



Mavrou, K. (2011a) 'Changing the state of mind of postgraduate students about Technology, Disability and Inclusive Education: Theory or Practice?' *Journal of Assistive Technologies*, 5(3), 131-139.

Abstract

This paper aims to briefly describe the experiences from the design, development and implementation of a(n) (assistive) technology course in a postgraduate programme for a Master's in special/inclusive education. Data presented in the paper are collected documents' study, and specifically from students' assignments and final exams, with the consent of the students involved. Considerations and thoughts of the paper are based on students' work, feedback and expectations as well as the expectations of the university with respect to the programme's aims. Findings of this review suggest that, even though the programme described does not yet have a long history in inclusive technology, it offers the potential for considerable benefits for the change in the state of mind of postgraduate students in relation to technology and disability. Theoretical background is vital in order to re-form students' thinking, but at the same time, it seems that there is a need to provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in real settings, with responsibilities for technology applications for all learners. The paper offers an important insight into the considerations and progress in designing a new course related to technology and disability with an emphasis on inclusive education and not technology per se.

Main findings

The experience described in this paper offers the potential for considerable benefits for changing the state of mind of postgraduate students and in-service teachers with regard to technology and disability. In the world of academia, it is a fact that the theoretical background and study of the current literature and research work form the foundations of any programme, especially at master's degree level. However, it is noticeable that 21st-century students need more evidence from practice. In order to develop critical thinking and attitudes towards inclusive pedagogy and social inclusion in the technology era, it seems that, as well as theory, they need engaging and motivating activities. The aim of a course in ICT and inclusion is to help participants shift from 'some' to 'all' and recognise the use of technology as an everyday property for meaningful learning for all. It seems that the aim can be achieved when participants are provided with opportunities to apply their knowledge and theoretical background in real settings, and get into challenging roles, with responsibilities for every child in any learning experience. The design and development of a course related to technology and disability is not only challenging because of the rapid changes of technology per se; it is indeed more challenging because of all the historical, social, political, cultural and economic determinants that have already influenced the participants' state of mind in a strongly grounded status quo.

Web link for additional information

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1953799>