

Fair for all: practical strategies for equality and inclusivity
De Montfort University, 11 September 2008
Neurodiversity workshop

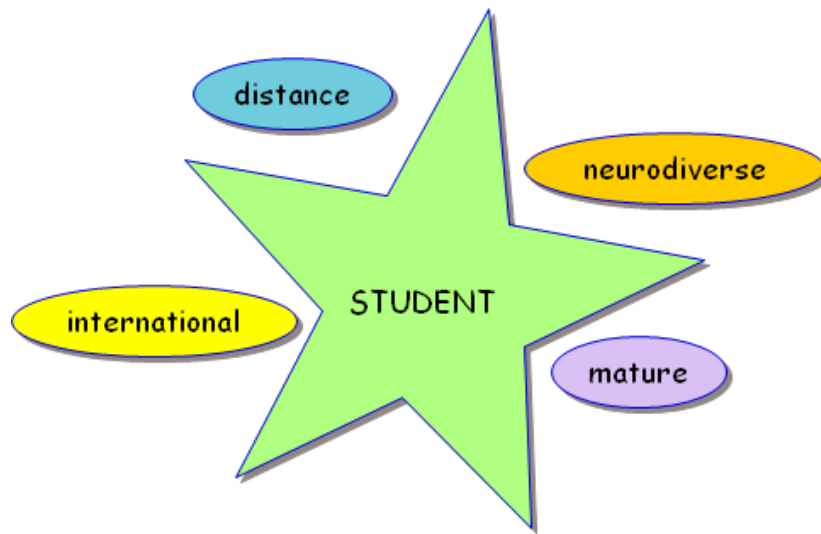
What are the challenges of 'neurodiverse' students for HE?

- Encouraging disclosure (but: if teaching is fully inclusive, there should be no need to disclose - shouldn't be obligatory/necessary)
- Numbers of students: offering individual support
- Providing access to courses, encouraging applications
- Identifying different mechanisms to assess achievement of learning outcomes
- Designing and embedding inclusive assessments: time and funding constraints
- Maintenance (or perception of) academic standards: not 'dumbing down'
- Awareness of issues by staff
- Consumers as customers
- More rights-based mentality - including refusal of following medical assessment procedures

How could HE be challenging for 'neurodiverse' students?

- Transition is difficult anyway - adjusting to different teaching styles
- Intimidated to be in a large group - loss of 'personal contact' from teacher - lecturer too busy
- Requires more self-organisation - more independent work - confidences issues
- Don't know what is expected of them - unrealistic expectations
- Self-stigmatisation - may not wish to disclose
- Volume of written work/extensive bibliographies
- Requires multi-tasking - listening, note taking
- Absence of friends and family who may have been aware and were part of support network
- HE values reading and writing more highly than other skills like group activity
- HE staff: negativity about dyslexia - prejudice. Overcome these difficulties by educating staff
- HE innovation is happening: needs to be disseminated, shared, celebrated
- Transition from HE to employment
- Often one of a group, not an individual: class sizes
- Assessment: reliance on written expression

How can HEIs better accommodate students with learning differences? Could it reach a stage where labels are not an issue?



- Choice of learning styles and assessments
- Assessment: choose three, best two are counted
- Problem: funding needs labels. Medical model inadequate?
- Need labels for monitoring for discrimination?
- Class sizes: problem with expanding student numbers
- Support for staff with learning differences
- Raising staff awareness
- Adequate evaluation and support process for diagnosed students
- Host institution responsible for ensuring external speakers are aware of inclusive teaching policies (provision of handouts/slides)
- Answer: yes, if teaching becomes fully inclusive