University of Ljubljana

Developing Effective and Inclusive Learning for Students with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties (Professor Dr. Alan Hurst – Trustee of Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, UK)

Introduction
For a number of reasons, issues concerning the development of policy and provision have become more prominent in many countries in the past decade. Because of this, there is a greater need for staff in universities to be aware of the issues associated with the development of high quality provision for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. In particular, there is a need to review current practices in learning, teaching and assessment to consider the extent to which they are inclusive or whether they create barriers for some students with particular impairments.

Aims
The aim of the session is to raise awareness of a range of practical issues which need to be considered when developing effective, inclusive learning for students with disabilities in higher education.

Process
The programme has been organised into small sections. The tasks are designed to move discussion from general concerns about attitudes and stereotypes through to looking in more detail at individual case studies, some of which are less complex than others. Having explored what is involved from the students' perspective, there is a move to looking at learning and teaching.

In order to achieve the learning outcomes set out below, a range of strategies will be used. The majority of the time will be spent working in small groups which offer greater possibilities for applying many of the principles underpinning effective learning including the importance of variety of task, and of active involvement. Effective learning is associated also with interest, enjoyment and having fun!

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

The outcomes of the session are that participants will

a) recognise the characteristics of an approach to policy and provision underpinned by a social model of disability

b)demonstrate the development of their knowledge on general matters relating to policy and provision for disabled students

c) identify at least ten issues to be addressed when making provision for students with a range of impairments

d) list reasons for recruiting disabled students and concerns raised by teaching staff

e) outline the "Teachability" approach to developing inclusive learning and teaching

Programme (all timings approximate)

Introductions (10 minutes)

Setting the scene - students with disabilities in the context of widening participation
                                - policies and provision based on solid foundations including implementation of a social model of disability

Students (Tasks One and Two take 30 minutes; Task Three 40 minutes)

Task One - attitudes and prejudices (ideas inventory - small groups)

Task Two – exploring existing knowledge (individuals and then pairs) time

Task Three - students with disabilities : case studies (small groups)

Feedback and general discussion on student perspectives

Inclusive Learning and Teaching (Tasks Four, Five, Six and Seven take 50 minutes)

Task Four – the skills students are expected to have and how reasonable adjustments might be made for disabled students (15 minutes)

Task Five – challenges faced by disabled students when using libraries (10minutes)

Task Six – barriers and challenges to inclusive learning, teaching and assessment (10 minutes)

Task Seven – how are disabled students examined in ways which are fair? (15 minutes)

How can inclusive learning, teaching and assessment be promoted? The "Teachability" approach (Presentation) (10 minutes)

Feedback and general discussion on

Concluding Comments and Evaluation (20 minutes)

Current national policy developments and disabled students in the UK - possibilities for comparing policies and provision (presentation by Alan Hurst)

Feedback, discussion on issues raised by the presentation