

ALISS Quarterly

Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences

Diversifying Libraries

Black History Month

Stolen Tools – a liaison success story,
Clare Camp, Collections Analytics Librarian, King's College London

Disability

Recent Aliss Disability Forum Meetings

Disability, Higher Education, teaching and
Learning Bibliography July- October 2024

Neurodiversity

Creating A Library Guide for Neurodivergent Students.

Creating an online tutorial exploring study
support for neurodivergent students

ALISS Quarterly Vol. 20 Number 1

October 2024

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Published by ALISS.

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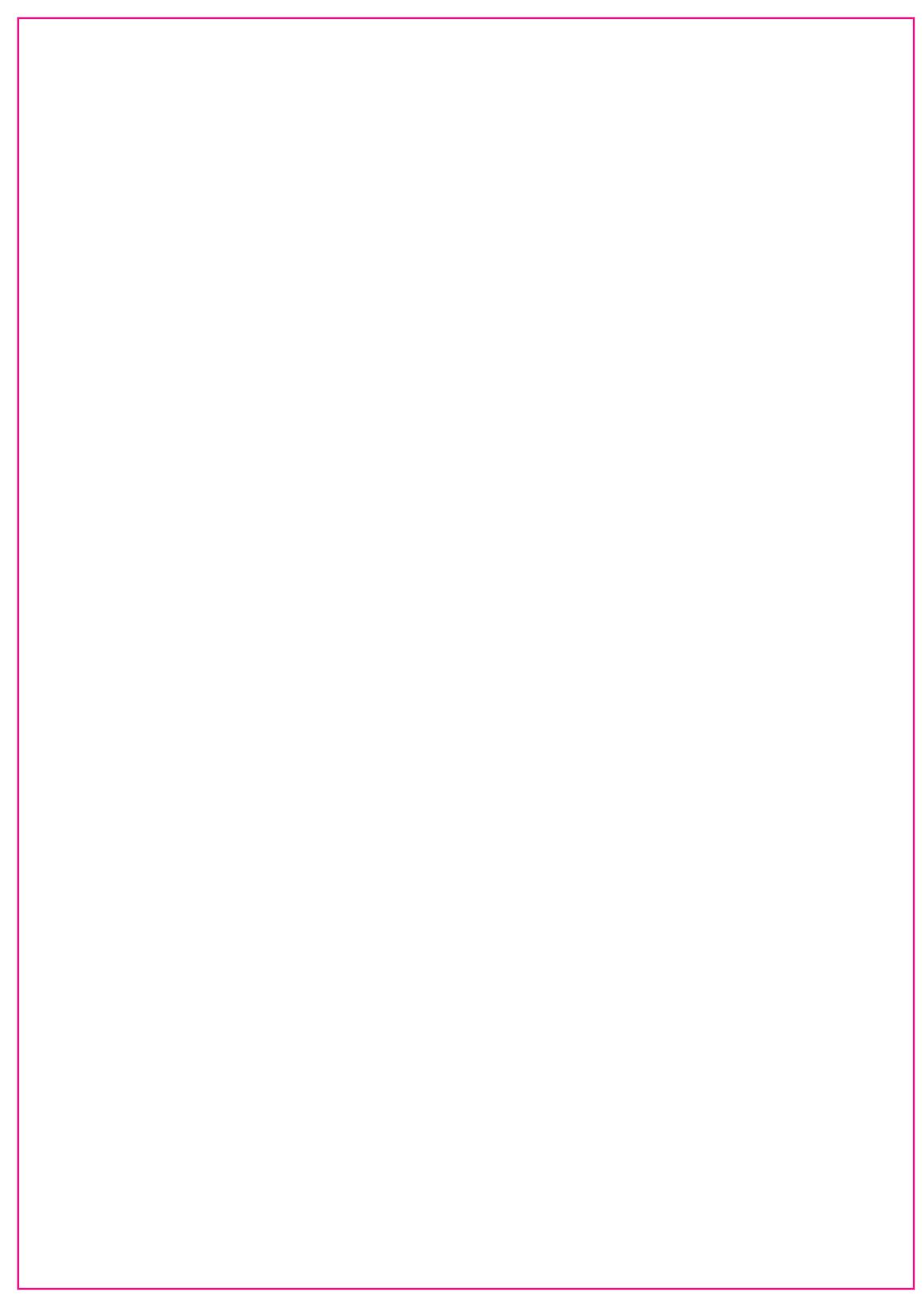
Jen Townend, Learning Support Specialist, Library and Learning Services, University of Northampton (UON)

Creating an online tutorial exploring study support for neurodivergent students

Sam Gill, Liaison Librarian for Histories, Languages and Cultures, Libraries, Museums and Galleries, University of Liverpool

Louise Minta, Liaison Librarian for Medicine, University of Liverpool

Heather Johnston is Learning & Liaison Librarian University of Liverpool.



Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences).

In this issue, we highlight a number of themes

The first section of the journal focuses on the key theme of engaging with our communities. It introduces our padlet of resources for Black History Month highlighting those relevant to uncovering hidden black histories in oral history accounts. Clare Camp describes her work at Kings College London with 'Stolen Tools', a pioneering open-access journal providing a platform for racialised minority voices. She covers this from her perspective as a university Librarian offering a valuable insight into the challenges and successes of it in terms of academic liaison. See this video for more discussion of the project.

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Stealing+the+Master%27s+Tools+-+Sohail+Jannesari+%28Speaker%29%2C+Ricardo+Twumasi%2C+Clare+Camp%2C+Ruth+Murry/1_pajq1ct

The issue also contains well-being and disability sections. These are linked to the disability forum section of our website where further slides and dates of future meetings can be found <https://alissnet.com/disability/>

The main focus is on resources to support neurodivergent students. They include the creation of a Library guide at the University of Northampton and an online library tutorial at the University of Liverpool

We hope you enjoy the issue

Keep up to date on the website <https://alissnet.com/>

Best wishes Heather Dawson ALISS Secretary h.dawson@lse.ac.uk

Especially for Black History month

We created a basic padlet of subscription and free resources. While this was based on LSE Library resources it also includes a section of links to free web sources
https://padlet.com/h_dawson/lse-library-black-history-month-2024-86bqyrv08iipul32
 Also following the 2024 theme Here are some examples of oral histories which allow Black voices to be unheard.

Making of Black Britain

<https://themakingofblackbritain.org/>

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-making-black-britain>

non-profit organization collecting stories of the resilience of ordinary people

The Barnardo's Oral History project

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/oral-history-project>

Includes: The personal experience of Vice President, Baroness Floella Benjamin who came to Britain from Trinidad and Tobago as a small child

- six-part feature - Resilience: a life in Care, a series with Tony Simpson who retraces his steps in Barnardo's Care by visiting the places and institutions he was born and raised in
- The intergenerational conversations between British black and dual heritage care leavers about their experience of being supported by Barnardo's
- Personal reflections of staff who are direct descendants of the Windrush generation

Birmingham Black Oral History Project

<https://dams.birminghummuseums.org.uk/asset-bank/action/browse?categoryld=1970&categoryTypeld=2>

The collection includes oral history interviews with 21 people conducted between 1990 and 1992, who originated from the Caribbean, South Asia and covered a range of themes including first impressions, religious experiences, education, experiences of racism, identity, as well as their thoughts on the future, nationality identity and belonging.

The Britain at Work: Voices from the Workplace 1945-1995 project

<http://www.unionhistory.info/britainatwork/index.php>

interviewed people from a diverse range of backgrounds about their experience of work including those who are Caribbean-descended, e.g., Lily Crawford (Jamaica), Dermot Davis (Barbados), Glenroy Watson (Caribbean British), Frank Bailey (Guyana), Frank Murray (Guyana) and Sheila Emmanuel (Dominica).

The Memories of the Reading Windrush Generation and the Descendants
<https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/memories-reading-windrush-generation-and-their-descendants> is 'a series of oral history recordings developed by members of Reading's local Caribbean community and accessible online. The recordings include the memories of Caribbean-born migrants to the UK: Anderson Springer (Barbados), Grace Browne (Barbados), Neville Nelson (Jamaica), Nordia Nelson (Jamaica) and Rod Welsh (Barbados).

Nationality, Identity and Belonging:

An Oral History of the 'Windrush Generation' and their Relationship to the British State, 1948-2018

<https://windrushscandal.org/scoping-project/>

ongoing university of London project which contains interviews that **highlights the importance of the Windrush Generation in Higher Education.**

The Black Frontline

The Black Frontline project

<https://theblackfrontline.org/> has conducted 300 oral histories with Black doctors and nurses in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ghana.

The UK section forms part of a broader project collecting memories of **testimonies of Black healthcare workers in the UK. all contributions are anonymised.**

see more examples of free websites and subscription databases (as provided by the LSE)
https://padlet.com/h_dawson/lse-library-black-history-month-2024-86bqryv08iipul32

NAACP Legal Defence Fund records.

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/naACP-legal-defense-and-educational-fund-records/about-this-collection/>

Major resource documenting the funding and activities of the NAACP fighting for Black civil rights in 20th Century America. It includes materials relating to key cases including:

- Correspondence about Josephine Baker's treatment at the Stork Club in New York City, 1951.
- Letters in 1955 between Thurgood Marshall and Simeon Booker, Washington bureau chief for Jet magazine, concerning witnesses for the Emmett Till trial.
- Correspondence between Thurgood Marshall and his staff concerning a trip to Korea to investigate charges of racism in the U.S. military and the disproportionate number of court martial proceedings brought against Black soldiers, 1951.
- A letter from Langston Hughes to Henry Lee Moon concerning his poem, "The Ballad of Harry Moore," January 3, 1952.

- Documents about Brown v. Board of Education, 1954, and related cases.
- Cases concerning elections and voting rights in the 1940s and 1950s with one Alabama primary election case, Gray v. Main, from 1966
- Also provided are historical textual records.

Stolen Tools – a liaison success story

Clare Camp, Collections Analytics Librarian (formerly Collections Liaison Librarian)

King's College London

Background

I was employed as a Collections Liaison Librarian [CLL] from September 2019 until April 2023 at which point I began my present role which is a secondment to the role of Collections Analytics Librarian for a period of two years. The aim of the CLL role is to liaise with faculties and collaborate with them on developing and engaging with our library collections in support of teaching. There is a team of CLLs who each are assigned one or more faculties and who undertake a variety of duties and responsibilities. These include advising on the development of reading lists and the acquisition of resources for teaching, promoting collections to increase their visibility and use, and collaborating on projects in faculty related to our collections' development and their use. Fundamental to the role is the ability to build relationships with academic colleagues, to be able to represent the library within faculty, to share our knowledge and expertise, and bring back insight from faculty to help inform our collection development practices.

Diversification and anti-racism in collections liaison

An important dimension of my work as a CLL included working with faculty staff and stakeholders to develop inclusive and diverse library collections. Increasingly, the need to diversify library collections has been recognised within the sector (Meyers, 2021) with growing calls for academic libraries to de-centre the historic concept of neutrality (Crilly, 2023) and proactively engage in work that tackles the prevalence of Eurocentric, white and male perspectives within academic library collections and on reading lists (Blume & Roylance, 2020).

In practice, much of this work within a collections liaison context for me requires the ability to understand and interpret what inclusive education means within faculty, and to be able to communicate the library's strategic aims to diversify our library collections clearly. It is important to undertake work that seeks to make our collections more inclusive and representative of a variety of perspectives and voices, many of which may have been traditionally underrepresented within academic library collections. Much of this work is practical in nature – such as providing support and guidance on how teaching resources on reading lists could be diversified and signposting to resources such as our Inclusive Reading List Toolkit. Beyond this, however, it is also important to look for potential opportunities to collaborate on initiatives that support anti-racist practice within faculty that may fall outside the day-to-day work.

Supporting with intersectional equality and inclusion initiatives within the library is important to me as a professional and has shaped my approach to faculty liaison and collection development work. For me, this work always extends beyond simply contextualising and communicating inclusive education or library strategic aims within faculty. I also endeavour to platform the voices of others and facilitate access to the decision-makers within the library to obtain both moral and practical support with anti-racist work. In a profession that is dominated by white professionals (CILIP, 2023), and as a white professional myself, it is important to me to find ways to leverage the privilege and power afforded to me to open doors, rather than to gatekeep.

Stolen Tools and the liaison journey

I was first approached by an academic colleague, Ricardo Twumasi, in January 2022 from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience [IoPPN] to ask if the library might be able to support with the development of a new academic journal called Stolen Tools. I had a pre-existing relationship with Ricardo, formed in response to a relatively routine enquiry about obtaining resources for reading list material for a module he was teaching. We'd kept in touch over the years in my capacity as CLL and would regularly discuss diversification and anti-racist projects being undertaken within the faculty and library.

When Ricardo asked what the library might be able do to assist I was a little unsure. I had never been approached by a member of academic staff with this sort of query and I was conscious that this would be new territory for the library who had not supported with this sort of project before. I felt curious about the possibility, however, and could see a great deal of potential for the library to become involved.

I was open with Ricardo about my uncertainties but assured him I would consider ways the library could support.

In order to determine my approach to engaging library colleagues and to pitch for the benefits of library involvement, I asked myself the following questions:

- **What** – What could the library do to support? Although setting up a journal was outside my area of expertise, I considered the fact that there were colleagues within the library who did potentially possess this knowledge and would be able to assist.
- **Who** – Who in the library could support with this work? I had some ideas as to who might be best suited, but I recognised that this would require support at a senior level in order to gain buy in and the resources required.
- **How** – Once I'd identified key colleagues in the library, I considered how best to engage them and pitch the opportunity of involvement.

I met with a number of senior management colleagues from the collection development and research support teams. I provided an overview of the opportunity, acknowledging that this was unlike any request we'd received before but that it represented a fantastic opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in faculty on an anti-racist project at the point of initiation. Although I recognised that there were many competing demands within the library for our time and resources, I also explained that this was an opportunity for us to share our knowledge and expertise with academic colleagues whilst also delivering on our strategic commitments on diversification and inclusion. The response I received from senior colleagues was positive, although there was still work to do to understand the practicalities involved. However, following a further meeting between members of the library, Ricardo and Sohail Jannesari - another founding member of the Stolen Tools team – it was agreed that the library could support by offering practical advice regarding establishing the journal, provide financial support, and to promote the journal once it was published through dedicated engagement and advocacy work.

What I learnt

It is easy to get lost in minutiae of the day-to-day routine of library work and potentially miss opportunities to try something new. In this case, from fairly innocuous beginnings, a relationship was established that enabled the library to play a foundational role in the establishment of Stolen Tools and to contribute in a meaningful way to diversification and anti-racism work.

Throughout my liaison work on the Stolen Tools project, I was constantly struck by the generosity and positivity of both Ricardo and Sohail about the support I provided. Although I had little part in the practical stages of setting up the journal, the recognition and acknowledgement of the role I had played gave me a great sense of personal and professional pride. Frequently in my experience, the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in liaison can feel nebulous, hard to conceive of in oneself, and difficult to articulate to others. However, in this case, the benefits of having dedicated professionals who are responsible for building and maintaining relationships within faculty are clear. Liaison work and advocacy takes skill, time and dedication. It is important that this is recognised, and that those engaged in liaison activities are permitted to be curious in their approach in order to unearth opportunities for collaboration that may otherwise pass libraries by.

References

Blume, R. & Roylance, A. (2020). *Decolonization in collection development: developing an authentic authorship workflow*. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(5), 102175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102175>.

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (2023). *A Study of the UK's Information Workforce 2023*. Retrieved February 23, 2024, from https://www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/research/workforce_mapping/workforce_mapping_2023.pdf.

Crilly, J. (2023). *Diversifying, decentering and decolonising academic libraries: a literature review*. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, 30(2-3), 112-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2023.2287450>.

Meyers, J. (2021). *The importance of linguistically diverse collections: decolonizing the theological library*. *Theological Librarianship*, 14(2), 11-28. <https://doi.org/10.31046/tl.v14i2.2889>.

Recent disability forum meeting September 4th 2024

49 attended

Lesley Thompson, University of Lincoln. Discussed the wellbeing offering in the University Library, covering in particular the creation of a sensory room

Neurodiversity.

During the event we created a padlet

Recommended tools

AbilityNet My computer My way has guides to using inbuilt accessibility features. They include adjustments that can be useful for dyslexia, ADHD and neurodiversity.
<https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/>

Goblin.tools is written and maintained by Bram De Buyser, an AI, software and data engineer. It is a useful collection of free tools which help with tasks neurodivergent people may find more difficult. They include compiling to do lists, breaking down tasks into parts and estimating time. Putting sentences into the right tone. <https://goblin.tools/>

AI for Accessibility

JISC training video good introduction with examples.

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training/ai-for-accessibility>

Resources created/ suggested by attendees

NLISN

Neurodivergent Library and Information Staff Network

Supporting Neurodivergent Talent in Library and Information Staff in the UK & Ireland

Study support for neurodivergent students (liv.ac.uk)

<https://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/knowhow/neurodiversity/story.html>

A guide from the University of Liverpool. This was introduced by Samuel Gill. It contains great advice on preventing distractions and creating study plans.

University of Northampton Guide Library Guide for Neurodivergent Students
(<https://libguides.northampton.ac.uk/disabilitiesoradditionalneeds>)

This was introduced by Jenny Townend. It has been produced and handed out for the first time in 2024 as part of a taster day where students are invited to visit the library and find out about these services before term starts. It includes a speed dating element on tables with different services.

University of Law has a libguide with recommended reading lists
<https://law-uk.libguides.com/leisure-reading-community-collections/disability>

Leeds Beckett University libguide was recommended for pointing out clearly to students the multiplicity of ebook platforms and the different accessibility functions on each.
eBook Collections - eBooks - The Library at Leeds Beckett University

Training for library staff

Recommended resources. Contacting Lara Marshall, the RNIB engagement officer who can offer training in developing awareness of how the library is experienced by students with visual impairments

The empathy lab <https://www.empathylab.uk/> aims to raise awareness about how others experience the world

A UoN blog about the empathy lab too:

<https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/learningtechnology/2024/04/22/pop-up-empathy-lab-at-the-university-of-nottingham-understanding-accessibility/>

human library, which is a similar idea - checking out a 'human book' to learn about their experience <https://humanlibrary.org/>

The Human Library® is a library of people. It hosts events where readers can borrow human beings serving as open books and have conversations.

Disability forum meeting

October 29th 2024

58 attended

Steve Peters and Jason Shirley from Canterbury Christ church university discussed their stressless campaign and well-being offering.

They traced the origins of the campaign from 2017 explaining how it was originally intended to address concerns about student well-being and mental health during exam periods. During 2020-21 it was moved online to support students during lockdown. Some funding was obtained from an external Kent County council resource during covid, but most had been done on a shoestring including checking Facebook groups and recycling materials creatively. In 2023 monthly stressless events were organised. In October 2023 these events were expanded and adapted to include 'disability' e.g. painting without paintbrushes. In January 2024 champions were introduced. This drew on an existing volunteer platform used by the university. Students receive credit and awards for certain numbers of hours of volunteering. In September 2024 it was expanded again to include events organised by and for neurodivergent staff and students

In 2024 the collaborated with the Student Green office and Academy for a Sustainable Future on an Ecohope campaign. This included upcycling events, displays, litter collection, clothes repair. There was an increasing emphasis on student led events. The logo was designed by a champion. Hopes for the future include more cross university collaboration, enhancing the student voice.

They stressed the importance of cross university collaboration. The University wellbeing team is based in the library. They have also worked with student organisations

Jordan Keighley, Youth Engagement Curator, Leeds City Museum spoke about access pilots at the museum.

He began by outlining the work of the Preservation party, a group of young 14-24-year curators based at Leeds City Museum. They were initially established in November 2010 to run as a 6-week experiment to see how museums could work with young people. They now meet weekly for two hours to work on projects that they see from the conceptualisation stage to the final result.

One project they worked on was the Overlooked exhibition which considered how traditional museum collections 'overlook' or marginalise many communities. This involved not only improving physical access to the collections but also a wider consideration of 'intellectual access'. For example, the museum started to offer visitor tours but feedback from the Deaf community revealed that they felt this ought to be led by deaf curators as some of the content translated by hearing interpreters was not meaningful in BSL language.

As a result, they worked on a section about a Giant Irish Elk.

<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/news/museums-deer-friend-gets-spruced-up-in-time-for-christmas/> Working with curators to create new content. Challenges were to condense a whole experience into 8 panels/transcripts.

It involved 1.5 days consultation with Deaf translator to consider how good English could be put into BSL preserving the same content, 1 day of filming, ½ day additional editing time with filmmaker and Deaf translator.

The same exhibition also raised issues of access to 'bind' and 'partially sighted communities. One user complained that the use of cases meant the experience was meaningless to her. As a result, curators worked to tell her story, tactile benches were created with 3D printed copies of some of the objects designed for handling.

This took over 6 months of collaboration. As a result, West Yorkshire Sight Loss Council also undertook an Audit. They suggested More QR codes that could be read aloud or in a large print, more tactile features. The latter involved 3D printing with Helix with the assistance of university of Leeds. Even with this specialist assistance and financial underwriting. It took 1 full day of scanning on site, 2 months to print and 370 plastics costs. The museum is working on collaboration with the Neurodiverse Museum <https://theneurodiversemuseum.org.uk/> This will also produce special 'visual access' guides which will be supported with 'sensory backpacks. The aim is for these to be meaningful and enhance the experience rather than offering distraction toys. For example, offering fabrics that correlate with materials.

Ann-Marie Foster IWM is leading a project to make Imperial war Museum collections more accessible to disabled, chronically ill, and neurodivergent users. she briefly described this and asked if any members might be interested in helping develop a funding bid about neurodiversity in the archives to relevant bodies. If so a contact address can be supplied.

Disability, Higher Education, teaching and Learning Bibliography July- October 2024

Stigma

Goodall, G., Mjøen, O. M., Witsø, A. E., Horghagen, S., Hardonk, S., & Kvam, L. (2024). Attitudes towards students with disabilities achieving their educational and work-related goals: a factorial survey experiment among higher education institution employees in Norway. *Higher Education*, 88(2), 419–465.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01123-8>

Abstract: Despite the widespread promotion of inclusive environments within higher education, social barriers and a lack of understanding among university staff continue to hinder students with disabilities in their goals of graduating and finding employment. Using ableism as a theoretical framework, this study aimed to explore attitudes among higher education institution employees towards students with disabilities and their feasibility in different types of education and employment positions. “Employees” in this study included teaching staff, student support, and administration. We conducted a factorial survey experiment in which respondents were invited to evaluate vignettes describing fictional students with and without disabilities. Other factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and motivation were also included in the vignettes. A total of 2157 higher education employees across Norway participated in the survey and answered four questions regarding the likelihood of the student described in the vignette graduating, finding employment, and being suitable for relevant work tasks. Additionally, respondents were asked to rate how likely it was that they could make arrangements for the student during their studies. Results from multilevel regression analyses suggest that higher education employees are generally positive towards making arrangements for students with disabilities. However, despite this, students with disabilities were considered less likely to graduate, find employment, and less suitable in performing relevant work tasks in comparison to students without disabilities. We argue that ableist expectations continue to dominate perceptions of students within academia, and until ableism is addressed at an institutional level, higher education will remain far from inclusive.

Whitburn, B., & Riffo-Salgado, P. (2024). Negotiating access and belonging in a higher education institution: a post-qualitative narrative. *Higher Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01263-5>

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to foreground accessibility as a necessary aspect of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

We go about this by highlighting shared experiences of negotiating institutional ableism together, as a disabled scholar employed at a HEI in the UK, and a non-disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse individual employed to bridge inaccessible spaces. Drawing upon Wong's (2023) conceptual framework of spatial belonging in higher education, which traverses the intersecting terrain of physical, digital, relational and structural spaces, we develop a post-qualitative narrative demonstrating the limitations of narrowly defined legal protections that fall short of implementing inclusive ideals. The narrative draws attention to the ways that 'access intimacy', understood as shared commitments to accessibility, develops informally, which excuses HEIs from taking responsibility to institutionalise it. We contemplate accessibility as a relational concern and build an argument for learning from our experiences to inform the development of key accessibility considerations into institutional ways of working and relating to difference. The paper is significant for engaging principles from critical disability studies as conceptual means by which to consider accessibility, and the relational account provided contributes a collaborative perspective frequently experienced but not widely considered in higher education research for strengthening EDI.

Teaching and Learning

Alvarado, N. J. M., Chávez, J. R. L., Hernández, D. F., & Caiza, H. F. Q. (2024). Inclusive Strategies and Public Policies for the Integration of University Students with Disabilities and the Promotion of their Mental Well-Being in Academic Environments.

Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture, 40–51.

<https://doi.org/10.70082/esiculture.vi.1000>

Disabled Student Commitment – Year-one report | Advance HE. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2024, from <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/disabled-student-commitment-year-one-report>

Heffernan, T. (2024). Failing at the basics: disabled university students' views on enhancing classroom inclusion. *Oxford Review of Education*, 50(5), 694–709.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2023.2281314>

Abstract: Since the beginning of higher education, universities have remained largely closed off spaces for disabled students. This paper examines how, and why, it has largely been in the last fifty years that these students have slowly been able to enter universities as the sector has made incremental improvements to enable the entry of students from different disability backgrounds.

The paper aims to assess the positive steps universities have taken towards more inclusive practices for disabled students, while also using data sourced from a survey of disabled students studying in the Global North to consider what actions might increase equitable practices in university classrooms. Disabled students highlight that for all of the advances and support they receive, so often it is the fundamental elements of classroom inclusion that are still being overlooked, and subsequently, are creating barriers in even the earliest steps into their university careers.

Li, Y.-F., Zhang, D., Dulas, H. M., & Whirley, M. L. (2024). Academic learning experiences and challenges of students with disabilities in higher education. *Journal of Postsecondary Student Success*, 3(4), 79–102.
https://doi.org/10.33009/fsop_jpss134617

Abstract: Students with disabilities are an increasing subpopulation in higher education. Recently, research has put an emphasis on students' voices to explore their academic learning experiences, as well as the learning strategies they use to overcome learning barriers. This study aimed to investigate the academic learning experiences of students with disabilities in college or graduate studies and the learning strategies they used when faced with insufficient or delayed support. This study used interpretative phenomenological analysis to gather data from three online focus groups, with a total of 10 participants. The results demonstrated three themes: experiences or issues related to university resources and accommodations, building influence through advocacy and education, and being an independent learner. Some participants continued to face academic learning challenges despite their active seeking of accommodations and support. Some participants utilized study strategies, especially when support was inadequate or not immediately provided. This study highlighted the urgent need for higher education institutions to establish support services and resources for all students. Related discussions and implications are presented.

Mashwama, X. N., & Omodan, B. I. (2024). Breaking barriers: A systematic review of inclusive practices in higher education for engineering students with disabilities. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(7), 228–249.
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.7.12>

Abstract: This systematic review paper focuses on inclusive practices in higher education for engineering students with disabilities. It addresses systemic barriers and highlights the role of faculty in creating inclusive environments. The article presents a qualitative synthesis that combines qualitative and quantitative research findings. Using a systematic review approach guided by PRISMA guidelines, we meticulously selected and scrutinised 34 relevant articles.

The systematic literature review consolidates information from various sources to comprehend global inclusive practices in engineering education. Challenges identified include staff perceptions and inadequate infrastructure. Inclusive education theories, such as the Social Learning Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, provide frameworks for understanding and addressing these challenges. Attitudinal factors of parents, teachers, and students, along with accommodations like universal design, play crucial roles. The study underscores the benefits of inclusive practices, such as improved retention, employment rates, and the incorporation of diverse perspectives in STEM fields. It emphasises the imperative for public institutions to champion inclusive policies, considering social norms, perceived control, and skills enhancement. In conclusion, the paper advocates for inclusive practices in higher education for engineering students with disabilities. It offers insights, recommendations, and a call for further research to enhance sustainability and accessibility in engineering education.

Mayer, Y., Hershler, L. D., Bulk, L. Y., Cook, C., Belliveau, G., Xie, K., & Jarus, T. (2024). Promoting inclusion for disabled students in healthcare education: Using research-based theatre to enhance knowledge and empathy. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 79, 104085. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nep.2024.104085>

Abstract: Aim: This study explores and compares the impact of in-person and online versions of a Research-based Theatre production named "Alone in the Ring," aimed at increasing knowledge and fostering positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities in healthcare professions. The study examines changes in attitudes towards disabled persons in healthcare professions, levels of engagement in the play and knowledge about the experiences and challenges of disabled individuals in healthcare professions. It also investigates possible actions to increase inclusion for disabled persons in healthcare education and practice.

Background: Disabled students face numerous barriers in healthcare education and practice, many of which are rooted in stigma and negative attitudes. Research-based Theatre promotes experiential learning to address these attitudes and stereotypes. The performance "Alone in the Ring" is based on a comprehensive study of the experiences of disabled students and clinicians in health professions, aiming to promote inclusion for students with disabilities in these fields.

Design: This study uses a pre-test and post-test design with two comparison groups.

Method: The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design to explore the impact of online versus in-person Research-based Theatre teaching in healthcare education. Participants were graduate health students ($N = 198$); 100 watched the in-person version and 98 watched the online version.

Surveys were administered before and after the performance. Participants were also invited to share their experiences in semi-structured interviews and their responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: Results indicated that students generally felt more comfortable with disabled persons in healthcare professions in the post-survey compared to the pre-survey, with online participants reporting greater comfort and higher engagement than those in-person. Knowledge of disabled persons' experiences and challenges, as well as possible actions to increase belonging and inclusion, improved significantly for both groups from pre- to post-performance, with online participants showing a greater change. Qualitative data revealed that online theatre was perceived as authentic and beneficial for accessibility, engagement and emotional impact on students, though challenges included potential distractions and technological issues. Positive correlations were found between changes in knowledge, positive attitude and engagement, suggesting that increased engagement and a shift in attitudes can promote knowledge and awareness of the inclusion of disabled persons in healthcare professions.

Conclusion: These results support the use of online theatre-based academic teaching that experientially engages students, increases empathy and can promote more inclusive healthcare educational settings for disabled persons.

Assistive Technology

Şahin, F., & Yıldız, G. (2024). Understanding mobile learning acceptance among university students with special needs: An exploration through the lens of self-determination theory. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 40(4), 1838–1851.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12986>

Abstract

Background

Despite the significant emphasis on self-determination in special education and the crucial role of mobile learning, there is a notable absence of path modelling studies that explore the effect of self-determination on the usage of mobile learning by students with special needs.

Objectives

This study sought to investigate the intentions of mobile learning usage among students with special needs by proposing a model rooted in the technology acceptance model, complemented by extraneous constructs from self-determination theory (competence, autonomy and relatedness).

Methods

The data of the study was obtained online from 1298 special needs university students with eight different types of disabilities. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and bootstrapping.

Results and Conclusions

The proposed model explained 78.4% of ease of use, 85.2% of usefulness, and 76.5% of intention. 11 of the 12 hypotheses tested within the scope of the model were supported. All hypotheses examining the impacts of self-determination theory constructs on ease of use, usefulness, and intention were validated (8 hypotheses), with the exception of the autonomy → intention relationship. Substantial empirical evidence has been acquired to support the role of the self-determination theory in exploring the intention toward mobile learning among university students with special needs. Concurrently, a robust theoretical framework has been introduced to the field of special education to elucidate the acceptance and utilization of technology by university students with special needs.

Assistive Technology

University of Kent (2024)

'Inclusive Teaching with Technology: Strategies, Tips and Tools' via Digitally Enhanced Education Webinars YouTube Channel.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAbF8wnSF-e_ay59Gj6o5vHMuGIT2SthZ

From Matthew Deeprose (University of Southampton): 'Using Generative AI to improve digital accessibility efficiency, featuring Copilot, Whisper, and Claude'

https://matthewdeeprose.github.io/genAI_a11y_efficiency.html

<https://matthewdeeprose.github.io/index.html> -- homepage of the link above!

https://asuo-ai-labs.streamlit.app/Image_Accessibility -- The Arizona State University Image Accessibility Creator

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mattdeeprose/> -- Matthew Deeprose on LinkedIn

From Helen Todd (University of Sussex): 'Universal Design for Learning: Enhancing Online Distance Learning at the University of Sussex'

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/> -- The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

<https://disabledstudents.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Going-Back-is-Not-a-Choice-Small-Print.pdf> -- Going Back is not a choice: accessibility lessons for higher education

[linkedin.com/helentodd](https://www.linkedin.com/helentodd) – Helen Todd on LinkedIn

From Dr Sandra Morales and Nithya Ramadoss (University of Oxford):

Optimizing Inclusivity: Using Digital Tools to Enhance Teaching Practices

<https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/digitally-supported-inclusive-teaching-toolkit> --

Digitally Supported Inclusive Teaching Toolkit

From Amy Giles (University of South Wales): 'Tools to Enhance Accessible and Personalised Digital Learning'

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/curricula-development/education-mental-health-toolkit/social-belonging/inclusivity> -- Education for Mental Health Toolkit – Inclusivity

<https://ally.ac/> -- Blackboard Ally

From Mike Clapp (University of Exeter): Breaking the Ice to Build Inclusion:

Creating Inclusive Ice Breakers

https://exeter.powtoon.com/public-powtoon/?public_link_token=2PibWCFT9OlfeyPq_fm4wxWQM87fwN_JPsnybv4ne1o&mode=movie –

What is the purpose of 'education'? – A Powtoon video presentation by S. Hassan

Van Loon, J., & McCann, S. (2024). Enhancing accessibility in STEM: a survey of accessibility errors in STEM academic databases. *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship*, 36(3), 190–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1941126X.2024.2383520>

ADHD

Magnuson, L., Opdahl, J., Nataraj, L., & Olivas, A. P. (2024). Different, not deficient: Supporting university and college students with ADHD in academic libraries. *The Library Quarterly*, 94(3), 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.1086/730466>

Abstract: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent patterns of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsivity that may interfere with daily life. College and university students with ADHD may struggle with aspects of academic library use and research, and ADHD may be underdiagnosed and undertreated in marginalized populations. Academic library support for students with ADHD has been understudied, but more research is emerging on how students with ADHD struggle and adapt to university life. This article will review literature about college students with ADHD and identify themes in the existing research that can inform academic library practices. Recommendations for how academic libraries can support students with ADHD as well as areas for future research will be identified.

Sharabi, A., & Shelach Inbar, O. (2024). Positive distance learning perception, personal resources, and loneliness among higher education students with ADHD and/or SLD. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 39(3), 162–172.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09388982241247580>

Abstract: This study assessed the positive perception of distance learning of undergraduate students with and without attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or specific learning disorder (SLD), and examined their personal resources (academic self-efficacy [ASE] and sense of coherence [SOC]), and social vulnerability (loneliness) in predicting their positive distance learning perception. Participants were 276 Israeli undergraduates, 138 diagnosed with ADHD/SLD and 138 in a comparison group without disabilities. Students' positive perceptions toward distance learning, ASE, SOC, and loneliness were assessed via self-report questionnaires. Students with ADHD/SLD reported a less positive perception of distance learning, lower ASE and SOC, and higher loneliness than students without disabilities. In both groups, females had a more positive perception of distance learning than males. ASE uniquely contributed to a positive perception of distance learning only for students with ADHD/SLD. As hybrid learning becomes more and more common in higher education, it is critical to understand the unique needs and adaptation to distance learning of students with ADHD/SLD.

Deaf Students

Listman, J. D., Kurz, K. B., Picioli, A., & Craig, P. (2024). Inclusive research environments for Deaf and hard of hearing English speakers. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 23(2), ar22.
<https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.22-11-0235>

In recent years, an increasing number of deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) undergraduates have chosen to study in STEM fields and pursue careers in research. Yet, very little research has been undertaken on the barriers and inclusive experiences often faced by D/HH undergraduates who prefer to use spoken English in research settings, instead of American Sign Language (ASL). To identify barriers and inclusive strategies, we studied six English speaking D/HH undergraduate students working in research laboratories with their eight hearing mentors, and their three hearing peers sharing their experiences. Three researchers observed the interactions between all three groups and conducted interviews and focus groups, along with utilizing the Communication Assessment Self-Rating Scale (CASS). The main themes identified in the findings were communication and environmental barriers in research laboratories, creating accessible and inclusive laboratory environments, communication strategies, and self-advocating for effective communication. Recommendations for mentors include understanding the key elements of creating an inclusive laboratory environment for English speaking D/HH students and effectively demonstrating cultural competence to engage in inclusive practices.

Mental Health

Asghar, M., Minichiello, A., & Ahmed, S. (2024). Mental health and wellbeing of undergraduate students in engineering: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 113(4), 1046–1075. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20574>

Abstract: This systematic literature review identifies and synthesizes empirical scholarship related to the MHW of undergraduate engineering students. Undergraduate engineering students experience a variety of mental health issues that negatively affect their experiences in engineering education. Stress is the most prevalent mental health issue identified; anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are also reported. Heavy academic workloads, sleep issues, and the nature of engineering education culture are identified as impediments to MHW in engineering education.

Fox, J., Gasper, R., & Anghel, R. (2024). When UK academics decide to disclose mental distress to employers in the HEI workplace: identity conflict, organisational context and the need for systemic change. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 48(7), 683–699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2024.2386061>

UK academics currently report increased workplace stress and workload, with decreased work-life balance, but often feel reluctant to disclose mental distress. We distributed an anonymous online qualitative survey to explore factors which lead academics to decide whether to disclose mental distress in the workplace. Thirty-one participants responded, providing qualitative data about institutional and psychosocial factors that informed academics' decision to disclose, supplemented by information on role position. Data was analysed thematically. Our study reports the individual struggles of academics as they manage their professional identity alongside the demands of the HEI workplace and explores the individual processes of identity conflict that leads to a re-construction of the professional identity after disclosing mental distress. Our findings reinforce the evidence that this decision occurs within the context of an increasingly business-focussed work culture of over-commitment and strain in this sector in which academics are made responsible for their own wellbeing. These findings lead us to recommend further research into disclosure using the lens of identity integration. We endorse important systemic changes by suggesting that universities need to consider factors contributing to poor mental wellbeing as structural issues, which require institutional action. Furthermore, we highlight the need for HEIs to value the hybrid identity of those who are both academics and experts-by-experience. Finally, we advocate for universities to adopt the social model of disability, which promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity for people who experience mental distress. The small study sample size makes the findings tentative, but they are nevertheless significant and intriguing.

Goodman, L. (2024). "The Most Valuable Course That I Have Ever Taken": Prioritizing Mental Health Education in Higher Ed. *Journal of College Student Mental Health*, 38(4), 1058–1064. <https://doi.org/10.1080/28367138.2024.2329034>

Abstract: Mental health support in higher education currently relies heavily on downstream efforts, a model that necessitates the provision of more clinical mental health services than is possible or sustainable on campus. Credit-bearing mental health education is an underutilized resource, a large-scale upstream intervention in which students can expand their knowledge and develop skills for promoting their own mental health and wellbeing. This essay introduces the critical need and distinct value of skills-based mental health and wellbeing education, and highlights students' experiences from a credit-bearing wellbeing course at a large, urban, minority-serving university. As one student summarizes – "This is honestly the only class that has prepared me to live a better life."

Gorman, K. S., Walden, D., Braun, L., & Hotaling, M. (2024). Navigating a Path Forward for Mental Health Services in Higher Education. *Journal of College Student Mental Health*, 38(4), 749–767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/28367138.2023.2298647>

Abstract: This position paper reviews four intersecting trends impacting the burnout and turnover of clinical staff in counseling centers in the 2020s: ever expanding service demand, mismatched clinical models, the emergence of third-party vendors, and uncompetitive salaries. The authors provide a framework and make recommendations for institutions to take deliberate steps to align the mental health needs of a campus, the resources offered, and the services provided.

Huang, X., & Fan, B. (2024). The Association between campus climate and the mental health of LGBTQ+ college students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sexuality & Culture*, 28(4), 1904–1959. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-024-10200-8>

Abstract: Exploring the relationship between campus climate and the mental health of LGBTQ+ college students is essential, given their unique contextual vulnerabilities. This systematic review and meta-analysis aim to explore comprehensively the campus climate and to synthesize the varied findings from existing literature, focusing on both significant and non-significant correlations between campus climate and mental health. A thorough literature search was conducted in the PubMed and Web of Science databases until November 15, 2022, adhering to the pre-registered protocol (PROSPERO CRD42023388504). Our comprehensive literature review includes 24 research articles, offering an insightful overview of the current literature and mapping out the varied definitions of campus climate employed in these studies.

We identified four dimensions of campus climate: individual and interpersonal, community and educational, institutional and structural, and cultural and societal. The meta-analysis, incorporating data from eight studies with a total of 3035 LGBTQ+ college students (mean ages ranging from 20.54 to 24 years), reveals significant positive correlations between a discriminatory campus climate and elevated levels of stress (pooled $r = 0.337$; 95% CI 0.223–0.451) and anxiety (pooled $r = 0.197$; 95% CI 0.147–0.247). It also indicates a significant positive correlation between a discriminatory campus climate and depression (pooled $r = 0.267$; 95% CI 0.06–0.474). However, our analysis did not find a significant correlation between a perceived inclusivity climate and depression. This study advocates a more comprehensive investigation of the relationship between different dimensions of campus climate and the mental health of LGBTQ+ college students. It also highlights the urgent need for universities to strengthen inclusion and support mechanisms for these students.

Mincey, K., Allen-Joyner, C., Bowens, R., Richardson, B., Smith, L., Mize, V., Al-Haleem, D., Graham, E., Davis, V., Dave, A., Ahmadieh, M., Beblowski, M., Faul, S., Joseph, J., Moore, K., Patel, A., & Shoemaker, M. (2024). Mental Health and Black Male Graduate Students. *Social Work in Public Health*, 39(7), 628–637.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2024.2376088>

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to understand how masculinity and race impact mental health among Black male graduate students. A qualitative study using in-depth interviews recruited Black male graduate students enrolled at a private university in the southern United States. Data were collected over zoom and recorded. Interviews were transcribed and the data were analyzed for similar themes. Twenty-nine Black male graduate students 23 to 51 were recruited. Participants reported the three main elements that impacted their mental health were (1) expectations, (2) pressure, and (3) being strong. These findings suggest that colleges need to develop programming to help Black men learn how to handle racial discrimination in positive ways. Additionally, findings also highlight the need for culturally relevant mental health services that let Black men know seeking help is ok and is what men do.

Smith, K., & Smith, D. (2024). Tuition attendance and students with mental health disability: does widening tuition options increase access? *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 39(4), 304–319.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2021.1999801>

Abstract: This article explores student engagement with tuition at The Open University (a distance learning Higher Education institution in the UK), specifically students with declared mental health disabilities, comparing their access rates with (disabled) students overall, studying in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 2018–2019. y. The results show that students with disabilities generally engaged with all modes of tuition in similar proportions to which they were registered on the modules. However, students with mental health disabilities engaged with tuition at lower levels than registered on the modules, and the amount reduced as they progressed beyond the first level of study. Regarding the availability of different types of tuition, rather than widening access to more students, for students with a declared mental health disability it was often the same students accessing the different modes of tuition. We conclude that for students with mental health disabilities, more tuition event modes did not widen access to more students, although it did give more options to those who did access the tuition. These findings contribute to improving the currently limited understanding of how to effectively support students with mental health disabilities in tuition.

Osborn, T. G., Town, R., Bawendi, M., Stapley, E., Saunders, R., & Fonagy, P. (2024). University students' access to mental health services: A qualitative study of the experiences of health service professionals through the lens of candidacy in England. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 29(4), 230–239.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13558196241235877>

Abstract: Objectives

In order to develop a better understanding of students' access to mental health services, we explored the experiences of health care professionals interacting with university students with mental health problems.

Methods

We interviewed 23 professionals working across university advice and counselling services, NHS general practice, crisis, and psychological services in North and East London between June 2022 and January 2023. Our approach drew on reflexive thematic analysis and the principles of abductive analysis. The notion of candidacy – that is, how different needs are deemed deserving of health service attention – was particularly helpful to our understanding of the ongoing phenomenon of interest in the data.

Each student's access to mental health support was highly contingent on the student's dynamic social context and the pressures and organisation of the local health system. Professionals described how different students viewed different needs as deserving of health service attention. Which students reached the professional's service depended on the resources and relationships a student could draw upon, and the service's relative permeability. Once there, what action professionals took was strongly influenced by the professional's service expertise, resource constraints, the relationships the professional's service had with other organisations, the students' wishes, and whether students regarded treatment offers as acceptable.

Conclusions

Candidacy offers a useful lens to view university students' access to mental health support. Access appears to be an increasingly intricate task for students, given the fragmented service landscape, surging demand for mental health care and challenges of emerging adulthood. Our findings suggest that policy goals to increase use of mental health services are unlikely to improve outcomes for students without policy makers and health systems giving holistic consideration of inter-service relationships and available resources.

Swindell, N., Thomas, J., Tree, J., Hill, D., Hudson, J., & Stratton, G. (2024). Understanding (in) formal health and wellbeing networks within higher education: a mixed-method social network perspective. *Higher Education*, 88(3), 1037–1058. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01158-x>

Abstract: In response to increasing concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of university students and staff, policy aims have shifted towards a 'whole-university approach' to mental health and wellbeing. This policy advocates for a culture wherein mental health and wellbeing are a key priority across all levels (individual, societal, environmental). Thereby, responsibility for mental health and wellbeing is distributed across the institution, requiring contributions from staff irrespective of whether mental health and wellbeing are central to their role. Consequently, boundaries of responsibility and expertise can be unclear, while individual and professional capacity and opportunity influence the consistency of support. Effective governance of the whole-university approach requires an understanding of the complex network of 'actors' in the wellbeing system to cohesively deliver strategic objectives. This mixed-methods case study of one Higher Education Institution (HEI) employed social network analysis (SNA) to identify network structures and connections between staff who promote mental health and wellbeing.

Qualitative follow-up explored factors associated with network prominence, cohesion between the informal network and formal structures, and overall perceptions of the network. An informal network of 211 actors in the wellbeing system was identified, revealing disparities with formal governance structures. Prominence in the network was attributed to both extrinsic (e.g. workplace culture and leadership) and intrinsic (e.g. social rewards) factors, and was perceived to provide value by increasing cohesive and collaborative working. However, findings also indicate the need to raise awareness of the network and improve capacity for network membership and engagement.

Syrnyk, C., Williams, E., & McArthur, A. (2024). A pilot study of academic burnout and stress in undergraduate students: the role of canine-assisted interventions. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 48(7), 671–682.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2024.2385402>

Abstract: Burnout, often linked to increased stress, can impact student mental health, academic success, and overall well-being. To investigate animal-assisted interventions' (specifically a canine-assisted intervention; CAI) impact on student stress and burnout, a free CAI event was held on campus prior to final exams (n = 41). Self-selecting participants completed the School Burnout Inventory (SBI; Salmela-Aro et al. 2009) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarch, and Mermelstein 1983) before and after the event. Results showed a reduction in self-reported levels of stress and burnout from before to after the CAI. The impact of self-determined duration of attendance showed that those who attended the CAI for longer had a greater reduction in stress than did those who spent less time at the event. The findings suggest that CAI events can reduce perceived student burnout, alongside stress, strengthening arguments for CAIs utilisation in academic settings, and considers how the duration of CAI engagement may benefit different students.

Tabassum, R., Kashif, M. F., & Jamil, M. (2024). Impact of mental health and well-being on academic performance of students. *Journal of Social Research Development*, 5(03), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.53664/JSRD/05-03-2024-04-37-48>

Abstract: The study was conducted to investigate the impact of mental health and well-being on academic performance of university students. Quantitative research design was adopted for the study. The sample of study comprised 300 university students from both private and public sector universities. A random sampling technique was used to select the study sample. Data was collected by a self-constructed questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale. Experts validated the tool's content. Data analysis was done through SPSS, version 22, including independent frequency distribution, sample t-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis.

The results of study offer significant information that showed that mental health and well-being significantly impacted the academic performance of university students. Thus, based on conclusion of study, it was recommended that a great focus on judgment and improvement of missing areas of the students' mental health should be considered by universities, their faculties, and their parents. Moreover, this study may open new interdisciplinary horizons for the future researchers by merging education and psychology to consider the different issues in a tailor-made format.

Thomas, P. B., Hoelscher, D. M., Ranjit, N., Jones, E. C., Smits, J. A. J., & Papini, S. (2024). Race and Ethnicity, Help-Seeking Behavior, and Perceptions of Mental Health Treatment Among College Students with Depression. *Innovative Higher Education*, 49(5), 1015–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-024-09718-4>

Abstract: This study examined the associations between race, ethnicity, help-seeking behavior and perceptions of mental health treatment among college students with depression. This cross-sectional study included pooled data from the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters for $n = 654$ students from one large, public university. Baseline surveys were administered to undergraduate students at the beginning of each semester. Findings indicated that Asian students with depression have 77% increased odds ($aOR = 1.77$, 95% CI: (1.17, 2.68), p value = 0.007) of seeking help compared to White students with depression. Asian students with depression have two times the odds of regretting not seeking help compared to White students ($aOR = 2.00$, 95% CI: (1.05, 3.89), p value = 0.03) while Hispanic students with depression have 1.72 times the odds of regretting not seeking help compared to White students ($aOR = 1.72$, 95% CI: (0.94, 3.16), p value = 0.079). Asian race modified the effect of general anxiety on help-seeking behavior, reducing the odds of help-seeking by 53% (interaction OR: 0.47 (95% CI: (0.20, 1.10), p value = 0.08). Findings show that the psychosocial landscape of Asian minorities among students with depression is changing; future research should focus on these shifting attitudes to encourage help-seeking behavior and tailor treatment.

Woodruff, A. L., & Boyer, B. P. (2024). Reimagining College Mental Health: Collaborating with Faculty to Build Well-Being Supports into Academic Environments. *Journal of College Student Mental Health*, 38(4), 1038–1057. <https://doi.org/10.1080/28367138.2023.2301397>

Abstract: College mental health is at a crossroads. Prevailing approaches that focus efforts on healing individual students are unsustainable given unprecedented demand for mental health services. However, these challenges also present an opportunity for the field of higher education to diverge from that path and begin cultivating university communities where everyone – not just mental health professionals – take care of our students and each other.

For well-being promoting efforts to reach all students, it is almost a requirement to focus on initiating changes in classrooms and other learning environments in collaboration with the instructors and other academic staff who interact with students on a daily basis. To this end, our Well-being in Learning Environments (WBLE) program creates partnerships with faculty to embed mental health support practices within classrooms, departments, and colleges. Herein, we reflect on six years of relationship-building with faculty, staff, and administrators to support student well-being at multiple levels within our institution, describing the theoretical framework, implementation, evolution, and outcomes of the WBLE program since its launch in 2017.

Zhao, M., Abdul Kadir, N. B., & Abd Razak, M. A. (2024). A Systematic Review on The Prevalence and Risk Factors of Depression among Chinese Undergraduate Students. *E-Bangi Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 21(3).

<https://doi.org/10.17576/ebangi.2024.2103.23>

Abstract: This review focuses on the prevalence of depression and its associated risk factors among Chinese undergraduates, particularly examining the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health. The aim is to deepen the understanding of depression's prevalence and risk factors within this group, providing a robust reference for future studies and interventions. A comprehensive search and review were conducted on 1,198 documents from CNKI, Web of Science, Scopus, and other relevant databases. The selection process involved deduplication, preliminary evaluation, and a thorough full-text review, culminating in 75 documents that adhered to rigorous analytical standards, including the detailed reporting of depression data, the use of standardized depression scale assessments, and focusing on ordinary Chinese undergraduates. The analysis identified 70 risk factors for depression, confirming that the prevalence of depression among these students is influenced by a complex interplay of sociodemographic, psychological, health status, and personal lifestyle factors. The review also highlights several methodological flaws in previous studies, such as simplified research methods and outdated references. The study underscores the need for future research to consider the impact of different cultural backgrounds on depression, to employ longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships, and to use theoretical frameworks to conduct more systematic and detailed analyses. These steps will enhance the understanding and development of effective interventions for improving the mental health of Chinese undergraduates in a post-pandemic context.

Neurodiversity

McKenney, E. E., Richards, J. K., Day, T. C., Brunwasser, S. M., Cucchiara, C. L., Kofner, B., McDonald, R. G., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Lamm, J., Kang, E., Lerner, M. D., & Gotham, K. O. (2024). Satisfaction with social connectedness is associated with depression and anxiety symptoms in neurodiverse first-semester college students. *Autism*, 28(8), 1972–1984. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613231216879>

Abstract: Social difficulties and mental health are primary behavioral health concerns in autistic young adults, perhaps especially during key life transitions such as entering college. This study evaluated how dissatisfaction with social connectedness may predict and/or maintain depression and anxiety symptoms in neurodiverse, first-semester, undergraduate students (N = 263; n = 105 with diagnosed or suspected autism). Participation included a baseline survey battery, a brief survey completed twice per week across 12 weeks, and an endpoint survey battery. Social dissatisfaction at baseline was prospectively associated with biweekly ratings of depression symptoms, when controlling for baseline depressive symptoms. Social dissatisfaction was synchronously related to elevated sadness, anhedonia, and anxiety throughout the semester. These relationships were generally consistent across levels of baseline social motivation; however, there was one significant moderation effect—the negative relationship between baseline social satisfaction and anxiety was strongest for more socially motivated participants. More autistic traits were related to lower social satisfaction at baseline and greater mood concerns across timepoints. In contrast, greater autistic traits at baseline were related to greater satisfaction with social connectedness throughout the semester. Results support ongoing efforts to address mental health in autistic college students by highlighting the importance of social satisfaction.

Salvatore, S., White, C., & Podowitz-Thomas, S. (2024). "Not a cookie cutter situation": how neurodivergent students experience group work in their STEM courses. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 11(1), 47. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00508-0>

Abstract: Participants shared experiences with in-class and out-of-class group work assignments for lecture and laboratory courses. Results: Through inductive thematic coding of semi-structured interview transcripts, we identified seven themes impacting participants' experiences. Three themes were individual level: personal characteristics that participants associated with their neurodivergence; strategies for academic success (with subthemes of organization/time management, adaptive communication, and self-advocacy); and beliefs on group work's value. Four themes were group level/classroom level: group dynamics; role in group (including leadership roles); the competitive culture within STEM; and recommendations for instructors.

Through a social-relational perspective on disability, we proposed a model showcasing how group and classroom factors serve as supports or barriers to neurodivergent students' full participation in group work, as well as to their sense of belonging. Using the seven themes we articulated, we outlined a set of practices for designing group work assignments. In addition, we propose how pairing inclusive assignment design with instructor reflection and articulating anti-ableist values can support neurodivergent student belonging by disrupting discourses of normalcy in STEM.

Conclusions: As one of the first studies exploring the impact that group work in STEM courses has on neurodivergent undergraduates, this work may inform reimaginations of group work practices to better address the needs of neurodivergent STEM students and support a more inclusive culture in STEM classrooms. In addition, our conceptual model may serve as the basis for future research regarding interactions between individual-level and group-level factors associated with neurodivergent students' learning through group work and other active learning practices. © The Author(s) 2024.

White, J. F. (2024). Neurodiversity & nursing: Reflection of a final year general nursing student. *Nurse Education Today*, 141, 106318.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2024.106318>

Abstract: Autism Spectrum Disorder is neurodevelopmental disorder, the manifestations of which and levels of support individuals may require vary greatly. Although there is a plethora of information regarding supporting autistic individuals in higher education and the workplace, there is a paucity of information regarding both autistic nurses and nursing students. This paper presents an overview of autism spectrum disorder, the particular features of which are relevant in nursing professions and in the context of higher education; and highlights issues surrounding disclosure and implementing reasonable accommodations. It concludes with a reflection of the author's experience as an autistic nursing student

Creating A Library Guide for Neurodivergent Students.

Jen Townend, Learning Support Specialist, Library and Learning Services, University of Northampton (UON)

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The last few years have seen a steady increase in the number of University of Northampton students choosing to disclose their neurodivergence. With the enhancement of the student experience a long-standing University priority, Library and Learning Services (LLS) wanted to ensure that access to library support and services was appropriately facilitated for these students.

Speaking to current students was the first step in identifying their needs and this was made possible through one of the University's student-led groups, (Neuro)Diversity. Established in 2020 by Kirstie Pope, an autistic postgraduate student, the group meets monthly; providing a safe space for neurodivergent students to catch up and share any issues, challenges or victories.

During a meeting in October 2023, group members were asked about their experiences of using the library. They were forthcoming and mainly positive, although it became clear that there was a lack of awareness when it came to some vital support services. A second-year undergraduate student mentioned she was struggling with structuring her assignment and when asked if she'd contacted Learning Development (specialist tutors providing guidance on improving academic skills, such as critical thinking and reflective writing), she replied "Oh, is that support for us?".

Tom Parsons, a recent graduate of the University and then LLS's Graduate Trainee, shared details of his own experiences of engaging with the library, as an autistic student:

"When I first started as an undergraduate I found the sheer amount of information overwhelming. It came from too many sources and contained too many acronyms that staff used with such familiarity that it was difficult to keep up with. A lot of the information was also too dense. I distinctly remember receiving an email with 7 different attachments on support for students. I found myself with so many questions that I never asked because I didn't know which one to start with. I really would have benefited from an approachable guide that I could go back to which highlighted in a single place what support was available to me in a simple way. I also could have done with some explicit explanation of the social rules of engagement within the learning space. I often avoided the library as an undergraduate because I didn't know what was expected of me or my peers when using the space."

These conversations highlighted the need for tailored, accessible information about the library and so the decision was made to create a straightforward guide which would purposefully leave little room for confusion and personal interpretation.

Work began on A Library Guide for Neurodivergent Students in early 2024, with a focus on identifying the most important library services and facilities and making content as clear and concise as possible.

The guide incorporated fundamentals such as membership, access and details of expectations within certain spaces (for example, eating and drinking in library spaces is allowed, but there is no signage stating this). Additionally, it covered how to access resources and the different ways to get help. Photos of meaningful places such as the Sensory Room, Help Desk and Drop-in area were included, as well as web links to relevant Frequently Asked Questions entries, helpful instructional videos, and the University's disability support unit, ASSIST (Additional Students Student Support and Inclusion Services Team).

Within the guide, the keywords in each sentence were highlighted in bold to help with focus, comprehension, retention and processing. This technique can be especially beneficial for neurodivergent individuals, as it reduces the risk of overwhelm or distraction. It can also make the document significantly easier to skim read.

In May 2024, the first draft of the guide was circulated to various University committees and student-facing teams for feedback. This was a valuable exercise, garnering some useful comments and resulting in some minor amendments. The final version was then sent to an external design/print company, via the University's Marketing team. Some aspects of the guide did not meet UON's brand requirements, but exceptions were agreed considering its bespoke nature. The finalised versions (paper copy and accessible PDF) were completed in August 2024 and feedback from colleagues and (Neuro) Diversity group members was positive:

“This library guide has been well thought out to give neurodivergent students a clearly worded and visually helpful tool. Navigating the library, both physically and socially, can be overwhelming for our students and this guide provides friendly reassurance in an accessible format.” **Autism Specialist Mentor**

The best result came when approximately 30 paper copies of the guide were distributed at an event exclusively for new students who had disclosed their neurodivergence on application. This annual Taster Day takes place on campus before Welcome Week and provides an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the environment and to meet the staff in place to offer support or guidance.

Many students expressed their gratitude for a purpose-written guide and a few days later, link tracking revealed that all of the web links in the guide had been clicked upwards of 70 times.

With the guide in circulation, Kirstie Pope commented "The best thing about being involved in the creation of this guide is the fact that it actually happened. Not just in the sense that people cared enough to support us in creating it, but the fact that it actually materialised. So often, we have meetings about things and nothing ever comes of them. Recently, neurodiversity and inclusion have become buzzwords, yet as a student, I haven't seen very much tangible change. When I first came to UON, I know this would have made a huge difference to my experience (as an autistic student). There were so many unanswered questions that those around me didn't seem to have, or rules that they appeared to inherently know, whereas I felt completely lost and out of my depth. The guide being a physical resource felt so important too, as we often struggle to retain and process verbal information, especially if we're overwhelmed."

The guide provides a foundation for LLS to build on in the future – as a living document it will be regularly edited and updated to ensure it remains fit for purpose. We will continue talking with our neurodivergent students, employing empathic listening and actioning their suggestions where possible. Ultimately, our aim is that each interaction they have with the library is a supportive and inclusive one that contributes to an overall positive, meaningful student experience.

Check out the guide at <https://tinyurl.com/NDguide2024>

The author would like to acknowledge and thank Kirstie Pope and Tom Parsons, whose significant and valuable input made this project possible.

Creating an online tutorial exploring study support for neurodivergent students

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The Learning Development and Academic Liaison Team were approached by an academic in the School of Medicine at the University of Liverpool, who was concerned that students in the department were struggling as they were reluctant to seek support for a variety of neurodivergent conditions. Referrals for support with academic skills were already being made to the relevant Liaison Librarian via the School's Academic Advisor system, however it was felt that that a resource focusing on study support for neurodivergent students would be a useful addition to the Library's KnowHow offering. Following further discussion, it was decided to create a resource to share with students that brought together not only study support but also information and guidance from various services across the university in one place.

Neurodivergence is a term used to explain a range of neurological differences including dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD and autism, with many being part of a spectrum. Individuals will experience different strengths and effects and often these conditions can co-occur. (Royal College of Nursing, 2024).

A review of the literature surrounding neurodivergent students by Clouder et al (2020) explored how it is essential for universities to encourage students to disclose their disabilities and be flexible in their approaches to support students once they do. Academic attainment can be good 'if students are supported to complete their studies' state Hamilton and Petty (2023), but often 'masking' and trying to imitate what are perceived as neurotypical behaviours can lead to exhaustion and students feeling unable to cope with university life.

Exact numbers of neurodivergent doctors are not known and medicine as a field has been 'slow to acknowledge or accommodate neurodivergence' (Duong and Vogel, 2022). Giroux and Pelissier-Simard (2021) state that mental health issues and neurodivergence in the medical field 'remain taboo' and there is a definite 'fear of stigma'. Locke et al. (2017) states that doctors with conditions such as dyslexia often would not disclose this to an employer and would instead try to develop their own 'workarounds' to cope. This is consistent with the concerns expressed by the academic in the School of Medicine, who was keen to change the perception of neurodivergence amongst the medical student community at the University of Liverpool.

Being neurodivergent alone is not a fitness to practise concern, and the General Medical Council in fact recognise that “a diverse population is better served by a diverse workforce that has had similar experiences and understands their needs” (General Medical Council, 2021).

Although the initial query came from the School of Medicine, we wanted to create a resource that could be used by students across the university to explore the options available to them if they identified as neurodivergent. Robinson (2022) states that in order to improve learning for medical students with neurodivergence it is important to help them identify elements that are ‘advantageous for them and their patients’. Therefore, we were keen to emphasise the potential strengths linked to neurodivergence that could be beneficial both as a student and in the workplace, as well as exploring how to potentially minimise some of the challenges.

We decided to create a self-paced tutorial, which could be accessed online 24/7 and published as a link on both the School of Medicine website and within our Virtual Learning Environment. We chose Articulate Storyline to make the content, which allows the creation of a professional looking and accessible tutorial. However, although we had the technical expertise to create the tutorial, we were conscious that we were not experts in neurodivergence, so aimed to involve as many other professionals as possible within the University to refine the content.

The tutorial begins with some definitions of neurodivergence, adopted from the Royal College of Nursing. We then approached the University of Liverpool Disability team to create a video with an overview of the support they offer and the different routes available to students both with and without a formal diagnosis. We were keen to include videos where possible to showcase the friendly and supportive teams at the University, and to ensure the tutorial was not too text-heavy.

We included some tips and advice around creating study plans, note taking techniques and strategies to deal with distractions, as these are aspects of study that many neurodivergent students often struggle with. We included a student video providing advice on dealing with procrastination to allow for some peer-to-peer advice. We also signposted towards different technologies which students can access for free to help with their studies via our IT Services team, along with some tips and tricks to help make different software work for them. We wanted to include practical advice without coming across as patronising or condescending, whilst being mindful that not all students will have the same support needs.

The next section of the tutorial focused on the support available within the Library – including options available for students with additional needs, and the different group and individual spaces available for booking. We also added videos showcasing the support available from the Liaison Librarians and PhD Writing Tutors, who can provide one to one appointment around finding and using library resources, referencing, and writing in an academic style.

Finally, we included some advice on how to manage challenges faced during placement, adopted from the NHS Practice-Based Learning Guide for Neurodivergent Students. Again, we wanted to offer practical suggestions and options for students to try if they were facing any of the issues discussed.

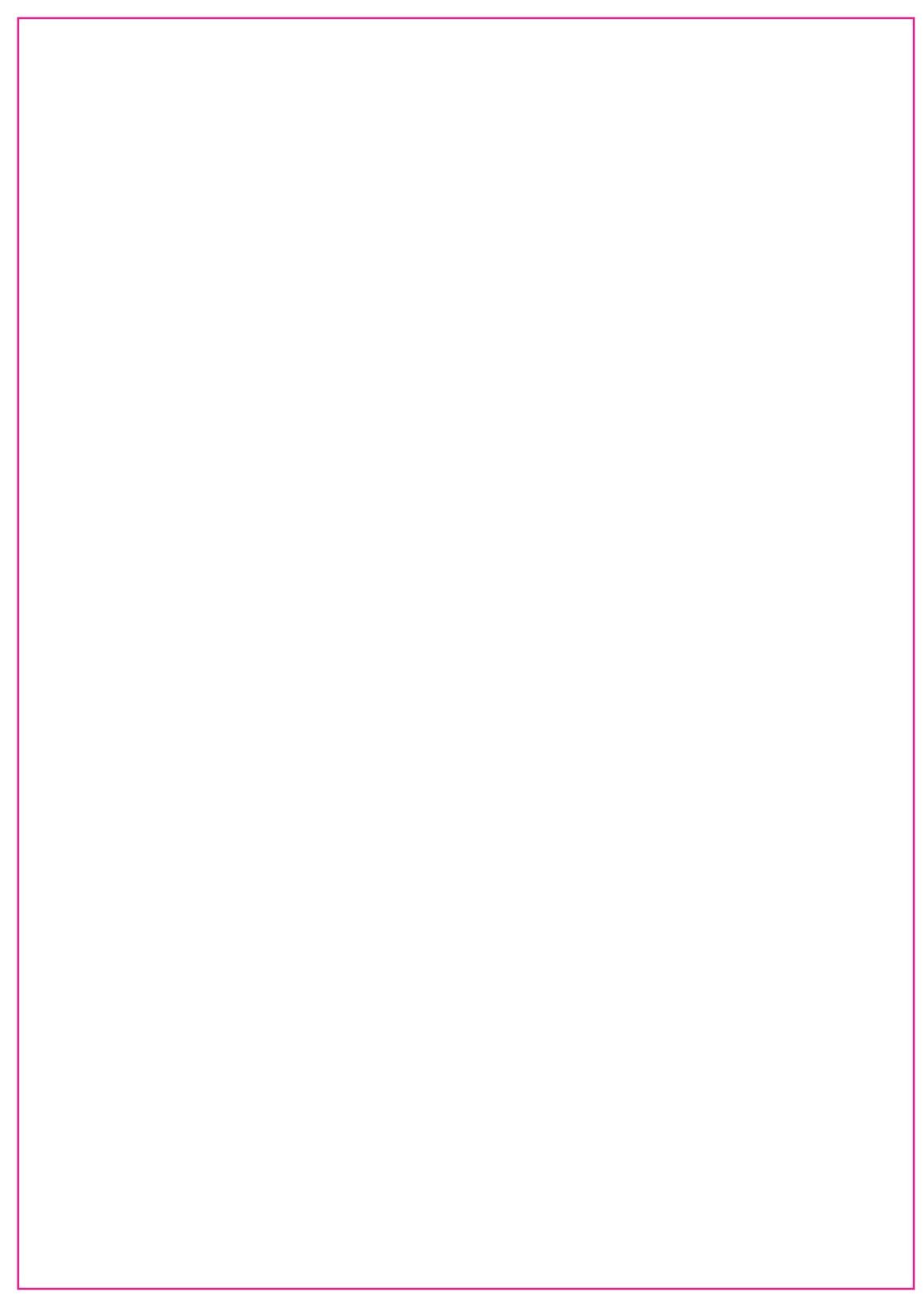
The whole tutorial was reviewed by the Disability Support team as well as academics and support staff in the School of Medicine to ensure the advice we were providing was correct and written in an appropriate tone.

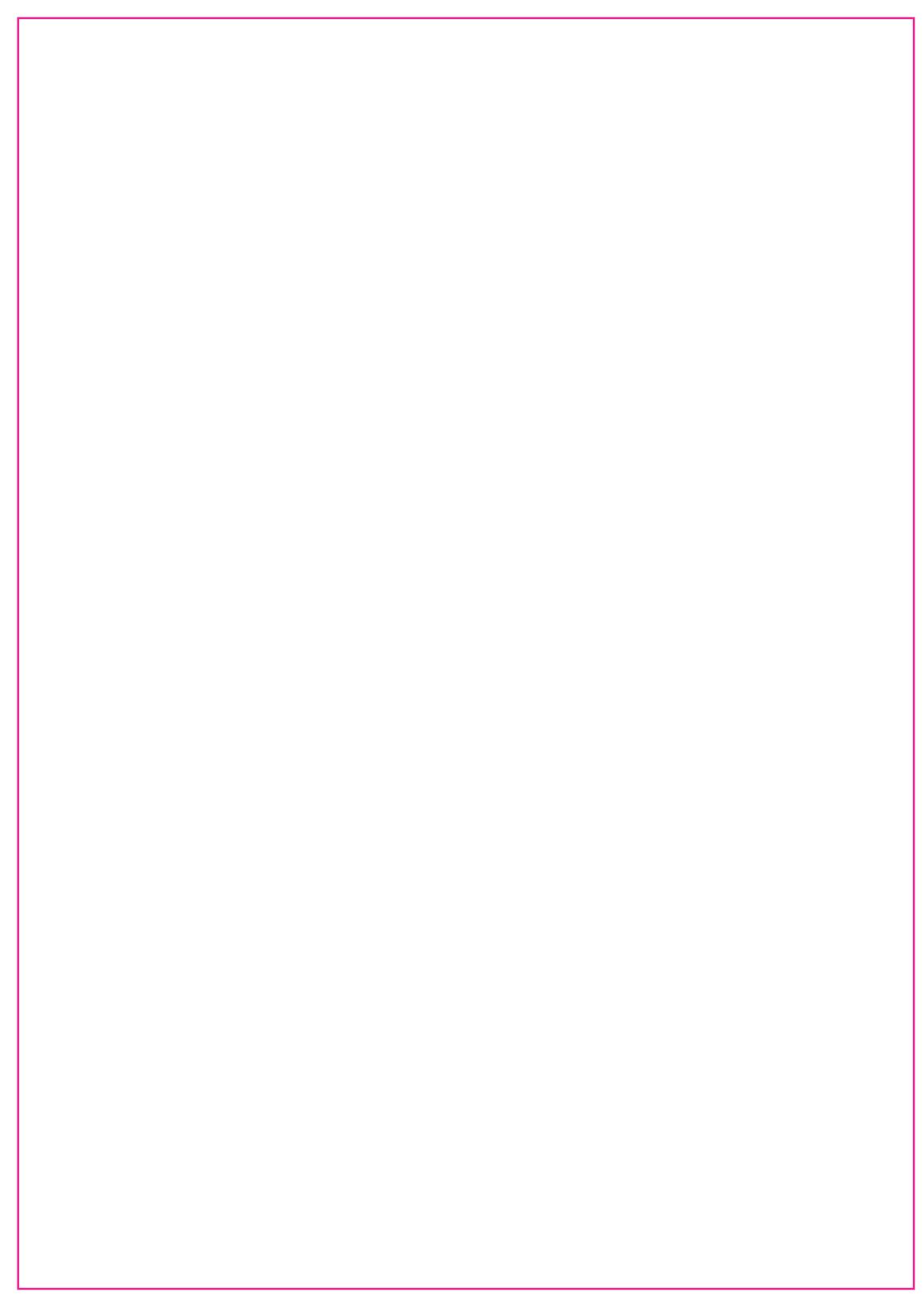
The tutorial has been shared with schools and departments across the university, and feedback from staff has been very positive, describing it as ‘interesting and informative’ and ‘an amazing resource’. We have added an online survey link at the end of the tutorial to gather feedback from students on the resource and will make amendments and updates as needed at the end of the academic year.

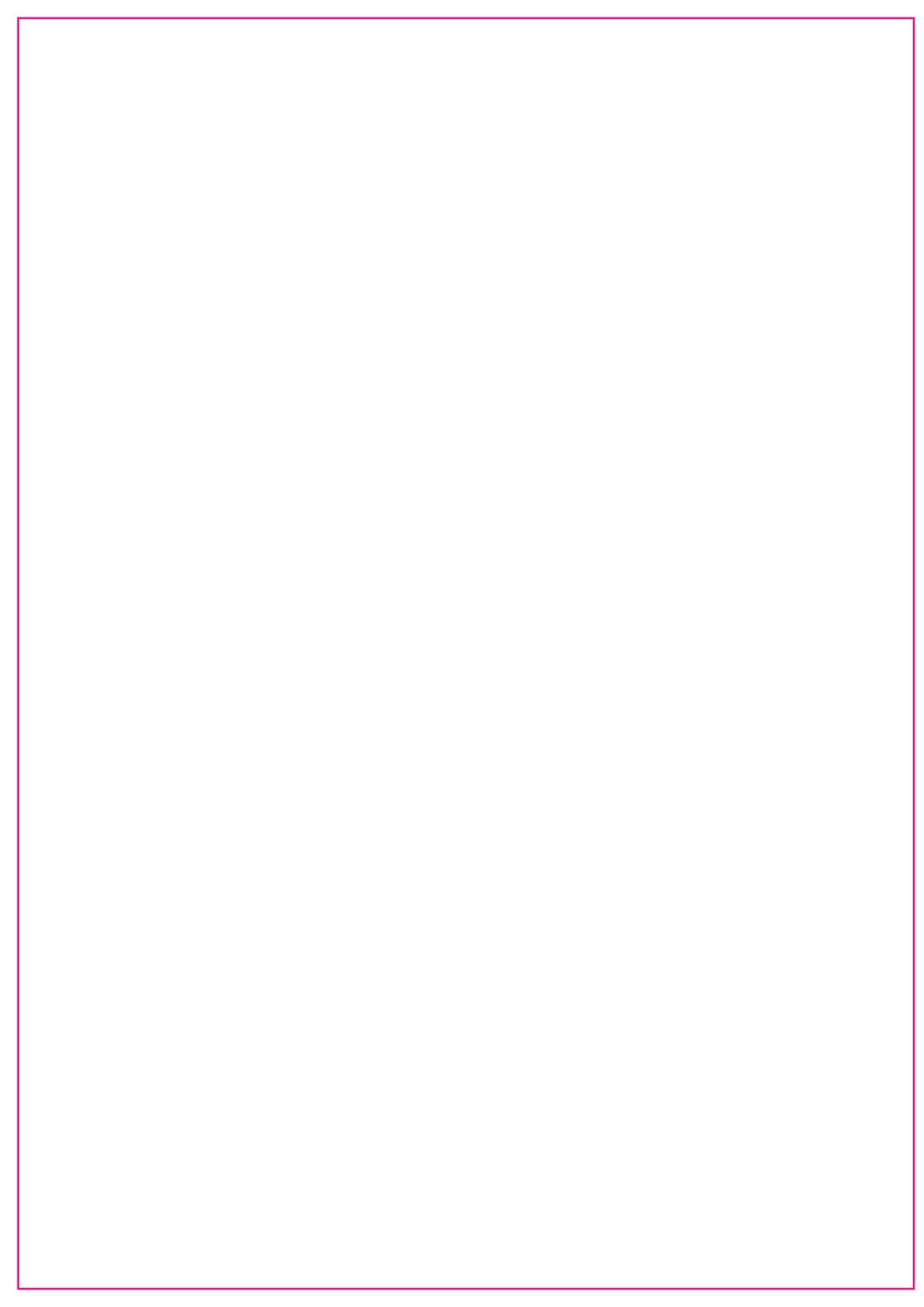
The tutorial can be reviewed at this link.

<https://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/knowhow/neurodiversity/story.html>

Heather Johnston and Louise Minta, University of Liverpool.







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