**Equity Groups: Students with disabilities**

Literature Review

As an identified equity group, both in legislative and higher education policy terms, students with disabilities have also been a growing focus of attention, particularly in terms of funded projects from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE). This literature is broadly focused on three things: firstly, it has offered characterisations of the composition of the students with disabilities population is (in terms of what disabilities are most reported in enrolment data); secondly, it outlines the challenges and barriers that students with disabilities can face; and thirdly, it explores institutional responses to such issues.

The numbers of students with self-reported disabilities has grown steadily over recent years, growing from 3.67% to 5.04% of commencing and enrolled undergraduate population (Kilpatrick et al., 2016). In terms of characterising the student population, there appears to have been a significant shift in the types of disabilities that students report (although see Kilpatrick et al., 2016 for a counter view). In 2001, when Foreman et al. conducted their research at the University of Newcastle, students self-reported having the following disabilities:

* 32% had physical disabilities
* 12% had visual disabilities
* 10% had medical disabilities
* 22% had multiple disabilities

Compared with a matched group of students without disabilities, the students with disabilities tended to be older (more over 30) and more were female. The majority of enrolments were in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (40% compared with 19% of the matched group). In contrast, Ganguly et al.’s (2015) NCSEHE-funded research suggests that although the pattern towards older and female students persists, the most common reported disabilities were mental-psychological rather than physical conditions; 35% reported having psychological conditions, and 55% reported having more than one ‘comorbid’ condition. Similarly, in Kent’s (2016) NCSEHE-funded study of online students with disabilities, nearly half of his participants reported having a mental illness (44.9%), compared with 39.2% who reported having medical impairments and 25.3% who reported issues with mobility. Kent also found a strong trend towards older female students in the Arts and Humanities (the average age in his study was 42 and 71.4% of respondents were female). In their 2016 project, Owen et al. focus specifically on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, because of expected growth in students with autism, and an existing “failure of existing supports” (p.5). Therefore, while strong and persistent patterns prevail in terms of the age range and gender of students with disabilities, the types of illnesses appear to have shifted towards what Ganguly et al. call ‘invisible’ disabilities such as mental health and psychological disorders. However, this may be a result of changing methods of categorising disabilities, and inconsistent methods of collecting data (as much is based on students self-reporting, which is associated with stigma and shame). As such researchers have called for improved methods of data collection and a consistent set of measures across the sector (Ganguly et al. 2015; Kent, 2016; Brett, 2016; Kilpatrick et al., 2016).

The challenges faced by students with disabilities are a significant focus of the literature. These can take the form of physical impediments (such as location, physical access of campuses, rooms and materials) (Gabel & Miskovic, 2017), modes of study (particularly with online students (Kent, 2016; Ganguly et al., 2015), relationships with teaching staff, and issues with retention and success (Gabel & Miskovic, 2017). Kilpatrick et al.’s (2016) NCSEHE-funded research suggests that students with disabilities experience external environmental factors that impede their learning, such as “being misunderstood by teaching staff, unsupportive attitudes of university administrative staff, inaccessible course materials, peer ridicule, financial difficulties, low expectations, frequent staff turnover in [Disability Resource Offices], health, counseling”, contributing to slightly lower success rates overall (see also Foreman et al., 2001), and consistently lower retention for students who seek disability support. In addition, findings from Ryan (2011) highlighted the limited knowledge of educators regarding the legislative responsibility of university staff and students under the Australian Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) in nursing programs at HE. This often led to unsupportive behavior towards students with disabilities in the university. Furthermore, Owen et al. (2016) argue that in contrast to other disabilities, the specific needs of students with autism mean that built environment needs to be carefully considered (e.g. the sensory-scape), and that due to struggles with social interaction these students are less likely to seek support from conventional support services. The limited disclosure of students’ disabilities in HE was also observed in Vickerman & Blundell’s study (2010), which revealed that only 5.6% of students (out of 504 participants) disclosed their disabilities, compared to the UK average of 6.9%. Findings from Grimes et al. (2018) study suggest that students’ reasons for non-disclosure were influenced by various factors, including age, gender, first in family status and Indigenous status. Other significant reasons mentioned by participants include the perception that their learning challenge is an individual responsibility, the perceived stigma towards students with disabilities, and the desire to be viewed and treated as a ‘normal’ student (Grimes et al., 2018). In terms of participation in HE, Wray (2013) identified several factors that were significant barriers or enablers to the participation of students with disabilities. Findings from Wray’s (2013) study suggests that students’ motivations for pursuing HE were highly influenced by significant others, as well as their perceived future job prospects and their liking towards the subjects studied. However, negative experiences from school, including inefficient delivery of education and negative expectations from teachers appear to be a significant barrier in the students’ participation in HE (Wray, 2013).

These studies highlight a need for higher education institutions to pay more attention and offer more resources and more nuanced approaches to support the participation, learning and success of students with a variety of disabilities or disorders. The role of significant others in facilitating students’ participation in HE highlights the critical role of university staff in supporting the needs of students with disabilities in universities (Wray, 2013). Kilpatrick et al. (2016) therefore call for more training for staff at all levels (academic, teaching, professional) to raise awareness of issues and possible resolutions. Similarly, Vickerman & Blundell (2010) highlight the importance of educating and training university staff to respond proactively to the various needs of students with disabilities. Ganguly et al. (2015) also make a similar recommendation, particularly for students who suffer from mental illness and medical disabilities because reasonable adjustments are often made on the assumption of physical disabilities. Specifically, the opportunities and constraints related to online learning require additional attention (Kent, 2015; Ganguly et al., 2015; Kilpatrick et al., 2016), as do the needs of students with autism (Owen et al., 2016). Apart from that, Vickerman and Blundell (2010) also urge HE institutions to be more proactive at the pre-entry to university stage to encourage more students to disclose their disability, with an assurance that they will be treated with respect and empathy, and a commitment to address any significant barriers students might encounter in accessing and participating in HE.

To a lesser degree than with low SES students, there is a suggestion that deficit is extended to students with disabilities, albeit less about adapting to the expectations and practices of higher education and more at the level of adapting to the culture of the institution by self-reporting any disabilities. Michael Kent’s (2016) work is located specifically within a social model of disability, thus explicitly resisting an approach that places the onus on the individual to adapt and adjust to the institution. Indeed, Kent (2015) contends that a social model can advocate for a collective approach to countering such deficit narratives: “By putting the focus on the disabling role of society, rather than an individual body that needs to be ‘made well’, the model allows for people with many separate impairments to come together to demand social change” (p.147). Working from the legislative context, it is more likely the case that the institution needs to adapt to accommodate students with disabilities, and this is particularly evident in the publishing of inherent requirements for courses. The NCSEHE-funded work of Brett et al. (2016) specifically examines the context of inherent requirement statements, responding to a dearth of research on institutional responses to the need to make reasonable adjustments that can be made to enable participation of students with disabilities in HE. Their research highlights how there is limited use of inherent requirement statements, with only 78 from a sample of 419 courses audited (only 18.6%) including such statements, and they observed substantial variation (in the terms used, length and nature of academic descriptors, which included, extent to which related to legislation, cross-referencing to other materials/documents, formats) across the 78 statements. Brett et al. (2016) argue that the inconsistent use of inherent requirements statements, and the lack of consistency across them “create information asymmetry” (p.3) which can disadvantage students and has an impact on equity and participation. Moreover, there are legal implications for institutions, as “Differences in inherent requirement statements may influence the provision and denial of specific reasonable adjustments across the sector placing universities at heightened risk of complaint and litigation” (2016, p.3).

Annotation written by Anna Xavier

**References**

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*Requirement Statements in Australian Universities*. Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.

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education: an institutional analysis. *Disability and Society,* 29(7), 1145-1158. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.910109

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**Equity and Higher Education Annotated Bibliography Series**

**Equity Groups: Students with disabilities**

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| **Citation** | **Annotation** |
| Ashworth, M.; Bloxham, S. & Pearce, L. (2010). [Examining the tension between academic standards and inclusion for disabled students: the impact of marking on individual academics’ frameworks for assessment](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248963324_Examining_the_tension_between_academic_standards_and_inclusion_for_disabled_students_The_impact_on_marking_of_individual_academics'_frameworks_for_assessment), *Studies in Higher Education,* 35(2), 209–223.  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Assessment; widening participation; disabled students; marking; inclusion* | **Context:** Developments in HE have often resulted in ‘a tension between widening participation and maintaining academic standards’ (p. 209) (Riddell et al., 2007). Ways to safeguard academic standards while ensuring inclusion has often been debated among both policy makers and researchers (Quality Assurance Agency, 2006; Bloxham, 2009).  **Aim:** This article aims to explore the impact of staff values regarding WP on marking by drawing on developing theory regarding assessment ((Shay 2005; O’Donovan, Price, and Rust 2008; Sadler 2009). It reports on an ‘innovative creative arts module delivered for students with complex disabilities’ (abstract), which aimed to contribute towards inclusion by adjusting curriculum and assessment design for students with complex disabilities.  **Theoretical framework:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** A qualitative, ethnographic approach was employed, with a case study methodology. Data collection methods employed include: 1)a review of the literature and other documents relevant to the study; 2) observation of the programme in action; 3) interviews with academic staff, students and support staff; 4) recordings of two academic team discussions (university and college tutors); 5)a questionnaire on moderation issues for the two university tutors. Participants: Students (n=6) with multiple disabilities caused by cerebral palsy, causing severe impact on speech, mobility and motor skills. Module employed: Designed particularly for six students from college with no formal qualifications, but possessed experience in creative work; delivered alternately at college & university campus; students were accompanied to campus by individual key workers.  **Findings:** Findings show a generally positive attitude regarding the module outcomes; a recurring theme among individual students was ‘the thrill of HE’ (p. 215); students appreciated ‘being part of the ‘real world’, working in an institution with a professional purpose’ with matching facilities; the findings also highlight the ‘inseparable dilemma’ (p. 216) of course tutors in categorising achievement under conventional marking standards within the specialised context; support workers felt unprepared to be learning facilitators on a HE course; tutors also faced difficulties in capturing the evidence of learning for students whom standard learning communication methods are highly inappropriate. The difficulty the students faced in providing oral or written expressions resulted in the staff using ‘subtle and ephemeral’ forms of expression as evidence of prominent thinking. The perceived difference in students’ perspective compared to their non-disabled peers led tutors to recast student achievement as ‘different’ instead of ‘inferior’ (p. 218). Tutors’ view of students being disadvantaged in the context of the module criteria also led to narrowed expectations of what was considered ‘fair’ (p. 218). In terms of the coursework’s reflective element, tutors directed their assessment towards the students’ ability to choose resources, and the application of their thought processes to work in relation to the theme. Nevertheless, despite the reasonable adjustments incorporated, tutors believed that there were ‘undeniable limits’ to the achievement of students with disability within the criteria and standards of the module implemented.  **Discussion:** The study indicates that the notion of ‘reasonable adjustments’ to teaching and assessment oversimplifies the barriers presented by the complex disabilities for students in learning. However, academic staff in this study appeared to interpret semantically ‘loose’ learning outcomes and grade descriptors in the light of a new shared ‘standards framework’ for interpreting the existing criteria (p. 220). This framework appears to combine the ‘need to maintain ‘standards’ with positive values regarding inclusion, a willingness to change expectations in the light of students’ disabilities, and an openness to recognising learning however it reveals itself’ (p. 220).  **Core argument:** Assessment in practice is neither ‘objectivist [n]or relativist. It is contextual, experiential, and, perhaps most importantly, value based’ (Shay, 2004, p. 325). While values are transparent relation to the assessment of students with complex disabilities, this case serves to highlight the role of values in many marking judgements in HE. |
| Brett, M., Harvey, A., Funston, A., Spicer, R. & Wood, A. (2016).  [*The Role of Inherent Requirement Statements in Australian Universities*](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/the-role-of-inherent-requirement-statements-in-australian-universities/). Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** NCSEHE-funded project. Works from understanding that reasonable adjustments can be made to enable participation of students with disabilities in higher education; however “these accommodations cannot themselves compromise the essential elements of a course that all students must meet” (p.2), especially with regard to inherent requirements that are designed to help identify what count as reasonable adjustments. Responds to dearth of research on “the prevalence, consistency and characteristics of inherent requirement statements across Australian institutions and fields of education” (p.2), particularly with regard to how students interact with them. Explores legislative, demographic and policy context, as well as exploring literature on students with disabilities in higher education. Authors refer to work of first author (Brett, 2014), who argued that increased participation of students with disabilities = clearly linked to disability legislations (especially the Disability Standards for Education 2004 (Cth)) – particularly Section 3.4. Discusses inherent requirements in context of regulation of higher education (e.g. TEQSA/ AQF), legislation such as *Disability Standards for Education* and professional accreditation. Particular focus on health throughout reviews  **Aim:** To analyse “the prevalence, accessibility, and form of inherent requirement statements within the Australian university sector” (p.2), with reference to examples from Curtin, Uni Melb and Western Sydney.  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Review of legislative, demographic and policy context, literature review, audit of existing inherent requirement statements (desktop audit/ analysis) for a “point‐in‐time sector‐wide snapshot of inherent requirements statement practice” (p.3).  **Findings:**  Analysis = limited use of inherent requirement statements (From sample = 419 courses, 78 (only 18.6%) of courses audited) and substantial variation (terms used, length and nature of academic descriptors, which included, extent to which related to legislation, cross-referencing to other materials/documents, formats).  Implications = lack of cross-institutional coordination/ national direction, which “create information asymmetry” (p.3) which can disadvantage students – need to consider impact on equity and participation. Also, there are legal implications: “Differences in inherent requirement statements may influence the provision and denial of specific reasonable adjustments across the sector placing universities at heightened risk of complaint and litigation” (p.3)  Location of inherent requirement statements = 65% in course handbook or on school/ faculty website (35%)  65% = UG/ 35% = PG  Mostly found in health courses (46/180 health courses audited), then in Society & Culture (16/104 courses). None or only 1 found in Natural/Physical Sciences, IT, Hospitality, Mixed Field, Creative Arts, Agriculture, Engineering)  Only one statement of all 78 refers explicitly to professional standards of the field.  No case studies given  6 statements published by 2 universities refer to non-disabilities (i.e. diversity) requirements, albeit no explicit use of term diversity (see p.25): “Considering inclusion of people from diverse social, cultural and religious backgrounds, only 7 references to considerations of the student’s social, cultural or religious background were found, and how reasonable adjustments can be made relating to these factors as well. However, we noted a tendency for such cultural inclusion statements to be paired with advice that adjustments cannot compromise the academic integrity of the course” (p.36 – see page for more examples)  **Recommendations:**   1. universities work together to better coordinate and improve consistency, transparency and clarity (across institutions and disciplines) 2. Stakeholders with responsibility for disabilities monitor inherent requirement statements 3. Further research needed on effects on students 4. **“**That universities ensure that descriptions of academic requirements and their use within processes of identifying reasonable adjustments are accessible to, and transparent for, students, and that these descriptions are consistent with the Higher Education Standards Framework and Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and Disability Standards for Education 2004 (Cth)” (p.4).   **Core argument:** More research needed  We found that under the skills and requirements category “Verbal and Non‐Verbal” there was a common emphasis in inherent requirement statements on a student’s capacity to understand and respond, to have effective English for communication and safety, to appreciate instructions and feedback, and to recognise non‐verbal as well as verbal communication” (p.39) |
| Cheng, S. & Fung Sin, K. (2018). [Conceptions of learning and quality of university life among deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing university students](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2018.1427154), *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(12), 1333–1334.  CHINA  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Conceptions of learning; quality of university life; deaf or hard-of-hearing* | **Context:** As the quality of university life is a significant predictor for various aspects of student success at university, including their level of academic success (Pedro, Leitão, and Alves 2014) and psychological integration within the university (Unalan et al. 2008), the issue of how to enhance students’ quality of university life has received great scholarly interest. Previous literature has highlighted the relation between environmental, demographic, or individual difference variables and the quality of university life (e.g. Cheng and Zhang 2017; Hipp et al. 2016; Pekmezovic et al. 2011).As there is an increasing number of DHH students who have gained access to universities, it is meaningful to explore the quality of university life including satisfaction with academic domains, social domains, and facilities and services among DHH students. In addition, many new DHH university students suffer from high attrition rates at the university to a statistically significant extent when compared with hearing students (Boutin 2008; Gore, Leuwerke, and Turley 2005).  **Aim:** This study aims to test how deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH) students’ individual differences in conceptions of learning relate to their university life quality. Hypothesis: ‘…the deep-level conceptions of learning (i.e. learning as an understanding, learning as continuous, learning as a social competence, learning as a personal change, and learning as a duty) would significantly and positively predict quality of university life, while the surface-level conceptions of learning (learning as gaining information) would significantly and negatively predict quality of university life’ (p. 4).  **Theoretical framework:** 1) Purdue & Hattie’s (2002) ‘conceptions of learning’ (p. 2): Six conceptions of learning which can be classified into two levels (surface and deep). The deep level involves five conceptions of learning: learning as an understanding, learning as continuous, learning as a social competence, learning as a personal change, and learning as a duty. The surface level includes one conception of learning: learning as gaining information. 2) Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, and Rahtz’s (2007) ‘quality of university life’(p. 3): four domains for quality of university life: satisfaction with the overall university life, satisfaction with academic aspects of university life, satisfaction with social aspects of university life and satisfaction with university facilities and services.  **Methodology:** DHH students (n=200) and hearing students (n=24) from the same academic discipline (art & Design) from two universities were selected for the study. Measures used: 1)The conceptions of learning inventory III (The COL-III; Peterson, Brown & Irving, 2010): 6 point Likert scale 2) A modified version of the original quality of university life measure (QULM) ((Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, and Rahtz 2007), with 45/70 items remaining. Responses were captured using a 5-point rating scale. Data analysis: The reliabilities for the two inventories were first estimated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients. Following that, multiple regressions were performed separately for each of the four quality of university life scales among hearing and DHH students respectively, with all the six conceptions of learning serving as predictor variables in each analysis and with relevant demographic factors being controlled for.  **Findings:** 1)for DHH students, conceptions of learning contributed to the prediction of quality of university life at a statistically significant level (8 % - 22%). Duty (the deep level) significantly positively predicted overall satisfaction with university life, satisfaction with academic and social aspects of university life, and satisfaction with university facilities and services. 2)For hearing students, the contributions of conceptions of learning were also noted ( 7% to 10%). Duty (the deep level) significantly positively predicted all the four subscales of quality of university life, while continuous (the deep level) significantly negatively predicted satisfaction with university facilities and services.  **Discussion:** The predictive relationships found between the two constructs are more likely to be true than to have been found by chance, for the following four reasons: 1) There is no conceptual similarity between conceptions of learning and quality of university life 2) In general, students with the deep-level conceptions of learning tended to be more satisfied with university life, while those with the surface-level tended to be less satisfied. 3) Findings among hearing students are consistent with that of Rabanaque and Martínez-Fernández (2009) which indicated that students with interpretative and constructive conceptions (more advanced level) tended to score higher on student developmental outcomes (i.e. intrinsic value and motivation). 4) Only duty and gaining information among DHH and only duty and continuous among hearing students were found to significantly influence quality of university life.  **Implications:** 1) University administrators and teachers can use the modified QULM to understand the quality of DHH and hearing students’ university life more comprehensively, be better able to guide or train students to feel more comfortable about and satisfied with their university life. 2) University teachers may be able to promote the quality of DHH and hearing students’ university life by cultivating the deep-level conceptions of learning among them.  **Core argument:** As predicted, deep-level conceptions of learning significantly and positively predicted quality of university life for both DHH and hearing students, while surface-level conceptions of learning significantly and negatively predicted quality of university life among DHH students. Contrary to the hypothesis, deep-level conceptions of learning (continuous) significantly negatively predicted satisfaction with university facilities and services. |
| Foreman, P.; Dempsey, I; Robinson, G.; & Manning, E. (2001). [Characteristics, Academic and Post-university Outcomes of Students with a Disability at the University of Newcastle,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360120108386) *Higher Education Research & Development,* 20(3), 313–325.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Under-representation of students with disabilities (SwD) in higher education. Authors note two significant policy/ legislative directives: A Fair Chance For All and 192 Disability Discrimination Act. Authors scope literature that suggests sensory and physical disability is most common in higher education students, and more are likely to be female and older (24 = mean age) and most likely to be studying in the Arts.  **Aim:** “1) To determine the level of satisfaction with support services of students with a disability at the University of Newcastle. 2) To determine how academically successful these students are at the University. 3) To determine the employment status of students with a disability following graduation or discontinuation. 4) To determine whether there are any differences between students with and without a disability in relation to academic and post-graduation success.  Procedure  **Theoretical frame:** None explicit – quantitative methodology  **Methodology:** Questionnaires, interviews, academic record analysis. 108 students responded to request to complete survey. Sampled from 220 students who had registered for support from disability support at UON (although 466 students had registered as having a disability so more than half = did not seek support from this service). Comparison group = matched on basis of age, sex, PT or FT, course/level, time studying. Of 108 respondents, 89 gave permission for research team to access academic records. Questionnaire asked for demographic, enrolment information, self-perceptions of academic performance and factors that aided/impeded studying. Statistical analysis of q’naire results.  **Findings:**  32% had physical disabilities  12% had visual disabilities  10% had medical disabilities  22% had multiple disabilities  Compared with matched group, SwD = older (more over 30) and more females. Most = enrolled in Faculty of Arts and Social Science (40% compared with 19%)  Attitudes: SwD = 1st year students felt not doing as well as others, found it harder to cope with work, got same level of/ kind of support as others  Support: SwD: fewer assisted by presentation of lecture material, presentation of tutorial material, more assisted by UON services, fewer assisted by assessment practices, fewer =access to library services  Academic performance: SwD performed less well (lower GPA), more likely to withdraw, more likely to fail subjects **Core argument:** “students with a disability tended to be less successful than students without a disability, although there was no significant difference between the group in their reason for discontinuing studies, or in the extent to which they believed that the University had prepared them for employment. The disability group also experienced additional stressors such as lower income” (p.324) |
| Fossey, E., Chaffey, L., Venville, A., Ennais, P., Douglas, J. & Bigby,C. (2017). [Navigating the complexity of disability support in tertiary education: perspectives of students and disability service staff](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2017.1278798). *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 21(8), 822–832  AUS  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Disability; tertiary education; reasonable adjustments; individual accommodation; student viewpoint; specialist services* | **Context:** In Australia, educational institutions are mandated to provide the necessary individual learning supports to support students who disclose disabilities to participate in education on an equal footing with their peers (Commonwealth of Australia 1992, 2005).This support is usually provided by staff employed in the respective institutions’ disability service. The Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth of Australia 1992) requires that institutions implement ‘reasonable adjustments’ to address physical, social, and attitudinal barriers in enrolment and participation; curriculum development and delivery; student support; and the elimination of harassment (Commonwealth of Australia 2005). A reasonable adjustment refers to ‘an action or measure taken to assist students with disability to participate in education by addressing their learning support needs’ (p. 1) (Commonwealth of Australia 2005). Despite some evidence supporting the use of reasonable adjustments, an Australian government report noted a lack of clarity about roles and processes related to implementing reasonable adjustments in educational settings (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations 2012).  **Aim:** To present the perspectives of disability service staff and students about implementing and using reasonable adjustments.  **Theoretical framework:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** A qualitative, interpretive research design was employed. Duration: 12 months. Participating students: (n=25). All students reported an ongoing health condition (n=15) , or a physical, sensory or cognitive impairment (n=10). Similar numbers of students had been studying between one and five years (n=9) and more than five years (n=11). Participating staff employed in disability service roles: (n=7); female; with one to five years of prior experience of supporting students with disability in a tertiary institution. Data collection: Semi-structured telephone/face-to-face interviews for 17 – 90 minutes. Topics covered: nature, experience and perceived usefulness of reasonable adjustments. Data analysis: Iterative, thematic analysis.  **Findings:** All participants described negotiating and implementing reasonable adjustments as a complex and variable process. Actions and decisions related to reasonable adjustments were made at multiple points during a student’s engagement with an educational institution; involving multiple parties, each with their own values and beliefs, and were made in the context of balancing student learning needs within the often competing social, legal, and financial imperatives of the institution. 1)Obtaining disability support: Disability service staff were aware of the opportunities for students to gain support and the processes necessary to obtain it; students were more mystified by the processes. 2)Dealing with multiple people & influences: Multiple factors and people influenced the decisions and actions of students and disability service staff when identifying & negotiating reasonable adjustments *(can be viewed in Table 2 (p. 6)).* Students & staff expressed differing expectations about the timing of reasonable adjustment requests. Students: Influenced by prior experiences and evaluation of when they needed assistance. Staff: Preferred proactive arrangement of support (influenced by: need to manage workload demands/belief that students should take more responsibility). 3)Negotiating the implementation of reasonable adjustments: Views of students and disability service staff differed regarding process of negotiating reasonable adjustments with service staff. Students: Some preferred to negotiate themselves; highly influenced by relationships with teaching staff; felt negotiating learning support is an added stress in difficult times. Disability learning staff: Majority considered negotiating as part of their role; some felt it was the student’s responsibility. Most disability staff reported incidents where teaching staff were reluctant about implementing the reasonable adjustments negotiated.  **Discussion:** The complex and variable process of obtaining disability support for students with disabilities is evidenced in this study.Creating a learning support plan and negotiating reasonable adjustments with teaching staff are also complex, given differing positions of power between students and staff.Lack of awareness about the existence of disability services was also a key factor in the timeliness of securing reasonable adjustments for students. The study showed little evidence that students and disability service staff engaged in a dialogue as to who would negotiate reasonable adjustments with teaching staff, suggesting the need for greater acknowledgement of the place of power in negotiating relationships between students, disability service staff, and teaching staff.  **Core argument:** The complexity of and variability in implementing and using reasonable adjustments to support students experiencing disabilities in HE highlights the importance of examining the values and beliefs underpinning practice in disability services in negotiating reasonable adjustments with teaching staff. |
| Gabel, S. L. & Miskovic, M. (2014). [Discourse and the containment of disability in higher education: an institutional analysis](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2014.910109), *Disability and Society,* 29(7), 1145–1158.  USA  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Disability studies; higher education; containment; social model; Foucault; discourse* | **Context:** There is an increasing number of students with disabilities attending HE in the US. Nevertheless, students with disabilities still face various forms of exclusion, including containment. Containment happens when individuals with disabilities are silenced, ignored, forgotten or defined using an individual deficit model. Containment is like a structure, with several components and an active social process. Between 2008 and 2011 the authors conducted federally sponsored research assessing the institutional climate around disability and providing quality education for disabled students at the private, non-sectarian Midwestern Regional University (MRU) in the United States.  **Aim:** This study aims to re-interpret the original dataset via the theoretical lenses of discourse an containment, while maintaining the view of disability as a social category of difference that has been stigmatised and contained historically. RQs: 1) what is the ensemble of phenomena that represents the disability discourse at MRU; 2) what is the architecture of containment resulting from the discourse of disability?  **Theoretical framework:** 1) Disability: Derived from the ‘social model of disability’ (p. 1146) originating from the ‘Disabled People’s Movement’ (p. 1146) in the UK (Oliver, 1990). Disability is viewed as a social category of difference, similar to race or gender. 2) Discourse: Concepts from Foucault (1980a, 1980b, 1982) as well as others who highlight the materiality of discourse & technologies of power are borrowed. 3)Containment: Containment is viewed as a strategy to silence the oppositional voices (Senzani, 2010) called ‘noxious materials’ (Irvine, 2011, p. 17) which are exercised through ‘linguistic isolation’ and which ‘insulate the speaker from something disvalued or dangerous’ (Irvine, 2011, p. 26).  **Methodology:** Unit of analysis: The selected institution (MRU). Sources of information: Interview excerpts (semi-structured interviews with students with disabilities (n=18) & the faculty and staff (n=28) across 3 colleges at MRU); texts (eg: institutional policy, legal definitions, survey results) and descriptive statistics. Interpretive strategies employed were derived from the theoretical frameworks of discourse & containment adopted. Two questions asked while reading & interpreting multiple information sources: ‘(1) What is the ensemble of phenomena (Olssen, Codd, and O’Neill 2006) that represents the disability discourse at MRU? (2) What is the architecture of containment (Smith 2004) resulting from the dis- ability discourse at MRU?’(p. 1148).  **Findings:** Significant features of the architecture of containment identified in the study: 1) Individualisation: Reasonable accommodation resources are provided to those students most knowledgeable about law, policies, and procedures, those most able to obtain proof of an impairment (something that can be costly), and those most willing to risk self-disclosure. 2)Time-management: Institutional policy requires students to identify within two weeks of the start of a term before students have had the opportunity to develop a relationship with an instructor. Putting impairment into a narrow time frame assumes that it is static and immediately perceptible, which has been widely refuted (for example, Couser 1997; Davis 2002; Shildrick 2007). 3)Boundary setting: Disability can be contained by the physical boundaries mapped out by students’ instructor (eg: a professor insisting the students to stand, cross arms and hold hands with the person on the right & left, which could not be done by a student in a wheelchair with little use of arms & hands). 4)Protective features (Irvine, 2011): Students’ disability is sometimes ignored, intentionally not talked about or not noticed or even forgotten about. 5)Statistical information: MRU’s institutional position that <1% of students are disabled leads the institution into a complacency that results in a mediocre response to the reality that at least 8–10% of students identify as disabled and list specific impairments they associate with disability. 6)Regulatory and institutional policy and features: MRU’s discourse facilitates patterns of interaction that contain disability without authoritative intervention (Clemens and Cook 1999), which is a hallmark of institutional power.  **Recommendations:** 1)Policy can be revised to consider the lived experience of students with disabilities whose impairments may not conform to rigid time frames of the MRU policy. 2)Institutions should be proactive in the communication of policies and procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, as many students may not be aware of the entitlement of accommodations, as evident in MRU. 3)Professional development should include examples of containment as observed in this study, and faculty members should be supported in the examining individual practices of containment. 4)Institutions should strategically address the cultural representations of disability (e.g. <1%) to increase awareness of the exclusion surround students with disability.  **Core argument: ‘**The architecture of containment – individualization, time management, boundary setting, protective features, cultural representations, and regulatory and institutional policy – provides taken-for-granted ‘scripts for behavior’ (Clemens and Cook 1999) that mobilize regularities’ (p. 1156), highlighting the need to address the exclusion of students with disabilities at the institutional level. |
| Ganguly, R., Brownlow, C., Du Preez, J. & Graham, C. (2015). [*Resilience/Thriving in Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities*.](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/resiliencethriving-in-post-secondary-students-with-disabilities/) Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** NCSEHE-funded research. Literature review identifies 6 themes across international literature on students with disabilities (SwD): “(a) academics’ poor knowledge of disabilities; (b) academics’ lack of  sensitivity while discussing educational adjustments issues; (c) students with “invisible” disabilities being misunderstood by peers and academics; (d) poor study skills and time management skills of students with disabilities; (e) negative self-perceptions among students with disabilities, and (f) disability self-disclosure issues” (p.11).  **Aim:** “to explore and describe the lived experiences of students with a self-disclosed disability enrolled at a regional university in Australia” (p.6)  **Theoretical frame:** Academic persistence and resilience (Connor & Davison, 2003; Berger & Lyon, 2005): psychological orientation  **Methodology:** 2-stage: 1) web-based survey (n=274) on socio-demographics, disability characteristics, career optimism, wellbeing, academic satisfaction, and resilience; 2) interviews with 30 students with disabilities (SwD) at one regional Australian university on strategies to overcome barriers. Analysis of quant data = descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modelling.  **Findings:**  Survey findings   * 70%+ of survey respondents = over 30 years of age (average age = 38); * more female than male (65:35%). * 34% did not disclose disability when enrolling. * 50% who had disclosed did not use disability support service. * Most common disability = self-reported psychological conditions (35%); 55% = more than one ‘comorbid’ condition. More had ‘invisible’ disabilities than ‘visible’ (physical) disabilities. * 75% = online or online + on-campus mode * Students with higher GPA (5.5+) = more resilient and satisfied (according to scales) * No direct relationship evident between resilience, academic satisfaction, wellbeing, career optimism and academic achievement   Interview data   * Of the 30 SwD = common characteristics for high-achievers: “taking personal responsibility for their actions, having a good personal social network, perseverance, resourcefulness, and having pragmatic expectations of self and life” (p.7). * External environmental factors = generally considered barriers to success (e.g. “being misunderstood by teaching staff, unsupportive attitudes of university administrative staff, inaccessible course materials, peer ridicule, financial difficulties, low expectations, frequent staff turnover in DRO, health, counselling, and other needed * support services, and not receiving assessment adjustments on time” (p.7). * Disability Resource Office(DRO) = useful for some students in terms of making course materials more accessible * Academically high-achievers = strategic learners who “selected contextually specific strategies in their repertoire and persevered with it until the adversity was mitigated” when they had problems (p.7).   **Recommendations:**  1. Create a professional development-training module for mandatory training for all academic staff that focuses on universal design principles.  2. Create specific programs of support for female university students with disabilities.  3. Provide resilience intervention training to university students.  4. Provide comprehensive and flexible disability support services.  5. Provide online student discussion groups (p.9)  **Core argument:** More longitudinal research needed, especially for the large proportion of SwD with psychological issues (because they have high attrition rate and tend to perform less well). Also more research on influence of resilience on optimism, wellbeing and academic outcomes needed so as to identify university stressors |
| Grimes, S., Southgate, E., Scevak, J. & Buchanan, R. (2018). [University student perspectives on institutional non-disclosure of disability and learning challenges: reasons for staying invisible](doi:10.1080/13603116.2018.1442507), *International Journal of Inclusive Education*,23(6), 639–655.  AUS  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Higher education; disability; disclosure; mental health; stigma* | **Context:** Students with disabilities (SWD) in Australian higher education need to disclose to their institution to access a range of ‘reasonable adjustments’ to support their learning. Nationally, 5.8% of the university population disclose their disability to their institution. Very little is known about the reasons for non-disclosure as this group represents a hidden population in higher education.  **Aim:** This paper aims to explore the reasons for non-disclosure by SWD so that universities could better plan and develop support for them.  **Theoretical framework:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** A mixed-methods approach was employed for the study, which was part of a larger project entitled ‘Support for student learning: Challenges to learning’, which explored the use & perceived importance of institutional supports for students with learning challenges. Data collection method: Survey - a modified and reduced form of the HESA UK classification system (2015) was used for participant self-identification into the groups of: Learning difficulties (HESA codes 51 and 53); Ongoing medical conditions. (HESA code 54); Mental health issues (HESA code 55); and Physical disabilities (HESA code 56, 57, & 58). The options of ‘Prefer not to say’ and/or ‘None of these apply to me’ were available within the question. Non-disclosed learning challenge respondents were asked open-ended questions on reasons for non-disclosure. Participants: 3995 responses were obtained for the survey with 2821 enrolled as domestic undergraduates; 13.2% of the domestic undergraduate population. Within this sample, 1234 students self- reported diagnoses/assessments. 994 identified their diagnoses/assessments and learning impact along with their institutional disclosure status. Of the 994, 361 student had disclosed to the institution and 633 had not disclosed to the institution. All 633 non-disclosing students identified their reasons for institutional non-disclosure and 386 completed the open-ended question.  Data analysis: Quantitative data: Analysed using SPSS with frequency counts for reasons for non-disclosure & Pearson’s chi-squared tests (Laerd Statistics, 2017). Qualitative data: Descriptive analytical approach was employed to thematise data from open-ended question & identify prominent themes (Patton, 2015).  **Findings:** Reasons for non-disclosure: A)Closed question: ‘*I have developed strategies for dealing with my learning challenge’* (53.7%), ‘*I didn’t know there was any assistance’* (31.9%), ‘*I do not think the help offered would be of any use to me’*(30.0%) (p. 7). Differences in reasons for non-disclosure appear to be attributed to: age, gender, first in family status, Indigenous status and the identified learning challenge groups. B)Open-ended question: 1) Individual responsibility: Acceptance of the learning challenge as an individual responsibility 2)Stigma and fear: Fear that disclosure would results in stigma and embarrassment 3)Institutional process: Perceived usefulness, access and outcomes of support. 4) Student identity: A desire to control how they were perceived at university – students appear to actively construct what they perceived as a ‘normal’ student identity.  **Discussion:** Reasons for non-disclosure are complex and can change over time. The data analysis revealed three aspects of non-disclosure and their implications for institutions, which were: non-disclosure decisions were the result of careful reasoning by students; students continually weighed up potential impacts of disclosure throughout their higher education journey; and students had difficulty negotiating the disclosure process.  **Implications:** 1)HE institutions should acknowledge that non-disclosed students with learning challenges are living with, and managing, their learning challenges alone. 2) Disclosure may not be appropriate for all students: institutions need to respect the right to non-disclosure. 3) Students need to be assured that help seeking for academic progress is normal and that all students should seek help when they need it. 4)Institutions should address students’ limited knowledge around accessing help by making information available easily regarding the services & support provided for academic progress (at the point of enrolment, through transition, and throughout their study). 5)Institutions need to have support strategies & training for staff on ways to assist students who choose to disclose 6)Professional development should be provided for teaching and professional staff working with students who may be living with mental health issues in order to address the stigma, both perceived and real.  **Core argument: ‘**Institutions need to understand that they have an invisible group of non-disclosing SWD in their student populations and that, to meet their learning challenges, universities need to support changes to policies, procedures and curriculum design’ (abstract). |
| Kent, M. (2016). [*Access and Barriers to Online Education for People with Disabilities*.](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/access-and-barriers-to-online-education-for-people-with-disabilities/) Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** NCSEHE-funded research on accessibility of online learning for students with disabilities (SwD) = fully online only via OUA. Students registered through OUA can identify as having one or more of 8 categories: mental illness, medical impairment, mobility impairment, hearing impairment, learning disability, vision impairment, acquired brain impairment (ABI) and intellectual disability. Draws on author’s own research which suggests that SwD become invisible when studying online, which can lead to unintended accessibility problems  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Social model of disability: “it is the constructed environment that disables people with impairments (Oliver, 1996)” – p.2. “By putting the focus on the disabling role of society, rather than an individual body that needs to be ‘made well’ the model allows for people with many separate impairments to come  together to demand social change” (p.147).  **Methodology:** 2 phases: 1) survey of SwDs’ experience of studying online (n=356), specifically regarding accessibility of online learning and teaching platforms, students’ approaches to disclosure and effectiveness of institutional accommodation. 2) interviews with 143 students (via Skype, email exchanges or phone) – expanded on survey responses  **Findings:**   * Majority of students preferred to study online * 44.9% survey respondents = mental illness * 39.2% = medical impairments * 25.3% = mobility impairments * Average age = 42 (average SwD with OUA = 36) * 71.4% = female, 27.5% = m, 1% = prefer not to say * 33% = Year 1 students * 85.6% of respondents had studied through OUA for 3 years or less * Most students in Arts and Humanities * 28.7% aware of type of accommodation that can be offered with relation to disability; 43.9% not aware; 27.3% = unsure * Most students (69.7%) had received no accommodation * Most students who had not advised institution of disability did not do so because they did not think it would help (51.8%) * Most access course via laptop; * 17.9% of students have had issues with accessing internet because of disability (most commonly with Blackboard, Echo 360 and university websites)   **Recommendations:**  Policy: OUA should release full breakdown of impairment categories as matter of standard policy (don’t use ‘other’ category); change disclosure process so students don’t need to repeatedly disclose and provide evidence – registration and documentation should be held centrally and students should be given option of how much is automatically propagated through systems and should be able to change settings whenever they want  Organisations of study: 13 week study period can be exhausting for some students – more flexibility to suspend studies needs to be possible  Promotion of disability-friendly environment: “some resources [should] be devoted to promoting this disability friendly and welcoming attitude at both OUA and its partner institutions, and also how students with disabilities can be assisted if they require it” (p.150).  Staff training: all staff should be trained on disability issues. Also, staff should be offered training in how to use online technology/ unit design/ effective learning and teaching strategies  Unit design: principles of universal design should be followed and trigger warnings of unit content should be considered.  Assessment design/implementation: Alternatives to invigilated exams need to be considered; also essays can cause stress and group work assignments need to be carefully designed to allow possibility of accommodation and extension policies need to be flexible and responsive  **Core argument:** Although accommodation is made on assumption of physical disabilities, the two most common forms of disability reported = mental illness and medical disability (31.6% and 27.6% respectively) - there is very little work around inclusive design in teaching and learning, particularly online learning, for these disabilities |
| Kilpatrick, S., Johns, S., Barnes, R., McLennan, D., Fischer, S. & Magnussen, K. (2016). [*Exploring the Retention and Success of Students with Disability*](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/exploring-the-retention-and-success-of-students-with-disability/). Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** NCSEHE-funded research that examines the retention and success of students with disabilities (SwD) in higher education  **Aim:** “to explore the relationship between supports and university adjustment for students with disability, and their retention and success” (p.ix).  **Theoretical frame:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** Mixed-methods: examined data (2007-2013) from Higher Education Student Data Collection for: number of students with disability, type and disclosed need for support. Disability categories = hearing, learning, mobility, visual, medical and other [note: nothing explicit about mental illness] . Student data was also analysed regarding retention and success. Universities (Table A and B) categorized according to performance (high, medium, inconsistent, low). Three institutions from each category invited to participate in interviews on policy and practice to provision of adjustments for SwD. Desktop audit also conducted: “to provide an overview of policy, practice and institutional culture in relation to  disability across the institutions” (p.ix) in 2015.  **Findings:**   * Percentage of commencing and enrolled SwD increased over 2007-2013 but no real changes in types of disabilities (3.67 – 5.04%) * Smaller universities (10k-30k students) have larger proportion of SwD * Students with medical disability = most common; hearing issues = least reported * SwD = slightly lower success rate * Students with learning disability = retained at higher rate than other disabilities * SwD + support = retained at consistently lower rate * Differences between institutions in terms of policy and practice = at level of maturity of inclusive policy/ practices * Some institutions do not have current Disability Action Plan (DAP) * Few institutions involve students in development of policy * Disability support services = generally located in central support and generally shared throughout the institution = “indicating the move from a medical model to an inclusion model” (p.xi) * Factors that improve retention and performance * Recruitment via external linkages (schools/ disability networks) * Collaborative approaches (internal + external stakeholders)   **Recommendations**  Nationally consistent approach to categorizing students needed  Changes to policy and practice needed nationally, including: whole-of-institution inclusive framework built of concept of universal design, flexibility and current policy, offer financial resources to create suitable responses, integrate disability support with mainstream support, employ specialist disability support staff, regular monitoring of student outcomes, develop formalized learning action plans. Also “Consider students with disability from the perspective of the student lifecycle model, including recruitment and outreach strategies, and career transition strategies” (p.xiii).  **Core argument: “**students with disability are retained at consistently lower rates and have lower success rates than the total student population,suggesting that higher education institutions need to do more to redress this situation” (p.45) More research needed on better methods of disclosure, how to better support students with mental health issues and autism and more training for staff needed (academic and non-academic) |
| Moriña, A. (2017). [‘We aren’t heroes, we’re survivors’: higher education as an opportunity for students with disabilities to reinvent an identity](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1070402), *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 41(2), 215–226.  SPAIN  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Students with disabilities; higher education; inclusive education; resilience; biographical narrative methodology* | **Context:** Spanish legislation explicitly recognises the right to an inclusive, accessible education based on a universal design. In HE, the current Constitutional Law 4/2007 on universities specifically mentions the inclusion of people with disabilities, guaranteeing them equal opportunity and non-discrimination. However, even with the law supporting the right to an inclusive education and the necessary curriculum adaptations, it appears that in practice this is often not considered, as concluded by López and Moriña (2015).  **Aim:** To discover the barriers and aids affecting access, academic performance and students’ perception of their HE experience from the students themselves.  **Theoretical frame:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** Multidisciplinary study (educational sciences, economics, health sciences and experimental sciences), part of an extensive research project financed by Spain’s Ministry of Education and Competition, titled ‘Barriers and aid that students with disabilities identify at the University’ (ref. EDU 2010-16264). Participants: All participants were students with some type of disability (aged between 19 – 59 years old); 22 men & 22 women; 38% of the students had a physical disability, 15% psychological, 36% sensory disability and 11% had difficulties associated with some type of organic problem (asthma, degenerative diseases, etc.). The research project was conducted in several stages, with a biographical-narrative methodology. Stage 1: Part 1: Focus groups and individual interviews (oral & written). Participants: (n=44). Part 2: Micro-life histories focused on university career. Participants: University students (n=16) who participated in Part 1. Data collection instruments: Life-lines, focus interviews, self-reporting. Stage 2: Application of a biographical-narrative methodology to provide in-depth life histories & polyphony of voices. Participants: 8 of 16 students who drafted their micro-life histories in Phase 2. Data collection instruments: in-depth interviews, photographs, interviews with key people in each student’s lives, observations. Data analysis: 1) Narrative analysis (Goodley et al., 2004): To draft each history 2)Structural analysis (Riessman, 2008) (Miles & Huberman, 1994): To conduct a comparative analysis of all information collected.  **Findings:** 1)Whether or not to reveal a disability: Most significant theme – Students’ desire to be treated normally, and to only receive support when ‘absolutely necessary’ (p. 219); Need to constantly demonstrate invisible disabilities; Dilemma regarding revealing disability; lecturers as a barrier to achieving successful academic outcomes. 2)What they can and cannot do: Significant theme – the required awareness among students regarding activities they could & could not do; besides lecturers, students highlighted their disability as a barrier 3)The effort needed to achieve one’s goals: Significant theme – ‘disabilities meant having to invest more time and effort than the rest of the students to achieve their objectives’ (p. 220). 4)The various perceptions of themselves as students: No generalised conclusions; Common perceptions: similar to any other university student, ‘fighters’ (p. 221), ‘heroes’ or ‘survivors’ (p. 221); Factors influencing perceptions: Courses studied, their commitment towards their academic career. 5)Rising to meet adversity: Students developed ‘strategies of resilience, both to overcome obstacles and to work out how to face such obstacles’ (p. 222)); Eg: ‘Look at things differently’ (p. 222), gaining awareness of disability to develop appropriate strategies. 6) University as a context that contributes to social inclusion and employment: Most students with disabilities perceived HE as a ‘positive experience offering them a normalised context’, by providing an ‘escape mechanism’ to overcome challenges associated with their disabilities (p. 222).  **Core argument:** HE, as highlighted in this study’s findings, provides university students with disabilities an opportunity to rebuild their identity, which might have been construed more negatively during other stages of their education. However, not just any university environment facilitates this reconstruction. Inclusive environments are ideal for favouring personal and social development. While universities recognise the need to advance in the field of inclusion and fairness, policies, strategies and programmes must be implemented to contribute to the true achievement of these objectives. |
| Moriña, A. & Morgado, B. (2016). [University surroundings and infrastructures that are accessible and inclusive for all: listening to students with disabilities](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0309877X.2016.1188900), *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 42(1), 13–23.  SPAIN  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Higher education; students with disabilities; architectural barriers and infrastructures; universal design; biographical-narrative methodology* | **Context:** In Spain, the right to HE for students with disabilities has been recognised by legislation. For HE, Constitutional Law 4/2007 for universities specifically mentions the inclusion of people with disabilities, establishing guaranteed equal opportunity and no discrimination. Nevertheless, authors such as Oliver and Barnes (2010) have questioned the policies and practices of university systems, which, in many cases have inaccessible curricula, negative attitudes and physical barriers.  **Aim:** To investigate the barriers and aids that university students with disabilities identify with regards to access, career and results at the university**.**  **Theoretical frame:** Social disability model (Barnes, 1991)  **Methodology:** Multidisciplinary study (educational sciences, economics, health sciences and experimental sciences), part of an extensive research project financed by Spain’s Ministry of Education and Competition, titled ‘Barriers and aid that students with disabilities identify at the University’ (ref. EDU 2010-16264). Participants: All participants were students with some type of disability (aged between 19 – 59 years old); 22 men & 22 women; 38% of the students had a physical disability, 15% psychological, 36% sensory disability and 11% had difficulties associated with some type of organic problem (asthma, degenerative diseases, etc.). The research project was conducted in three phases, with a biographical-narrative methodology. Phase 1: Focus groups and individual interviews (oral & written). Participants: (n=44). Phase 2: Micro-life histories focused on university career. Participants: University students (n=16) who participated in Phase 1. Data collection instruments: Life-lines, focus interviews, self-reporting. Phase 3: Application of a biographical-narrative methodology to provide in-depth life histories & polyphony of voices. Participants: 8 of 16 students who drafted their micro-life histories in Phase 2. Data collection instruments: in-depth interviews, photographs, interviews with key people in each student’s lives, observations. Data analysis: 1) Narrative analysis (Goodley et al., 2004): To draft each history 2)Structural analysis (Riessman, 2008): To conduct a comparative analysis of all information collected.  **Findings:** Architectural barriers & infrastructures: (1) Urban barriers: Streets and public spaces outside the university (2) Transportation barriers: Public transportation, personal vehicles (3) Building barriers: Inside university buildings and spaces ( limited number of ramps, narrow doors which hinders wheelchair access, lack of lifts in libraries) (4) Environmental barriers: Furniture, environmental conditions (light, temperature) (5) Communication barriers: Signposting, access to information (public address system, bulletin  boards, non-adapted computers, *PowerPoint*, visual surroundings).  **Recommendations:** 1) common spaces at universities need to be more accessible, with signage, ramps, wide doors and toilets, anti-slip strips and adapted lifts. 2) classrooms must be designed without steps, and have spaces reserved in the front rows for students with disabilities, with adequate audibility and visibility and where there are new technological facilities.  **Core argument:** The obstacles that university students face are structural barriers rather than personal or individual barriers, as recognised by the social disability model. The findings therefore highlight that the university centres studied still require a certain degree of adaptation and readjustments to make them fully accessible for and usable by all students. Future university policies should earmark part of their budgets for complying with legislation on disability, and therefore, on architectural barriers existing in the various colleges; while specific legislation and accessibility plans should be developed in urban environments to achieve ‘full inclusion’ (p. 8). |
| Owen, C., McCann, D., Rayner, C., Devereaux, C., Sheehan, F. & Quarmby, L. (2016). [*Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Higher Education*](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/supporting-students-autism-spectrum-disorder-higher-education-2/). Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University: Perth.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** NCSEHE-funded research exploring targeted improvements for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (SwASD). Context = expected growth in number of SwASD in coming years in higher education and “failure of existing supports”. SwASD often have poor academic outcomes. The specific needs of SwASD mean that built environment needs to be considered (e.g. sensory-scape). Review of literature suggests that SwASD struggle with social interaction; coping with the learning environment, that is, sensory overload, lack of structure and predictability; and engaging academically. These students = unlikely to seek support  **Aim:** To explore design of built environment as = holistic framework of support for SwASD in higher education; to recommend holistic disability supports, pedagogical innovations, inclusive design solutions and the potential under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for funding to support students with ASD in higher education (p.5). Research questions are:   1. What is the scope of existing support provided to students with ASD in Australian higher education institutions? 2. What are the experiences and individual needs of higher education students with ASD? 3. What opportunities exist to enhance support for students with ASD in higher education? 4. What is the potential for funding under the NDIS to support students with ASD in higher education? (p.10)   **Methodology:** Mixed methods: Literature review, survey, photography (SwASD). Survey Monkey survey sent to subscribers on ATEND network (n=35) with 2 MCQ: 1) types of supports provided to students with ASD, 2) the types of supports provided to the staff (academic and professional) working with students with ASD. Two open-ended Qs: effective ways of supporting students, examples of good practice. Offers case studies of good practice from universities; student experience (photography) with 6 SwASD from UTAS  **Findings:**   * Most common form of assistance reported in surveys = LAP (learning access plan), internal reference to counselling service/staff, internal reference to study support services. Also mentioned: reference to external/community services, student support services or information on disability. Less prevalent = peer-mentoring/ specific support for ASD, transition programs for SwASD * Support for staff = mainly regarding inclusive teaching practices and more likely to be supported via web-based general disability resources (rather than ASD-specific) * Strong emphasis on individualised assessment and support = most common suggestion regarding good practice   Student data:  Contextual factors to consider = sensory environment (nowhere left to go), social environment (navingating ‘hidden curriculum and social norms = difficult; e.g. leaving a class to avoid group work), cognitive environment (difficult to ‘make sense’ of university worlds = navigation, legibility, learning styles)  Coping mechanisms: “Several participants discussed the use of personal devices including earplugs, stimming toys (props that support repetitive body movements – used as a self-calming mechanism) and other physical aids to reduce sensory overload and anxieties” (p.62); escaping when it’s their ‘turn’ or it’s too much, turning up early to wind down and desensitise.  **Recommendations**  Holistic supports need to extend beyond academic support and include social skills, self-management, advocacy and personal development.  Universal design principles “may provide a useful pedagogical framework to support students with ASD and the  broader population of students” (p.6).  SwASD can experience sensory overload from acoustic and visual stimuli and have difficulty navigating online and offline spaces and experience anxiety over ‘forced social interaction’ = means a need for more sensory calming spaces and discrete escape/safe spaces **Core argument:** Need to develop more holistic supports for SwASD and increase staff awareness of ASD and help them to develop their understandings and practices with these students. More research is needed to explore possibilities of supporting SwASD through/with NDIS |
| Robinson, S. & Fisher, K.R. (2012). [*Participatory and inclusive approaches to disability program evaluation*](http://www.aes.asn.au/2012-aes-conference-papers.html), Proceedings of 2012 AES (Australasian Evaluation Society) International Conference, Adelaide, SA, 27–31 August, Australasian Evaluation Society.  AUS  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Disability; participatory approaches; inclusive approaches; evaluation framework* | **Context:** Inclusive approaches: engage people as active agents; provides opportunities for – increased breadth & quality of data; ethical schema; clear conceptual & methodological framework for practice; addressing human rights & social justice for marginalised communities. Rationale for including people with intellectual disabilities in evaluating disability programs: people with disabilities are more comfortable talking to someone with similar experiences, leading to the acquisition more accurate and extensive information; more simplistic approaches of questioning; increased involvement of targeted participant group. Pilot program conducted: Residential Support Program (RSP) - Support from 8 NGOs to >700 residents with disability, living in 20 private residential services (unfunded boarding houses and hostels) in 5 locations; Community access, personal care, health and well-being; Complex needs of program participants– 42% intellectual or cognitive disability, 73% psychiatric disability, 64% multiple disability  **Aim:** To reflect on the RSP in terms of: 1) extent and depth of inclusion 2)limits to the current approach 3)ways to enhance the program in the future.  **Theoretical framework:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** Longitudinal study, with a mixed methods approach was employed. Data collection methods: Interviews (with stakeholders); Observations (meetings & residence).  **Findings:** 1)Control of technical decision making (stakeholder- evaluator): Design of governance & conduct of evaluation: Consultative design phase with PWD; critical comment from stakeholders on draft design and outputs; steering committee; advisory group; formative evaluation – responsive feedback. Limits: Control remained with people acting on behalf of PWD. 2)Diversity among stakeholders (diverse – limited): The program evaluation reached individuals who do not normally contribute to evaluations of disability programs, leading to: Unexpected data & consequent action. Limits: Brief & occasional contact, repeated to build trust & triangulate data. 3)Power relations among stakeholders (conflicting – neutral): acknowledgement & address of power imbalances in program and evaluation – boarding house reform conflict; limits: capacity & risk, both locally and in committees (confidential briefings on ethics & conflict). 4)Manageability of implementation (unmanageable – manageable): Logistical, time & resource challenges: Finalised time after consulting stakeholders in design; Delays – ethics approval, accessible materials, intensive interviews; ethical practices – disclosure protocol, confidentiality, assistance with complaints, cash reimbursement; diverse participation instead of full inclusion. Limits: organisational management at the expense of inclusive practice. 5) Depth of participation (deep – consultative): Unexpected information with utility for evaluation questions – governance and data collection; observational context data. Limits: No direct participation of residents & people with significant cognitive impairment at decision making levels of evaluation.  **Implications:** 1) Build the capacity of academic and community evaluators as team members, mentors, advisors and direct participants 2)Make inclusive evaluations of disability policy 3)Inclusion of people intellectual disability in evaluation about programs related to their lives 4)Employ methods that build on *everyone’s* strengths 5)Support self-advocacy & disability activities to develop capacity & participation in big issues  **Core argument:** A participatory and inclusive evaluation of people with disability requires local capacity building, time and resources. |
| Ryan, J. (2011). [Access and participation in higher education of students with disabilities: access to what:?,](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13384-010-0002-8) *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 38(1), 73–93.  AUS  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Equity, Access, Participation, Students with disabilities, Nurse education, Curriculum and pedagogy* | **Context:** People with disabilities comprise 20% of Australia’s population but only account for 4% of university enrolments. In 1991, the Australian Government designated students with disabilities as one of the six equity groups that were under-represented in higher education. Despite the existence of the Australian Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) and the introduction of the Disability Standards for Education in 2005, negative attitudes about students with disabilities by university lecturers continue to exist.  **Aim:** To investigate and report on university staff and students’ knowledge of the legislative responsibilities of universities under the DDA and their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with a disability in nursing education programs.  **Theoretical frame:** Socio-political model of disability (Barnes et al., 2002; Davis, 1997): Views disability not as a ‘inherent, medically defined feature of an individual but as the product of socially constructed environments and attitudes’, resulting from interaction between the individual’s physical/mental status and their socio-political environment.  **Methodology:** Mixed methods approach – Data collection instruments: Questionnaire, focus groups (4), individual interviews (5). Participants: Undergraduate nurse students (n=330; 72% response rate), lecturers & clinical educators (placement supervisors) (n=48; 83% response rate), nurse clinicians (n=32; response rate 11%), university disability practitioners (29; response rate 83%). (3 categories of respondents: Students, nurse educators, disability officers) Age groups: Students: 18-20 years old; Staff: 21-30 years old, 30-41 years old. Data analysis: Questionnaires: Using SPSS.  **Findings:** 1) Knowledge of legislation: Disability possessed superior knowledge of the DDA: disability officers had a mean correct response rate of 78%; students had a mean correct response rate of 50%; nurse educator group had a mean correct response rate of only 43%. 2) Attitudes towards entry to Bachelor of Nursing programs: Nurse educators are the ‘least supportive’ (p. 86) in including those with disabilities in BN programs. Data suggests a strong link between occupational status & attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into the BN programs. 3)Experience of disability: Findings suggest having a disability, or an experience of working with a colleague with disability led to more acceptance or support of others with disabilities.  **Implications/Recommendations:** 1)Universities need to address the ignorance and disregard of disability legislation and policies amongst their staff particularly in areas such as nurse education 2) Universities should be proactive in collaborating with their affiliated agencies & professional bodies in addressing deficit & uninformed views. 3) Universities should ensure that inflexible course requirements do not impede students’ success their courses.  **Core argument:** A lack of understanding towards legislative and institutional requirements underlies the negative attitudes regarding students with disabilities, especially in practicum-based courses such as nursing.It is therefore crucial for universities to address the ignorance and disregard of disability legislation and policies amongst their staff. |
| Slee, R. (2001). [Social justice and the changing directions in educational research: the case of inclusive education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603110010035832), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 5(2–3), 167–177.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *inclusive education, disabilities* | **Context:** Disabilities.  Speaking to an audience of like-minded people so explicitly does not need to debate the merits of inclusive education, but cautions against resting on assumptions about shared definitions: “The absence of a language for inclusive education that stipulates its vocabulary and grammar increases the risk for political misappropriation” (p.167). Discusses inclusive education in context of special education (with particular focus on disabilities). Frames discussion around introduction of special/ inclusive education – notes how inclusive education = narrowly framed around disorders and defects, rather than acknowledging inclusive education= for all students.  **Aim:** To discuss “human rights and the production and reproduction of meaning as it adheres to the intersection of disablement and education” (p.169). Asks questions about how to teach and what research to draw on when teaching education students about inclusive education  **Theoretical frame:** Not specified in study  **Methodology:** Essay  **Discussion:** Scopes the evolution of ‘special education’. Argues that “The exclusion and `othering’ of young people through the forms and processes of education is endemic” and “The context of education policy  creates the conditions for exclusion that militate against an inclusive educational project” (p.172). Makes the point that schooling was never designed to be for everyone, so the more education has opened to the masses, the more it has “developed the technologies of exclusion and containment” (p.172). Makes 3 propositions for teacher education:   1. inclusive education = cultural politics 2. consider cross-cultural dialogue (inter/intra-disciplinary with a focus on social justice) 3. teaching focus should shift to difference and identity politics   **Core argument:**  For inclusive education to be congruent with hope for social justice, need to confront political nature of teacher education, and work against tokenistic and surface “strive against the notion that compulsory special education units for trainee teachers is better than nothing” (p.175). |
| Vickerman, P. & Blundell, M. (2010). [Hearing the voices of disabled students in higher education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09687590903363290), *Disability & Society,* 25(1), 21–32.  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *higher education; disabled students; consultation* | **Context:** Since the return of the Labour government to power in the UK in 1997 inclusive policies and practices have been highlighted in the political and statutory agenda. These include strategies to enhance opportunities and access to the physical, social, learning and teaching environment for students with disabilities in HE (Riddell, Tinklin, and Wilson 2005). However, despite growing interest in issues surrounding inclusion, research suggests that the voices of disabled students have rarely been heard (Fuller, Bradley, and Healey, 2004).  **Aim:** To explore the perspectives of students with disabilities in HE in relation to their experiences of: induction onto their course, course delivery, barriers to learning and links into employability with the purpose of gaining a rich insight into the various phases of their student life cycle.  **Theoretical framework:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** A mixed-methods approach was employed for the two-phased study conducted in a UK HE institution. Phase 1: Student learner support questionnaire: Sample: (n=600); 500 student responses from a sample of 600 (84% response rate); Sampling method: Convenience sampling; Type of questions: Open & closed questions. Phase 2: Face-to-face interviews with selected disabled students. Participants: (n=4) disabled students (one from each area of: PE, sport, dance & outdoor education); Types of disabilities: General learning disability, dyslexia, physical disability. Data analysis: Phase 1 (questionnaire): Data analysed via the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) v14.0, and was collated & represented in a graph format; Open-ended responses (Phase 1 & 2): analysed via protocol analysis (Robson, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).  **Findings:** 1)Disclosing a disability: Only 5.6% of students (out of 504 participants) disclosed their disability, compared with a UK average of 6.9%; 25% of students who disclosed their disability did not disclose this on university applications due to a perceived fear of not being offered a place on their preferred course.  2)Pre-enrolment & transition to university: of the 75% of students who disclosed their disability on university applications, 47.6% reported not being contacted by either the academic or welfare services staff prior to their course commencement; 0f the 52.4% of students contacted, only 36.4% found that a ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’ process (p. 27); One student has a positive interview experience prior to beginning a course. 3)Teaching, learning and assessment: 11.1% of disabled students felt their assessments did not consider their needs, compared to 3.6% of non-disabled students. Nevertheless, one student positively commented on the inclusivity of assessments in every module. 4)Career development & employability: 50% of disabled students had no contact with university careers service; those who did found limited advice on specific employability issues.  **Recommendations:** 1) HE institutions should be more proactive at the pre-entry to university stage to encourage students to disclose their disability, with a commitment to treat students who do with respect, empathy and to work towards addressing any potential barriers to their learning within a positive culture. 2) Universities should provide students the opportunity to visit and discuss their needs as part of the decision-making process prior to enrolment, which could have positive benefits to both staff and students alike.  3) While equality legislation is an important part in addressing the challenges faced by students with disabilities, it is vital that this is matched by the education and training of HE staff to respond proactively to the diverse needs of the disabled students they support.  **Core argument:** To empower disabled students and provide equal access to HE, there should be a commitment from the policy to the practice level, with a desire to ‘adopt flexible approaches to all aspects of university life’ (Riddell, 1998). |
| Wray, M. (2013). [Comparing disabled students’ entry to higher education with their non-disabled peers – barriers and enablers to success](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2013/00000014/00000003/art00006), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 14(3), 87–101.  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: [*barriers*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27barriers%27)*;*[*disability*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27disability%27)*;*[*enablers*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27enablers%27)*;*[*social model*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27social+model%27)*;*[*students*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27students%27)*;*[*widening participation*](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/search?option1=keywords&value1=%27widening+participation%27) | **Context:** Statistical evidence and qualitative research on HE in England suggests that disabled people underachieve in comparison to their non-disabled peers and that they face a range of barriers that hinder their success throughout their educational journey. In 2009, Aimhigher (a government-funded programme that aimed to increase the participation rates of underrepresented groups in study within HE) in Warwickshire and Coventry formed a working group to oversee activities that were targeted at learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). The group decided to investigate the educational journeys of these learners and to identify additional barriers, administrative burdens and skills required to enable successful progression.  **Aim:** To examine and compare the experiences of disabled and non-disabled learners within the education system in England. RQs: 1) ‘What barriers and enablers to equitable access to higher education exist within the educational journeys of disabled learners? 2)How do these barriers and enablers compare with the experiences of non- disabled learners? (p. 87).  **Theoretical frame:** Social model of disability (Oliver, 1996; Barnes, 1991): To identify disabling barriers within the educational environment.  **Methodology:** A qualitative approach was employed, with focus groups as the primary method of data collection. Participants: Two groups: One group of disabled and one group of non-disabled learners. Participants were recruited from two further education (FE) colleges and two HE institutions in West Midlands. FE groups: Six learners in each group (n=12); HE groups: 12 disabled learners & 16 non-disabled learners.  **Findings:** Common barriers and enablers for HE: 1) FE students: a)Motivations for continuing in education: Both groups were influenced by similar factors – significant others; liking towards subject studied; future work prospects; implications for studying. Compared to non-disabled students, disabled students were much more satisfied with current college situations. b)University choice and options after college: Both groups ruled out university for similar reasons – money issues; level of debt; non-disabled learners’ perception of colleges’ lack of proactiveness c)Previous experiences at school: Distinct differences in issues raised by disabled learners – All six disabled learners had negative experiences – poor delivery of education; unmet needs; bullying and isolation (mainstream schools); accessibility and mobility issues (bigger schools). 2)University students: a)Finance and work: Both groups of students saw financial arrangements within the current system as an enabler, not a barrier. B)Experiences from school: Contrast in responses between non-disabled students, who mentioned feelings of ‘strong self-belief’ (p. 95) from their experiences, and non-disabled students, who mentioned varying levels of support at school. Students highlighted role of significant others in encouraging their pursuit of HE. Disabled students also reported negative expectations towards them in school, which sometimes restricted their choices. c)Advice received: Differences in responses between disabled & non-disabled students’ responses – Disabled students: Availability of support services & accessibility of campus were key factors influencing students’ university choices; DSAs and accommodations by universities were significant enablers; Non-disabled students:  **Recommendations:** 1) As many student chose not to pursue HE due to financial concerns, this factor should be considered by schools and colleges in the quest towards widening participation into HE. 2)The influence of significant others, especially teachers, as highlighted in the findings, emphasises the role of teaching staff in inspiring learners to pursue HE. **Core argument:** Availability of course & academic standing of institution influenced their university choices.  Disabled learners face significantly more barriers in their educational trajectories compared to non-disabled learners. The findings highlight a marked contrast between the two groups of learners in terms of the difficulties they had faced during their schooling, as disabled learners dealt with a number of issues throughout their education which non-disabled learners simply never encountered. |