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Physical Sciences Educational Reviews

The journal of the Physical Sciences Centre Number 12

Reviewed in this issue:

46 books

9 software packages

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Disabled Students in Higher Education: perspectives on widening access & changing policy



Subject area

General

Description

This book is a monograph on the access of disabled students to higher education.

Authors

Sheila Riddell, Teresa Tinklin, Alastair Wilson

Publishers/Suppliers

Taylor & Francis Ltd
(www.tandf.co.uk/books)

Date/Edition

2005/1st edition

ISBN

0-415-34079-9

Level

Teachers

Price

£25.99

Students are not all the same: they have different learning styles and needs. The theme of **Disabled Students in Higher Education** is that disabled students have needs that are different from their fellow students. Although the numbers of 'non-traditional'

(disadvantaged, ethnic minority or non-middle class) students in higher education have

increased over recent years, disabled students are still an under-represented group.

The chapter titles give the favour and outline of the book: 'Setting the scene: disabled students and multiple policy innovations in higher education'; 'Patterns of participation of disabled students in higher education'; 'Policy and provision for disabled students in higher education: the current state of play'; 'Institutional ethos and support for disabled students in higher education'; 'The construction of *learning difficulties* and *reasonable adjustments* to teaching, learning and assessment'; 'Disabled students' experiences of access and independence'; 'Support for students with mental health difficulties in higher education: the students' perspective'; 'Disabled students in higher education: negotiating identity; and Conclusion: connecting the treads'.

Every academic should read **Disabled Students in Higher Education**. We would all benefit from being more aware of how many students have some disability: Who are they? What impairments do they have? What subjects do they study? What are their social backgrounds? Why do some students hide their disability? What are our responsibilities and duties towards students with disability?

Disabled Students in Higher Education does not give 'hands-on' advice on how to teach students with a disability. There are excellent resources, which deal with that issue, for example⁽¹⁻⁴⁾. What this book *does* have, are discussions of the background policy, equity and implications for implementation, with several case studies of how students with disability or mental health difficulties have sought assistance. The appendix has summaries of many other case studies. Some of these students have overcome the difficulties; others are struggling. Although the book **Disabled Students in Higher Education** focuses on the impact of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2002) in the UK, the themes are just as applicable in other countries.

As an Australian reviewer of a British book, I noticed some differences in terminology between the book and antipodean practice. We prefer the term 'students with disability' as this implies individuals are identified as students first, and less importantly by their disability. Similarly, Australian students who are deaf often identify themselves as a linguistic minority, because they communicate using sign language: English is viewed as a second language. This could be an instance of an overly pedantic reviewer or it may be due to international variations in English usage; it does not detract from the value of the book.

Kieran F Lim (林百君)
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December 2005

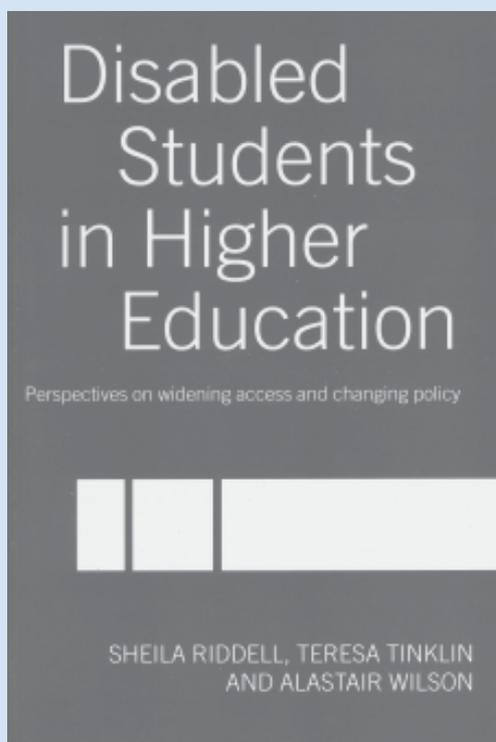
Summary Review

range: * poor to ***** good

Academic content	*****
Usefulness to student	*****
Usefulness to teacher	*****
Meets objectives	*****
Accuracy	*****

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Disabled Students in Higher Education: perspectives on widening access & changing policy



From the publisher...

Disabled Students in Higher Education: Perspectives on Widening Access and Changing Policy

By Sheila Riddell, Teresa Tinklin, Alastair Wilson

As wider access to higher education becomes a top priority for governments in the UK and around the world, this ground-breaking piece of work raises the challenging questions that policy-makers, vice-chancellors and government officials are reluctant to ask.

0-415-34079-9 224pp 2005 £25.99

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Disabled Students in Higher Education it is not intended for the average undergraduate science student, but rather for "students of education, social policy, politics, and disability studies, and for those working towards accredited university teacher status". I wish it had been published nine months earlier for use in my Graduate Certificate studies.

References

1. Mole, J and Peacock, D *Learning, teaching and assessment: a guide to good practice for staff teaching d/Deaf students in science and engineering*, University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton (2005) <www.wlv.ac.uk/teachingdeafstudents/>.

2. Supalo, C 'Techniques to enhance instructor's teaching effectiveness with chemistry students who are blind or visually impaired', *J Chem Educ* (2005) **82**, 1513-1518 <www.jce.divched.org/Journal/Issues/2005/Oct/abs1513.html>.
3. Sivan, Y *Teaching chemistry to blind students*, a contribution to the Chemistry Education Discussion List (2005) <mailer.uwf.edu/listserv/wa.exe?A1=ind0507&L=chemed-#79> (accessed 16 November 2005).
4. The American Foundation for the Blind <www.afb.org/>.