

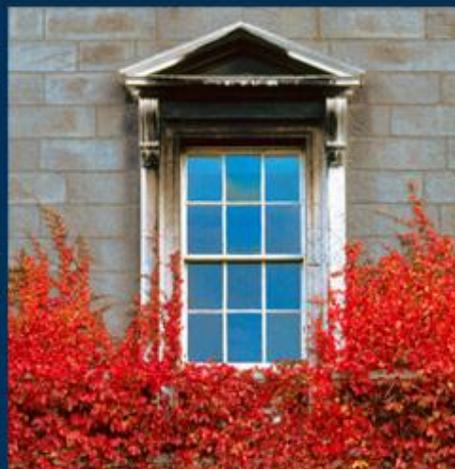


TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF DUBLIN



Disability Service
Seirbhís do dhaoine faoi mhíchumas



‘Is anybody out there listening? School experiences of secondary level students with disabilities.’

Alison Doyle



National strategies

Strategic Objectives set by the Higher Education Authority (HEA, 2008) recognise that despite recent increases in participation of students with disabilities in Higher Education, there are still significant barriers faced by students with disabilities at all stages of the student journey.

In the secondary school cycle these barriers continue to impede students, particularly with physical and sensory disabilities from acquiring the academic standards required to compete for places in Higher Education.

National Access Office (HEA, 2008) specifically advise that HEIs seek personal perspectives of individual stakeholders with regard to access to education.





Rose and Shevlin (2010):

‘Students should be encouraged to voice their needs, intentions and aspirations for the future, and to support such engagement and participation.

There is a need for developing tools that permit pupils to engage in self-evaluation as a means of moving towards achievable goals using a ‘systematic approach to investigating pupil responses’.





Aims of the study

- To examine school experiences of secondary pupils through a thematic analysis of personal statements.
- To investigate personal perceptions of the impact of disability and to determine how these affect academic aspirations and achievement.
- To provide initiatives, advice, support and guidance via a dedicated 'transition' programme.
- To use an emancipatory methodology that permits students with a disability to voice their experiences of transition.





HUMPHREY, N. and LEWIS, S. (2008)

- 20 pupils, four secondary schools
- semi-structured interviews and pupil diaries
- educational experiences
- self-perception and 'fitting in' at school

HUMPHREY, N. (2008)

- challenge stereotypes and raise expectations
- create order from chaos
- promote peer understanding
- develop social skills
- adapt academic subjects,
- modify conversational language.





Trinity College Dublin has a supplementary application procedure in place for students with disabilities. This is known as DARE (Disability Access Route to Education).

DARE is an admissions scheme for school leavers which recognises that disability and/or specific learning difficulties can have a negative impact on educational attainment at school and on progression to higher education.

www.accesscollege.ie





- Text from personal statements (n=998) submitted by Trinity College applicants (sensory, physical , ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome) between 2008 and 2011.
- Anonymized, coded and themed into categories which were not pre-identified or selected on the basis of previous research findings.
- Three main themes were identified as factors which impact on educational experience and attainment in secondary school:
 - (i) significant absences due to medical interventions
 - (ii) inadequate access to the curriculum, including school response
 - (iii) an alien and isolating social environment.





- Text from personal statements (n=205) submitted by Trinity College applicants with Asperger's Syndrome between 2008 and 2011.
- Main themes were identified as factors which impact on educational experience and attainment in secondary school:
 - Social isolation
 - Anxiety, frustration and stress
 - Language and information processing
 - Co-morbidity of conditions





Quantitative results

- Text from personal statements (n=205) submitted by Trinity College applicants with Asperger's Syndrome between 2008 and 2011.
- Main themes were identified as factors which impact on educational experience and attainment in secondary school:
 - Social isolation
 - Anxiety, frustration and stress
 - Language and information processing
 - Co-morbidity of conditions





Quantitative results

| Themes | Instances |
|---|-----------|
| Social isolation | 48 |
| Anxiety, frustration, stress | 61 |
| Language / information processing | 68 |
| Co-morbidity | 28 |

Statements n=205





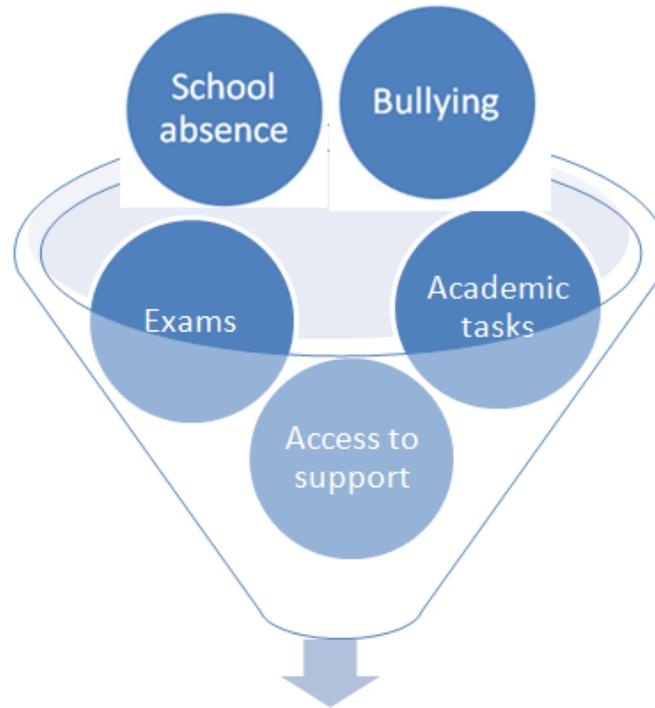
Research questions

- How is this manifested in the school environment?
- What specific effects do they have on academic performance?
- What are the effects on vulnerable adolescents at a critical time in their secondary education?
- What implications does this have for successful transition to higher education?
- How can institutions of higher education help?





Qualitative results



School performance
Successful transition





Quantitative results

| Categories | Instances |
|---|-----------|
| Access to and quality of learning support | 52 |
| Teacher attitude and assistance | 20 |
| Bullying | 11 |
| Learning styles / preferences | 73 |
| Writing tasks | 43 |

Statements n=205





Rose and Shevlin (2010):

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Teachers and teaching

‘When i get asked a question i have to think about what i want to say but it takes too long and the teacher moves to the next person’.

‘I was late for classes and the teachers were annoyed with me. All this stress made me very anxious and tired from trying to get it right’.

‘As I was in a special needs school up to the age of 16 I had limited subject choice as the teachers were only trained to primary level education. I was self-taught in my junior cert classes’.

‘My resource teacher is out on maternity leave so I`m behind on my 5 weekly resource hours due to lack of manpower’.





‘The difficulties that I have in school is when a teacher is writing on the board and explaining at the same time.There are too many things coming at once’.

‘Poor concept of time: its hard to get across how little I register the passage of time. I never instinctively check the time’.

‘Frustrated at not getting the results I expect. Frustration at not understanding instructions. Frustration at low concentration and memory levels. Frustration at being misunderstood and not understanding.’

‘I am an extremely organised individual in my own ways which are usually not viewed as the proper ways I can work well on my own yet struggle with conventional study methods’.



Assessment and examinations

‘At exams especially during second level i undergone high levels of stress my handwriting is not great in these circumstances’.

‘It is also more difficult to reproduce information in a clear and logical sequence particularly in an exam situation. It is also difficult to focus on the exact information being sought in the question on the exam paper’.

‘My illegible handwriting has a negative effect on my examination performance with the vast majority of teachers either unable or not willing to correct my tests properly ’.

‘I find it difficult to cope with the time limits imposed on exams as it causes me to panic and for my mind to go blank’.





Bullying and isolation

‘I have no friends what so ever in school. All day I am on my own I sometimes feel very lonely and stay mostly in the toilets during break-time’.

‘School has been a very unhappy time for me. My only hobby is studying’.

‘In first year as a result of a severe lack of communication skills I became a target of bullying to such an extent that my academic results deteriorated from being top of the class to the bottom of the class’.

‘As a young second level student I was so badly bullied by the other students that I had to leave school and receive home tuition’.

‘I found it harder to speak out loud for fear of either a paper plane hitting me or a string of verbal abuse. I was on my own most of the time’.





- Findings indicate that each of these factors has significant consequences in terms of educational achievement and expectations of the education system, which affects opportunities and aspirations of transitioning to third level education.
- These factors are of particular consequence for students with Asperger's Syndrome and ADHD, whose disabilities are not always evident to peers or school staff.
- Targeted intervention programme are required during the final two years of senior education – if not before.
- HEIs should use the resources at their disposal as part of their outreach strategy, to pave the way for successful transition.





Transition Intervention programmes

Disability Service Outreach, Transition, Retention and Progression Plan 2010 – 2013

- Aims to develop clear and effective support systems at all stages in the student journey from college entrance to graduation to employment.
- Works with students at three stages of their Higher Education journey:

Phase 1 Pre-entry, admission and the first year experience

Phase 2 Building and maintaining a college career

Phase 3 Progressing through College to employment.





Transition Intervention programmes

Phase 1 was delivered via a website specifically designed for this study as a community of practice 'Pathways to Trinity'
www.tcd.ie/pathways-to-trinity.

The screenshot shows the website's header with the Trinity College Dublin logo and navigation menu (TCD Home, Faculties & Schools, Courses, Research, Services, Contact, A-Z). A search bar is present in the top right. The main heading is 'Pathways to Trinity'. Below this is a search box and a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Home » Home'. A left-hand navigation menu lists: Home, My application (+), My course choice (+), My life on campus (+), Transition discussion Forum, Transition Planning Tool, Contact Us, Sitemap, and Useful links. Below the menu are three survey links: Student survey, Parent survey, and School survey. The main content area features a large image of students in a lecture hall with a 'Welcome' banner. Below the image is a text block: 'We hope that this 'one stop shop' will provide you with all the information you need to successfully apply to and gain a place in College.' A 'Latest News' section follows with the text 'Latest news goes here' and social media icons for Facebook, iTunes, YouTube, and RSS.



Transition Intervention programmes

Strategy 2 support workshops to senior cycle students beginning in October 2011.



- study skills
- assistive technology
- transition to college assessment and planning
- self-determination and self-advocacy
- examinations
- managing stress
- sleep hygiene





Transition Intervention programmes

| Date | Time | Place | Workshop | Person |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 5 th October 2011 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Introduction. Planning your transition to college | Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 2 nd November 2011 | 2 – 5pm | Library Training Room | Learning styles and study techniques | Trish Ferguson and Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 7 th December 2011 | 2 – 5pm | Library training room | Using assistive technology to maximise your study | Andrew Costello and Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 11 th January 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Applying to DARE: things you need to know and do | Declan Reilly and Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 8 th February 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Mind your mind: stress, relaxation and sleep hygiene | Claire Gleeson and Kieran Lewis |
| Wednesday 7 th March 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Library training room | Finding and using resources online. Writing for exams: how to get your point across to the examiner | Trish Ferguson and Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 4 th April 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Organising your study time: pacing, planning and procrastination | Brian Creaner and Alison Doyle |
| Wednesday 9 th May 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Using reasonable accommodations in the LC | Alison Doyle |
| | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | Tips and tricks for exam revision | Trish Ferguson |
| Wednesday 6 th June 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Building | FAQs, feedback and discussion | Alison Doyle |





Session content

| | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 8 th February 2012 | 2 – 5pm | Arts Buildin g | Mind your mind: stress, relaxation and sleep hygiene | Claire Gleeson and Kieran Lewis |
|--|------------|----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|

Student Schedule

Two Occupational Therapists from the Unilink service will go through important ways to look after your health in the months leading up to the exams. The session will further focus on diet and exercise, sleep, relaxation methods, common signs of stress and information on where to get help.





Transition Intervention programmes

Strand 3 transition assessment and planning tool.

Pathways Assessment Tool

Plan your journey from school to college.....

About....

Hello and welcome to the PAT transition planner, a free assessment tool for second level students, parents, schools and other education practitioners.

PAT contains five skill areas that are crucial to successful planning for post-secondary opportunities and activities, whether they be employment options or a college course. It has been designed to help you complete all the necessary steps to achieve your goals.



Click on a unit to begin your transition plan





Transition Units

There are 5 units and you can take as long as you like to complete each one. PAT automatically saves your answers so that you can continue planning the next time you log on.

When you have completed a unit you can read a report or summary of the tasks you have completed, and those you still have to do.

You can update or change your report at any time.

Preparing myself for life after school



Independent living skills



Academic and study skills



Applying to college



Using supports in college







Alison Doyle

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Disability Service

<http://www.tcd.ie/disability/>

Pathways to Trinity

www.tcd.ie/pathways-to-trinity

pathways@tcd.ie





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