Jackie Ede on Inclusive design in Canvas (video transcript)

Hi, I'm Jackie Ede, Inclusive learning adviser from within Libraries and Learning Services.

I'm going to talk to you about an exciting resource developed by a grass roots team of learning designers and learning advisers from across the University.

It's called inclusive design in Canvas.

It shows how you, through a number of small steps, can make real changes on your course and make it more inclusive for all students.

It uses plain language, local expertise, local context, and local content, so hopefully it should be accessible to you as well.

So why do we need Canvas to be inclusive? Simple answer – students need it.

My job at this university is to provide academic development support to students with invisible disabilities: dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, autism spectrum disorder, and so on.

Students with invisible and visible impairments span every faculty, department and level at this university.

According to the stats they make up 3 to 10 percent of the student population, so it's highly likely you have students in your course with invisible disabilities or impairments and you don't know who they are.

That's one strong reason about why we need to make Canvas inclusive.

We need to improve that learning experience for them and if we do we'll improve the experience for all students.

Finally it's a good time for us to start thinking as a whole, about what we can do about accessibility, and how we can actually support the University's policies around it.

The Disability Programme which is run by the Equity Office is hoping for all materials to be fully accessible by 2020 – that's all coursework materials.

Well how do you do it and what does this mean to you?

What this resource does is provide you, in very small micro steps, changes that you can make.

Now you don't have to alter everything at once. You can go (dip) in and out and just think about inclusion going forward.

In terms of structure we kick off by providing some context, and then we focus on what we believe to be the minimum essentials: accessible homepages, accessible assessment information, and style, structure content.

And finally we ended off by about how you can test for accessibility.

On each page we explain why this action is important, what you need to do to achieve it, and how you need to do it.

We even provide a lot of templates to look at.

With the technical language we've tried to break it down into simple step by step actions.

Honestly if I can do it, you can do it.

A key takeaway which would produce maximum impact for my students with disabilities and make everyone's life easier would be to ensure you have an accessible homepage.

Simply open two screens and match your course next to our suggested course in the Canvas resource.

Different departments have different templates but there should be still some basic information on your homepage, such as the name of the course coordinator or the person who coordinates the test conditions.

Nest the date, time and worth of the test.

And finally an inclusive learning statement links the students directly through to Student Disability Services so they can get help fast.

This is important because students who are eligible for special conditions need to supply their test information to Student Disability Services as soon as possible in every semester.

If you embed this information on another Canvas page, or into a course outline, your students will have difficulty finding it.

This means some of my students will miss out on test conditions.

Also it makes sense if you make that information easy to find your students will turn up to the test.