

## **Enabling digital pedagogy: Utilising technology to enhance the learning experience of students with disabilities**

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Digital technology is increasingly used to facilitate learning experiences and thereby the wellbeing of the academic community; its inclusivity for those with disabilities is however not always considered. Going beyond medical models of disability which situate impairments in individual bodies, this paper considers the social model that views societal practices as “disabling” individuals and the cultural model which emphasises the role of cultural practices in society and their influence on one’s understanding of disability. Preliminary descriptive investigations were conducted in preparation for a larger action research study combining these models within the field of Digital Humanities, to examine barriers of learning in the digital sphere that students may face due to visual and hearing impairments, and means of support the digital may in turn offer for amelioration. Semi-structured interviews with relevant individuals from the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD), the Main Library, and the IT staff of the Faculty of Arts indicate limited participation by students with disabilities in online pedagogical platforms such as LMS, due to insufficient familiarity with digital material. However, the discussions also highlight the lack of student motivation in engaging with available technology and in expending optimum effort towards learning, inadequate guidance in subject selection, and issues of perceived stigma. The paper offers micro-level recommendations to increase student access to, and familiarity with, online material, such as training in navigating LMS and revised methods of lecture delivery and feedback. It is also projected that once the full study is completed, more largescale recommendations could emerge, such as revised curricula and immersive experiences, which, enhanced by digital tools, may contribute towards shifts in social, cultural, and individual views of disability, including the views of those with disabilities themselves. Such changes in practice and mindset could generate accessible and meaningful education, fostering intellectual participation, enjoyment, and growth.

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