- Participating in a project
- Constructing a model or drawing a diagram
- Mind mapping
- Recording information

- Using and sorting index cards
- Interactive exercises
- Group work

This type of learner prefers a hands- on approach and learns best when they can handle or rework information.



Knowing which type of learning is most effective for the learner can enable tutors to adapt their teaching methods.



16. John has visual memory difficulties as a result of having had meningitis as a child. What is the best way of presenting new, career guidance information so that John can best remember it?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.65)

4.4.1.4 Identifying how the learner learns

There are a number of ways of establishing a student's learning style and learning preferences.

- Self assessment
- Observation
- Setting a task or exercise
- Discussion with the student
- Learning style questionnaire



CASE STUDY

Tom sustained a head injury as a result of a motorbike accident when he was at college. Although he made a full recovery it took some time and Tom's psychological assessment revealed that he had some residual auditory memory loss.

Tom has been offered a place on his original engineering course and is looking forward to getting back to college.

During the initial meeting with his guidance counsellor, Tom confirmed that he sometimes had difficulty with remembering things and that he was worried about how he would manage his course work.

Subsequent discussions and self-assessments during the course of the next few weeks revealed that Tom remembered things best when they were written down. He now uses work logs and diaries to organise his work. He summarises his written lecture notes again in the evenings to consolidate learning and has become very effective in using mind mapping as a memory tool.

4.5 Mind mapping

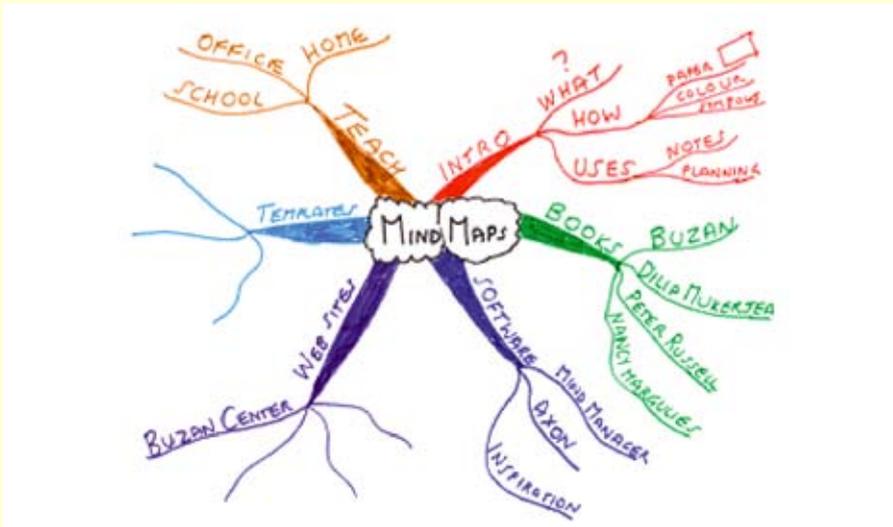
Mind mapping is one of the most powerful tools available to learners and provides a flexible format for capturing ideas and remembering information. Mind mapping involves writing down a key idea in the centre of a page and adding branches of related ideas radiating outwards.

A mind map has been defined as:

'a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central word or idea. It is used to generate, visualise, structure and classify ideas and as an aid in study, organisation, problem solving and decision making.'

(Wikipedia)

Because mind maps are visual, they are much easier to recall than conventional notes. They depict association of ideas and key words so are much more accessible than notes when organising information for essays or examinations.



(www.members.optusnet.com)

We can see from the above example that a mind map is a very effective way of showing connections and relationships between ideas. The use of branches, colours, lines, symbols and arrows can enable the learner to form logical and accessible plans or maps which can be used in a great variety of ways.

Mind mapping is a great way for learners to:

- Be creative. The free association of ideas enables a greater flow of creative thinking
- Plan and organise. Mind maps enable the learner to get all their ideas down in one place so that they can be organised more easily
- Remember. The visual nature of a mind map makes it easier for the learner to retrieve information from memory
- Take notes and present information. Key words or concepts can be quickly noted and recalled easily when needed
- Brainstorm problems. Mind maps highlight connections and relationships which can be a useful way of sorting out the issues and their order of importance.

4.6 Motivating the adult learner

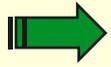
Adults require a great deal of self-motivation to study, perhaps while juggling a variety of other commitments and demands on their time. Guidance counsellors can be an important source of encouragement and support.

There are a number of key motivational principles to bear in mind:

- Frequent, constructive feedback ensures that the learner is aware of what they have achieved and what areas they need to improve on. Concrete suggestions for improvement will provide practical help
- Adult learners thrive in an atmosphere which is built on trust and mutual respect and prefer a climate which is informal, individualised and personal
- Drawing upon learner's experience as a resource and using real life examples will encourage them to use their reflective skills and will act as a positive reinforcement
- Providing opportunities for problem solving and experimentation will build confidence and promote creative thinking
- **Involving** learners in planning for their future will enable them to form concrete goals and achievable aims
- Peer support and professional back-up from counsellors can make a difference if the learner runs into difficulties
- All adults like to express their views and have their values affirmed



Feedback is one of the simplest and most powerful tools for keeping people motivated



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 4

Activity 16

Some of the suggestions you might have made could include the following:

- Giving John information verbally
- Asking him to repeat the information aloud
- Allowing him to record the information in audio format
- Presenting information in a workshop
- Asking him to input information onto a PC using voice recognition software
- Presenting information in a mind-mapping format

MODULE 5: INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ADULT LEARNING

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Outline how to identify a student's needs in relation to the demands of a course
- Understand the importance of planning in the learning process
- Understand a range of strategies for course delivery

5.1 Student inclusion

Adult students bring with them a unique set of abilities and experiences to the educational environment. Students with disabilities are no exception and may indeed add an even greater diversity of life experience to enrich the learning environment.

While these students may learn in different ways, these differences do not imply reduced academic capacity or capability.



There is no need to dilute curriculum or reduce course requirements for students with disabilities

Some students may, however need access to certain accommodations. Modifications in the way information is presented may be required and methods of testing and assessment may need to be adapted.

Tutors can be aided in their efforts by drawing upon the student's own prior learning experiences and may be able to draw upon existing resources.



17. What difficulties might tutors encounter if asked to include students with disabilities on their course?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(See P.80)

It can be daunting for an adult returning to education, perhaps after many years and possibly having had only negative experiences at school. The person may be lacking in confidence and feel apprehensive about how they are going to cope.

There are four key ways of strengthening a learner's confidence and self-esteem:

1. **Awareness** - knowing about the disability
2. **Assessment** – understanding the impact of a disability and identifying one's strengths and weaknesses
3. **Accommodation** – knowing what compensatory strategies and techniques help
4. **Advocacy** – knowing what legal rights and services they are entitled to

(NALLD 1994)

Guidance counsellors can support this strengthening process by:

- Identifying what the student needs
- Making an individual plan based on that identification of needs

- Reviewing the plan on a regular basis to set new goals
- Giving frequent constructive feedback on progress to date

5.2 Identifying what a student needs - pre-entry

When working with students with disabilities, it is important to establish what, if any, accommodations they might need in the course of their studies.

The following questions may help to determine what accommodations an individual student requires:

- What are the specific demands of the course in question
- Has there been a meeting between the student and tutor to try and establish educational needs
- What specific limitations or problems is the student experiencing
- How are these difficulties going to impact on the student's ability to learn
- What strategies or accommodations are possible to reduce or eliminate barriers to learning
- Is it possible to have regular meeting between student and tutors for feedback and planning

Establishing what a student needs should involve some discussion with them as to:

- What difficulties are being experienced
- What effect these difficulties are having and to what degree
- What specific accommodations are required to eliminate or reduce these difficulties
- What strategies have worked in the past
- What resources are available



CASE STUDY

Mary is a mature student who has had a successful career as a senior childcare worker. New regulations meant that Mary needed to gain a formal qualification in social care. Mary found her degree course daunting and failed her first assignment. Her tutor explained that Mary's written work lacked structure and was difficult to understand because of poor spelling, grammar and syntax. Mary had experienced similar difficulties throughout her schooling.

Her tutor referred Mary to Disability Support services and an assessment by an educational psychologist revealed that her difficulties were due to dyslexia. Mary was finally able to understand the nature of her difficulties with written language and to identify the sort of accommodations she needed on her course. With the assistance of a learning support tutor, Mary was able to regain confidence in her own intelligence and ability to learn.

(AHEAD)

5.4 Identifying accommodation needs

Identifying the demands a course is going to place on a student is an important first step in discovering what accommodations or supports may need to be put in place.

The following checklist could be used, as a basis for an exploratory meeting between counsellor and student, as appropriate.

Course Demands checklist

Will undertaking the course require me to consider assistance in the following areas:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Remembering things | Yes | No |
| 2. Concentration | Yes | No |
| 3. Solving problems | Yes | No |

4.	Following a sequence	Yes	No
5.	Organising things	Yes	No
6.	Written work	Yes	No
7.	Reading	Yes	No
8.	Note taking	Yes	No
9.	Using the laboratory	Yes	No
10.	Field trips	Yes	No
11.	Using the library	Yes	No
12.	Following verbal instructions	Yes	No
13.	Following written instructions	Yes	No
14.	Understanding diagrams	Yes	No
15.	Getting from place to place	Yes	No
16.	Meeting deadlines	Yes	No
17.	Managing multiple tasks	Yes	No
18.	Study skills	Yes	No
19.	Maths	Yes	No
20.	Physical demands	Yes	No
21.	Transport	Yes	No
22.	Examinations	Yes	No
23.	Accommodation	Yes	No
24.	Finances	Yes	No
25.	Childminding	Yes	No

5.4 Planning the learning process

Identifying the demands of a course with students will make it easier to identify what accommodations are needed during the course. All students benefit from two-way communication and involvement in their education. Learning will be most effective when it has clear goals and objectives.

This may involve the following process:

- Identifying specific accommodations required
- Assisting the student in making an individual plan
- Prioritising learning objectives
- Selecting appropriate teaching methods
- Reviewing progress
- Identifying achievements
- Setting goals for improvement

An individual plan should reflect the student's identified needs and should include:

- Written long-term and short-term learning objectives
- Specific actions as to how to achieve these objectives
- Allocation of the various responsibilities
- Written copies to all participants in the plan
- Regular review dates
- Positive reinforcement
- Practical strategies for change

The Guidance Counsellor can play a vital role in this planning process by facilitating the student to take stock of where they going and to 'help someone work out what they want and then help them work out how to attain/achieve it'

(Richie et al 2003)

Adult learners will usually place a high value on their autonomy and will be keen to be actively involved in their learning. One of the ways people learn is through reflecting on their own and others experience. Planning and reviewing progress on a regular basis will ensure that students are actively involved in developing strategies for dealing with any difficulties that arise.



Students learn best when they perceive that what they learn is useful and relevant to their circumstances.

Sample Individual Plan

The following is an example of an individual plan, which can be used with a student as appropriate:

Individual Plan of: _____

Course: _____

Date: _____ **Review date:** _____

Difficulties experienced in the following areas:

Accommodations needed:

Following actions agreed:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This is the individual plan review of: _____

Course: _____

Date: _____ **Date of next review:** _____

What worked well:

What difficulties were encountered:

Actions agreed:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

5.5 Delivering the course

When planning the delivery of a course to students with disabilities, there are a number of things for tutors to bear in mind:

- Ensure that the content and teaching methods reflect identified needs
- Emphasise discussion and self directed learning activities
- Use interactive methods such as group work, role play, case studies and practical exercises
- Build in opportunities for experimentation
- Ensure the materials and teaching methods reflect the student's learning style
- Allow plenty of time for practice and repetition

Like any other student, those with disabilities may have had negative learning experiences in the past. In addition, they may have physical or health difficulties to contend with.

Tutors may therefore need to:

- Continue to identify and prioritise learning needs during the course
- Break down tasks into sub-tasks and teach them one at a time
- Show the student how to analyse and break down tasks so that they can do it independently
- Provide ongoing feedback to improve motivation
- Allow the student to make mistakes
- Give instructions one step at a time and encourage the student to write things down
- Work with the student in developing memorising strategies
- Frequently check the student's understanding of subject matter
- Gradually build up the amounts of information you give in order to increase the student's attention span

- Provide repetition, demonstrate new tasks and give concrete examples to illustrate points
- Understand that some students may tire easily so provide rest breaks as needed
- Give the student more time to complete assignments and exams
- Maintain a consistent routine and let the student know in advance if that routine is going to change
- Reduce distractions such as noise as far as possible in the classroom
- Make contact with organisations who can provide support and increase understanding of disability issues



List some of the other things a tutor can do to help students learn more effectively

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



CASE STUDY

Barbara is a second year Community Studies student. Last term, she had two large projects to prepare before the Christmas break. Barbara became very anxious because of the time pressure and found it difficult to concentrate on both projects at the same time. She began to lose sleep, which made things worse.

Barbara finally plucked up the courage to meet with her tutors. She was able to negotiate extensions for both projects and agree new deadlines for their completion. This reduced her anxiety considerably. Barbara created a new daily schedule for herself to help her stay on track.



Does your institution have a policy on the inclusion of students with disabilities?
If so, how is it incorporated into everyday practice?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

5.6 New students

The start of a new course or the beginning of a new academic year can be overwhelming for a student. Planning ahead and getting more information can sometimes help reduce some of the pressure. Visiting the college, meeting with tutors, guidance counsellors and Disability Services can really help to make the transition less stressful for new students.

Some of the following things may be useful to consider:

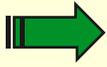
- Orientation to the college and classrooms can minimise student's anxiety as can making booklists and course materials available as early as possible
- Establishing what a student needs as early as possible can help reduce problems later on.
- It is the student's responsibility to make it known that they have a disability and to request the provision of the accommodations they need
- A wheelchair user or a student using some other assistive device may, at times encounter obstacles or barriers in getting to class on time. Flexibility around timekeeping and attendance may, at times be needed but ground rules need to be agreed with individual students

- Classroom seating needs to be arranged in order to maximise student's ability to see and hear
- Tutors need to remember to face the class and avoid moving around when speaking. They also need to keep communication simple, using demonstration and concrete examples whenever possible
- Key points, new and technical terms should be clearly written on the blackboard or screen
- Students who find it difficult to take notes would be helped by allowing them to tape lectures or by making lecture notes available to them. Note takers may be necessary in some cases and this should be agreed beforehand
- Some students may need to take exams orally or may need to use readers or scribes. Others may need time extensions or some modification to the exam format
- Where possible, make materials available by electronically
- Carry out an audit to see how accessible your educational establishment is to students with disabilities.



Accessibility Audit

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Is there sufficient course information available to enable a potential student with a disability to make an informed decision as to whether the course is suitable? | YES | NO |
| 2. Is this information available in accessible formats? | YES | NO |
| 3. Are courses flexible in relation to attendance requirements | YES | NO |
| 4. Is there a student induction and orientation process in place | YES | NO |
| 5. Are there procedures in place for consulting with other professionals in relation to identified student needs | YES | NO |
| 6. Are there procedures in place for ensuring that staff are made aware of the specific needs of students in a class or tutorial situation | YES | NO |
| 7. Do staff receive training in how to work with students with disabilities | YES | NO |
| 8. Are there systems in place for alternative ways of assessing students' work if required | YES | NO |
| 9. Can course materials be made available in alternative formats | YES | NO |
| 10. Can examination papers be presented in alternative formats | YES | NO |
| 11. Is there flexibility in relation to deadlines for assignments | YES | NO |
| 12. Can alternative examination arrangements be made if required | YES | NO |



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 5

Activity 17

You may have identified some of the following difficulties:

- Lack of previous experience of working with students with disabilities
- Lack of knowledge about the impact of impairment on study patterns
- Lack of knowledge about technical supports available
- Inflexibility of course structure and prescribed activities
- Lack of time to take on any additional work
- Implications for routine methods of learning and teaching
- Assessment requirements
- Impact on other students
- Maintaining academic/professional standards
- Health and safety considerations

MODULE 6: ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify a range of accommodations available in adult education
- Be aware of a range of strategies for use in an educational setting
- Understand the accommodation needs of students with a range of disabilities

6.1 Accommodating the student

An educational accommodation is an arrangement that involves introducing some type of support for a student. This can be an arrangement for a student to be able to tape lectures, to have information available in different formats or to be able to sit an examination in a quiet room. There are a number of practical ways in which students can be assisted, such as being given class notes and handouts ahead of time and permitting lectures to be taped. Some students may simply need more time to complete tasks, assignments or examinations.

The education system has been designed for the needs of the “traditional learner” and does not take account of the needs of people who learn differently. For example, a blind student cannot learn through a visual medium and will require information to be presented in different, accessible formats such as audiotapes. Those who have guide dogs need to be able to bring them to classes.

This sort of accommodation does not give students with a disability an unfair advantage over other students. Rather, it helps ‘level the playing field’ so that students with disabilities can compete on an equal footing with their peers. Academic standards do not need to be compromised and students’ work can be assessed on exactly the same criteria.

Students with disabilities fall into a number of groups. Some may require no supports or accommodations during their course of studies. Others may identify themselves as needing some assistance, resource or equipment.

There may be some students who choose not to identify themselves as having a disability but who may actually need some accommodations. These students can sometimes run into difficulty with their course work because they lack the additional help they require.

Many students are reluctant to disclose their disability because of the stigma attached or because they want to make it on their own. Some of these students can get into difficulty in dealing with the demands of academic work, particularly in the first year. It is important therefore that students are encouraged to seek access to the supports and accommodations they need and are reassured that they will be treated in a confidential manner. A short sentence could be included in the course information to the effect that adjustments are routinely made for students with **identified** disabilities.

6.2 Including Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Whatever the degree of impairment, students who are visually impaired should be expected and facilitated to participate fully in classroom activities such as discussions and group work. To record notes, some may need to use aids such as laptop computers or computerised Brailleurs.

Some students may encounter difficulties in laboratory classes or field trips but with careful planning, most difficulties can be minimised.

6.2.1 Pre-entry or early in the course – assessing what the student needs

The following are some of the accommodations which may be required:

- The provision of reading lists or syllabi well in advance to allow time for such arrangements as the taping or Brailing of text
- Ensuring that core learning texts are available in alternative formats
- Assistance in finding note takers or tutors as necessary. Where possible, students need to be teamed with a sighted classmate

- Front seats may need to be reserved for low-vision students and magnified print may need to be used. If a guide dog is being used, it will be highly disciplined but will require some additional space.

6.2.2 During the Course

Tutors working with students who have visual impairments may need to:

- Convey in spoken words whatever information is presented on the board or screen
- Permit the use of assistive technological devices for recording lectures
- Provide lecture notes in Braille format if necessary
- Provide large print copies of classroom materials
- Be flexible with deadline assignments as it can take a student with visual impairment up to 50% longer to complete a written assignment.
- Plan field trips or external activities well in advance and alert supervisors as to what arrangements may be needed.
- Consider alternative assignments that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter if a specific task is impossible for them to carry out

6.2.3 Examinations and Assessments

Students should not be exempt from examinations because of a visual impairment and should not be expected to master less content or attain a lower level of academic skill. Alternative methods of assessing their course achievements may be necessary.

The student and the Disability Officer should be able to offer suggestions on testing and evaluation strategies based on previous experience. Because it takes considerably longer for students with visual impairments to complete their work, examination times may need to be extended.

The following represents some of the alternative methods of presenting examinations:

- Provision of exam papers in Braille formats
- Personal computer with screen reading software
- Provision of a reader
- Provision of exam papers on audiotape
- Provision of exam papers through personal computer in large size format



Access means much more than being able to get into buildings. Information also needs to be available in accessible formats



CASE STUDY

Jane has a progressive eye condition that affects the vision in both her eyes. She has sufficient vision to recognise very large print, outlines of her physical environment, colours and darkness and light. She uses a guide dog and is mobile within familiar environments.

Jane is about to begin a post Leaving Certificate course and would like to take a computer subject, as it is a key communication tool for her. She enjoys using technology and believes that she learns new things easily. Jane has never studied as a blind person and is very anxious about how she will learn new skills and how she will manage to compete with the other students



18. What sort of difficulties might Jane encounter on her course?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.111)

6.3 Including Students with Physical Disabilities

A wide range of physical conditions may limit mobility and/or hand function. Some of these conditions may also impair strength, speed, endurance, coordination and dexterity.

Physical access is a major concern for students with a physical disability and some may have difficulty in getting to and from class or managing out of class assignments and tests.

Those who use wheelchairs, braces, crutches, prostheses or canes, or those who fatigue easily, can find moving about difficult, especially with the time constraints imposed by classroom timetables. Occasional lateness may be unavoidable due to transport problems or wheelchair breakdown.

Getting out of the classroom or building quickly may be a problem, particularly in the case of an emergency.



Students with disabilities need to be included in emergency evacuation drills

The following points should be noted:

- Access issues need to be discussed with the student and suitable arrangements put in place for attending classes
- Be prepared for a change of classroom or building if no other solution is possible.
- Familiarise yourself with the building's emergency evacuation plan and ensure that it is manageable for students with physical disabilities.
- Consider what evacuation procedures are available from the upper floors of buildings



19. What factors need to be taken into consideration when carrying out a fire evacuation drill, which includes people with disabilities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.111)

6.3.1 In the Classroom

Some courses and classrooms can present obstacles, which can make it difficult for students with physical disabilities to fully participate. When seating these students, every effort should be made to integrate them in the class.

- In some cases, chairs can be unbolted from fixed seating to make room for a wheelchair.
- Work stations which are too high or which have insufficient room for knee clearance can be modified or replaced with portable stations.
- Students with hand-function impairments may find it difficult to use the library for reading or research. Arrangements for assistance may need to be made with library staff for access to card indexes, bookshelves, microfiche and other equipment.
- Assistance may also be needed with the manipulation of documents and page turning. Page-turners may be needed.
- Students with hand-function impairments may also experience difficulties with note taking. Wrist rests may be needed.

Since some students may experience difficulty with written work, tutors may need to consider whether assistive technological support is required.

The following strategies may help:

- Allowing the use of a note taker or assistive technology devices for recording lectures
- Making copies of lecture notes available
- Allowing additional time for the completion of written assignments

Many types of high and low-tech devices are now available for people with physical disabilities. These include specialist mice, screen reading software, wrist rests, page-turners and copyholders.

6.4 Including Students with Dyslexia

Adults with dyslexia might not have had their difficulties identified at school so may have had repeated experience of failure and frustration whilst learning. Most are likely to have developed compensatory strategies for dealing with their memory and language processing difficulties. Some of these strategies will continue to be useful whilst other, newer ways of learning may need to be adopted.

Students with dyslexia share a common learning style, which is characterised by:

- A tendency towards holistic thinking and looking for patterns and relationships
- Highly developed visual or spatial skills
- A reliance on long term memory and association of ideas
- Over learning or learning by rote to compensate for poor short term memory
- Lateral and creative thinking
- Difficulty in tracking time and direction and in using numbers
- An ability to see the 'big picture'

Tutors may take these learning issues into consideration when:

- Teaching
- Setting reading work
- Setting written assignments
- Giving feedback on assignments
- Preparing students for examinations
- Offering examination facilities

**CASE STUDY**

Adrian is a 19-year-old student on a full-time computer course at his local FE College. An educational psychologist recently carried out a psychological assessment and the results indicated that Adrian has dyslexia. Adrian can read print in font size 12, but his reading is slow, inaccurate and he frequently misreads words – reading print in font size 16 is much easier.

Adrian has short-term memory difficulties and is easily distracted. He finds taking notes and listening at the same time very difficult and organising his ideas for written assignments is a real problem. Revising for exams is also difficult and Adrian gets muddled easily when reading examination papers.

Adrian is very bright and psychological test results revealed very high verbal reasoning and comprehension scores. He is, however experiencing some difficulties with the maths module of the course. Adrian is fascinated by technology and owns his own laptop, which he uses for surfing the Internet and playing games.



Adrian met with his guidance counsellor and his tutor and the following individual plan was agreed:

1. Adrian needs to develop his study skills with individualised tutorial support
2. He needs an assessment to identify his assistive technology needs.
Inspiration mind-mapping software is to be sourced to help Adrian improve his visual memory techniques.
3. A Text Help Gold package is also to be sourced. This is a scanner which reads material which can then be copied onto a memory stick for use on any computer
4. Adrian is to practice using his laptop for college work as well as for entertainment
5. Adrian's tutor will redesign maths exercises so that they are broken down into easy to follow stages.

6.4.1 Teaching strategies

During classes, students with dyslexia will be required to do a number of things at once, listen, write, and summarise, all of which they will need to do quickly. It may be difficult for some students to keep up with note taking or to copy written material.

When presenting written material it is important to:

- Use coloured paper rather than white and keep backgrounds plain
- Use a clear font such as Ariel or Comic Sans and bold rather than underline text
- Keep text simple and break in down well into paragraphs, using bullet points and clear headings
- Use graphs, flowcharts, diagrams and other visual cues
- Print clearly and avoid writing in red

- Highlight important items
- Provide handouts whenever possible
- Make information available electronically where possible

Many students will benefit from the sort of teaching practice which best suits those with dyslexia. It will be particularly helpful for students with intellectual disability or those for whom English is a second language.

Tutors can undertake a number of steps to adapt their teaching methods to the learning style of students with dyslexia, including:

- Briefly reviewing the previous class and giving an overview of the present one
- Providing copies of notes and overheads
- Using large font in handouts and limiting the amount of information on each page
- Briefly annotating reading lists
- Breaking complex topics into smaller, simpler sections
- Avoiding unnecessary jargon
- Using a practical, multi sensory approach to cater to the student's learning style by presenting materials such as videos, flow charts, diagrams and audio tapes
- Allowing students to use assistive technology devices during lectures
- Highlighting patterns or themes in subject matter as this enables students to associate ideas and caters to their visual/spatial skills
- Encouraging students to ask questions and if necessary, re-explain complex material using simpler language



The following is an example of how a maths task can be broken down and simplified for a student with dyslexia

Original maths task:

The perimeter of a field in the shape of a right-angled triangle is 208m. The longest side is 89m. Find the lengths of the other 2 sides.

This task can be rewritten in a more user-friendly way using large, Ariel font with clearly separated sub-tasks using symbols where possible.

Revised maths task:

An engineer is fencing off a piece of land and he wants a piece of land in the shape of a triangle. It must have an angle of 90° .

He has 208m of wiring and he must use all of it.

He fences off the longest side of the land first. The length of the longest side is 89m.

Draw a sketch of piece of land.

Find the lengths of the other two sides.



When assessing student's work, it is important to decide exactly what skills are to be assessed. Using visual cues and breaking down tasks will encourage the student to learn independently.

6.4.2 Setting Reading Work

Reading is an essential element of most courses, but tutors can tailor reading requirements to students with dyslexia by:

- Making allowances for the fact that students may be competent at reading to themselves, but may have impaired ability when reading in front of others
- Only asking students with dyslexia to read aloud if they want to and giving them advance notice
- Offering students extra time for reading tasks and giving examples of the sort of information they should look out for
- Helping students make choices about essential reading
- Giving a list of key words in advance of assigning a reading passage, as students with dyslexia have difficulties with scanning text for gist
- Using cues, models, themes and visual aids as memory prompts

6.4.3 Setting Written Assignments

Most courses rely on some form of written assignments to measure students' progress. Students with dyslexia are often at a disadvantage in this area.

Tutors and support staff can assist them by:

- Establishing a reduced word count for essays
- Helping students to plan essays by breaking them into smaller steps
- Setting interim targets for various stages of an assignment, rather than having a single final deadline
- Offering to go over early drafts of assignments and encouraging students to use non-linear notes
- Encouraging students to focus less on spelling and presentation than on content, until they prepare their final draft
- Focusing students on key essay requirements, such as introductions, conclusions, presentation of arguments backed up by supporting evidence and research
- Assisting them with the essential writing conventions such as bibliographies, references, citations and footnotes
- Suggesting students write on only one side of the page and use double spacing so that corrections can be easily identified and made
- Suggesting that students record any specific or important instructions or conversations so that they can remember them



Disability Support Services recommends that all students with dyslexia become computer literate

- Highlighting any patterns in errors and colour coding them, for example, using green for grammar and red for spelling
- Keeping feedback sessions short so as not to overload the student with corrections
- Focusing on a small number of error types at a time
- Encouraging students to keep diaries and personalised dictionaries
- Using whatever specialised supports and resources that are available

6.4.5 Preparing Students for Examinations

Pre-exam study demands a high level of motivation and examinations place pressure on all students.

For those with dyslexia, this pressure can be intense and study time is most effectively used if it is geared towards the student's learning style.

Tutors can offer these students pre-exam assistance by:

- Establishing a schedule for short-term, mid-term and long-term planning goals
- Reviewing past examination papers, together with course handouts and overviews
- Rehearsing the reading and interpretation of questions for example, by using the SCORER acronym (Scheduling time, searching for Clue words, Omitting difficult questions, Reading carefully, Estimating time for answers and Reviewing work)
- Helping students to plan possible exam answers, using past papers as a guide
- Encouraging students to use highlighter pens to pick out key words in questions as they read them
- Introducing students to mind-mapping concepts, which can be used to help them organise key information in a visual format

- Encouraging students to proof-read their answers critically, using a checklist of 'personal errors'
- Getting students to rehearse sticking to a strict timeframe by answering past exam questions under timed conditions
- Agreeing an emergency plan, such as using bullet points, if time management fails
- Offering stress management tips to help cope with anxiety and use adrenaline to good effect

6.4.6 Examination Facilities

Examinations can be more daunting for students with dyslexia because of the additional effort they need to make in order to interpret the meaning of exam questions, recall information quickly and structure ideas coherently within a limited timeframe.

Whereas certain exam features, such as a deadline for completion of the paper, cannot be eliminated, institutions can help minimise the impact of dyslexia on exam performance by:

- Avoiding complex language in exam questions and clearly separating questions on the exam paper
- Offering some extra time – on average 10 minutes for every exam hour – to compensate for the additional effort students with dyslexia need to put into reading, writing and recalling memorised information
- Opting for multiple choice or short answer questions rather than questions which require essay type answers
- Avoiding answer sheets, particularly computer forms, which pose particular difficulties for students with perceptual difficulties
- Allowing students to use a dictionary, hand-held spelling checker or personalised list of spellings
- Printing exam questions in enlarged font and on shaded paper, such as light blue or pink, to eliminate the glare that can arise from traditional black text on a white background

- Enabling students to use a quiet room, to minimise the risk of distractions
- Allowing students to record their answers orally while still providing skeletal notes to show planning and structure
- Permitting the use of exam questions on audio tape using a headset
- Allowing students the use of a computer, ideally one with voice recognition software, so that they can explain their answers orally and edit them on screen
- Permitting students to use a scribe to write down answers
- Allowing students to view the exam paper in advance and have unfamiliar words explained to them



CASE STUDY

In his first year as a business studies student, Mark experienced great difficulty during his first written exams. He found it particularly difficult to differentiate between individual questions on the exam papers and to answer the questions within the time allocated. Stress compounded these problems.

Following Mark's poor exam performance, he was assessed by an educational psychologist who identified that Mark had dyslexia.

The Disability Support Officer carried out a needs assessment with Mark to identify the academic tasks he was having difficulties with and the supports or accommodations, which might help him.

The college has now provided a range of accommodations in examinations for Mark. Examination questions are now clearly separated and Mark has been given additional time to complete his examination papers.

Mark is currently developing his keyboard skills and will use a PC with voice recognition software during his second year at college. He will also attend a Learning Support tutor for two hours per week to improve his study skills.

6.5 Including Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearings

Despite the many advances in the education of students who are deaf over recent years, educational standards, particularly in numeracy and reading skills have remained well below the norm.

Research has consistently shown that the reading levels of 16 to 18 year old students who are deaf are only equivalent to those attained by hearing children within the 9-10 age group.

(Quigley & Paul, 1984)

6.5.1 Pre-entry or early in the course

English is a second language for many students who are deaf; therefore their comprehension of the language may not be at the same level as their peers. Students who are profoundly deaf or have a serious hearing impairment will have great difficulty in understanding the spoken word.

If a student is using a sign language interpreter, it may be necessary for a tutor to meet with both student and interpreter at the start of the course. It is important to develop systems for ensuring that the interpreter has access to teaching material in advance.



CASE STUDY

Mary has a hearing impairment and has enrolled on a computer course at her local college.

She wears a hearing aid and is able to follow a face-to-face conversation providing the environment is quiet and there are only one or two people present.

Mary has organised a meeting with her course tutor to discuss how she can best access the curriculum.



20. What sort of problems do you think that Mary might identify? What sort of accommodation do you think she might need during lectures and tutorials?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.111)

6.5.2 Teaching strategies

People who are deaf are likely to miss out on everyday opportunities to learn and absorb language and information - access to conversation, radio, television and film are all very much restricted. The main difficulty experienced by a student who is deaf therefore is likely to be related to language.

Some of the difficulties experienced by students in the classroom might include:

- Limited vocabulary and difficulty in extracting meaning from written material
- Difficulty in producing written work without grammatical or spelling errors
- Misinterpretation of written information
- Difficulty in absorbing new words or concepts

Tutors can offer assistance by:

- Providing reading lists or syllabi in advance. This will assist students in prioritising their work and organising any assistance they might need
- Making course notes available and allowing the assistance of a note taker if required
- Explaining unfamiliar terminology or technical terms. Interpreters may need to work with students in devising signs for new vocabulary or concepts

- Write new words down and use examples to explain new ideas
- Summarise information frequently
- Allow students more time to absorb new information and to take notes. Students who lip read can miss a lot of what is being said
- Make it clear when you are moving to a new topic to avoid confusion
- Writing down important information
- Avoid moving around when speaking and always face the audience
- Using visual cues such as charts, overheads and diagrams wherever possible
- Making sure that the lighting in the classroom is adequate
- Remember that sign language interpreters need time to translate what is being said
- Arranging the seating so that the student can see both tutor and other students
- Reducing background noise from equipment where possible
- Using an audio loop where possible
- Speaking clearly and using Plain English
- Inviting regular feedback from students to ensure that they are following what is going on

6.5.3 Examination Facilities

The provision of adequate communication channels for students who are deaf or hard of hearing is fundamental to ensuring equality of access to examination procedures.

It should be the responsibility of supervisory staff in the examination centres to ensure that all announcements are properly interpreted for any deaf or hard of hearing students.

The giving of instructions by the invigilator during exams can be facilitated using the following procedures:

- The use of a sign language interpreter (if the student uses sign language)
- Facing the students and speaking clearly (if the student lip reads)
- Producing all examination instructions in writing.
- The use of FM hearing system or induction loops

6.5.4 Alternative Answering Procedures

Examination in written format will present particular difficulties for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.



The granting of extra time to these students may be fundamental to bringing equality and fairness to examination procedures

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may require time extensions for examinations with significant reading demands – the amount of extra time allowed will depend on the individual's needs.

The provision of some of the following accommodations may also be required:

- Access to an interpreter who will translate the exam questions into sign language
- Provision of a dictionary and thesaurus
- Simplification of complex language in exam questions and access to the tutor during exams to clarify comprehension of questions
- Completion of examinations through a personal computer with spelling and grammar checks, dictionaries and thesauruses
- Where necessary, allowing the student to present the examination answers through sign language or a scribe



CASE STUDY

Dave is a first year Mechanical Engineering student who has a profound hearing impairment. His first language is Irish Sign Language (ISL).

The college facilitated access to sign language interpretation for Dave in classes and tutorials and this system enabled him to effectively access the curriculum.

Dave did not have an interpreter during his first examinations and the examination supervisor was unaware of his communication requirements. When Dave told the supervisor that he needed assistance, he was provided with examination instructions in written form.

The college has since agreed to provide either an interpreter or clear written examination instructions for Dave. The supervisor will also communicate in writing with Dave during the examinations if required.

Examination supervisors are now always made aware of the presence of a student with a disability, and of their specific accommodation needs, in advance of examinations.

6.6 Including Students with Mental Health Disabilities

Modern medication can be very effective in controlling the symptoms of mental illness so for some students, their disability will have little or no impact on their ability to learn. Many people also develop a range of strategies to cope with their disability.

Some students may however display the following:

- Reluctance to participate
- Poor self confidence
- Memory problems
- Anxiety
- Difficulty in remaining focussed and motivated
- Prioritising work
- Meeting deadlines
- Timekeeping and attendance

Medication can also cause:

- Drowsiness
- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth
- Difficulties with concentration

6.6.1 Teaching strategies

Having a mental health problem can sometimes make it difficult to carry on with everyday life. Adult education can provide some of the supports that can lessen the impact and enable students to be successful learners.

Some students may feel they cannot cope with study but most problems can be resolved or at least minimised so that the student is able to remain on their course.

Some of the following strategies may help:

- Spreading the workload so that there are not too many deadlines occurring at the same time
- Some flexibility around deadlines for assignments may be required. This needs to be negotiated and agreed with individual students
- Although large groups can be daunting, working in pairs may help reduce isolation
- Agreeing work to be carried out at home if the student needs to discontinue the course for a period of time
- Allowing students to tape classes if needed
- Negotiating targets if timekeeping or attendance is a problem
- Asking the student what has worked well for them in the past
- Making the student aware of any counselling supports available

6.6.2 Examination Facilities

Examinations are stressful for all students and some may need accommodations in order to be successful:

Some of the following accommodations may be appropriate:

- Provision of time extensions in examinations
- Examinations in a separate room or quiet area
- Designated seating close to the door
- Provision of rest periods- some students may require a break(s) during the examination
- Provision of flexible time arrangements in examinations including split sessions on the same or successive days
- Allowing the student to have drinks during exams
- Provision of an alternative task or assignment rather than a set examination



CASE STUDY

Patrick is a mature student currently completing the first year of a diploma in Social Science.

Patrick has a history of mental health problems and experienced both panic attacks and high levels of anxiety before entering adult education. He entered college through an access programme and during his first examinations he experienced high levels of stress and anxiety.

Patrick found the build up to the examinations extremely difficult. Also, the noise and distraction caused by other students in the large examination hall added to his anxiety and affected both his concentration and his performance.

College tutors were surprised by Patrick's poor exam performance. The college subsequently agreed to allow Patrick to sit his final exams in an individual examination centre.

They have also agreed to accommodate, if necessary, a number of planned breaks during these exams. Extra time will be given in lieu of these rest breaks.

6.7 Including students who have intellectual disabilities

An intellectual disability poses a lifelong challenge and may pose particular difficulties as the student attempts to navigate the learning environment.

Adults with intellectual disabilities may:

- Have poor memory skills
- Avoid reading or writing in class
- Have difficulty with abstract concepts
- Work slowly
- Have difficulty summarising information
- Misread or misspell words
- Have difficulty with making changes or adjusting to new settings

It is important therefore to identify how the student approaches learning and what sort of strategies work best.

In identifying the individual's learning style, it may be useful to observe whether the student:

- Follows verbal, written, or practical instructions best
- Completes tasks independently or needs assistance
- Works best alone or in a group
- Needs frequent repetition
- Can identify their strengths in learning
- Learns best through verbal, written or 'learning by doing' methods
- Has any difficulty in remembering things
- Works at the same pace as other students
- Needs time to practice and rehearse

6.7.1 Course Design

One of the ways people learn best is through reflecting on their own and others experience. All students will benefit from a course, which has a variety of instructional methods and opportunities for learning.



Students learn best when they perceive that what they are learning is useful and relevant to their circumstances and lives.

When designing a course, there are a number of things to bear in mind:

- Ensure that the content and teaching methods reflect assessed needs
- Emphasise discussion and self directed learning activities
- Use interactive methods such as group work, role play, case studies and practical exercises
- Build in opportunities for experimentation
- Ensure the materials and teaching methods reflect the student's learning style
- Allow plenty of time for practice and repetition

6.7.2 Teaching strategies

Like any other student, those adults with intellectual disability may have had negative learning experiences in the past. In addition, they may have cognitive difficulties to contend with.

To work constructively with students with intellectual disabilities, tutors may need to:

- Use short, simple sentences in Plain English where possible
- Present information in a sequence
- Avoid words with double meanings and double negatives
- Continue to identify and prioritise learning needs during the course
- Use active rather than passive constructions
- Break down tasks into sub-tasks and present them one at a time
- Teach the student how to analyse and break down tasks so that they can learn independently
- Provide ongoing feedback to improve motivation
- Allow the student to make mistakes
- Use practical, hands on demonstrations where possible

- Give instructions one step at a time and frequently check the student's understanding of the subject matter
- Work with the student in developing memorising strategies and encourage them to use mind-mapping techniques
- Gradually build up the amounts of information you give in order to increase the student's attention span
- Provide repetition, demonstrate new tasks and give concrete examples to explain
- Give the student more time to complete assignments and exams
- Maintain a consistent routine and let the student know in advance if that routine is going to change
- Reduce distractions as far as possible in the classroom
- Allow the student to tape record lectures or use a laptop computer
- Encourage the student to use notebooks, calendars and post-its as reminders
- Get students to stick reminders on frequently used equipments such as computers
- Break down information and present it in 'chunks', e.g., AB CD EF rather than ABCDEF
- Use visual cues, colour coding and labels where appropriate
- Point out associations, links and connections

6.7.3 Maintaining concentration

Some people with an intellectual disability find it difficult to concentrate on what is been said and write things down at the same time. This is particularly the case where the material is difficult or complex.

For some people, trying to do two things at once makes learning extremely difficult.

Some of the following strategies might help:

- Restructure tasks or assignments so that they include only the essential functions

- Break down large or difficult assignments into smaller steps
- Keep the classroom environment simple and reduce distractions such as noise, harsh lighting and clutter
- Allow the student to work in a separate area if needed
- Plan to reduce interruptions when working on new concepts or material with the student

6.7.4 Meeting deadlines and staying organised

A person's organisational skills may be affected by an intellectual disability making it difficult to complete assignments.



People learn better if they are organised and being organised makes it easier to retrieve and remember information.

- Remind students of deadlines by text or e-mail or by encouraging them to note it in their daily planner
- Put things in the same place so that they are easy to find and encourage the student to do the same
- Use calendars to mark deadlines for assignments
- Schedule regular feedback sessions to ensure that things are on track
- Encourage students to use personal organisers or laptops

A student with an intellectual disability may have difficulty with memorising and summarising information.

The following worksheet may help to summarise a lesson simply by identifying the main learning points:

Class Worksheet

Date _____ Today's topic is _____

The main learning points from this lesson are:

1. _____

2. _____

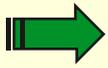
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Notes



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 6

Activity 18

Your answers may have included some of the following:

- Getting around the campus and lecture rooms
- Getting to know the other students and engaging in social activities.
- Taking notes during lectures and accessing textbooks from the library.
- Following written instructions and writing assignments
- Dealing with the volume of reading materials
- Obtaining course materials in an accessible format

Activity 19

Your answers may have included some of the following:

- Students with visual impairments may not be able to see emergency signage.
- Unless there are flashing fire alarms, students who have a hearing impairment may not be aware that there is a fire or fire drill.
- Unless the building is purpose built, it may be difficult to evacuate students with mobility problems in the case of emergency
- Some students may need physical assistance to evacuate a building in an emergency

Activity 20

Some of the accommodations required by Mary during classes and tutorials may include:

- Provision of transcripts of any audio or video tapes that might be used
- Provision of printed notes prior to lectures so that she can familiarise herself with the topic
- Ensuring that only one person speaks at a time
- Not moving around when speaking or facing away from the class
- Allowing a note taker or laptop to be used

MODULE 7: WORKING WITH ISSUES OF DISCLOSURE

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- State the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure
- Explain how to make an effective disclosure
- Identify the sort of information which could be disclosed

7.1 Disclosure

The disclosure of a disability is a very personal choice and one, which may have an important impact on a person's social, educational or employment future. Deciding whether or not to disclose a disability requires a lot of thought to ensure that the decision is an informed one.

Some of the disclosure issues, which many students face could include:

- Whether or not to disclose
- Who is the appropriate person to make the disclosure to
- At what point to make the disclosure
- How much information to give
- How to explain their disability

When a person has an obvious disability or where there are clear support needs, the decision may be relatively clear-cut. For example, a student with a visual impairment will need course materials to be made available in large print.

For other people, their disability may not even be a factor if it is not relevant to their ability to follow their course of study and if they do not need any accommodations.

The decision to disclose belongs totally to the person with a disability who will want to weigh up all the advantages and disadvantages first.

When a person makes a disclosure of a disability, they are, in effect, making available private and personal information about themselves. This may be an important part of making sure that a person obtains any accommodations or supports that they need.

Some students with disabilities, however, require little or no help and can make perfectly good progress through their adult education with no assistance.



CASE STUDY

Jason has started a new computer course, which he is really enjoying. After much consideration and discussion with his guidance counsellor, he has decided to disclose his mild learning disability to his tutor.

Jason feels that it is important to explain his difficulties with reading and his poor comprehension of complex or technical information. He also needs time off from his course once a week to attend his NALA literacy classes.

Jason used to feel ashamed of his disability, particularly in relation to his reading and writing. He now feels that it is essential for his tutor to have this information in order to get the help he needs to successfully complete his course.

7.2 Reaching a decision

One of the issues faced by students entering adult education is whether or not to divulge that they have a disability. Although there is no requirement to make this information available, a student who needs accommodations on their course needs to make it known that they need assistance.

It is therefore up to individual students to decide whether or not they need accommodations in order to complete their course.

Some of the disclosure issues, which many students face could include:

- What are the entrance criteria
- What knowledge and skills are required on the course

- How does their disability impact on their capacity to learn and make progress
- Can they complete the course successfully without accommodations
- If not, what supports and services do they need in order to successfully complete the course

Answering the above questions can help students make a more informed decision as to whether disclosure is the right way forward. A range of factors can influence the decision making process – the degree of disability, the need for accommodations and the person’s previous experience of disclosure.

Part of the decision making process should involve some thought as to the roles and responsibilities involved.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Make a disclosure of their disability if accommodations are required
- Choose a time which is appropriate and which will allow for full discussion
- Find out about course requirements and demands
- Contact Disability Support Services and other professionals if required
- Make staff aware of any difficulties being experienced

Advantages and disadvantages of disclosure

There are many differing opinions as to whether or not it is a good idea to disclose a disability. Some recommend making a disclosure at the outset, others that it is only necessary if accommodations are needed.

There is only one person who can make that judgement and that is the person with the disability.

The following is a summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure:

7.3.1 Advantages

- It enables the student to gain access to the essential accommodations they need
- It ensures that students are protected against discrimination under current legislation
- It provides an opportunity to present a positive image of one's strengths and talents
- It ensures that students have the resources they need in order to learn most effectively
- It provides greater freedom to ask for help when it is needed
- It avoids the stress of keeping the disability a secret
- It allows greater access to a range of supports available, such as Disability Support Services
- Many employers have equality policies and are happy to employ people with disabilities
- It ensures that emergency plans can be put in place if needed

(It is important to remember that what may be an advantage for one student could be a disadvantage for another.)

7.3.2 Disadvantages

- It may focus greater attention on the person's disability
- It could cause the person to be overlooked or underestimated
- Other students may feel uncomfortable with this new information
- It can lead to being treated differently
- It could have an effect on the person's self-image
- People may see the student as being less able than they are
- Other people may feel that the student with a disability is being given an unfair advantage



CASE STUDY

Niamh has always wanted to work with children and is taking a childcare course in her local college. She has applied for a work experience placement in a local crèche where she will be looking after pre-school children.

Niamh was hospitalised after having a seizure when she was younger but has been seizure free ever since. She is wondering whether or not she should tell this to her supervisor in the crèche and if she does what impact this will have on her work experience.

What are the options for Niamh?

7.4 When to disclose

The timing of a disclosure is important bearing in mind that organising suitable accommodations can take time.

There are a number of options available to a student who has decided to disclose that they have a disability:

- Prior to enrolment on the course at a time when needs and accommodations can be discussed
- At the beginning of the course when the student has settled in and is familiar with staff
- As soon as the student becomes aware that they are experiencing difficulties
- During the course when the nature of the accommodations needed becomes clearer (But not the day before exams!)

7.5 What information to disclose

Disclosing that you have a disability can be difficult and stressful so it is worth bearing in mind that the student needs to disclose only what needs to be known and to people who really need to have the information. It is not necessary to go into personal or medical detail.

Some of the information a student might want to disclose could include:

- General background information about their disability
- Information about any previous difficulties experienced in education
- The type of difficulties which might be anticipated
- The type of accommodations which may be needed
- The areas of strength which the student can bring into play

7.6 Effective disclosure

Having decided to disclose that they have a disability, the student needs to prepare and practice for making that disclosure.

A student might need to prepare by doing the following:

- Practice explaining their disability in a few, concise words
- Make a list of things that have worked well in the past
- Research the course and find out what are the knowledge and skills criteria
- Practice having a face to face interview with someone
- Describe how their disability might impact on their learning performance
- Identify and make a list of the sort of accommodations they need

The following pointers may also be useful:

- Prepare by making a list of strengths and needs
- Choose a time which is quiet so as to avoid interruptions
- Be positive about skills and abilities
- Talk about examples of previous success
- Focus on the course and what you want to achieve
- Be prepared to answer questions about your disability
- Be honest about the sort of help you need
- Talk about things that have worked for you in the past
- Be yourself and don't over explain

MODULE 8: BOUNDARIES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- State the requirements necessary in maintaining confidentiality in the counselling relationship
- Explain how to maintain professional boundaries
- State the requirements of the Data Protection Act

8.1 Establishing boundaries

The relationship between student and guidance counsellor is a working one where one adult engages with another in order to identify and manage a set of problems. The initial stages of the relationship are probably the most important because this is when the building of trust and respect begin.

There are a number of factors to think about when meeting with a student for the first time:

- Privacy – is the working environment sufficiently private
- Comfort – is the room warm and comfortable
- Introductions – explain who you are and what your role is

There are a number of key elements involved in the guidance counselling process:

- Empathy
- Active listening
- Respect
- Active communication
- Professionalism
- Confidentiality
- Setting boundaries

Part of the guidance counsellor's role involves setting and maintaining boundaries with their client. This is particularly important where the student has, because of their disability, a lack of awareness of what may or may not be appropriate. Setting clear boundaries at the outset will ensure that the guidance counselling relationship remains both effective and professional.



CASE STUDY

Jack was involved in a road accident a few years ago. Although he has recovered well physically, Jack has some slight residual brain injury and is on medication for depression.

He has some difficulties with short-term memory, becomes tired easily and has problems with interpersonal relationships. Jack prefers to work on his own and will often eat his lunch outside in his car.

Jack is following a course in sound engineering and is coping well with the skills involved although he finds it difficult to complete tasks quickly. Jack gets on well with his guidance counsellor whom he meets each morning to discuss some complex difficulties in his home life.

Jack's guidance counsellor has recommended one to one tutorial support and the use of Inspiration software to improve Jack's memory and help organise his course work. There has also been some discussion as to whether Jack could do the course on a part-time basis.

The guidance counsellor feels that Jack is overly dependent on their daily meetings and is starting to limit the number of sessions to twice weekly. He is also trying to direct the discussion towards course related rather than personal issues.

It can sometimes be difficult getting the balance right between being accessible and being professional. Boundaries help us identify what is and isn't acceptable and sets the target for what is expected. Without boundaries, it is difficult to know where something starts and ends.

Some of the following might be ways of giving a professional message:

- Have an appointments system – this will formalise the meetings and prevent interruptions
- Explain roles and responsibilities
- Check the student's expectations
- Set a time for meetings and keep to the agreed schedule – a clear structure will keep things on track
- Agree a number of meetings and review progress at the end of the agreed period
- Establish the purpose for the meetings and agree clear, concrete goals
- Focus on the agreed agenda and avoid personal topics
- Be consistent in your dealings with students
- Make referrals to other professionals when appropriate

Guidance counsellors may sometimes need to enlist the help of other professionals and it is helpful to have a comprehensive list of referral sources available.

**CASE STUDY**

Shane is a mature student who has had some mental health difficulties in the past. He has recently started an Art and Design course and feels that he is doing well. He has been meeting with his guidance counsellor on a regular basis to discuss progression and career possibilities. The counsellor has also recommended some mind mapping and stress management techniques.

Shane attended the college's Christmas party for the first time and asked his guidance counsellor for a dance. In the course of the evening, she bought him a drink and danced with him again. Shane asked his counsellor if he could see her home but she refused.

Shane is scheduled to meet with his guidance counsellor again in the New Year but is considering cancelling his appointment. He likes his guidance counsellor and finds the sessions helpful. But he is now confused about the relationship and doesn't know where he stands.



21. What are the boundary issues in this situation? What steps should the guidance counsellor take?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(See P.126)

8.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the obligation not to knowingly disclose information obtained during a professional relationship. Confidentiality is an essential element of the counselling relationship and students need to know that any information they share with their guidance counsellor will be treated with respect.

It is important that students understand the nature of the guidance counselling relationship.

There are some issues, which guidance counsellors need to clarify with the student at the beginning:

- The role and responsibilities of the guidance counsellor need to be explained
- The purpose and aims of the guidance counselling need to be clarified and agreed
- Information about the student's disability may need to be shared with other professionals so that accommodations can be arranged
- Consent will be sought from the student when information is to be shared with a third party
- The rules of confidentiality need to be explained

When explaining how confidentiality works, it is important to emphasise that guidance counsellors cannot offer absolute levels of confidentiality to their students.

There are a number of exceptions to maintaining confidentiality:

- Where there is a risk of potential harm to the student or others
- Where a child might be in need of protection
- Where there is a legal requirement to release information
- Where there is an essential need to consult with other professionals, such as in a case conference
- Where there has been a serious breach of the law



CASE STUDY

Marian has been attending guidance counselling for the last six months and feels that she has a good relationship with her guidance counsellor. Attending guidance counselling gives her a chance to discuss her progress on her course and it really boosts her confidence to get some positive feedback.

Marian suffers from depression and sometimes feels very isolated. She gets particularly down during the winter months when she needs to increase her medication. Marian has recently disclosed to her guidance counsellor that she sometimes feels like killing herself. She doesn't want to see her psychiatrist about this and has asked her guidance counsellor to keep the disclosure confidential.



22. What should the guidance counsellor do in this situation? Do the rules of confidentiality apply?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(See P.126)

8.3 Data Protection Act 2003

Under Section 4 of the Data Protection Act, people have a right to obtain copies of any information relating to them whether stored on a computer or in a manual filing system.

In the course of their work, guidance counsellors can accumulate a range of data in relation to their clients. These might include:

- Student information
- Assessments
- Medical records
- Psychological reports
- Session notes
- Individual planning records
- Interview notes

Guidance counsellor's records may also contain sensitive, personal information and the Act is particularly stringent in this regard.

It is therefore important to have a secure system of record-keeping in place. This might involve a system where:

- Confidential records are stored in a locked filing cabinet
- Access to these records is controlled
- Rooms are locked when not in use
- Computer passwords are used
- Information is kept accurate and up to date
- Records contain only what is relevant and necessary
- There is a system for the archiving and disposal of confidential records

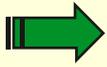


The following is a checklist of the main responsibilities involved in data protection policy:

Data protection checklist

- Are students aware that information is restored in relation to their counselling?
- Is consent sought about making information available to a third party
- Is there an agreed policy on the sharing of information
- Are computers protected by password
- Are paper files securely stored
- Is it clear who is authorised to access files
- Is there a system in place for signing files in and out
- Are there clearly defined rules about the disclosure of information
- Are there procedures in place in relation to requests for access to information
- Is information contained in files relevant and justifiable
- Is some information excessive or unnecessary
- Is it clear how long records are to be retained
- Is there a system in place for the correct disposal of records

(Adapted from Self-help checklist on data protection policy,
(www.dataprotection.ie)



FEEDBACK SHEET FOR MODULE 8

Activity 21

Your answers may have included some of the following:

- Professional boundaries have been breached in this case

The guidance counsellor could:

- Refer the student to a new guidance counsellor
- Renegotiate a new contract with the student outlining the boundaries of the relationship
- Seek advice from another person
- Develop a new policy around behaviour with students

Activity 22

Your answers may have included some of the following:

- Tell the student that you need additional assistance in this case
- Refer the student to Disability Support Services
- Record your actions on file

MODULE 9: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Aims and objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- State the advantages of assistive technology for students with disabilities
- Be aware of a range of assistive technology resources
- Identify a number of suppliers of assistive technology products

9.1 What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology refers to any item or piece of equipment that can be used to increase a person's independence and make the environment more accessible. Assistive technology enables a person to perform tasks more easily so that they are able to make greater progress in the classroom or workplace.

Assistive technology tools can range from the very simple, such as a calculator, to sophisticated pieces of equipment or software. Assistive technology is not the only solution to addressing some of the learning challenges experienced by people with disabilities. It is, however an important tool which can greatly enhance a person's freedom and independence.

9.1.1 What are the advantages?

Advances in assistive technology have been rapid and life changing. Many of the systems, which have been developed for people with specific disabilities, have been found to have applications for other users, both with and without a disability. Screen readers and scanners, for example can be used by people with visual impairments and those who have difficulty with reading.

There are a number of reasons why using assistive technology can benefit students. These include:

- Can bring standards of performance to a much higher level
- Introduces a greater range of choices for learning
- Gives greater freedom and independence

- Allows students to compete on an equal footing
- Helps 'level the playing field'
- Provides tools for education, work and everyday living

9.2 Finding assistive technology solutions

Technology can greatly affect the lives of its users so a certain amount of matching needs to take place to ensure a good fit between the user and the assistive tool.

Deciding on the most appropriate technology can involve:

- A functional assessment of assistive technology needs
- A team approach which can include technology and disability experts
- A self assessment by the student
- Training in the use of the selected technology
- A trial period of use for the student

Some of the factors to be borne in mind include:

- Environmental
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Portability of equipment
- Skills required to operate equipment



CASE STUDY

Roisin is a first year student on a Food Science degree course and has been assessed as having dyslexia. Although Roisin copes very well with the technical aspects of her course, she is having difficulty with written assignments and course reading.

On her tutor's advice, Roisin made an appointment with the college Disability Officer to discuss her support needs.

It was agreed that Roisin would receive assistive technology assistance. She now uses reading and scanning software on her laptop and finds it really useful when doing assignments.

The mindmapping package 'Inspiration' also helps her organise and plan her work more effectively. Roisin feels that her coursework has really improved and she now worries less about assignments.



There is now a wide range of assistive technology available and what is used will depend on the student's disability. The types of technology available can range from very simple solutions, such as enlarging font size for better visibility, to sophisticated voice recognition systems such as JAWs.

9.2.1 Software solutions

Voice recognition systems enable the user to dictate information into a computer using a microphone instead of a mouse and keyboard. A powerful computer is needed. These systems are suitable for people with visual impairments, dyslexia or manual dexterity difficulties.

These are some of the voice recognition software packages available:

- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- IBM Via Voice

Reading and scanning tools enable the user to scan paper documents into a computer which then reads the text. Suitable for people with visual impairments and those with dyslexia. Users need to already be computer literate.

Some examples of reading and scanning tools are:

- Kurzweil 3000 for Windows
- Readingpen

Screen readers enable information on a computer screen to be 'spoken' so that a student who is blind can hear and edit the text.

Some examples of screen readers are:

- HAL for Windows
- JAWS for Windows
- OutSPOKEN
- KeyRead
- Readplease 2003 (free Windows download)

Reading and writing software enable students with dyslexia to enhance their language processing skills. These packages offer word completion, corrections and spelling options. A set of headphones and speakers are required.

Some examples of reading and writing software are:

- WordSmith
- WYNN 3.0
- TextHelp 2
- TextHelp Read and Write Gold
- Write:OutLoud

Mind mapping software enables students to organise and plan their written assignments. This type of software is useful for students with dyslexia, intellectual disability or memory problems.

Some examples of mind mapping software are:

- Inspiration
- MindGenius
- MindManager Pro

9.2.2 Hardware solutions

Alternative keyboards: Large print keyboards and keyboards which are specially designed for students with manual dexterity difficulties. Some include wrist rests. Single-handed models and Touch screen keyboards are also available.

Alternative mouses for students who have difficulty with motor control.

Some examples of alternative mice include:

- Microspeed trackerball mouse
- Traxsys Roller Plus
- Bigtrack
- EasiTrax

Handheld aids such as spellcheckers and Thesaurus can be useful and some include a function for creating a personal dictionary

Some examples of spellcheckers and Thesaurus include:

- Pocket Thesaurus
- Oxford Primary Dictionary and Thesaurus
- Speaking Language Master (adapted for those with visual impairment)
- Chambers Speller

Aids for students who are visually impaired include CCTVs and scanners

which are used to magnify and scan written materials.

Some examples are:

- Chroma CCD
- Smartview CCD
- Poet Compact scanner
- Perkins Braille notetaker
- Looky handheld magnifier

9.2.3 Lo Tech Solutions

There are numerous lo tech and simple solutions which can easily be applied in a learning situation.

Some of these include:

- Enlarged print
- Tape recorders
- Laptop computers
- Diaries
- Personal organisers
- Post its as reminders
- Wrist rests
- Ergonomic furniture
- Antiglare screens
- Highlighters
- Colour coding
- Calculators
- Page turners
- Copyholders
- Dictaphones

9.3 Assistive Technology Supports and Suppliers

Abledata www.abledata.com - US site provides objective information about assistive technology products and product listings

AbilityNet is a UK based charity which helps children and adults with disabilities to use **computers and the internet** by adapting and adjusting their technology. Solutions for home, work and education.

E-Mail: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

Web: www.abilitynet.org.uk

Andrews Awards Systems offers a wide range of educational software on a variety of subjects for **further education and adult learning**

Address: 38 Pine Valley Park, Grange Road, Dublin 12

Tel: 3531 4930011

Fax: 3531 4930010

E-Mail: info@awards.net

Web: www.awards.net

Apple Accessibility www.apple.com/accessibility Mackintosh site for users with physical, hearing, visual, literacy and communication difficulties

Assist Ireland an online resource providing information on assistive technology and a directory of products available from Irish suppliers.

Address: Assist Ireland, Comhairle, 7th Floor, Hume House, Ballsbridge, Dublin

LoCall: 1890 277 478

SMS : 087 3837 644

E-mail: support@assistireland.ie

Web: www.assistireland.ie

Central Remedial Clinic provides a range of training, therapeutic and technological services for people with physical disabilities in addition to an **assistive technology database**.

Address: Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Tel: 3531 8057400

Fax: 3531 8336633

Web: www.crc.ie

Diskovery Educational Software for primary and secondary school levels and special needs

Address: Unit 2, Waveney House, Harbour Road, Howth, Co. Dublin

Tel: 3531 806 3910

Fax: 3531 806 3944

Web: www.diskovery.ie

EdTech Software Ltd.

Address: Murrisk, Westport, Co. Mayo

Tel: 098 64 886

LoCall: 1850 9234 59

Fax: 098 64842

Web: www.edtech.ie

Enabletech www.enabletech.ie gives an overview of assistive technology and offers guidelines on the use of assistive technology in education

Enabling Technologies – www.enabletech.ie Guidelines for the use of assistive technology in education

National Council for the Blind www.cfit.ie aims to ensure that IT products and services are designed to be accessible.

Jackson Technology have a website dealing specifically with **literacy and dyslexia products**. They offer a wide range of software and assistive technology to help with dyslexia or literacy difficulties, from early learners to adults. Software is available for scanning and reading, voice recognition, mind mapping, Lexicon assessment. Portable spell checkers and note takers and Wordshark3 s are also available.

Address: 24 Kiltipper Ave., Aylsbury, Dublin 24

Tel: 3531 4624793

Fax: 3531 4624793

E-mail: sales@dyslexia-ireland.com

Gateway (Guidance for Assistive Technology in Education and Workplace).

This is an excellent resource for young people with disabilities, educators, guidance counsellors and employers. The site contains information on **assistive technology tools for students with disabilities** in accessing education, low-tech solutions, funding information and advice for employers. Gateway provides both hardware and software solutions including alternative keyboards and mice, Braille note takers and displays, induction loops and magnifying software.

E-Mail: info@gateway2at.org

Web: www.gateway2.org

WorkWise www.irishjobs.ie - provides an online guide to assistive technology and ergonomics in the workplace

Microsoft Accessibility designs accessibility products for people with physical and cognitive disabilities. Assistive technology for **learning difficulties** include word prediction and reading comprehension programs, reading tools and learning disability programs, speech synthesizers and speech recognition systems.

Web: www.microsoft.com/enable

National Centre for Technology in Education (NCGE) www.ncge.ie provides information on information technology and matching the student to the technology.

Techdis, UK information and advice resource for technology related to inclusion

E-mail: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk

Web: www.techdis.ac.uk

Rehabtool www.rehabtool.com provides assistive technology and adaptive technology products including alternative communication devices for people with **speech difficulties**

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Education and Science provides grant assistance for assistive technology for students at **post primary level**. Funding applies to students who have a physical disability or who cannot communicate through speech or writing. The type of relevant equipment includes computers, induction loops, tape recorders and software.

For information on grants towards the purchase of equipment for pupils with a disability contact:

Department of Education and Science, Post-Primary Administration Section,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Tel: 057 9321363

Web: www.education.ie

The Department of Education and Science provides funding for **third level students** with disabilities under the Special Fund for Students with Disabilities. Funding is available for personal assistance, transport and equipment.

Information on the Special Fund for Students with Disabilities is available from:

The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, Higher Education Authority, Marine House, Clanwilliam Court, Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 661 2748

E-Mail: access@hea.ie

The Health Service Executive provides funding for assistive technology for people with disabilities under its Aids and Appliances scheme. Applications for funding are through an agency or therapist.

Information is available from:

Health Service Executive, Oak House, Limetree Ave., Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Tel: 045 880400

E-Mail: info@hse.ie

Web: www.hse.ie

FAS provides a range of grants and assistance in relation to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace: Further information and application forms are available on www.fas.ie

Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme (DATS) Private sector employers who provide disability awareness training for staff can apply for a grant of up to 90% towards the cost of this training (to a maximum of €20,000).

Information is available from Services to Business departments of regional FAS offices.

Job Interview Interpreter Grant for job seekers with speech or hearing impairments. Funding is available for the provision of a sign language interpreter for job interviews and induction. There is no limit on the number of interviews a person can attend with an interpreter.

Workplace / Equipment Adaptation Grant is available to private sector employers, employees or self-employed people with disabilities who require adaptations in the workplace. A maximum grant of €6348 is available for the provision or upgrading of equipment or premises.

Personal Reader Grant is available to blind or visually impaired employees who require assistance with work related reading. Personal readers are paid an hourly rate up to a maximum of 640 hours per annum.

Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) is a financial incentive for employers of people with disabilities to work for more than 20 hours per week. The subsidy is calculated on the number of hours worked and the employee's level of productivity.

Employee Retention Grant The purpose of this grant is to assist employers to retain employees who have become ill or disabled while at work. Grant assistance is provided to retrain employees so that they can remain in employment in an existing or alternative role.

Supported Employment Programme provides support for people with disabilities to work in the open labour market. Sponsor organisations employ Job Coaches to support the person in finding and retaining employment.

USEFUL CONTACTS

A.C.L.D. (Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities)

offers support services related to dyslexia and specific learning disability.

Address: Suffolk Chambers, 1 Suffolk Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 3531-679 0273.

[Further information on A.C.L.D.](#) available (April 1997).

[A.C.L.D. Home Page.](#)

Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA) – professional association for adult guidance practitioners working in the AEG Services.

Contact: Chairperson, 3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1

Tel: 353 1 8787495

AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access & Disability) AHEAD is an independent voluntary organisation working to promote improved access for persons with disabilities to Third Level Education in Ireland.

Address: East Hall, UCD; Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

Tel: 3531 716 4396

Fax: 3531 716 4398

E-Mail: ahead@iol.ie

Web: www.ahead.ie

Get Ahead – Forum for Graduates with disabilities

Aisling Foundation – promotes the employment of people with disabilities and offers advice to employers.

Address: The Rear of Number 1, Mount St. Crescent, Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 634 0018

E-Mail: info@theaislingfoundation.org

Web: www.theaislingfoundation.org

AONTAS, The Irish National Association for Adult Education Provides information, referral service for adult learners and the general public.

Address: 2nd. Floor, 83-87 Main St., Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Tel: 3531 4068220/1

Fax: 3531 4068227

E-Mail: mail@aontas.com

Web: www.aontas.com

Arbour Hill Prison Brailing Unit

Address: Arbour Hill, Dublin 7

Tel: 3531 671 9333

Assist Ireland – Assistive technology services for people with disabilities.

Address: Comhairle, 7th Floor, Hume House, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

LoCall: 1890 277 478

E-Mail: support@assistireland.ie

Web: www.assistireland.ie

Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGCSI) – professional association for career advisers working in third level.

Address: Careers Service, East Chapel, Trinity College, Dublin 2

Tel: 353 1 7021705

Fax: 353 1 6793295

E-Mail: igc@eircom.net

Web: <http://www.gradireland.com>

AWARE (Fighting Depression),

Address: 72 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 661 7211

Website: www.aware.ie

Brainwave (The Irish Epilepsy Association) provides information, advice and counselling for people with epilepsy, their families and friends.

Address: 249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12.

Tel: 353 1-4557500.

E-Mail: info@epilepsy.ie

Web: www.epilepsy.ie

Bus Eireann,

Address: Broadstone, Dublin 7

Tel: 353 1 830 2222

Website: www.buseireann.ie

Central Remedial Clinic provides a range of training, therapeutic and technological services for people with physical disabilities

Address: Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Tel: 353 1 8057400

Fax: 353 1 8336633

Web: www.crc.ie

Centre for Independent Living (CIL) – operates a number of programmes to enable people with disabilities to live independently.

Address: Carmichael House, North Brunswick St., Dublin 7

Tel: 353 1 873 0986/ 8730455

E-Mail: info@dublincil.org

Web: www.dublincil.org

Citizens Information Phone Service provides free, impartial and confidential information via telephone or e-mail.

Lo Call number: 1890 777 121 or email: information@comhairle.ie

Comhairle is the national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services

Address: 7th Floor, Hume House, Ballsbridge , Dublin 4

Tel: 3531 605 90 99

Fax: 3531 605 90 99

E-Mail: info@comhairle.ie

Web: www.comhairle.ie

Dept. of Social, Family and Community Affairs – responsible for the administration of social insurance and assistance schemes.

Address: Aras Mhic Diarmada, Store St., Dublin 1

Tel: 353 1 7043000

Web: www.welfare.ie

Enable Ireland – provides training, education, personal assistance and other services for people with physical disabilities.

Address: Enable Ireland National Services, 32F Rosemount Park Drive, Rosemount Business Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 11.

Tel: 3531 872 7155

E-mail: communication@enableireland.ie

Website: www.enableireland.ie

Enable Ireland website providing information for young people with disabilities, and employers and educators on how assistive technology can help them achieve in college and the workplace. www.gateway2at.org

Equality Authority

Address: 2 Clonmel St., Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 417 3333

E-Mail: info@equality.ie

Website: www.equality.ie

FÁS – the National Training and Employment Authority. Also offers grants and programmes for people with disabilities.

Address: 27/33 Upper Baggot St. Dublin 4

Tel: 353 | 6070500

Fax: 353 | 6070600

E-Mail : info@fas.ie

Web: www.fas.ie

www.careerdirections.ie FAS careers database

Headway Ireland - The National Association for Acquired Brain Injury

Address: 101 Parnell St., Dublin 1

Tel: 353 | 872 9222

E-mail: info@headwayireland.ie

Website: www.headwayireland.ie

Health Service Executive Head Offices

Address: Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 880400

Fax: 1890 200893

Address: Parkgate St. Business Centre, Dublin 8

Tel: 353 (0) | 635 2500

Fax: 353 (0) | 635 2823

HSE Info line: Call save: 1850 24 1850

Web: www.hse.ie

IBEC

Address: Confederation House, 84/86 Lower Baggot St., Dublin 4

Tel: 353 | 605 1500

Email: info@ibec.ie

Web: www.ibec.ie

Inclusion Ireland (formerly NAMHI) Largest national representative organisation for people with intellectual disabilities.

Address: Unit C2, The Steelworks, Foley St., Dublin 1.

Tel. 3531 8559891

Fax: 3531 8559904

E-Mail: info@inclusionireland.ie

Web: www.inclusionireland.ie

Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) – National voluntary organisation

Address: Muing, Belmullet, Co. Mayo

Tel: 097 82894

Fax: 094 82895

E-Mail: iase@iol.ie

Web: www.iase.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association

Address: Aras Cuchulain, Blackheath Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Tel: 03531 8186400

Email: ids@indigo.ie

Website: www.iwa.ie

NALA – National Adult Literacy Agency

Address: 76 Lower Gardiner St., Dublin 1

Tel: 3531 855 4332

Fax: 3531 855 5775

E-Mail: literacy@nala.ie

Web: www.nala.ie

National Association for the Deaf

Address: 30 Blessington St., Dublin 7

Tel: 3531 860 1910

Email: ids@indigo.ie

Website: www.irishdeafsociety.org

National Association for Deaf People

Address 35 North Fredrick St., Dublin 1.

Tel: 3531 872 3800

Email: nad@iol.ie

Website: www.nadp.ie

National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) Department of Education and Science agency which supports and develops guidance provision and practice in all areas of education

Address: 1st Floor, 42/43 Prussia St., Dublin 7

Tel: 353 1 86907 15/6

Fax: 353 1 88238 17

E-Mail: info@ncge.ie

Web: www.ncge.ie

National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) – Government agency on the use of information and communications technology in education

Address: 1st Floor, 42/43 Prussia St., Dublin 7

Tel: 3531 8690715

Fax: 3531 8690717

E-Mail: info@ncge.ie

Web: www.ncge.ie

National Council for the Blind in Ireland

Address: PV Doyle House, 45 Whitworth Rd., Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Tel: 353 1 8307033

Email: ncbi@iol.ie

Website: www.ncbi.ie

Centre for inclusive Technology (CFIT): www.cfit.ie

National Disability Authority acts on behalf of the State to promote the rights of people with disabilities. Carries out research, develops and monitors standards and codes of practice.

Address: 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4

Tel: 353 1 6080400

Email: nda@nda.ie

Website: www.nda.ie

National Educational Psychological Service - an agency of the Department of Education and Science, responsible for the provision of a psychological service to schools and centres of education.

Address: Dept. of Education & Science, Frederick Court,
24/27 North Frederick Street

Tel: 353 1 8892700

Fax: 353 1 8892755

E-mail: neps@education.gov.ie

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies – The national umbrella organisation for voluntary and non statutory agencies that provide direct services to people with intellectual disabilities

Address: Oranmore Business Park, Oranmore, Co. Galway

Tel: 353 91 792316

Fax: 353 91 792317

E-Mail: secretariat@fedvol.ie

Web: www.fedvol.ie

National Institute for Intellectual Disability (NIID) at Trinity College Dublin is an inclusive Institute centering on lifelong learning for individuals with intellectual disability, research and social change

Address: Trinity College Dublin, 4th Floor, 3 College Green, Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 608 3885

Fax: 353 1 677 9131

Email: nisld@tcd.ie

Website: tcd.ie/NISLD

National Learning Network is part of the Rehab Group and offers a range of accredited vocational training and educational programmes throughout the country.

Address: Rehab Group, Beach Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4

Tel: 3531 2057200

Fax: 3531 2057202

Email: dara.duffy@rehab.ie

Web: www.rehab.ie

National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance - provide information on educational and vocational training opportunities within the EU.

Address: 42-43 Prussia Street Dublin 7

Tel: 353 1 8690715

Fax: 353 1 8823817

Web: www.ncge.ie/euroguidance

People with Disabilities in Ireland – FAS employability through e-Technology initiative

Address: 4th Floor Jervis House, Jervis Street, Dublin 1

Tel: 3531 87 21 74 4

Fax: 3531 87 21 77 1

Email: info@pwdi.ie

Web: www.pwdi.ie

Peter Bradley Foundation – Brain injury services

Address: 41 Northumberland Avenue, Dunlaoghaire, Co. Dublin

Tel: 3531 280 4164

E-mail: info@pererbradleyfoundation.ie

Website: www.peterbradleyfoundation.ie

Schizophrenia Association of Ireland

Address: 4 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2

Tel: 3531 676 1988

Email: info@sirl.ie

Web: www.sirl.ie

SESS (Special Education Support Service) Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Resource for teachers, guidance counsellors and employers.

Address: c/o Cork Education Support Centre, Western Road, Cork

Tel: 1850 200 884

E-Mail: info@sess.ie

Web: www.sess.ie

Vantastic – provides transport for wheelchair users

Address: 196 Howth Rd., Killester, Dublin 3

Tel: 3531 833 0014

Email: info@vantastic.ie

Website: www.vantastic.ie

Please use this space for additional useful contacts

Useful Websites

www.ahead.ie

Provides information, training and research on higher education issues

www.accessireland.ie

Access Ireland – information on wheelchair access and access in general

www.accesswest.ie

A good resource which offers information on entitlements, services, the law, organisations and more

www.aontas.com

The National Association for Adult Education

www.aoti.ie

Association of Occupational Therapists in Ireland

www.assistireland.ie

An excellent resource which provides information on assistive technology for people with disabilities

www.careerdirections.ie

FAS careers database

www.citizensinformation.ie

Public services information and links to useful sites

www.cognitive-rehab.org.uk

Society for Cognitive Rehabilitation

www.disability.ie

Disability related information

www.dyslexia.ie

Dyslexia Association

www.ecollege.ie

FAS e-College provides learning opportunities through a range of courses available on-line. Courses are free of charge for people in receipt of some State benefits, including disability allowance.

www.fas.ie

www.gateway2at.org

Guidance for Assistive Technology in Education and Workplace Advancing Young People with Disabilities

www.hse.ie

Local area contact for **HSE Occupational Guidance Service**

www.hselibrary.ie

HSE on-line library

www.idall.com

idaal.com is a consortium of Intellectual Disability Libraries established to provide easy and comprehensive access to up-to-date information in this and related fields thereby supporting research, best practice and education in services.

www.iaslt.com

Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists

www.learning-styles-online.com

Learning styles information and questionnaire

www.irishdeaf.com

The Irish Deaf Association – online directory

www.irishhealth.com

irishhealth.com is an independent health website offering users an online source of medical and healthcare information and health news.

www.irishjobs.ie

Web based **job search** tool

www.memletics.com

Online **learning styles inventory**

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

General resource on **mental health** issues

www.ms-society.ie

MS Society Ireland

www.ncge.ie

The National Centre for Guidance in Education.

www.pwdi.ie

FAS employability through e-technology programme for people with disabilities and employers

www.sess.ie

Special Education Support Services

www.shef.ac.uk

University of Sheffield site, which contains useful information on teaching students with disability

www.scipsworc.uk

Resource that provides strategies for creating **inclusive programmes of study**. (Aimed mainly at teachers and trainers)

www.workway.ie

A joint IBEC and ICTU initiative offering good practice guidance on the **employment of people with disabilities**

www.workstart.ie

A **supported employment** programme for people with disabilities

Please use this space for additional website resources

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES WEBSITE ADDRESSES

Athlone Institute of Technology www.ait.ie

Carlow Institute of Technology www.cit.ie

Cork Institute of Technology www.cit.ie

Dundalk Institute of Technology www.dkit.ie

Dublin City University www.dcu.ie

Dublin Institute of Technology www.dit.ie

Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology www.iadt.ie

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown www.itb.ie

Institute of Technology Sligo www.itsligo.ie

Institute of Technology Tallaght www.it-tallaght.ie

Institute of Technology Tralee www.ittralee.ie

Limerick Institute of Technology www.lit.ie

Letterkenny Institute of Technology www.lyit.ie

National College of Ireland www.ncirl.ie

NUI Galway www.nuigalway.ie

NUI Maynooth www.access.nuim.ie

Tipperary Institute www.Tippinst.ie

Trinity College Dublin www.tcd.ie

University College Cork www.ucc.ie

University College Dublin www.ucd.ie

University of Limerick www.ucl.ie

Waterford Institute of Technology www.wit.ie

References

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Websites

www.ahead.ie

www.aontas.com

www.equality.ie

www.fas.ie

www.gateway2at.org

www.memletics.com

www.ncge.ie

www.peterhoney.co.uk

www.sess.ie

www.shef.ac.uk

