

You are invited to attend the following:

HEA Research Seminar Series:  
Inclusive Policy and Practice

## Enabled or Pathologised – The HE experiences of students with Learning Differences

Wednesday 14 May 2008

2.00pm – 4.30pm

De Montfort University

**Facilitators:**

**David Pollak, De Montfort University**

**Nicola Martin, Sheffield Hallam University**

**Edward Griffin, Research Assistant, De Montfort University**

The seminar will focus on Dr David Pollak's NTF Project BRAIN HE (Best Resources for Achievement and Intervention re Neurodiversity in Higher Education). This research interrogates the experiences of students with a range of specific learning differences. One of the specific learning differences researched is Asperger's Syndrome and the seminar will include a contribution from Dr Nicola Martin on her PhD thesis 'Towards a better understanding of effective strategies to support university students with Asperger's Syndrome'. In her study, staff from 17 universities, augmented by views of students and mothers, provide insights into effective and ineffective support strategies for students with AS.

Both pieces of research are based on a social model of disability which sees how specific learning differences are constructed as disabilities by the practices of HEIs. They also draw on positive psychology, a perspective which looks at strengths rather than focussing on deficits or defects. The use of nvivo7 for the analysis of qualitative data in the BrainHE project will be explained and evaluated. Findings indicate the commonalities in experiences of students with a range of specific learning differences where students' disabilities are consistently seen through a 'medical model lens'.



## Academic Professional Development Unit

**Please contact [nilapatel@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:nilapatel@dmu.ac.uk)  
to book your place.**