

BOOK of Abstracts

**ONLINE SYMPOSIUM
1st DISABILITY IN EDUCATION
DIALOGUE:
MAKING INCLUSION A REALITY
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN
24TH JUNE 2025
9:15-14:00**

Contents

Making Inclusion a Reality Across the Lifespan

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For more information, email us:

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Agenda

- 09:15- 09:25 Welcome & Symposium Address: **Georgina Nnamani**, Chairperson, Disability in Education Network
- 09:25-09:40 Opening Address: **Professor Lisa Murtagh**, Head of the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE)

09:40-10:20 Keynote Chair: **Vinette C Rowley**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Wolverhampton, Co-Chairperson, Disability in Education Network

Professor Sujata Bhan, Professor and Department Head of Special Education, Chairperson, Board of Studies in Special Education, SNDT Women's University Mumbai

Inclusive Education: Global Priority and Collective Responsibility

10:20-10:30 Q & A

10:30-10:35 Comfort Break

10:35-11:35 Making Inclusion a Reality: Children and Young People

Chair: **Nysha Givans**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Wolverhampton

Niamh Hennessy, Registered teacher, and Advisor for National Council for Special Education, Ireland

Exploring Curriculum Construction, Pedagogy, and Delivery in Special Schools: Teacher Perspectives and Insights on Supporting Students with Severe to Profound GLD

Gabriel Agbobli, Reasearcher, University of Ghana

Measuring the Impact of Inclusive Curriculum: A Data-Driven Evaluation of Student Outcomes in African Schools

Chinyere (Chichi) Usen, Masters Energy Group, Lagos

The digital learning of children with disabilities (CWDs) in the context of COVID-19 calls for legal reforms of educational laws of states to achieve the sustainable development goal 4: A case study of Lagos state, Nigeria

11:35-11:40 Comfort Break

11:40-12:40 Making Inclusion a Reality: Higher Education

Chair: **Nysha Givans**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Wolverhampton

Vicky Kaperoni, Doctoral Researcher, University of Delaware, Enhancing

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning Through Multisensory Teaching

Sara Fori, Doctoral Researcher, Trinity College Dublin

Recent Approaches to Teaching Computer Programming to Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Scoping Review

Ruby Goodley, Doctoral Researcher, University of Leeds

The role of disabled anthropologists as infrastructural activists in higher educational spaces

12:40-12:45 [Comfort Break](#)

12:45-13:25 Making Inclusion a Reality: Higher Education

Chair: **Nysha Givans**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Wolverhampton

Dr Gift Sotonye-Frank, Queen's University Belfast, Workplace EDI Champion 2025

An interview about EDI initiatives in amplifying the voices of disabled people

Arelene Jackson, Doctoral Researcher, Manchester Metropolitan University

Minding the Gap: an autoethnographic analysis of a peer-led, online endeavour initiated to redress ableist institutional practices in higher education

13:25-13:30 [Comfort Break](#)

13:30-13:50 Making Inclusion a Reality Beyond the Academy Chair: **Georgina Nnamani**,

Doctoral Researcher, University of Manchester

Arianna Vivoli, PhD, Researcher, Action Research for Co-development (ACRO) Italy

Challenges and opportunities in tracing vocational training graduates with disabilities: insights from Nairobi County, Kenya

13:50-14:00 Closing Speech & Call for Action

Chair: **Vinette C Rowley**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Wolverhampton
Disability in Education Co-Chairperson

14:00-14:30 Online Networking & Key Reflection Session (Zoom Breakout Rooms)

The networking opportunity in the breakout rooms can be extended on request

Sign language interpretation will be available

Q&A- Slido.com To submit questions during the symposium on Slido, please use the QR code or link below and enter code #2161693

<https://app.sli.do/event/11GG8shAsnkWaYqD5PrdUN>



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Your feedback is important to us so that we can improve future events. Please take a moment to complete this feedback survey. We welcome feedback that you may have on all aspects of the symposium. To do so, please visit:

https://qualtricsxm9v2ksdj2v.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0UpAMLhuwStT5NY

Or scan the QR code below.



Paper Abstracts

**Making Inclusion a
Reality Across the
Lifespan**

**Challenges and Opportunities in Tracing Vocational
Training Graduates with Disabilities: Insights from
Nairobi County, Kenya**
Arianna Vivoli

Despite Kenya's leadership in disability mainstreaming through its policy frameworks and legislation, significant barriers persist, particularly in the transition from education to work for youth with disabilities. Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) play a pivotal role in equipping marginalized youth, including Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with practical skills. However, there is limited evidence on the school-to-work transition outcomes for this group, making tracer studies essential for understanding their trajectories and informing policy. Our study aimed to bridge this knowledge gap by conducting a tracer study of VTC graduates in Nairobi County, with an emphasis on the experiences of PwDs.

Building on a rights-based perspective, the study implemented a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. A sample of 100 VTC graduates from 8 VTCs in Nairobi was surveyed, with 5% of respondents identifying themselves as PwDs. Additional qualitative insights were gathered through FGDs with 42 graduates and KIs with stakeholders. Efforts to reach graduates with disabilities included leveraging institutional records, targeted outreach, and partnerships with local disability advocacy organizations.

Our findings reveal that while Kenya's VTCs have made progress in reducing stigma and promoting inclusivity, PwDs face unique challenges in their transition to employment. Barriers include inadequate resources for accommodating disabilities, limited career counseling tailored to PwDs, and a lack of employer readiness to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Notably, our data collection process highlighted structural challenges in reaching graduates with disabilities, including insufficient institutional tracking mechanisms and outdated contact records.

**Minding the Gap: An Autoethnographic Analysis of a Peer-led,
Online Endeavour Initiated to Redress Ableist Institutional
Practices in Higher Education**
Arlene Jackson

This fifteen-minute paper utilises autoethnographic practice to explore exclusionary institutional practices and structures, which negatively impact students living with illness/disability, who require remote modes of pedagogical inclusion.

Through a self-reflective method, I review the benefits of parity across the PhD student experience as fostered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, when online provision was offered to accommodate the non-disabled demographic. I note a subsequent regression and withdrawal of online/hybrid access due to prevailing beliefs in normative modes of teaching, social and networking opportunities inherent within academic traditions and orthodoxies

In recognising the impact of this change on both the personal and professional self as ableist microaggressions, I turn to disability theory to contextualise the emotional and physical labour associated with campaigning for equity in this context. I reference The Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments, before offering a critique of The Social Model of Disability as applicable to students living with illness/disability who are unable to physically attend campus.

I employ my own case study to illustrate the benefits of accessible technologies to promote inclusion in both the learning and social space: relating my self-directed process as I created and thereafter facilitated an online space to initially offer connection with my PhD peers, which evolved into a forum for learning, development and support; illustrating the necessity for such interventions and accounting for the resourcefulness of disabled students.

**The Digital Learning of Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in the Context of
COVID-19 Calls for Legal Reforms of Educational Laws of States to
Achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 4: A Case Study of Lagos
State, Nigeria**
Chinyere (Chichi) Usen

The use of digital learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has created the need to reform the legal regimes of States on education, especially as it affects Children with Disabilities (CWDs) and the achievement of SDG Goal 4. Nigeria has the National Education Policy 2004, and in 2019 passed the Disability Law with provisions for Inclusive Education (IE). Meanwhile, the Legal Regime of Lagos State on IE includes the Child Rights Law (2007), the Lagos State Special Peoples Law (LSSP) Law 2011, and the Lagos State IE Policy 2015. However, these laws and policies do not have provisions for digital learning that can be explored in abnormal situations like the lockdown period during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The paper examines the laws and policies of Lagos State and assesses the extent of the provisions for digital learning for CWDs. The paper argues that though the laws and policies of Lagos State provide for IE of CWDs, they were not fashioned in a way that contemplates abnormal situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper finds that there are gaps in the laws and policies. The non-provision of digital education for CWDs in the laws and policy has imprinted on the people's consciousness the price that CWDs pay when emergency efforts do not sufficiently address their educational needs. The paper calls for a review of the laws on IE to make provisions for the digital education of CWDs during abnormal situations in Lagos State to achieve SDG Goal 4 to guarantee equal education for all

Measuring the Impact of Inclusive Curriculum: A Data-Driven Evaluation of Student Outcomes in African Schools

Gabriel Agbobli

The goal of inclusive education is to provide equitable access to education for all learners, regardless of their background, abilities, or disabilities. In Africa, inclusive education has become a critical issue due to the high number of children with disabilities who are out of school. Therefore, this paper seeks to measure the impact of inclusive curriculum on student outcomes in African schools using a data-driven evaluation approach.

The paper is based on a mixed-methods research design that includes qualitative and quantitative methods. The study will involve a review of the literature on inclusive curriculum in African schools to provide a framework for data analysis. A sample of schools from different African countries will be selected for the study, and data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with teachers, students, and parents. Quantitative data on student attendance and achievement will also be analyzed.

The research will focus on several key research questions, including the impact of inclusive curriculum on student achievement, attendance, and engagement. The study will also explore the factors that contribute to the success of inclusive curricula in African schools. The findings of this study will provide insights into the impact of inclusive curriculum on student outcomes in African schools.

The research will contribute to the development of best practices for promoting greater equity and opportunity for all learners in Africa. The paper will also suggest ways to empower disabled individuals through inclusive education and provide policy recommendations to policymakers in Africa on how to develop more inclusive education systems.

Exploring Curriculum Construction, Pedagogy, and Delivery in Special Schools: Teacher Perspectives and Insights on Supporting Students with Severe to Profound GLD
Niamh Hennessy

This doctoral study explores teacher perspectives on how the curriculum is approached, constructed, and delivered for students with severe to profound general learning disabilities (S/PGLD) in three special schools in Ireland. The research aims to understand the curricular approaches, strategies, and teaching methods used to adapt and deliver the curriculum for this cohort of students. By examining teachers' experiences, the study seeks to identify effective practices, key challenges, and insights into curriculum adaptation and pedagogy in these special school settings.

A notable gap exists in the literature regarding how curriculum delivery and teaching methods can be tailored to meet the unique needs of students with S/PGLD, especially from the teachers' viewpoints.

Through semi-structured interviews with teachers and document analysis of school planning materials, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Student Support Plans (SSPs), and whole-school curricular plans, this research aims to identify and highlight the practices that best support students with S/PGLD. The study is guided by Norwich's exploration of the common versus differentiated curriculum within the Dilemmas of Difference framework, which considers how different educational practices are required for diverse learner needs.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute valuable insights for informing policy and practice in special education. It is envisaged that they will also further the ongoing conversation about curriculum reform for students with S/PGLD, particularly within the context of Irish special and inclusive education.

The Role of Disabled Anthropologists as Infrastructural Activists in Higher Educational Spaces.

Ruby Goodley

In the contemporary moment, the global higher educational (HE) sector is arguably in crisis and has been characterised as an anxiety machine. There are many readings of the university that can be characterised as ‘paranoid’ toward the future of the HE sector, inciting fear in current scholars but especially early-career academics and postgraduate researchers. Moreover, universities are rarely theorised from an infrastructural perspective.

This paper will provide an infrastructural lens, arguing that certain infrastructures in university institutions can be changed through human engagement and are intrinsically shaped by socio-political forces in societies. Consequently, this paper takes an affirmative critique and hopeful approach towards the future of the HE sector by providing ways in which disabled anthropologists are enacting infrastructural activism in their university institutions.

I outline two examples of infrastructural activism. Firstly, by utilising teaching and other pedagogical activities toward university students through the rubric of a ‘radical act of hope’, disabled anthropologists imbue their classroom with optimism, inclusivity, and critical reflections of the current world. These teaching moments offer students with tools to learn about hard realities in social worlds to formulate a critical approach to a hopeful future.

Secondly, disabled anthropologists engage and occupy ‘the undercommons’, these networks act within and against the university institution providing crip spaces whereby toolkits and knowledge can be effectively spread, amongst disabled academics, to make HE spaces more inclusive. I conclude this paper with the importance of cherishing acts of infrastructural activism towards a more hopeful reading of the HE sector’s future.

Recent Approaches to Teaching Computer Programming to Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Scoping Review

Sara Fori

Computer programming education can play a crucial role in promoting inclusion and providing better job opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities [1-2]. However, these students may face unique challenges when learning programming and are often excluded [2-3].

The literature focused on teaching computer programming to students with intellectual disabilities is still emerging. This scoping review aims to identify and collect the most recent key concepts, approaches, and effective practices, adding value to a previous systematic review that focused on a broader group of students with cognitive disabilities [4]. That review, covering the preceding decade, included only eight studies involving students with intellectual disabilities. However, in recent years, significant new research on this topic has emerged, highlighting growing interest and importance.

This scoping review highlights the diversity of instructional techniques, including visual programming, computational thinking, and educational robotics, tailored to meet the unique learning needs of students with intellectual disabilities. The collected studies [5-9] demonstrate significant improvements in computational thinking and problem-solving skills through targeted interventions, the potential of adjusted online programming education, and the benefits of inclusive assessment practices and hands-on, collaborative learning environments.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of engaging students with intellectual disabilities in Computer Science Education and supporting their development of programming skills.

This work serves as a foundation for future research, to inform the design of a more comprehensive systematic review and analysis, and an associated qualitative study involving stakeholders to further investigate effective teaching practices and needs in this field, defining facilitators and barriers.

Enhancing EFL Learning Through Multisensory Teaching

Vicky Kaperoni

Traditional methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often rely heavily on visual and auditory input, which may not fully support students with learning difficulties, particularly those with dyslexia. A multisensory approach engages multiple senses—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile—providing a more inclusive and effective learning experience for all students.

This presentation will explore the benefits of multisensory teaching in EFL classrooms, highlighting its impact on phonological awareness, memory retention, and overall language acquisition. Practical examples and activities will be shared to demonstrate how integrating movement, hands-on materials, and interactive techniques can enhance engagement and comprehension. The session will also discuss how this approach fosters confidence and motivation among learners, making English more accessible to students with diverse learning needs.

By the end of this presentation, participants will gain insights into implementing multisensory strategies in their teaching practice, ensuring a more inclusive and effective language learning environment.

Additional Talk Opportunity

Tuesday, 15th July 2025, 1:30 pm GMT

Dr. Abigail Mills

Rethinking Inclusive Education in Ghana: Insights from a Qualitative Study

Registration →



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