

Parallel Training Sessions

Wednesday 27 June 2012

09:30 – 12:30 (3 hours)

T.1 Creating an accessible academic environment and support services for students with disabilities

Leaders:

Dr. Lelia Kiš-Glavaš, Full Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, head of the University of Zagreb's Commission for Students with Disabilities

Valentina Novak, social worker, associate expert at the Office for Students with Disabilities of the University of Zagreb

Andrea Fajdetić, MA, doctoral student at the Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb

The principle of equal opportunities in education is becoming a priority for states and educational institutions at the global level. Terms such as the right to education, inclusive education, social dimension of education and education for all are among the terms that are becoming widespread in international discussions on education, but also in discussions on human rights, social inclusion and economic development. The principle of equal opportunities in education involves persons with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable social groups facing serious obstacles at all levels of education (Farnell 2012).

The right to education, including higher education, as a fundamental human right is defined in many international documents, which state that every individual has the right to access education at all levels based on principles of equality and non-discrimination. The exercise of this right directly affects the exercise of another right of persons with disabilities, which is the right to work and employment (Kiš-Glavaš 2012, following Kiš-Glavaš & Sokač 2006).

Despite the existence of a whole series of regulations, both general and strategic, on the rights to education, including higher education, of persons with disabilities, students with disabilities still face numerous obstacles to the quality of their studies at the university level. Students with disabilities are taken to include students with vision and hearing impairment, physical disability, chronic disease, learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dysgraphia, students with mental disturbances and disorders, as well as other medical conditions that can affect the course of one's studies.

In addition to the physical barriers and organizational obstacles, subjective barriers are still frequently encountered. The latter are caused by a lack of experience and knowledge in dealing with students with disabilities and by prejudice related to the abilities and competences of such students among teaching and non-teaching staff members working in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, members of the academic community face many ethical issues and dilemmas, whose solutions require more than the mere existence of a strategic framework. These issues require an individualized approach aimed at ensuring adequate conditions that would allow persons with disabilities to access education, to have a high quality of studies and to pursue a career upon completion of their study programs.

The aim of this workshop is to stimulate debate on potential ethical issues and dilemmas that may be faced by all members of the academic community (both teaching and non-teaching staff), but also by other stakeholders such as the competent ministries and departments and the local community. We would also like to stimulate discussions on the obligations and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and to propose solutions aimed at the implementation of ethical principles and human rights of applicants and students with disabilities.

Session structure:

9.30 – 9.50 – Introduction

9.50 – 10.00 – Support services for students with disabilities at Croatian universities

10.00 – 10.40 – Group work on tasks + joint discussion

10.40 – 11.10 – Break

11.10 – 11.30 – Tempus project EduQuality

11.30 – 12.10 – Group work on tasks + joint discussion

12.10 – 12.30 – Workshop assessment

T.2 Developing inclusive teaching and learning methods for diverse student groups in higher education

Leader: Julie Hall, Director, Learning & Teaching Enhancement, University of Roehampton, UK

In many universities, traditional teaching and learning methods have focused on university lecturers giving students information which they are later tested on. Growing social diversity among students challenges us to think more deeply about pedagogies and practices. For Mann (2001) pressure and the relationship of power between academics and students do not allow for formless experience, and thus creativity and the development of an autonomous sense of self.

The alternative for the student, is the development of a false self, developed as a means of surviving the loss or lack of a good enough relationship and a good enough learning space. This false self can easily be recognised in the features identified as characteristic of a 'surface' or 'achieving' orientation to learning in which students fail to flourish.

This interactive session focuses on how lecturers engage with pedagogic practices as the student body becomes more diverse. Using real quotations from lecturers and students, the workshop will consider implications for inclusion and exclusion, taking into account issues of diversity, inequality

and difference. Participants will discuss how lecturers choose their pedagogic strategies and whether there is a disjuncture between the ways in which they are experienced.

By the end of the session participants will have considered:

- assumptions lecturers and students bring to pedagogic practices
- how lecturers can be encouraged to understand students' needs in relation to diversity
- methods to aid people in changing practice
- pedagogies which are more sensitive to complexities in the student experience and more student-centred

Note: This session has been developed using insights learned from the 'Gender and Pedagogies' project.

What is the 'Gender and Pedagogies' project about?

This research project:

- explores the ways that gender and other social identities (e.g. class, ethnicity, nationality, etc) shape the teaching & learning experiences & practices of students & teachers in HE
- aims to help develop inclusive teaching practices that support diverse student bodies & challenge inequalities in higher education.

It is funded by the UK HE Academy and runs from 2010-12 at University of Roehampton, London.

[http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/Centre-for-Educational-Research-in-Equalities-Policy-and-Pedagogy/Current-Research-Projects/Formations-of-Gender-and-Higher-Education-Pedagogies-\(GaP\)/](http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/Centre-for-Educational-Research-in-Equalities-Policy-and-Pedagogy/Current-Research-Projects/Formations-of-Gender-and-Higher-Education-Pedagogies-(GaP)/)