**PATRICK CLARK**

Hello, my name’sPatrick Clark and I’m the Research Associate for the SCALE Project and prior to that I was Head of the Specialist Learning Support Service here at the University of Worcester. I’m also a lecturer and I provide specialist support to students with disabilities in the United Kingdom. So, I come at this from a variety of different perspectives. So, what I am going to try and talk to you today about, in the next three to four minutes, is how do we support students with specific learning difficulties like dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD? How do we support them in the higher education environment? As you can imagine, that’s a huge topic and I can’t possibly cover it in any detail in this talk. So, I commend you to look at the resources elsewhere on the website, on the SCALE website. There are some fantastic resources: quizzes, prompts, references and so on. There is a lot more detail there. However, I’m going to pick on four key elements of what I consider to be inclusive teaching practice that will help you to meet the needs of the majority of students with specific learning difficulties, and other students, if you plan and execute your courses in this way. The four principles are time, notice, clarity and choice.

So what do we mean by time? Well, students with specific learning difficulties or specific learning differences require more time to do certain tasks. Certainly, processing information and also collating and clarifying their thoughts before they answer questions, for example. So we need to build in time, to both our in-class question and answer sessions and also our assessments. So, this might be in exams or maybe giving longer to complete certain tasks for a student, like assignments and so on. So if we design that in universally, if we design in extra time universally for everyone, we say well, we think this should take 30 minutes but we’ll give everyone 45 minutes to complete that task, it meets the needs of students with specific learning differences and also other students. Time also applies to answering questions or clarifying questions after teaching content, for example. So, build in time after your lecture for students to come and have a discussion with you and make sure that they understand what the teaching content’s been. This is really important in the online environment where students have lost the opportunity to turn to their peers and say ‘did you get that?’ or ‘what do you think they meant by that?’ so that’s been minimised to a certain extent. So, when we’re doing that kind of online piece we need to ensure that we build in time for students to clarify things afterwards.

Notice – students like to plan in advance. They like to make an early start, particularly if they know it takes them longer to undertake certain tasks. So, providing advanced notice of teaching content; this might be lecture slides, it might just be a list of key points you’re going to cover in teaching. Group activities you might be going to undertake enable a student to plan for those. Also, when assessments are going to take place; when lectures are going to take place; that kind of information, in advance as much as possible gives a student the opportunity to take part equitably with their peers.

Clarity – clarity is really important. We need to present information clearly and in plain language. If it’s written information we need to use appropriate fonts and font sizes. We need to use appropriate language and glossary terms, those kinds of things if language is technical. We need to provide practical explanations and contextualised explanations of key concepts to ensure that people fully understand them. We need to provide closed captions or subtitles if we’re doing online teaching content as well. Again, reiterating this point about time, we need to build in time to clarify instructions. So we need to clarify that students have understood what we’re saying and we also need to give them time and the opportunity to come and clarify those kinds of instructions with us.

Choice – students want to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways. Students have different preferences for how they demonstrate their knowledge. They also have different preferences for how they access information. We shouldn’t just rely on one means of communicating with them or them showing their knowledge to us. So, with things like use of clear written instructions and the opportunity to present your thoughts in writing and also the opportunity to use video, blogs, verbal feedback - those kinds of things will enable a greater number of students to be able to access both the learning and also demonstrate their true knowledge to you.

So, that’s just some basic tips. If we build in time, notice, clarity and choice into our teaching design and our teaching delivery then that will go a long way to meeting the needs of particularly students with specific learning differences and also everyone else.

Thank you. I really hope you enjoy the SCALE website. I think there are some fabulous resources on there. Enjoy looking.