

Developing Autonomous Disabled Learners Through Formative Audio Feedback



What are the aims of this project?

this project aims to promote and evaluate formative engagement and autonomy amongst students with dyslexia and other disabilities through the student generation of audio feedback recordings.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Discover whether recording feedback conversations using digital audio can assist disabled students to become more autonomous and effective learners.
- Develop methods, services and guidance to support students in accessing and using audio equipment in support of their learning.
- Evaluate the impact of audio recording on all stakeholders.

The anticipated outcome of this project is the creation of a set of best practice guidelines on the use of audio feedback by some categories of disabled students as well as a transferable model of disabled student learner autonomy in the form of a case study that presents the audio feedback methodology.

What is the background / rationale?

The recording and redistribution of student-tutor feedback conversations by the tutor has been shown to be an effective and attractive method of encouraging greater student control and formative engagement with learning. However this model is difficult to scale.

The promotion of learner autonomy in Higher Education can introduce difficulties for disabled students, carers and support strategies. For example, the dependency of dyslexic students upon tutors and their need to review material more than once has been highlighted by Madriaga (2007). However, the playback of recorded feedback conversations have been shown to refresh student memory and re-engage learner construction from these formative conversations. Significantly, understandings of benefits of 'timely' feedback have changed, appreciating that the learner can control their access to the recorded feedback conversations as it suits them.

This project seeks to equip a group of students to record their learning interactions with peers and tutors and to facilitate their own verbal note taking.

What are the benefits to student learning?

Key benefits would include:

- Evidence demonstrating the value of audio feedback in promoting autonomy amongst disabled students.
- Evidence to support student services in their applications to LEA on behalf of disabled students for equipment funding, i.e. the need for digital audio recording devices to support learning engagement beyond the lecture, including assessment.
- Disabled students across the University will explore the benefits of digital media as an empowering learning tool.
- Evaluation of information and interaction types suited to audio recording and the promotion of learner autonomy
- Developed understanding in the University of the value and impact of audio recording has on student autonomy in general
- Guidance for audio recording to support future disabled students
- Developed understanding of the practicalities in using audio equipment to support student learning and autonomy.

How will this project be evaluated?

A qualitative Case Study methodology will be adopted to reveal the thinking and feelings of students using audio equipment to support their learning and learning autonomy. 25 students from across the faculties will be surveyed and form small focus groups. Surveys and discussions will be used to evaluate the student's first experiences of the technology, their continued use of equipment and their overall reflections on the project. related technology barriers and infrastructural requirements.

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