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Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences

Disability and well being

Implementing a Student Library Wellbeing Programme;

"We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at

Swansea University Libraries";

UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group (PAAG);

Disability, Higher Education,

Teaching and Learning Bibliography

New Resources

Sculpture trail at the University of Southampton

South Asia Heritage month resources

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Editorial

Disability and well being

Implementing a Student Library Wellbeing Programme

Kirstie Preest, Freelance Library and Information Professional: Consultant and Trainer

We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at Swansea University Libraries

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Charlotte Hopkins and Jeremy Smith

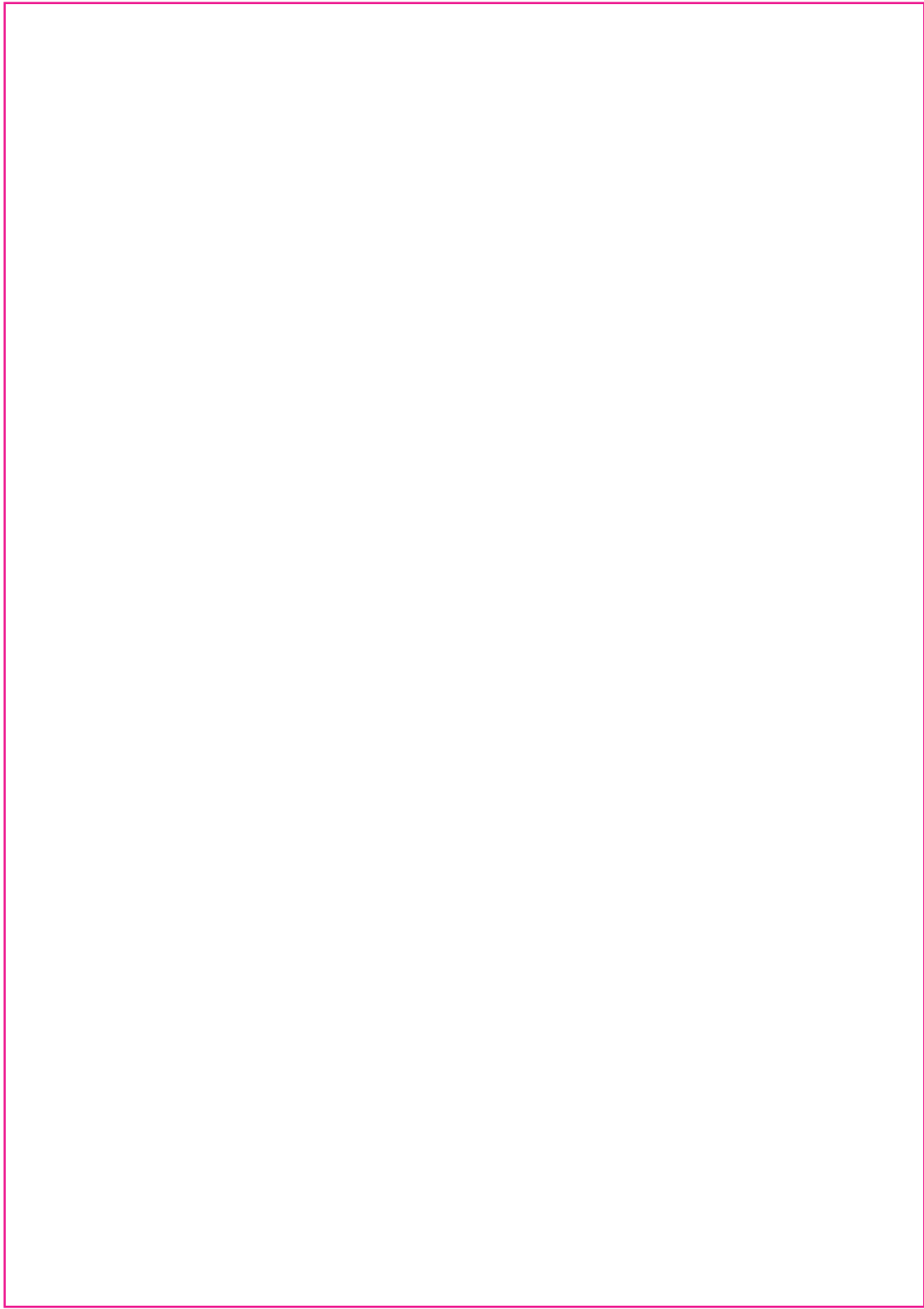
Disability, Higher Education, Teaching and Learning Bibliography
May-August 2025

New resources

Launching an interactive sculpture trail at the University of Southampton

Donna Ballan, Clare Hemmings, James Macdonell – University of Southampton Library

South Asia Heritage month resources



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).

First, an update on recent ALISS events. Associated slides and papers can be viewed on our website.

Strength and diversity through co-creation and curation in library and archive settings was held on July 17th 2025.

<https://alissnet.com/aliss-summer-showcase-2025/>

This event showcased a range of practical projects where library and archive services are harnessing the perspectives and expertise of their current and potential user communities to create more appropriate and better collections and services for all

- The Student Curator Project: Creating connections through collections and beyond – Catherine Batson and Ivana Jurisic, University of Surrey**
 Since 2018 Library and Learning Services at the University of Surrey have been running a collaborative staff-student partnership project based around the collections and resources in the Library. The motivation was to celebrate diversity and inclusion at Surrey, to expand and showcase the diversity of Library collections. The Library team have been working alongside the Students' Union at Surrey to promote, encourage, and celebrate the diversity of the student population and that of the Library's collections, whilst at the same time empowering students financially, creatively, and intellectually, and developing real world skills such as project, budgetary, and team management. Themes they covered were Black History Month, LGBT+ History Month, Invisible Disability Awareness, Talking about Mental Health, Healthy Learning, Empowering Women, Colourism, Life as I know it, Sustainability, Autism Awareness and Pride and Change.
 The team at Surrey have learnt a considerable amount about student-staff partnerships, what a fantastic opportunity it is to work closer with our students, how creative they are and supportive of creating a sense of belonging and understanding. How the lived experiences of our students directly impact on their engagement with teaching materials and feeling of inclusion at University. How important this is to help bridge the attainment gap and raise the profile of student voice within the institution. This talk covered the evolution of the projects, approaches taken by Student Curators, what partnership means to libraries and reflections from the library team and some of our students.

- **Accessible Research Spaces – Barriers, Opportunities, and Learning from Each Other.** Ann-Marie Foster, IWM
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/research/accessible-pasts-equitable-futures>

What makes a research space accessible to disabled, chronically ill, and/or neurodivergent users? Users of research materials across the libraries, archives, and museums sectors all face common issues in research rooms, study spaces, and when accessing specialist materials. Taking findings from two ongoing projects, 'Accessible Pasts, Equitable Futures' and 'Divergent Minds in the Archive', this talk highlighted common problems, considered solutions, and offers a space to reflect on how we talk about best practice across and between the sectors, as we all work towards the common goal of trying to provide better access.

- **Liberate the Library: co-production and collaboration with students at the University of Sheffield**

Rhian Stephenson, University of Sheffield

The Creative Library (Liberate the Library) Project

<https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/thecreativelibrary/welcome>

was an AHRC-RLUK Professional Practice Fellowship Project which ran through the 2023-24 academic year and explored information creation as a process. This critical information literacy project was co-produced in partnership with the University's Students' Union Liberation Officers and aimed to disrupt knowledge hierarchies by positioning students from marginalised groups as active knowledge creators, in creative workshops organised in the Digital Commons, the library's developing academic makerspace. In 2025 work on the Creative Library Project was moved into business as usual, via Lib Fest, <https://sheffield.ac.uk/library/about/lib-fest> a year-long festival of events focused on liberating the library. Lib Fest aims to build on work to celebrate the liberation priorities of our students, include previously missing voices in our university libraries, promote collaborative working, co-creation and interdisciplinary dialogue and enhance access to digital creativity through an ongoing University Library and Students' Union partnership. Along with creative workshops, the festival includes exhibitions, curated collections, reading groups, and a decolonising your literature searching workshop. This presentation highlighted the approaches taken to co-production and collaboration in the Creative Library Project and Lib Fest, challenges faced in times of financial constraints, lessons learnt and future plans for continuing and developing a collaborative approach to liberating the library both sustainably and ethically

- **The Fitba Research Club,**
Dora Petherbridge, curator, National Library of Scotland

This talk explored some of the challenges for research libraries undertaking co-curated and co-produced community research projects by way of a discussion of Fitba Research Club, a football history research project celebrating football's roots, culture and heritage. The project, run at the National Library of Scotland in 2023/24, brought together a team of young adult community curators from minoritised communities to explore the story of Andrew Watson, Scotland's – and the world's – first Black international football captain. The Fitba Research Club's community curators developed research skills and information literacy to explore a rich history of sporting achievement and to create the Andrew Watson's XI, an all-star fantasy team of Black footballers and footballers of colour who played in Scotland.

Aliss Disability Champions Forum meets online every 8 weeks. Recent presentations have included:

Andrea Price and Bethan Williams presented We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at Swansea University Libraries 3.0,

View the slides <https://alissnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/alisspresentationaug.pdf>

This offered insight into well-being initiatives taking place at the university. The article in this issue expands further on this.

Also in the well-being section are details of the UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group and timely advice from Kirstie Preest, Freelance Library and Information Professional: Consultant and Trainer on Implementing a Student Library Wellbeing Programme, which is based on practical experience in UK HE

The final section of the journal includes an article from the University of Southampton on the creation of an interactive sculpture trail to increase engagement with art on campus. It also has a list of free resources we have gathered for South Asia Heritage Month.

We hope you enjoy the issue

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

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

Implementing a Student Library Wellbeing Programme

Kirstie Preest, Freelance Library and Information Professional: Consultant and Trainer

Following on from my previous ALISS article on the Library Wellbeing Programme at Rosemary Murray Library, Mental Health Week 2025, looked at the power and importance of “community” within our mental health.

Baumeister and Leary state, “the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation” and that “belongingness appears to have multiple and strong effects on emotional patterns and on cognitive processes” (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p.497). This demonstrates that a sense of “belonging”, and “community” is important for our mental health as it promotes a sense of wellbeing, connection, and inclusion. Feeling supported can help reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Being part of a community and participating in groups and events therefore fosters wellbeing. Abbott (2010) concluded that participation in organised leisure activities for the pleasure of members may promote health and reduce social isolation. Similarly, The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, wrote:

simply belonging to groups can improve health....as a result, these groups may indirectly improve the physical and mental health of their members (p.1).

This sense of belonging is integral for libraries providing an inclusive community where members can feel connected with others and supported in a safe environment. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) state that “a library should be a place of wonder and safety for children and adults” (CILIP, 2023, p.2). Wellbeing initiatives are a part of that remit and enable people to be a part of their local community whilst making friends and getting out of the house. This not only gives a sense of belonging to existing users but brings new people into our libraries who would not normally use library services, further enhancing that community feel.

Belonging and community is equally important in academia. Lotkowski et al. (2004), saw social involvement as the “extent to which a student feels connected to the college environment, peers, faculty and others in college and is involved in campus activities” (Lotkowski et al., 2004, p.6). The University Mental Health Charter itself advocates universities “to adopt a whole-university approach to mental health and become places that promote the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the university community” (Hughes and Spanner, 2024, p.14). Wellbeing initiatives provided by academic libraries are therefore valuable in connecting students, providing social networks, and encouraging their involvement in the student community. Goodenow (1993), also said that the sense of belonging related to the “extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment” (Goodenow, 1993, p.80). Ensuring that your wellbeing initiatives and offerings are inclusive is therefore paramount so people feel included and can be themselves. Reaching out and consulting with the relevant student union representatives can help with this. I often used college or student union celebrated events to promote our own wellbeing activities such as LGBTQIA+ jewellery making, pink week (breast cancer awareness), etc. Ensuring that events mirror national events or themes really helps in their promotion.

Implementing wellbeing initiatives take a lot of thought, planning, time, and resourcing to make them a success. Financial budget constraints can therefore be a barrier to libraries wishing to implement their own wellbeing initiatives and programs. Bladek (2021), states:

there is rarely additional funding available to support libraries' own wellness programs. With no dedicated budget, academic libraries have actively sought to join larger institutional initiatives or partner with campus units already offering well-being services and resources (p.4).

However, this does not have to be the case. You do not necessarily need a lot of money to implement wellbeing programmes and can start small, because every initiative must start somewhere. You can do a lot with goodwill, willing volunteers, and donations. This could even be another way to get your community involved and start that sense of belonging and building something new that everyone can join in and enjoy.

Once in place, wellbeing initiatives can add value to a library's existing services and can help demonstrate the library's worth to management and stakeholders. Measuring your success and getting buy-in to wellbeing initiatives from management can be hard if activities are not mapped to relevant frameworks and policy documentation. Therefore, ensuring your interventions are mapped to key documentation is important, otherwise the value of your wellbeing initiative may be lost. Thomas (2012) agrees with this concept and states:

the notion of engagement should be embedded into the institutional vision and reflected in key policy documents, and this must be actively endorsed by senior managers" (p.19).

Boulton (2022) goes further by saying:

if interventions are to be effective, there is a clear need for universities to invest in staff recognition, resources, support.....or risk the interventions becoming unstable and no longer effective in supporting students' sense of belonging and academic outcomes (p.13).

It is therefore crucial that academic libraries use these frameworks when advocating their wellbeing initiatives to senior management. It is even more vital that recognition, funding, and support for wellbeing programmes is forthcoming from management and senior leadership.

There is a growing body of literature questioning whether academic libraries should be part of this whole university approach to wellbeing and whether they are replicating provision already at universities. Suresh et al. (2025) in their scoping document thought "connections between academic libraries and wellbeing are somewhat tenuous and unclear" (Suresh et al, 2025, p.3) although overall had potential. They were concerned that academic libraries needed to measure and understand the impact and effectiveness of the wellbeing initiatives that they were developing.

Walton (2018) states “University libraries have to decide where they wish to be in supporting wellbeing in the context of the broader institution” (Walton, 2018, p.122). Walton continues by saying that whilst diversification of libraries into wellbeing can allow growth and create links with other wellbeing departments, developing wellbeing in the library could take money away from providing existing resources where current library budgets are under constraint. Nevertheless, as shown above and in tip two below, creating a wellbeing programme can be done with limited investment.

Brewster and Cox (2022) and Cox and Brewster (2021) question whether librarians should be involving themselves in wellbeing altogether. They argue that “academic libraries do not always have a clear understanding of the nature of student mental health issues, or well-conceived ways of measuring the impact of interventions” (Brewster and Cox, 2022, p.35). Bladek (2021) goes further and asks, “are there professional competencies that academic librarians need to develop in order to support student wellness?” and “what exactly should librarians' roles and responsibilities be within their institutions' wellness framework?” (Bladek, 2021, p.7). Green (2022) states:

To be really effective it's important that libraries don't set up initiatives which are separate from others that are already in place within their universities. It's important to reach out to mental health services and work collaboratively with them....Library staff aren't trained mental health professionals and there are important issues of boundaries and roles (p.24)."

To help with this Bladek (2021) recommends that librarians consider the Reference and User Services (RUSA) guidelines and health on medical reference (2015) for relevant professional guidance. This emphasises that as librarians are not trained health professionals they should not “interpret or make recommendations regarding diagnoses, treatments, or specific health care professionals or health care facilities” (RUSA, 2015, cited by Bladek, 2021, p.7). In response to this from my own perspective, my role as Librarian had a pastoral element written into my job description. This meant it was my responsibility to keep an eye on students within the library and liaise with the tutorial department and other relevant staff over any potential issues as well as signposting students to relevant services, such as college nurse, college counsellor, Head of Wellbeing, etc. However, many libraries and library staff will not have clear guidance on wellbeing within their libraries. Therefore Bladek's (2021) recommendation above does provide useful advice in reminding us to establish boundaries and expectations as part of wellbeing planning. Reaching out and involving relevant departments to get essential advice and support is a good idea to ensure that wellbeing programmes are well thought through.

Despite these arguments against wellbeing in academic libraries, Suresh et al. (2025) concluded their “scoping review demonstrates the potential of academic libraries in promoting health and wellbeing for their users” (Suresh et al., 2025, p.2). They further commented that “wellbeing initiatives also appeared to benefit the academic library in most cases, opening opportunities to engage with new and existing library users” (Suresh et al., 2025, p.12).

Having shown that wellbeing, provides a sense of belonging in our libraries and building that community is vitally important. How do we incorporate wellbeing into our libraries to provide a relaxing and uplifting space for study and enhance that sense of community whilst addressing concerns about appropriateness, budget constraints and impact?

Here are my top tips on implementing wellbeing in libraries. Whilst the focus is primarily on students in university, the tips are transferable to all library sectors.

Tip No.1 Planning your Wellbeing Program

When I started out implementing wellbeing elements into library services, they were ad hoc after observing what students needed in terms of support, particularly at exam time. However, over the years planning became key to organising all the logistics required for a full wellbeing program spanning an eight-week Easter term.

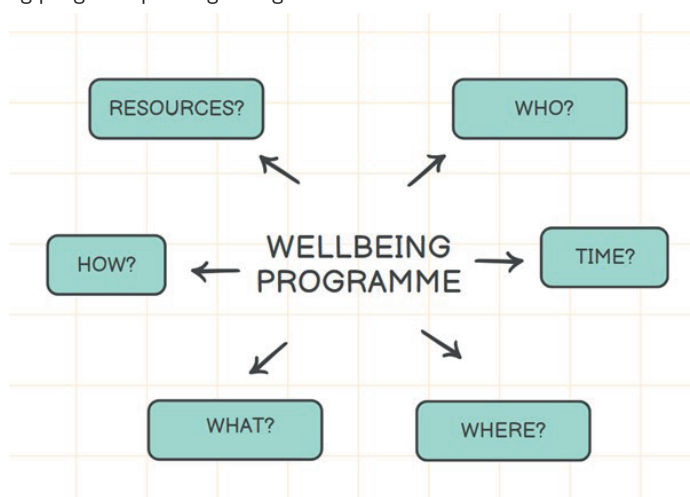


Figure 1. Elements of designing a wellbeing programme

My top tips are:

- Think about what you want your wellbeing programme to achieve
- Start small
- Get input from your team
- Identify colleagues or other departments who may be able to help you
- Obtain advice from relevant departments about expectations and boundaries
- Think about your environment and what space you'll need?
- What time in the day or week is best?
- Do you need a risk assessment for each activity?
- How long will the activity be?
- Can the activity be done at home with instructions or a video for inclusivity?

My key take away is keep it simple so everyone, no matter what level of ability, can join in. Differentiate tasks for beginners, improvers or those with advanced skills.

Tip No. 2 Financing your Wellbeing Program

Implementing wellbeing in your library does not need to be expensive, especially with dwindling budgets. Start small and build up your resources over time.

I remember starting the library wellbeing program on a shoestring, with no money and good will from colleagues before setting aside a small yearly sum of £50-£100 from the library budget. After a few years we had accumulated a good deal of material and resources that could be reused and rotated.

Think about:

- What could you do with limited investment?
- Ask your colleagues for donations
- Scout local charity shops for crafting materials
- What skills do your team or colleagues have that you can use in your wellbeing program?
- Liaise with your students or local community and see if they wish to donate items or find out if local organisations give small grants for start-up projects
- Liaise with your alumni office – can they help with donations or fundraising?
- Can you collaborate with other departments to get started?

Tip No. 3 Publicising your Wellbeing Program

Publicising and implementing new wellbeing initiatives can be scary at first. There is that unknown element about uptake and interest from your community, whether they are students or members of the public.

Think about:

- Poster design
- Using existing organisational communication networks
- Can you use social media? If so, which platform is appropriate for your audience?
- Are there communication policies or organisational branding you need to use?
- Check documents are accessible before they go to print or get published on social media
- Do you need to pass any publicity via your communications officer for authorisation?
- What about marketing techniques – are there special days or events you can link activities to?
- Showcase your initiatives at university wide events

Over time, publicity by word of mouth can be very powerful. Let the students or your community speak for you.

Tip No. 4 Measuring the Success of your Wellbeing Program

Finding out what people thought of your initiative is important for measuring success and impact. Asking for reactions and input from your community not only allows you to see how your program was received, but it also enables you to get valuable feedback which can enhance your future wellbeing offerings.

Think about:

- Designing an evaluation or feedback form
- Using ethnographic research and user experience (UX) techniques to find out what your students or customers think, like or dislike
- Talking to the participants during the event
- Evaluating whether you felt there were elements that could have worked better
- Implementing any improvements that need to be made

Tip No. 5 Demonstrate the value of your Wellbeing Program

Whilst creating the library wellbeing programme I came across some scepticism at first. Whilst students and some colleagues thought it was a great idea, others were not convinced by its value in supporting student wellbeing. Therefore, getting buy-in from senior managers is crucial.

Think about:

- Keeping statistics – data collection can provide vital evidence to demonstrate how your wellbeing service is doing in any reports and can show the impact your programme is having on student wellbeing
- Keep quotes and written evidence of how your students feel – remember qualitative data is just as important as statistics
- Map your activities to your university, college, school or public library wellbeing strategy, if you have one
- Demonstrate how your wellbeing activities align and collaborate with appropriate services already in existence, i.e. wellbeing team or university nurse
- Show how your wellbeing activities relate to other key documentation, i.e. University Mental Health Charter, the Managing Safe and Inclusive Public Library services guide or the NHS Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing
- Let the students or your community speak for you. They are your strongest advocates

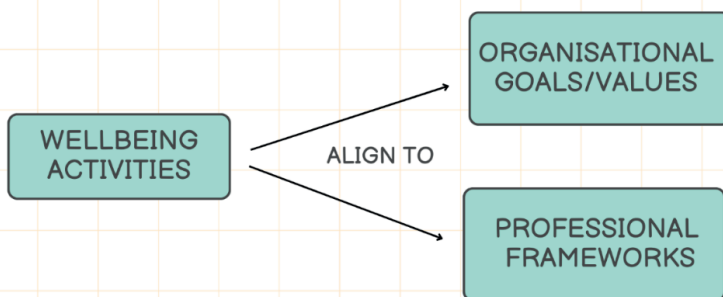


Figure 2. Align activities to organisational goals and relevant frameworks

Tip 6. Give it a go!

My final tip on creating your own wellbeing programme is to try it and see. All innovations and new programmes need to start somewhere, and it is important to remember they take time to bed in, so do not be disheartened if the initial uptake to your wellbeing activities are slow.

There will always be critics who will question what you are trying to do and what good it does. Be prepared to advocate for your wellbeing initiatives and demonstrate successes through statistics and student feedback.

In some of our activities, students did not do what we had planned and went their own way. It can be easy to see this as a failure. However, embrace it and allow for creative freedom. We found they enjoyed the activity even more and got more than they expected from it. It also gave us new ideas to try the next time we ran the activity and gave us all opportunities to learn from each other.

Do not be afraid to get it wrong. If something does not work one year, do not be afraid to try it again with another group. I often found that different year groups of students or students from different subject areas liked different activities. One year the nail bar was not very popular, so I thought about not putting it out the following year. However, during the first week of new term, the new student intake remembered it from their visit to college earlier in spring and it ended up staying out all term!

Good luck 🍀

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"We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at Swansea University Libraries"

Andrea Price and Bethan Williams, Swansea University.

The presentation *We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at Swansea University Libraries* outlines a qualitative research project aimed at understanding the experiences of underrepresented students to enhance engagement, well-being, and a sense of belonging within the academic library. This research was a direct effort to translate Swansea University's core values of 'professionalism, care, and teamwork', into tangible actions at an operational level. Supported by the Swansea Academy of Inclusivity, the study focused on a small cohort of nine "hard to reach" student participants from a widening participation background. The research utilized one-to-one interviews and event diaries to capture and listen to the "Student Voice" gaining insight into the social and academic challenges faced by this group. The findings were coded using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a theoretical framework, revealing critical insights that led to the development of a proactive library initiative called "ChatterBooks", designed to promote and foster a more inclusive and supportive environment. This summary identifies the key methodological approaches, findings, and recommendations of the presentation, demonstrating how academic libraries can evolve to meet the holistic needs of their diverse student population.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The methodology employed in the research was a qualitative approach, chosen to actively listen to the 'Student Voice' and understand the issues from the students' perspective. As Henn, Weinstein, and Foard (2009) argue, understanding the social world requires exploring it from the perspective of the people being studied. To this end, the researchers conducted in-depth one-to-one interviews and utilized event diaries, which provided rich, emotive firsthand accounts of the students' personal learning journeys and their interactions with the university library and staff. The focus on a small group of nine participants from underrepresented backgrounds, allowed for a deeper exploration of individual experiences which often differ significantly from those of more traditional students.

The data collected from the interviews and diaries were coded and analysed using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a widely recognized psychological theory that organizes human needs into a hierarchical pyramid. The research coding process directly mapped extracts from the One-to-One Interviews and Event Diaries to the five levels of the hierarchy: physiological needs (e.g., access to food, water, and comfortable temperature), safety and security (e.g., feeling safe and free from harm), love and belonging (e.g., having a sense of community and connection), esteem (e.g., feeling respected and having a sense of achievement), and self-actualization (e.g., achieving one's full potential). This framework was instrumental in providing a structured way to understand the complex and interconnected issues students face, from basic comfort to aspirational goals, and to link how the library environment and staff interactions influence and support these needs.

Key Findings: The Student Voice on the Library Experience

The research also touched on the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy: self-actualization. Student's personal motivations, such as the desire to "make people proud" or to "be someone who impacts someone's life positively," were clearly articulated. The library's role in this was to provide a supportive environment where these aspirations could be pursued. The quotes about feeling "powerful" and wanting to be "the smartest person in the room" further illustrate that the library is a space where students work towards achieving their full potential, 'being the best version of themselves'. This connection highlights the library's importance not just for academic success, but for the students' personal growth and sense of self-esteem and actualisation.

The "ChatterBooks" Initiative: A Proactive Response

In response to these findings, the presentation introduced the "ChatterBooks" initiative. This program is presented as a practical application of the research, designed to address the issues of belonging, well-being, and student engagement directly. "ChatterBooks" is a flexible weekly event that is a means for library staff to proactively engage with students in a more inclusive way, by having library staff move away from the traditional library desk. As Lackner (2022, p. 225), identifies "People aren't scared of being judged by a book slot, they are scared of being judged by the person behind the desk". The goal is to make staff more visible, accessible, and available, creating welcoming and safe spaces, to create a sense of wellbeing and belonging. The initiative also emphasizes collaboration with the academic library team and aims to foster equality and inclusion during challenging times within higher education. By creating these new opportunities for interaction and connection, "ChatterBooks" seeks to reinforce the library's vital role in the students' academic journey and personal development, providing a clear path to address the emergent themes shared by the student participants.

Conclusion and Future Implications

The "We Care" presentation provides a compelling case for the evolution of the academic library from a repository of resources to a central hub for student well-being and belonging. By actively listening to the voices of underrepresented students, the research has demonstrated a clear correlation between a supportive, inclusive, and physically comfortable library environment and a student's sense of security, belonging, and overall success. The findings underscore that seemingly minor details, such as lighting or ventilation, can have a significant impact on a student's experience. More importantly, the research highlights that positive, proactive staff interactions are a cornerstone of fostering a sense of belonging and combating feelings of isolation and anxiety. In a climate where the higher education sector faces ongoing financial challenges (Pickford, 2025), initiatives such as "ChatterBooks" offer a low-cost, high-impact model for enhancing student retention and success by highlighting the importance of student engagement, developing a relationship of empathy and trust. The presentation concludes with a powerful call to action: to continue putting "words into action" by using the library not only as a space for learning, but as a space where students feel seen, supported, and gain a sense of wellbeing and belonging, demonstrating "We Care".

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/15228959.2022.2095320>

Pickford, P. (2025). Higher education sector faces ongoing financial challenges. [https://www-officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/what-the-ofs-is-doing-to-help-universities-and-colleges-ensure-their-long-term-financial-sustainability/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/what-the-ofs-is-doing-to-help-universities-and-colleges-ensure-their-long-term-financial-sustainability/)

Swansea University Libraries 3.0. (2025). We Care: Actions Speak Louder than Words at Swansea University Libraries 3.0. (presentation)

UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group (PAAG)

Charlotte Hopkins and Jeremy Smith

PAAG brings together stakeholders and decision makers from across the publishing ecosystem, from content creators, designers and publishers to platforms, vendors, tool providers, distributors, end-users and readers with lived experience. We provide a forum for these related voices to discuss the key issues around making accessibility happen, with a focus on real, practical, achievable goals that make a real difference to improving access to published works. Our website brings together resources, education, contacts and other useful documents to help all of those involved progress the accessibility programmes in their organisations.

PAAG Mission statement

The UK Publishing Accessibility Action Group is a supportive community that fosters collaboration and encourages companies and publishing professionals in their accessibility journey. Our aim is to ensure that publications can be read by people with print disabilities. Its members include representatives from the publishing industry, publishing bodies, publishing technology organisations, disability associations, and people with lived experience of print disability.

PAAG Constitution

We have a simple constitution <https://www.paag.uk/constitution-of-the-publishing-accessibility-action-group-paag/> that provides more information about Structure and Membership, Governance, Decision-Making, and Finance.

Get involved!

PAAG meets regularly throughout the year to connect, network and hear from expert presenters on accessible publishing. This is an active and well attended meeting, facilitated by the UK Publishers Association.

For details about how you can join these meetings, the PAAG mailing list, LinkedIn group and various working groups visit the activities section of the website.

Who we are

PAAG is chaired by Stacy Scott. As well as Chair of the PAAG, Stacy Scott is the Accessibility Lead for the Taylor and Francis Group and Global Advisory Board Member for Learned Publishing. Having no usable vision all her life, Scott understands the challenges of accessibility and inclusivity from both the professional and personal point of view.

PAAG charter



The growing availability of ebooks and other digital publications provides an unprecedented opportunity for persons with print disabilities to enjoy access to mainstream content at the same time, in the same format and at the same price as other readers. UK publishers and authors are eager to explore and develop the advantages that ebooks offer and, in so doing, reach more readers. Ensuring that ebooks are fully accessible, however, will only happen if publishers, authors, developers, platforms and other stakeholders focus on this issue at a practical level.

Our objective is to make all content accessible and to embed accessible practices throughout the publishing ecosystem. Every aspect of the publishing industry is integral to our mission, and we encourage you to consider signing the PAAG Charter for Accessible Publishing to show your commitment to this objective. You can join either as a publisher or as a publishing ally. Join our impressive group of signatories and show your support for this important declaration.

With this in mind, we, the signatories to this charter, hereby commit to:

1. raising awareness among, and providing training for, relevant staff.
2. nominating a company “accessibility champion” who can bring together key stakeholders to discuss potential accessibility improvements and act as a liaison for all accessibility information.

3. publishing our accessibility policy on our website, including our commitment to this Charter.
4. designating and publicising a point of contact in our organisation to assist persons with disabilities to access alternate formats of our content.
5. partnering with national and international organisations that provide support for the availability of publications in accessible formats.
6. incorporating appropriate accessibility features within our digital publications and platforms, according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and other appropriate accessibility standards.
7. advocating for accessibility standards and collaboration throughout the publishing supply chain from author to reader.
8. utilising the accessibility metadata opportunities available to aid with the discovery of accessible content.
9. testing and validating content to ensure it is usable by people with print disabilities. Ideally this would include testing by persons with lived experience.
10. monitoring our progress in this area and regularly assessing the accessibility of our digital publications and platforms.

If you wish to become a signatory to the Charter for Accessible Publishing, please complete this declaration.

PAAG charter allies

If your role within the publishing industry makes it difficult to align your organisation to all of the publisher-focused principles in the charter, we would be delighted if you would signal your support by becoming a PAAG charter ally. The publishing industry is multi-faceted, and every part of the workflow is integral to creating more accessible, more user-focused content.

We welcome all stakeholders within the supply chain, from authors to digital content providers, from technical services to educational institutions and charitable bodies. You all play a significant role, and we'd love you to be part of our mission to improve the reading experience for all. If you wish to become an ally, please indicate this on the declaration form.

Charter signatories

Resources

This section contains guides and information. Topics covered include:

Alt text + image description - <https://www.paag.uk/accessible-content/>

Assistive technology <https://www.paag.uk/paag-resources/>

Accessible maths

Metadata

Assistive technology

Disability, Higher Education, Teaching and Learning Bibliography

May- August 2025

Stigma

Koutsouris, G., Stentiford, L., Dimitrellou, E., Yu, Z., Pujaningsih, & Azizah, N. (2025). The absent presence of disability in British higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, berj.70011. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.70011>

Abstract: Rates of disability disclosure are steadily increasing in British higher education (HE), with 18% of the student population having a known disability in 2023/24. It might be assumed that progress is being made with increased representation, rights and support for disabled students. However, drawing on interviews with staff who lead disability support services across a range of British HE institutions (HEIs), we find that disability remains an 'absent presence'—with enduring concerns around the dominance of medicalised framings of disability; differential disclosure rates across student groupings; a lack of attention by senior leaders; tensions between socio-political, legal, practical and economic imperatives underpinning a drive for often superficial understandings of inclusive practice; and the exclusion of disability materially and discursively on campuses. We particularly explore an emergent paradox between the increasing rate of disability disclosure and the relative absence of disability in institutional cultures, translating Sara Ahmed's work on diversity in HE and the concept of the 'non-performative' to disability research. Our analysis suggests that HEIs often mobilise diversity (i.e., equality, diversity and inclusion—EDI) discourses which 'contain' challenges associated with disability and, in this way, avoid meaningful engagement with social justice.

Teaching and Learning

Filippou, K., Acquah, E. O., & Bengs, A. (2025). Inclusive policies and practices in higher education: A systematic literature review. *Review of Education*, 13(1), e70034. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.70034>

Abstract: This systematic literature review examines research on inclusive policies and practices in higher education institutions published between 2001 and 2021. Six electronic databases (ERIC, Emerald, Web of Science, Wiley Online, Taylor & Francis Online, and Sage journal) were searched. Forty-three articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in this review. The results suggest that the number of studies on inclusive policies and practices in higher education is gradually increasing. Research on inclusion in higher education primarily focuses on policies, practices and accessibility. Studies reviewed delve into national, regional and university-level policies. Practices mainly related to curriculum, teaching and learning, and accessibility. The curriculum was projected as critical in facilitating inclusive practices in higher education.

The curriculum must be learner-centred, promote collaboration, use flexible assessment, and provide individual course guides and flexible and expanded learning opportunities for all students. Teaching must be differentiated, use multi-methods and assessments, and be orchestrated in a conducive atmosphere. Accessibility in terms of physical structures, social environment, attitudinal and digital provision was critical to ensure the inclusion of people who identified as disabled. The findings culminate in the development of an inclusive higher education framework. Implications for research and practice in higher education are highlighted.

Marom, L., & Hardwick, J. (2025). From access to inclusion: a call for a cultural shift in higher education. *Higher Education*, 89(2), 513–534.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01233-x>

Abstract: This study explores accessibility barriers in higher education (HE), by centering the voices of 50 disabled students. Drawing on the frameworks of critical disability studies (CDS) and in particular disability justice, we argue that access without belonging is not enough; disabled students need to be fully included in institutional life. Weaving these two frames allows us to simultaneously examine individual experiences and the impacts of systemic ableism within institutions and social structures. From the standpoint that all people have strengths, knowledges, challenges, and barriers and that accessibility and disability are constructed, we examine whose bodies and knowledges are included, whose bodies and knowledges are excluded, and whose bodies and knowledges are dependent on institutional approval and accommodations to be included. We see the participants as knowledge holders, whose experiences give them a perspective that might be hidden from those who design and run HE institutions. This is reflected in the structure of the paper in which, after each section that identifies barriers to access, the participants share their ideas and suggestions. We focus on four main issues of access to (1) receiving and (2) implementing accommodations, (3) physical accommodation, and (4) pedagogy and curricula. This study argues that it is not enough to grant disabled students access to HE by providing limited academic accommodation; rather, it is necessary to listen to disabled students to re-imagine all facets of HE with inclusion in mind.

Morettini, B. W., Accardo, A., Prentice, K., & Alharbi, H. (2025). The professor of the future: Perspectives of university faculty implementing Universal Design for Learning. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, 44(1).
<https://doi.org/10.3998/tia.5596>

Abstract: Data show that the university student population is increasingly more diverse than in the past. Certainly, the conventional college student profile has evolved with approximately three out of every four students now falling into groups previously deemed nontraditional, including adult learners and first-generation students and students who identify as disabled and/or neurodivergent.

Emerging throughout this shift in the university student population is a need to address university faculty uncertainty around how to support diverse and/or disabled learners. Despite the barriers to learning faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, there also arose the recognition by some U.S. faculty and staff that expanded college access provided as necessity, such as the use of educational technology and hybrid learning, supported access for a new and expanded population of students. As a result, university faculty and staff are uniquely open to frameworks guiding implementation of inclusive practices and pedagogy, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Findings from the study nuance the conversations on implementation of UDL at the postsecondary level; particularly, the findings show that while professional development and support can assist faculty in understanding and implementing UDL, there is still resistance to widespread implementation. This work provides a roadmap to other institutions who wish to implement UDL and explores specific barriers—and potential solutions—to the strategic implementation of UDL.

Nachman, B. R., Miller, R. A., & Gilchrist, T. (2025). "Education was always my ticket to something more": Disabled transfer students' educational journeys across contexts. *Journal of College Student Development*, 66(3), 248–263.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2025.a962919>

Abstract: Scholarship on disability in higher education has unveiled the complications that students face in coming to terms with their disabilities and traversing college based on the ableist settings they inhabit. Nonetheless, the paths, priorities, and unique challenges depicted in the literature are often limited to one institutional setting. In this narrative inquiry study involving interviews with 14 pre- and post-transfer college students, we chronicle their journeys from high school to community college and, for some, to a post-transfer institution. In particular, we unveil how, over these three points in time, students engage in changes of how they reconcile their disabled identities and waver between independent and interdependent behaviors. Our findings call for further inquiry regarding the role of familial capital in informing students' resource attainment, as well as push practitioners to form more intentional partnerships to support disabled students' smoother transitions across educational institutions.

Shaw, A. (2025). Inclusion of higher education disabled students: a Q-methodology study of lecturers' attitudes. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 30(4), 821–842.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2023.2280266>

Abstract: This UK Q-Methodology study combining quantitative and qualitative techniques explores lecturers' attitudes toward disability and inclusion of disabled higher education students. Disabled students are among those likelier to withdraw from university and have lower degree outcomes. One potential barrier impacting disabled students' is lecturers' attitudes and self-efficacy.

Using Qmethod software, thirty-one lecturers sorted forty-five statements describing the spectrum of attitudes toward disability and inclusion and provided optional post-sort survey and interview data. Two stances about inclusion emerged from factor analysis and interpretation: *cautiously committed with concerns* and *confidently committed with concerns*. Both groups are committed to inclusion of disabled students. However, the majority group is more cautious and concerned about their expertise. The second group is more ableism aware and confident about implementing inclusion but shares group one's concerns about training needs. Recommendations include further research and training on disability awareness and anti-ableist pedagogies plus allocation of time and resources

Assistive Technology

Abdelwahab, M. M., Al-Karawi, K. A., & Semary, H. E. (2025). A Systematic review of assistive technology for enhancing the students with disabilities. *Journal of Disability Research*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.57197/JDR-2024-0117>

Abstract: The dedication to enhancing the inclusion of students with disabilities has led to the growing prevalence of assistive technology (AT) in education. The present paper aims to systematically review studies on the effects of AT on the inclusion of students with impairments. A review of pertinent empirical studies published from 2009 to 2022 was conducted across four databases: Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and PsycINFO. The sample comprises 32 papers that fulfilled the inclusion criteria of this review, from a total of 218 papers identified. The results highlight that advanced AT markedly enhances accessibility and active involvement for students with mobility impairments, improving their academic engagement and social integration. Nonetheless, the analysis also highlights obstacles to efficient AT adoption, including inadequate teacher training, restricted awareness of AT possibilities, and difficulties related to availability and cost. The study closes with recommendations for governmental support, enhanced financing, and specialized teacher training to use advanced AT to create more inclusive educational settings for kids with significant mobility impairments.

Figard, R., Brunhaver, S., & Bekki, J. (2025). Crippling the content: An analysis of disability-related digital content at engineering-intensive universities. *Policy Futures in Education*, 23(5), 916–946. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103251320702>

Abstract: It is well known that disabled students face a myriad of barriers to inclusion while navigating higher education. Institutional policies and practices serve as fundamental drivers to the operation of a university and, as such, play a significant role in the support, experiences, protections, and inclusion of disabled students. This study critically analyzes the current state of disability-related institutional policies and practices across five large U.S. higher education institutions through a content analysis of their student support-related websites.

Further, this paper extends beyond the evaluation of legal adherence to present a more comprehensive assessment of the current state of structural institutional support, marking a necessary first step for enhancing disability inclusion within higher education. We offer implications for improved disability support and enforcement of disability-related policies and practices within U.S. institutions of higher education.

Jafry, Azeezah, and Jessica Vorstermans (2025). Evolving intersections: AI, disability, and academic integrity in higher education." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* no. 182, 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20629>.

Abstract: In this article, we investigate the critical intersections of AI, academic integrity, and disability in the context of a large undergraduate course. Our aim was to adapt the course to respond to generative AI (GenAI) to avoid entrenching barriers for students, and instead teach them how to use GenAI tools in ways that deepen their learning and uphold academic honesty. Grounded in disability justice and access pedagogies, we outline five design goals centered on guidelines for AI usage, education on responsible AI use, revised assessments, support for teaching assistants (TAs), and accessible materials. These activities are detailed in our methodology. In our findings, we provide a critical reflection of the course adaptation, taking up issues such as varying levels of familiarity with GenAI, students' capacity to engage with course changes, resistance to GenAI, instructors' relational shifts to AI, and feelings of demoralization among the teaching team. We conclude by offering practical recommendations for educators, calling for learning communities to view this disruption as an invitation to listen to disabled students

Lomellini, A, Lowenthal, P., Snelson, C. and Trespalacios, J (2025). Accessible and inclusive online learning in higher education: A review of the literature. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 37(3), 1306–29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-024-09424-2>.

Abstract: Disabled students are increasingly choosing to attend higher education. Online learning has the potential to meet the needs of disabled students in unique ways. However, questions remain about how well online learning is meeting the needs of disabled students and in what ways institutions are prepared for and actively providing students with accessible and inclusive online learning opportunities. This paper presents the results of a literature review of 91 sources focused on accessible and inclusive online learning. Themes that emerged from the literature are discussed, as are future implications for research and practice.

ADHD

Alamro, A. R., Alsaif, T. M., Diab, H. M., & Ibrahim, U. M. (2025). Effects of mindfulness e-activities on academic resilience in ADD/ADHD Students. *Journal of Disability Research*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.57197/JDR-2025-0005>

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate how students with attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) feel about their academic prospects after engaging in mindfulness-based online activities. The study aimed to identify the effect of e-activities based on mindfulness on the academic buoyancy of students with ADHD. The study employed a semi-experimental approach to investigate the impact of e-activities based on mindfulness on enhancing the academic buoyancy of university students diagnosed with ADHD. The participants were 50 hyperactive and distracted students. On an achievement test, they scored over 60 on the self-estimation scale for adults with ADHD. Two experimental groups were randomly assigned. Twenty-five are the electronic activity group and 25 are the control group. The study found that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post-measurement in academic buoyancy in favor of the experimental group. Also, the study found that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in academic buoyancy in the post and follow-up measurements in favor of the follow-up measurement. The results can help those in charge of university education to take advantage of e-activities to improve the academic buoyancy of these students. Also, providing e-activities that can be used with students with ADHD to overcome academic problems they face and improve their academic level.

Erdal, K., Adami, G., Gelléri, P., & Dettmers, J. (2025). Stress and burnout in university students with ADHD-like symptoms: The role of memory bias and daily stress. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 9, 100497. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2025.100497>

Abstract: Elevated ADHD symptoms are linked to higher dispositional stress and burnout in university students. Emotion-focused coping and negative memory bias may contribute to higher stress and burnout risk in ADHD students. Study highlights the importance of addressing coping flexibility and stress management in students with elevated symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity and/ or inattention.

Autism / Neurodiversity

Aitken, D., Hodge, G., Page, M., Lastmann, E., Hiller, S., & George, R. E. (2025). Navigating medical school with autism: a systematic review exploring student experiences & support provision in the United Kingdom. *BMC Medical Education*, 25(1), 927.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-06866-9>

Abstract: Medical education is inherently demanding, requiring students to navigate academically challenging courses, high-stake assessments, clinical training and interpersonal interactions within high stress environments. Autistic medical students can experience profound differences academically and professionally if their support needs are not identified and addressed by specific pedagogic adaptations. This systematic review aims to explore the experiences and support provision for autistic undergraduate medical students in the United Kingdom, through a critical interpretive review of the literature.

Method: The search strategy involved the use of 6 electronic databases, supplemented by citation tracking, consultation with academic experts and library searches. Of 400 papers, 6 satisfied the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Critical interpretive synthesis (CIS) was used to analyse these papers. The study design assimilated methods adopted in conventional systematic reviews within the format of CIS, to combine the entire body of literature and generate theoretical categories.

Results: Three synthetic constructs (overarching themes) were produced from the analysis: 'reassessing prevailing narratives on autism', 'navigation differences', and the 'absence of meaningful support provision'. Together, these constructs generated a theoretical framework ('synthesising argument') defined as 'reframing support for success' for autistic and neurodiverse medical students, which collectively explained the findings of the review. 'Reframing support for success' provided an explanation for the inconsistencies in understanding the lived experiences of autistic medical students and the required adjustments and support provision. It illustrated the distinct challenges experienced by autistic students in navigating medical school, as well the necessity to acknowledge the unique strengths autistic medical students bring.

Conclusion: The review calls for enhanced awareness and training within medical schools to foster an inclusive environment that accommodates neurodiversity more broadly. It advocates for legislative compliance and change in offering reasonable adjustments and stresses the potential benefits of viewing autistic traits as strengths in medical practice.

Da, F., Ma, Y., Ma, M., Mao, J., Weng, Z., Yang, C., & Wang, T. (2025). Effects of STEM learning on students with autism spectrum disorder and students with intellectual disability: a systematic review and meta-analysis.
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12(1), 1009.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05292-y>

Abstract: Although science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is known to benefit students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and students with intellectual disability (ID), its efficacy has not been fully evaluated.

This systematic review and meta-analysis examined the (1) overall intervention, maintenance and generalisation effect sizes of STEM learning; (2) effectiveness of intervention methods; and (3) influence of moderating variables (age, sex, disability type, intervention setting, interventionist and intervention duration.) Based on a Web of Science search, 40 studies published between January 2010 and July 2023 were included. This study involves two distinct groups: students with ID and students with ASD. Within the ASD group, participants were subdivided into two subgroups based on comorbid ID status: ASD-ID (with comorbid ID) and ASD-no ID (without ID). STEM learning had strong overall intervention and maintenance effects on students with ID and ASD. Disability type had a moderating effect on STEM learning outcomes, students with ASD-ID having more severe impairments compared to students with ASD-no ID and those with ID alone. This study has summarised interventions suitable for different fields and types of disabilities; educators should further optimise interventions that are proven effective. Future research should continue to focus on factors affecting the STEM learning outcomes of students with ASD and students with ID to help them improve their learning experiences, better understand the world and participate in social activities

Haire, A. (2025). What does it mean to be information literate for an autistic librarian in the academic library workplace? *Journal of Information Literacy*, 19(1), 27–47.
<https://doi.org/10.11645/19.1.723>

Abstract: This study centres on the experiences of autistic librarians in academic library workplaces, delving into how they become information literate—an intricate process influenced by social, epistemic, and physical modalities. Through a qualitative approach combining survey responses from 43 participants and detailed interviews with two autistic librarians, the research sheds light on the conscious, active labour often required to interpret social expectations, navigate sensory inputs, and engage with explicit knowledge. The findings highlight the unique, often hidden, efforts autistic librarians invest in their roles, bringing to the forefront the micro-decisions and strategies they employ daily. This research bridges the fields of IL and neurodiversity, broadening our understanding of workplace inclusivity. By giving voice to autistic librarians and drawing attention to their lived realities, the study invites reflection and action toward creating work environments that not only accommodate but celebrate neurodiverse talents.

Le Cunff, Anne-Laure, Faith Ross, Samuel J. Westwood, Sumeiyah Koya, Deborah M. Caldwell, Abigail E. Russell, and Eleanor J. Dommett. (2025). Key research questions to support neurodiversity in higher education: A participatory priority setting Exercise. *Education Sciences* 15 (7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15070839>.

Abstract: The number of identified neurodivergent individuals in UK higher education, within both student and staff populations, is steadily increasing, yet there is limited evidence on how best to support them. In the context of financial pressures and sector-wide transformation, setting priorities for neurodiversity research is critical to make the most of limited resources.

This study used an adapted James Lind Alliance methodology to identify the most pressing research questions concerning neurodiversity in higher education, gathering 385 ‘uncertainties’ (or possible research questions) from 135 students and staff across 37 UK universities. These were refined into 66 indicative research questions spanning 16 categories. Following interim prioritisation and a final consensus workshop, 10 top research priorities were identified. These reflect five key themes: staff knowledge, attitudes and practice; assessment; support; outcomes; and accessibility. This is the first study to systematically establish research priorities for neurodiversity in higher education, providing a foundation for evidence-based change that reflects the perspectives and needs of both neurodivergent students and staff.

Nachman, B. R., Cox, B. E., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Lounds Taylor, J., Gelbar, N. W., & Raclaw, E. (2025). “Enjoy your time and be confident”: Honoring autistic community college students’ multifaceted interpretations of success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000671>

Abstract: To date, our understanding of autistic college students’ experiences has largely excluded or avoided centering the experiences of this neurodivergent community, especially when it comes to defining their success. Our investigation aims to center the priorities of autistic students enrolled in community colleges, postsecondary institutions where most autistic students enroll in higher education at some point in their academic career. Our national study of autistic community college student success employs latent content analysis in processing the qualitative survey comments of 68 participants attending community college, in which we asked them how they made sense of what constitutes, contributes to, and could potentially further support their success. We draw from an original framework recognizing the holistic college student experience alongside Wang’s momentum model of community college student success. Through content analysis, we identified four key themes indicating success can (a) manifest as skill development and attainment, (b) be linked to one-on-one relationships, (c) entail connecting to specific resources, and (d) mean unique needs are accounted for (e.g., issues with finances and transportation in community colleges). We propose that college faculty enhance their understanding of autism to better support their learners’ needs, whereas researchers must more intentionally attend to the unique components of autistic college students’ considerations of success that our findings raise.

University of Oxford (2024). Neurodivergent Education for Students, Teaching & Learning (NESTL) <https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/project/neurodivergent-education-for-students-teaching-learning-nestl/>

Abstract: This project supports neurodivergent-inclusive teaching and learning. Based on workshops, interviews, and reviews of existing literature and resources, we collaborated with neurodivergent students and staff to co-create the NESTL Toolkit – a practical and reflective resource to promote neurodivergent-inclusive teaching and learning

Wan, Y., & Thompson, K. M. (2025). Conceptualising belonging: How LIS education can cultivate a truly inclusive future for neurodivergent and disabled information professionals. *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*, 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2025.2540085>

Abstract: This paper presents a self-/context-belonging/alienation model to conceptualise belonging in the workplace. Using disability and neurodivergence as an example, we argue that we can move beyond inclusion as mere physical access or policy compliance. Our model frames belonging as a relational, context-dependent phenomenon co-constructed by individual agency (self) and systemic factors (context). Synthesising existing literature on critical disability studies and organisational research, we examine how collegial relationships, spatial design, workplace policies and procedures, and organisational culture shape disabled and neurodivergent employees' belonging and alienation. We argue that Library and Information Science (LIS) education of the future, particularly in leadership and management curricula, needs to equip students with critical tools to recognise and address the social and structural factors that shape a sense of belonging, especially for equity-deserving employees, such as librarians with disabilities and neurodivergence. We propose pedagogical strategies incorporating the self-/context-belonging/alienation model into LIS coursework, encouraging reflexive leadership, inclusive policy design, and practices that challenge ableism. By embedding this model into LIS education, future professionals will be better prepared to foster equitable, accessible, and empowering organisational environments. This work contributes both a theoretical framework and practical applications for reimagining LIS education in alignment with principles of disability justice. © 2025 Yi Wan and Kim M. Thompson.

Blind Students

Firat, T., & Bildiren, A. (2025). University processes of students with visual impairments taking distance education. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 40(2), 152–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2022.2133600>

Abstract: This research aims to reveal the reasons why students with visual impairments (VI) prefer distance education, their experiences in the distance education process, and their expectations after university graduation. For this purpose, a study was conducted with seven university students with VI. The research employed a case study method, with data collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using content analysis techniques. This analysis determined that distance education posed both various difficulties and created a multitude of advantages for students with VI. Elements of accessibility and support services offered by universities played a vital role in both the positive and negative experiences of students with VI in distance education. Additionally, this study found that students with VI held a variety of expectations for themselves and society after university graduation. The study results are discussed in terms of future research and practice.

Deaf Students

Iturriaga, C. (2025). The burden of sustaining communication: communication breakdowns experienced by deaf students and their communication support workers in a further education college. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 38(1), 97–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2024.2418847>

Abstract: The educational inclusion of deaf students in England is usually interpreted as placement in mainstream settings alongside hearing students, creating unintended pressure for assimilation to the communicative needs of hearing people. In this context, it is deaf students and their communication support staff who are left to deal with communicative disparities found in educational settings. This ethnographic study explored episodes of communication breakdown in communicative interactions of 5 deaf college students in a further education college in Northern England. Analysis coded what was the source of breakdown, who noticed it, who repaired communication and what strategy was used. Findings were organised into three themes, reflecting how breakdowns were dealt with either by deaf students or their Communication Support Workers, or as a shared concern with teaching staff. Overall, deaf students were noted to deal with miscommunication through translanguaging, deploying their multilingual and multimodal repertoires to engage with multiple audiences and repair communication. Findings reflect how deaf students are overburdened with responsibility for ensuring communication is sustained, which opens further questions regarding the pressure to assimilate to hearing normative ways of communicating. Restricting deaf students' communication to English may limit their development as bi/multilinguals and their learning experiences.

Mental Health

Bruno, J., & Scalzo, T. (2025). CommuniTea in the Library: fostering relationships with warmth. *Assessment Update*, 37(1), 10–11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/au.30428>

Abstract: Wright College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution and community college in Chicago, Illinois serving around 10,000 students per year. The majority of our students are First Generation, 36% are Pell-eligible, about 60% work in addition to taking classes, and many take advantage of the Healthy Market for free groceries on campus. In their literature review, Broton, Mohebal, and Lingo (2022) describe the greater prevalence of food and housing insecurity among community college students compared to all college students, noting that these societal deficits often impact mental health, with nearly half reporting they experience depression and/or anxiety. While the Library cannot address these issues directly, we acknowledge the fact that many of our students are from underserved or minoritized communities and need additional support to navigate college life, so it is important to us that we are a welcoming space for students.

In the fall of 2021, the college faculty received training from the Wellness Center on being a trauma-informed campus. Since then, we have developed ongoing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to center wellness through rest and connection. Our trauma-informed work is also connected to City Colleges of Chicago Libraries' Strategic Plan goal: Create an Exceptional Student Experience. In this case, we focused on creating a welcoming space, displays that represent our community, and encouraging connection. Eldermire and Shinwari (2022) describe a case study where they provided tea bags and hot water to students at their small veterinary library. They found that students appreciated the gesture and were more likely to talk to library staff when they were in the library. They also found that by providing tea, they welcomed in students who had never been to the library before. We know that when students feel welcome and supported, they will be more likely to ask for help and we will be better equipped to meet their goals.

Cole, A. L., Navin, F., & Reid, D. (2024). Exploring university student mental health and wellbeing through a low-barrier peer-led service: Emerging insights from The Living Room. *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association*.
<https://doi.org/10.30688/janzssa.2025-1-01>

Abstract: Universities are increasingly recognising the importance of addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of their students. Mental health challenges experienced while at university can hinder academic achievement and exacerbate existing mental ill-health. In response to this identified need, many institutions have implemented mental health services, such as psychological and counselling support. However, barriers such as stigma, accessibility, and effectiveness often limit their reach and impact. Many students do not avail themselves to services, or access the supports available, due to these barriers. This study gathered initial data from 110 participants who visited Edith Cowan University's "The Living Room" (TLR) within the first 15 weeks of its opening. This new low-barrier, peer-led mental health service is designed to support students' social, emotional, and mental wellbeing. TLR already stands out as an early intervention sanctuary. Students can find understanding and support in times of difficulty through shared conversation with a trained peer, who is ideally positioned to help ease distress and offer connectivity to other services. The Welcome and Wellbeing Questionnaire has identified key emerging themes. These include the vital role of the TLR peer support team, as well as various academic, social, emotional, and wellbeing concerns with a broader impact on interpersonal and mental health challenges. This study highlights the emerging benefits of an early intervention primary mental health care model, identifies key recommendations for support, and further adds to knowledge of the social and emotional wellbeing of students at university.

De Ruyter, D. (2025). Flourishing as an aim of higher education: Exploring the aspirations and challenges of the educational philosophy of the University of Humanistic Studies (UvH). *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 59(3–4), 686–701. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhae083>.

Abstract: “Flourishing In the University of Humanistic Studies (UvH) research and education are inspired by an inclusive humanistic worldview. As a worldview-based university, the UvH has both an entitlement to promote humanism as the prime source of inspiration and a responsibility to live up to its worldview-based mission. It strives not only for the academic formation of students, but also promotes humanistic moral and ethical values and assists students in developing skills and dispositions that enable them to live a good life, more specifically a good working, civic, and personal life. In my own words, it aims for students' flourishing. This aim leads to various challenges in a university, and I discuss two of them. First, the university has to combine the promotion of humanistic values and the cultivation of students' disposition to put these into practice with respect for the autonomy of students. Second, it has to combine aiming for students' flourishing with looking after the mental well-being of students while ensuring that caring for, and preventing, students' psychological problems does not overrule, or even jeopardize, education for flourishing.

Delbert, T., Stepansky, K., Bucey, J. C., & Goodman-Schiller, D. (2025). Growing sustainable therapeutic third spaces – a therapeutic sensory garden's impact on university student self-reported quality of life and affect. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 26(5), 1172–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-05-2024-0313>

Purpose: College student wellbeing and mental health can be negatively impacted due to roles intrinsic to being and becoming a student in higher education. Active engagement in natural environments has been shown to have benefits for wellbeing. The purpose of this paper is to examine collegiate students' utilization of a therapeutic garden on a college campus and the impact on their quality of life.

Design/methodology/approach: A case series mixed-methods design was used to track self-reported measures of quality of life. Participants were instructed to spend at least 1 h per week over four weeks in the therapeutic sensory garden on campus. Student participants were assessed using the EUROHIS-QOL-8, Positive and Negative Affect Scale and a semi-structured interview.

Findings: Pre-post quantitative measures of quality of life show significant improvement in quality of life of 12 graduate and undergraduate students. These results are triangulated with reduction in negative affect immediately following garden visits, and rich qualitative illustrations of the value of nature engagement on self-care and occupational balance. Small sample size and convenience sampling limits the generalizability of results.

Originality/value: Institutions of higher education recognize the value of green space on campus; however, they may lack the intentionality of designing a nature-based space to support student wellbeing. An intentionally designed campus-based therapeutic sensory garden may provide a novel opportunity to support overall student mental health and wellness.

Dodd, A., Punton, G., Thomas, L., Orme, E. et al. (2025) What does community well-being mean in the university setting? Staff perspectives on connection, compassion, and culture." *Social Indicators Research* 179 (2), 1025-47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-025-03651-5>.

Abstract: Settings approaches are vital for positive health promotion at scale, including mental well-being. These can be designed to fit the local context where people live, work and study. Universities are large employers, and there is a drive for settings-based approaches in the workplace. Community well-being is about "being well together" as a collective, and can be applied to communities based on location as well as communities of shared values, interest and purpose, such as an organisation. Designing well-being initiatives and interventions could be informed through the community well-being lens. This study aimed to explore what university staff think are components of community well-being in the workplace. Semi-structured interviews guided by photo-elicitation (n = 15) explored the concept of community well-being. Three themes were created through Reflexive Thematic Analysis of the data: Social and Connected University; Physical Environment; and Compassionate and Supportive Culture. Activities, events and spaces that facilitate getting together, a campus and spaces within it that fosters identity and belonging to the university community, and a culture that nourishes connection, collegiality and participation are all key components of community well-being in universities. Understanding these components has implications for designing well-being initiatives that go beyond the individual. The components identified here also give insights into how community well-being could be operationalised in the workplace setting.

Kapil, M., Rostampour, R.; Hadwin, A., Miller, M. and MacDonald, S (2025). Mental health and foundational academic behaviours: Pieces of the academic success puzzle." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 55 (2), 75–93. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v55i2.190351>.

Abstract: The interplay between mental health and academic behaviours has been understudied. This study examined the relationship between foundational academic behaviours (e.g., attending class and meeting assignment deadlines), student mental health and well-being, and academic performance. Participants consisted of 229 students (52.6% female) who participated in a first-year introductory learning-to-learn course. Findings from structural equation modelling indicated: (a) higher levels of foundational academic behaviours predicted higher GPA, (b) higher levels of emotional well-being predicted higher levels of foundational academic behaviours and higher GPA, and (c) foundational academic behaviours mediated the relationship between emotional well-being and GPA. Findings affirm the integral role of mental health in academic performance and highlight the mediating role of foundational academic behaviours in this relationship. The association between emotional well-being and foundational academic behaviours underscores the multifaceted nature of academic performance and the importance of considering both mental health and foundational academic behaviours in academic success. Findings from this study suggest that managing behaviours that facilitate engagement in academic tasks, and mental health as a potential internal condition for learning, are both important pieces to the academic success puzzle.

Navarro, A., Armenta, R. F., & Rice, M. M. (2025). "We are way too stressed": Balancing academic priorities with mental health and wellness among life science undergraduates. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 24(2), ar23. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.24-09-0226>

Abstract: Recent calls to prioritize mental health discussions in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have gained momentum, driven by alarming reports on the prevalence of mental health issues within STEM disciplines. Research has extensively studied anxiety and depression in both STEM graduate and undergraduate students, but there has been little focus on the overall mental health of life science undergraduates. We examined how undergraduate life science students perceive support for mental health in their classes, how their major influences their mental health, and how students manage these challenges. To investigate these ideas, we conducted semistructured interviews with 20 life science undergraduate students at a commuter, primarily undergraduate institution with a diverse student body. Our findings indicate that most students prioritized academics at the expense of their wellness and perceived a lack of support for their mental health from STEM instructors. Despite these challenges, some students used various strategies to maintain their mental health and many remained committed to their degrees, viewing the pursuit as worthwhile despite its adverse effects to their mental health. These findings underscore the critical need for more comprehensive and sustained mental health support in undergraduate life science education, ensuring students are not only academically successful but also emotionally resilient and well supported.

Segú-Odriozola, M. (2025). The Mental health of university students: A social ecology perspective. *Societies*, 15(4), 110. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc15040110>

Abstract: University students increasingly encounter significant mental health challenges as they navigate a pivotal period of personal and academic transition. Heightened by academic demands, financial insecurity, social isolation, and cultural expectations, these pressures can profoundly affect their emotional well-being. In response to this growing concern, a qualitative phenomenological study was undertaken to explore the subjective experiences of university students regarding their mental health. Guided by a socioecological framework, the research examined the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors shaping students' perceptions and lived realities of mental well-being. The study utilized a phenomenological design and included 56 students from eight degree programs. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, reflective diaries, focus groups, ecological mapping, and ethnographic observation. The findings revealed that complex interactions between personal, social, institutional, and structural factors significantly influence students' mental well-being. The research identified strategies students use to maintain or improve mental health, along with barriers and facilitators they encounter in the university context. The results emphasize the need for universities to adopt comprehensive, student-centered interventions, such as peer mentorship and mutual support programs, supported by updated institutional policies. These measures aim to create inclusive, adaptive, and less stressful environments, providing a model for other universities seeking to address similar challenges.

Shin, Jiyun Elizabeth L. (2025). Impostorism: Prevalence and its relationships with mental health, burnout, dropout consideration, and achievement among graduate women in STEM.” *Social Psychology of Education* 28, no. 1 (2025): 129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-025-10090-0>.

Abstract: Impostorism is a psychological phenomenon characterized by persistent self-doubt and a fear of being exposed as an intellectual fraud, despite objective records of success. This phenomenon was first observed among high achieving women. The current study investigated impostorism among graduate women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs, a group that has historically been underrepresented and often subjected to negative stereotypes and discriminatory treatment, increasing their vulnerability to impostor experiences. A diverse group of 80 graduate women in STEM from various institutions in the U.S. participated in this study. Results demonstrated a high prevalence of impostorism with 97.5% reporting at least a moderate level of impostor experiences. Furthermore, a series of simple linear regression analyses revealed that impostorism predicted poorer mental health as well as greater burnout and dropout consideration, supporting the study hypotheses. Given that impostorism is experienced by high achieving individuals, impostorism was not expected to predict academic achievements. Supporting this hypothesis, impostorism did not predict academic achievements, as measured by the number of publications and graduate GPA. Implications and future directions are discussed

Stead, J., Gracia, L., & Riva, E. (2025). An Investigation Into the wellbeing and loneliness of PGR students and the effectiveness of institutional support strategies. *European Journal of Education*, 60(2), e70067. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.70067>

Abstract: There is a well-recognised mental health and wellbeing crisis among the undergraduate population in UK higher education. However, the wellbeing of postgraduate research students (PGRs) and the effectiveness of university strategies in supporting PGR wellbeing are much less understood. Early research shows that PGRs' wellbeing is impacted by their loneliness. These initial studies are limited; however, primarily considering loneliness using qualitative approaches and treating it as a unidimensional phenomenon. Our study addresses these limitations, using a quantitative approach to investigate the impact of loneliness (as a multidimensional phenomenon) on PGR wellbeing and the effectiveness of institutional strategies to support PGR wellbeing. We conduct regression analyses on the wellbeing of PGRs, focusing on components of loneliness and stress as predictors. Analysis demonstrates that social loneliness and stress separately predict lower PGR wellbeing. Further analysis reveals that PGRs who experience both social loneliness and stress have additional declines in their wellbeing. Results also suggest that typical strategies used by universities to support students are ineffective within the PGR community. Findings improve understanding of the nature of PGR wellbeing and loneliness, providing a platform for further work to improve PGR support and wellbeing.

Stoker, C., & Cole, J. (2025). Communicating compassionately: how the University of Exeter is changing the way it speaks with its students and why. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 29(3), 147–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2025.2474559>

Abstract: The Compassionate Communications project at the University of Exeter is changing the way in which student-facing staff across the institution communicate with our student body. At the heart of this work is a focus on ensuring we as a university are inclusive, accessible, and supportive in the way in which we provide information to our increasingly diverse learners. Embedded within a wider strategy for improving student mental health and well-being across the institution, the project aims to complement existing work improving students' sense of belonging through the implementation of key principles and staff training. In addition, the project seeks to improve our use of terminology and the readability of student-facing policies and procedures across our digital landscape. The fundamental principle is recognition that good communications are central to improving the student experience; particularly in regard to a sense of belonging, safety, and understanding

Van Kessel, G., Ryan, C., Paras, L., Johnson, N., Zariff, R. Z., & Stallman, H. M. (2025). Relationship between university belonging and student outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 52(3), 2511–2534. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-025-00822-8>

Abstract: University students experience academic demands in addition to everyday stressors, which can impact their well-being and potentially affect academic performance. University sense of belonging, a key social determinant of health and well-being, may directly and indirectly influence academic outcomes. We conducted a systematic review and meta-analyses to investigate whether a sense of belonging at university impacts student well-being and academic outcomes. The results revealed a significant small-to-medium positive association between university sense of belonging and academic outcomes ($r = 0.20$), and a significant medium-to-large positive association with well-being outcomes ($r = 0.40$). Additionally, the number-needed-to-treat analyses suggest that a population-based intervention to improve university sense of belonging could have a significant impact on academic and well-being outcomes. However, high heterogeneity was observed, and most studies had a high risk of bias. Future research should explore moderating factors (e.g., student type) that contribute to this heterogeneity and focus on establishing causality in these relationships.

Wang, L, and Fu, J. (2025). The Relationship between meaning in life and mental health of college students: A meta-analysis." *Current Psychology* 44(15), 13733–45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-08137-8>.

Abstract: Based on the dual-factor model of mental health, the study used meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between the meaning in life (MIL) and the mental health of college students, as well as the effects of moderator variables on the relationship, to provide an effective reference for improving the mental health of college students.

After literature search and screening, a total of 228 studies were included, including 229 independent samples and 188,365 subjects. Random-effects model analysis showed that college students' MIL has a medium level positive correlation with positive mental health, and a medium negative correlation with negative mental health indicators; the MIL measurement tools and positive mental health indicators have a significantly moderated the relationship of MIL and mental health indicators; while negative mental health indicators and gender have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between the MIL and mental health indicators. These findings indicate that MIL and mental health have a close correlation, and this correlation was moderated by the measurement tools of MIL in college students.

Whitburn, B., & Riffo-Salgado, P. (2025). Negotiating access and belonging in a higher education institution: a postqualitative narrative. *Higher Education*, 89(4), 1129–1143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01263-5>

Younis, B. K. (2025). From digital literacy to action: the impact of digital mental health literacy and critical thinking on mental health behaviors in university populations. *Current Psychology*, 44(11), 10851–10864. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07930-9>

Abstract: Objective: University students increasingly face mental health challenges driven by academic pressures, social changes, and digital media exposure. This study investigates how digital mental health literacy (DMHL) and critical thinking (CT) jointly mediate the relationship between university support and mental health behaviors, aiming to clarify the cognitive and digital mechanisms that underlie help-seeking and self-care practices. Methods/analysis: A cross-sectional, quantitative study was conducted with 453 university students across various academic disciplines. Validated instruments were used to assess university support, DMHL, CT, and mental health behaviors. Mediation analysis was performed using PROCESS macro (Model 4) in SPSS to test indirect effects through DMHL and CT. Findings: Results revealed that both DMHL and CT significantly mediate the relationship between university support and mental health behaviors. DMHL demonstrated a stronger mediating effect, indicating its central role in translating institutional support into positive mental health actions. The direct effect of university supports also remained significant, suggesting partial mediation. Novelty/improvement: This study contributes a novel, integrative model by examining DMHL and CT not in isolation, but as dual mediators, supported by both behavioral theory and recent empirical findings. By bridging cognitive and digital competencies, the research offers practical implications for improving university mental health initiatives and fills a notable gap in the existing literature

Zhai, S., Zhang, S., Rong, Y., & Rong, G. (2025). Technology-driven support: exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on mental health in higher education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(10), 13931–13959.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-025-13352-8>

Abstract: Mental well-being holds paramount importance and its relevance within the realm of higher education is undeniable. The academic journey often brings about unique challenges, stressors, and transitions that can impact students' mental health (MH). This study explores the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and MH education within higher education institutions, focusing on the intersection between Deep Learning (DL), MH education, and policy. The research aims to assess how AI can enhance MH support systems in educational settings and whether a combination of DL and MH education can contribute to a psychologically healthy community. The study tests hypotheses regarding the fundamental need for MH education to cope with stress, the role of AI in diagnosing mental health issues, the potential for AI to predict and reduce anxiety and depression, and the impact of policies in making MH education a mandatory component. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted with 600 valid responses from students, faculty members, educational technologists, and MH professionals across 12 universities in China. The data were analyzed using SPSS, revealing strong support for the integration of AI and MH education in promoting a psychologically healthy academic environment. The novelty of this study lies in its innovative integration of DL, MH education, and policy, offering a unique model for supporting mental health in higher education. The findings contribute to the broader understanding of how technology, education, and policy can collectively enhance student well-being and inform future strategies for integrating AI into educational and mental health practices

Launching an interactive sculpture trail at the University of Southampton

Donna Ballan, Clare Hemmings, James Macdonell – University of Southampton Library

Introduction

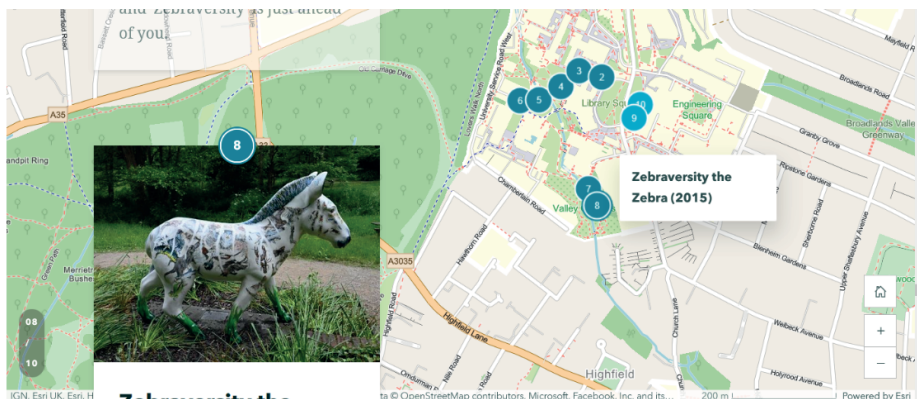


In Spring 2025, the University of Southampton Library launched its first interactive sculpture trail (University of Southampton Library, 2025b) which focused on the outdoor art on display at Highfield, the largest of the University's campuses. The trail was created as part of the work of the Library's Collections Engagement team; we are a group of 6 Librarians whose work it is to look at new and innovative ways of inspiring staff, students and visitors to engage with the Library's rich and varied collections.

A few years ago, Collections Engagement took over responsibility for looking after the 450+ artworks held in the University of Southampton Art Collection (USAC). We set out to increase the number of these items that are on display around campus and have successfully achieved this with a programme of 'hangs' in university buildings, making sure that everything was clearly labelled and using QR codes to link to more extensive information.

It was great to see how positively people responded to the new artworks on their walls and we were invited to collaborate with academic staff and students in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy Criminology on the "The Art of Social Sciences on the Corridor" project which is embedded into the curriculum (University of Southampton Department of Sociology, 2024). They had chosen to display artworks from the USAC within their space that were made by, or that represented, diverse voices and experiences and the project explored how these pieces can be interpreted through the work and theories that are used in the social sciences.

Showcasing the collection



The creation of a sculpture trail is another one of the ways in which we are showcasing the USAC. Our intention was to produce something that would offer easy wayfinding and a high degree of interactivity as well as enabling us to highlight the diverse range of artworks that can be seen across Highfield campus.

One of our first tasks was to identify the sculptures that would appear on the trail and to find out what we could about each one. Although not officially part of the USAC, we decided to include Erica the Rhino on the route. She and Zebraversity are life-size fibreglass animals created to raise awareness of issues around conservation and biodiversity and subsequently adopted by the University. Erica is a cyber rhino (<https://www.ericatherhino.org/>) created by the Electronic and Computer Science dept and enhanced with sensors and a variety of interactive gadgetry so both she and Zebraversity are brilliant and fun additions to the trail.

Next came the task of identifying the technology that would enable us to achieve all of this and we're indebted to our colleague James MacDonnell from the Library's Digital Scholarship team for introducing us to Storymaps, a storytelling tool from ArcGIS which enables maps to be embedded alongside narrative text, images, videos and other media. It was perfect for our needs and instinctively easy to use. An open source alternative is StorymapJS (Northwestern University, 2025).

Gathering feedback

Once we had brought map, images and text together into Storymaps, we asked colleagues to road-test it for us. Reports were that they really enjoyed this opportunity to explore the campus and interact with and find out more about the artworks. A few said that they'd regularly walked past one of the sculptures on the trail - Three Wilderness Stones – not realising it was a work of art at all, which goes to prove the value of making these objects more visible in their environment.

Some excellent ideas for improvement came out of this including the provision of a pdf copy of the trail for accessibility. We also acted on the suggestion that we should include a film of the route; this acts as both an extra navigational aid and offers an alternative, entirely digital way of experiencing the trail.

3D Showcase



We're very excited about the addition of 3D models of some of the sculptures (University of Southampton Library, 2025a). Our colleague James explains:

We used two different methods for digitising the Zebra and Rhino. For the Zebra we used a technique called photogrammetry where hundreds of overlapping photos are taken of an object and then fed through a programme which generates a 3D model. For the Rhino we used a structured light scanner. This handheld device connects to a laptop emitting a pattern of light which the scanner uses to generate 3D "snapshots" known as frames. Hundreds and even thousands of these are generated and then merged to form a solid 3D model. Although photogrammetry is a slower process it can be done with just a camera and was the perfect choice for scanning the Zebra which was located outdoors. The structured light scanner on the other hand requires both a power source and laptop but has the advantage of both speed and generally creating higher quality meshes.

A 3D model offers a greater level of accessibility and interactivity than the more traditional 2D image.

As in real life a visitor might walk around a statue to appreciate it from all sides, a digital user can manipulate the 3d model in much the same way. Likewise, while an in-person visitor might move a bit closer to make out some of the detail, a digital user can zoom in at areas that interest them.

However, a problem with 3D scans is that they are by their nature a copy and users are unlikely to feel the same sense of connection or awe when compared to the real thing. This difficult-to-define quality which makes the 'real' different to even an exact replica is most often defined as authenticity, and authenticity is something that is especially difficult to replicate with digital copies. Instead, we aim to create a new kind of uniquely digital 'authentic' experience. For example, having taken the 3D scan of the Zebra into a programme known as Blender, we can use some simple animation tools to bring it to life – something which a visitor to the real statue would only be able to achieve in their imagination - and hopefully this can go some way to mimic those same feelings of wonder and excitement. While there may be no level of immersion or scan quality that can allow for a 3D scan to come close to experiencing the 'real', the digital medium offers a unique and perhaps equally impactful opportunity to allow users to engage with artwork.

Current and future plans



The trail has been embedded into our staff induction pack and successfully used on our open and visit days, at wider University and civic events and we'll be promoting it to new students as part of freshers week. Also in the pipeline is the launch of a 'Create your own zebra' kit which will enable people to make their own papercraft version of Zebraversity.

We really enjoyed putting the trail together and are already working on extending it out to other University of Southampton campuses where there are many other sculptures to be explored. We also intend to create other trails that either link to a specific location or which connect artworks by theme so there are lots of plans for the future.

References

Northwestern University. (2025). StoryMapJS. <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>

University of Southampton Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology,. (2024). The Art of Social Sciences in the Corridor. <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/phEtgZE0sQARa1Rw?ref=Link&loc=mysways>

University of Southampton Library. (2025a). University Art Collection 3D models. <https://library.soton.ac.uk/UniversityArtCollection/Sculpture3Dmodels>

University of Southampton Library. (2025b). University Art Collection Interactive Sculpture Trail. <https://library.soton.ac.uk/UniversityArtCollection/InteractiveSculptureTrail>

South Asia Heritage month resources

To commemorate this month committee members put together a list of useful free resources.

The padlet can be viewed online at this address

https://padlet.com/h_dawson/south-asia-heritage-month-resources-5zuo09sm3dcabuif

Digital South Asia Library

<https://dsal.uchicago.edu/>

Magnificent resource for finding free high-quality material. Maintained by the University of Chicago and the Center for Research Libraries. Has sections for maps journals, historic books and academic finding aids

South Asian Britain: Connecting Histories

<https://southasianbritain.org/>

website which has emerged from the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research project 'Remaking Britain: South Asian Connections and Networks, 1830s to the Present' (AH/X001520/1). It is coordinated by the University of Bristol and Queen Mary University of London, in partnership with the British Library.

It aims to record events, networks and organisations with a strong focus on oral histories. It includes entries and biographies of over 450 individuals and 180 key organizations. Themes include colonialism and empire, family, education and work.

CrossAsia Search Portal

<https://crossasia.org/en/>

The portal has been set up by the Specialised Information Service Asia (Fachinformationsdienst Asien) at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Includes Library catalogues and open access repositories including Asian language materials, Some full text is for subscribers only.

Soas Digital Library India

<https://digital.soas.ac.uk/rsa>

The South Asia digital library is drawn from the physical holdings of the library and archives at SOAS, University of London. It is comprised of publications on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan as well as South Asia as a whole, including Indian Ocean countries and territories.

Language material includes works in Sanskrit and Pali, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu, as well as English and other western languages.

Topical materials include history and culture; politics, gender, caste and human rights; economics, development, and related materials; agriculture, forestry, natural resources, and industry; and law. Resources on religion touch upon Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism, as well as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. The digital collection holds a vast and growing collection of image and textual resources in areas of art, artefacts, archaeology, and architecture. The J.P. Mills and Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf collections provide a photographic evidence of some of the region's peoples during the colonial period

The South Asian Academic Research Chronicle

<https://thesaarc.com/>

Started and run by a group of academicians, The South Asian Academic Research Chronicle is a refereed international interdisciplinary monthly e-journal with the primary objective of showcasing the recent trends in academic research in India and the world outside to a broad-based global readership. The journal publishes both creative and critical writing and offers a wide range of forms—research papers, scholarly articles, thesis, dissertations, and project reports as well as forms of creative writing like poetry, Creative Writing, essays, conversations with writers, book reviews etc. *The South Asian Academic Research Chronicle* is a peer reviewed journal.

South Asia Ephemera Collection

<https://dpul.princeton.edu/sae/about/south-asian-ephemera-collection>

Princeton university. comprises pamphlets books fliers covering a range of topics: nationalism, gender health, and social studies

LSE Digital Library South Asian Heritage Collection

<https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/collections/list/collections/45>

Some full text items held in LSE archives including

All Pakistan Women's Association Newsletter
(https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/documents?filter_21=All%20Pakistan%20Women%27s%20Association%20Newsletter&applyState=true)

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She: Journal For The Home

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Mukti: Asian Women's Journal

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