

Inclusive University

“Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme-IHET”

The Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme, created by Prof. Laura Nota and her applied research team at the University of Padua (Italy), aims at developing inclusive **teaching skills** that take into account the **heterogeneity** that increasingly characterizes educational and training contexts, the students, and those who participate in university classrooms.

As further detailed below (*paragraph: “Inclusive Higher Education for a university working towards the 2030 Agenda”*), the Programme is strictly connected to the **2030 Agenda** and in particular to **Sustainable Development Goal n.4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**.

1

At the end of the proposed training programme, the participants will be able to design and conduct teaching activities that give value to complexity and heterogeneity. They will be able to develop a teaching program focused on equal opportunities and the presumption of competence. They will consider possible it to favour skills and abilities thanks to appropriate conditions, giving an active role to all learners, looking for original solutions, and personalizing proposals and supports.

Objectives

Taking into account the scientific literature (*see below, paragraph “The Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme: scientific premises and suggestions from the literature”*), the project aims to:

- **increase lecturers’ scientific and experiential knowledge** in particular regarding the heterogeneity of the student community (taking into consideration for instance disabilities and severe health conditions);
- **encourage the reflection** on one's **own** educational practice and stimulate the development of **personalised actions** and the involvement of students in learning and teaching activities;
- stimulate the propensity to **consider the voice of students** in order to outline educational trajectories that take into account specific needs;
- **promote behaviours** centred around inclusion, respect for human rights, sustainability and justice;
- **create widespread and friendly support networks** in the university community, involving academic, technical, administrative, and dedicated staff, students and peer tutors.

Skills

After participating in the Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme, the participant will be able to:

- consider the group heterogeneity, value it, and highlight the uniqueness of each student;
- consider university education as a process for the benefit of all and everyone, where there are no particular "guests" to be included or integrated;
- identify forms of personalization to facilitate learning;
- describe types of disabilities and learning difficulties that can characterize the university experience of some students;
- create positive relationships that can make people perceive support and encouragement;
- use inclusive language;
- collaborate with the support networks in place in the university;
- provide support in a friendly way and in favour of the right to study;
- promote actions to support the construction of inclusive university contexts.



Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme: Stages

- a. **Welcome and Pre-training activity:** Presentation of the course “The word to the teachers” (quantitative and qualitative assessment tool) – *duration: about 1 hour*
- b. **Training** (access in the web space dedicated to the project where you will find):
 - Videos on **transversal topics**, e.g., the value assigned to inclusive teaching, the concept of Inclusion, the right to study and the 'accommodation' processes inspired by Universal design, linguistic policies, Inclusive Language – *duration: about 45 minutes*;
 - Videos focusing on **scientific knowledge** on topics such as 'Dyslexia', 'Dyscalculia', 'Dysorthography', 'Head trauma', 'Hearing impairments' – *duration: about 45 minutes*;
 - Videos focusing on **experiential knowledge** for each of the conditions examined, e.g., the voice of the student with dyslexia, with dyscalculia, with dysorthographia, with head trauma, with hearing impairment – *duration: about 45 minutes*;
 - **Articles and documents on transversal and specific scientific topics** (*please see the list of materials below*)

3

➡ **Phase “b. Training” implies about 4 hours of autonomous training and individual study.**

- c. **Meeting and debriefing** (focus group) **and post-training activity** (quantitative and qualitative assessment tool) with the local facilitator with the support of Prof. Sara Santilli – coordinator of task force 2.10 – *duration: about 1 hour*;

➡ **Full participation to the IHET implies about 6 hours (Stages “a” to “f”). This time can be managed in a completely autonomous way.**

*Please note that participants are allowed to access the materials of a specific section (see below) only once they have completed the previous one.

- d. **Certification: IHET.**

Criteria

The certification will be awarded to all participants of the Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme.

Conditions:

Fulfilment of the activities foreseen in each session
Attendance in the program evaluation activities

TAGS: Learning community, Inclusive learning settings, Faculty development

Welcome and Pre-training activity date

March 3rd 14.00-16.00

April 25th 15.00-16.00

Debriefing and post-training activity

April 7th 14.00-16.00

May 23th 15.00-16.00

Pre and post-training meeting will be a group meeting on zoom
<https://unipd.zoom.us/j/99426278682>

Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme: Materials

1. Welcome – The word to the teachers

- Welcome video - Prof. Rosario Rizzuto (former Rector of the University of Padua) – *duration: about 2 minutes*

Let's start from the teachers' point of view

2. Let's get started

- Article: “The Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme” – Prof. Laura Nota
- Welcome video – Prof. Daniela Mapelli (current Rector of the University of Padua, former Vice-Rector for Teaching) – *duration: about 3 minutes*
- Article: “Inclusive Higher Education: suggestions and proposals” – Coordinamento delle Università del Triveneto per l’Inclusione (Coordination of the Triveneto Universities for Inclusion)
- Article: “Linguistic policies for local and global communication”

3. Building inclusive educational contexts

- Video: “Inclusive Higher Education” – Prof. Laura Nota – *duration: about 9 minutes*
- Article: “Building sustainable and inclusive educational contexts” – Prof. Laura Nota
- Video: “The right to study” – Prof. Marco Mascia – *duration: about 7 minutes*
- Article: “Human rights: a global work in progress” – Prof. Marco Mascia
- Video: “Universal Design for Learning” – Prof. Elisabetta Ghedin – *duration: about 9 minutes*
- Article: “The challenge of inclusive education” – Prof. Elisabetta Ghedin

4. Dyslexia at university

- Video: “Dyslexia at University” – Prof. Barbara Carretti – *duration: about 16 minutes*
- Article: “Dyslexia at University” – Prof. Barbara Carretti
- Video: “Being a university student with dyslexia” – student Alberto Felice – *duration: about 5 minutes*

5. Dyscalculia at university

- Video: “Dyscalculia at University” – Prof. Irene Cristina Mammarella – *duration: about 8 minutes*
- Article: “Dyscalculia at University” – Prof. Irene Cristina Mammarella

- Video: “Being a university student with dyscalculia” – student Alice Poloniato – *duration: about 8 minutes*
- 6. Dysortography at university**
- Video: “Dysortography at University” – Prof. Barbara Arfé – *duration: about 10 minutes*
 - Article: “Dysortography at University” – Prof. Barbara Arfé
 - Video: “Being a university student with dysortography” – student Alberto Mantovan – *duration: about 4 minutes*
- 7. Head trauma**
- Video: “Head trauma” – Prof. Konstantinos Priftis – *duration: about 7 minutes*
 - Article: “Head trauma” – Prof. Konstantinos Priftis
 - Video: “Being a university student with head trauma” – student Mattia Martinello – *duration: about 4 minutes*
- 8. Hearing impairments and hearing loss**
- Video: “Hearing impairments and hearing loss” – Prof. Barbara Arfè – *duration: about 10 minutes*
 - Article: “Hearing impairments and hearing loss” – Prof. Barbara Arfè
 - Video: “Being a university student with hearing impairments” – student Caterina Palmieri – *duration: about 5 minutes*
- 9. Supports for inclusive teaching**
- Video: “Supports for inclusive teaching” – Benedetta Zatti and Alessandra Biscaro – *duration: about 12 minutes*
 - Article: “Services for building inclusive contexts” – Benedetta Zatti and Alessandra Biscaro
 - Guidelines and resources for accessibility - [Link](#)
- 10. Concluding remarks**
- 11. Credits**

The Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme: scientific premises and suggestions from the literature

7

In the context of higher education, teaching has an essential value and its inclusive dimensions are nowadays paramount for the training of future citizens and Professionals, in order to make sustainable and inclusive societies flourish.

In this regard, the Coordination of the Triveneto Universities for Inclusion (“Coordinamento delle Università del Triveneto per l’Inclusione” –with its document “*Inclusive Higher Education. Suggestions and proposals*” (2019), also shared by the CNUDD (Italian National University Conference of Disability Delegates)-highlights that university teaching is a complex pattern of events taking place in the presence of increasingly heterogeneous groups of students. It must be based on the presumption of competence and it must be able to provide equal opportunities through training actions, personalisation, and the promotion of favouring learning environments for people with different needs.

Universities cannot but act with complex actions based on sound and accredited scientific research. The founding role of the university lies here, in the drive “to help people think in a manifold and articulated way, to cultivate change, to seek original solutions with high social value to the benefit of all and in particular of the most vulnerable” (Rizzuto, 2019). In line with this, teaching must become increasingly capable of allowing everyone to experience free, equitable and quality education; ensure equal access; foster skills to promote, inclusion, human rights, equality, peace, in a word...sustainability; and increase the supply of qualified teachers (Nota, 2021).

Inclusive Higher Education for a university working towards the 2030 Agenda

The Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme, created by Prof. Laura Nota and her applied research team at the University of Padua (Italy), is based on the awareness that we are living in a context of uncertainty, complexity and change, globalisation and inequality. All these elements have an impact on the well-being of individuals, groups and communities. Complexity relates to the multiplicity of issues we face, such as poverty, high rates of emigration and immigration, substantial levels of social heterogeneity, heightened competitiveness and precariousness, exploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation. These factors are often interconnected and interacting, and this implies that the consequences become even more substantial (Giovannini, 2018; Milanovic, 2017; Piketty, 2017; Rizzuto, 2019). Thus, the voices of those who invite us to place social issues within broader and more complex visions encompassing **models of development hinged on sustainability, inclusion, human rights, social**

justice, and the well-being of human beings and the environment are on the rise (Bergan and Harkavy, 2018; UNESCO, 2015). These reflections urge us to bring to centre stage the UN "**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**" signed in September 2015 by the governments of 193 countries, including Italy. The signature affixed to the document is a call to the nation, its politics, its universities and its institutions to do their part. Specifically, **SDG n.4 commits us to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

Involving university lecturers: what the literature suggests

In line with this, **recent international literature** highlights the need to promote projects to involve and train university lecturers based on the following recommendations:

- Proposing both the scientific vision stemming from research and experiential aspects of the subject of scientific research can stimulate a more intense 'immersion in the human realities and a greater reflectivity' (Stolz and Ozoliņš, 2018; Torres-Goens and Farley, 2017). Bringing together **scientific and experiential knowledge** fosters a deeper understanding of human experience - for instance, of what it means to be a university student with disabilities.
- Addressing complex social issues, such as promoting an accessible, equitable, and inclusive university culture, implies using information coming from **multidisciplinary** and **multicultural sources**. Benefiting from different points of view - the voices of different disciplines, on the one hand, and the voices of a heterogeneous student population, on the other- guarantees a more in-depth analysis and the drive to identify diversified and divergent teaching proposals, capable of having a greater impact on the social relevance of the educational action itself (Summerlee, 2018; Taylor, 2017).
- Discrimination, along the lines of social class, poverty, disabilities, gender, health conditions, sexual orientation, language skills etc.¹, is still present in university. The **fight against discrimination** needs to overcome undue generalisations and the preconceived and partly arrogant idea that even in the absence of experiential knowledge it is possible to possess information to fully understand the conditions of these people² (Appadurai, 2014; May and LaMont, 2014);
- Building contexts that favour participation and the perception of living rights and responsibilities to the full requires two main elements. On the one hand, '**giving voice**' to those who experience difficult conditions -e.g. disabilities, learning difficulties, psychological difficulties, health difficulties, etc.- by creating appropriate public spaces. On the other, providing a **context** that allows those who do not have such difficulties to listen to the voice of those who experience them, and subsequently elaborate appropriate thoughts, solutions and actions (Roffey, 2015; McCormack, Baker and Crowe, 2018; Burger, 2018);

¹Intersectionality must be taken into account, as the interaction of different variables may create very different conditions.

²This assumption may make less effective the students' attempts to make their voice heard about their specific needs. Thus, it may be at the root of discrimination and of attitudes such as poor consideration, lack of attention to specific needs, devaluation. As a consequence, students might experience isolation, withdrawal, psychological and social difficulties, all factors that may undermine their studies.

- Personal aspects such as the **sensitivity** and **openness** of lecturers become relevant as teaching activities increasingly require that the voices, the points of view, and the needs of people who find themselves managing learning situations as members of a minority are listened to.

Actions and methodology for designing an Inclusive Higher Education Training Programme

- The creation of an open technical-scientific committee including interested lecturers and/or teachers with specific competencies the University advisors for inclusion and disability, technical and administrative staff, students;
- The involvement of experts and lecturers of different disciplines in the preparation of 'essential scientific notes' about specific aspects of disabilities, learning difficulties, etc. (e.g. dyslexia: brief indications on the origins of the problem, brief indications on the difficulties it involves in learning, proposals for teaching);
- The involvement of people with disabilities, learning difficulties, health problems, etc., in order to take into consideration their point of view regarding the challenges they experience and the supports they consider necessary (e.g. student with dyslexia: brief indications of the difficulties he/she experiences, a brief description of the consequences, a brief description of the supports he/she considers necessary);
- The involvement of people who are part of the support network in order to provide further indications and suggestions with the aim of identifying personalised solutions (e.g. dedicated staff to present the requests to specific university services and to outline possible paths).