

OHP 1

The symbol for a disabled person is someone in a wheel chair, but it is much more likely that on the MS courses you will come across students with less obvious disability.

There may be some of you that have a disability...I have no idea, but I hope that I have tried to accommodate them if they are there.

A disability may not be permanent it can be temporary, but it is unlikely that you will tell people about it.

When you are in a meeting and you can't hear the speaker, you don't always ask the speaker to speak up, because you may not want to interrupt, or draw attention to yourself --especially if you appear to be the only one who is having a problem!

Therefore when you prepare your lessons, your handouts, your web page and other materials, assume that there will be students who cannot hear well, read well, see small print, or quickly grasp numerical functions. Prepare your lessons accordingly. Your "regular" students will not be inconvenienced if you use large print, or show captioned DVD's, and it might help them learn

Approaches

It is a good idea to ask: How would my lecture, seminar, presentation, exercise, handout, or wording be experienced by a

dyslexic student with reading difficulties;
a deaf student who lip reads;
a blind learner;
a student with high levels of anxiety;
a person
with mobility difficulties;
a learner with Asperger's syndrome?

It can be daunting but eventually becomes an instinctive process.

PowerPoint or overheads or handouts,

design slides with accessibility in mind.

Colour,

contrast,

amount of text

Avoid capitals for all letters

Size and type of font all affect the legibility.

Arial or Verdana work best at min size 30 mixed case and in bold rather than underlining or italics work effectively.

To emphasise words, either enlarge the print or put it in bold. Avoid underlining.

Ensure a contrast between text and background and avoid using colour alone to convey meaning e.g. red for danger

Use cream as a background

If you plan to use a video, check out whether it is captioned to assess its accessibility to deaf and hard of hearing students and its soundtrack to assess whether it is going to be useful to partially sighted students. Having deaf or blind students does not preclude the use of videos. In fact, video can increase the accessibility of the session. For very helpful advice see:

<http://www.skillsforaccess.org.uk/articles.php?id=151>

Organise a glossary of any terms you will be using with which students may be unfamiliar. There may be no sign language for the term and deaf learners who lip read may not recognise the word.

Dyslexic students will value seeing the spelling of the word and hearing it spoken in the session.

It is best practice to give BSL/English interpreters a copy of any lecture, outline of the session and handouts in advance so that they know what they are interpreting.

Small group work

- Plan small group activities so that all can be as fully involved as possible. Make part of the exercise the reading out of the tasks involved so that all will have understanding of what is required.
- Plan for alternative ways for participants to feed back from small group work. Offer choice.

Assessment

- Plan in alternative ways of assessing learning during and after the lecture or seminar.

Procedures for a seminar or small group activity

- Check with the student whether and/or how they would like the rest of the group to know about their requirements – if those requirements will have implications for the group members. E.g. a deaf learner working with an interpreter may want the rest of the group to know the ground rules for working through an interpreter.

Presentations

- Use a microphone when it is available as part of a loop system – however small the group or room.
- Face the group when presenting so that there is a clear view of you. If using PowerPoint, slides or notes, continue to face the audience. Try to maintain that stance throughout so that your lips are visible.
- Avoid standing with light directly behind you.
- Use focused lighting if the room is darkened for a presentation.
- Use clear, unambiguous language. If you are going to use acronyms, explain what they mean at the outset. If you are going to use or introduce terminology, write it down and give a definition or ensure the audience knows what it means.
- Speak clearly and deliberately to allow notetaking.
- Pause to allow clarification.
- Have short intermissions for review of material, individual reactions, questions.
- Describe diagrammatic materials or demonstrations.
- Lip reading is an exhausting activity

Discussion

- Establish ground rules for discussion with the group members that will allow as full participation as possible by all group members.

Small group work

- Make the task clear both in writing and orally.
- Talk through with groups any practical difficulties that might arise from having a diverse group and ways of addressing those difficulties.
- If reporting back is part of the exercise, give the option of reporting back orally. Usually dyslexic students' oral skills are stronger than their writing. Their contribution to a group discussion will be much greater if they do not feel pressured to produce a written account of the discussion.
- Offer to take notes of the plenary and distribute them through Blackboard or other electronic means.
- If flip charts are used as one medium for feeding back, make sure you feed back orally.