



CHBS Canopy

Inclusive Excellence

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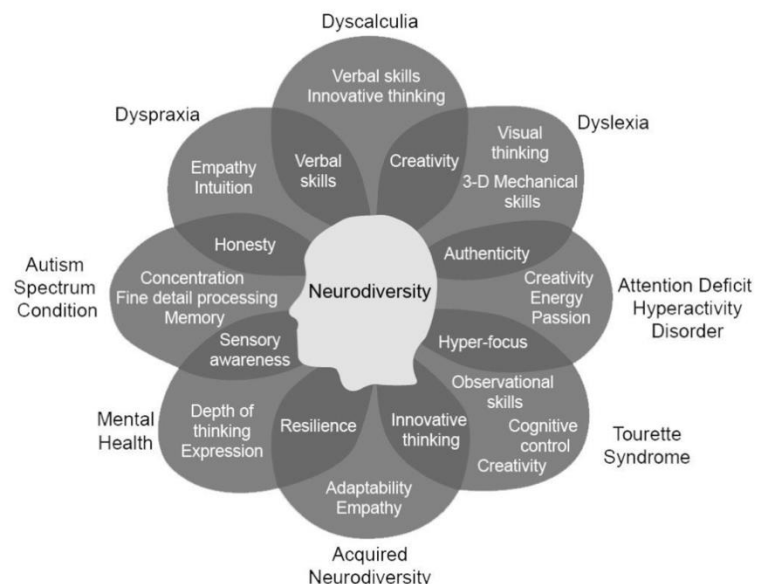
Exploring Neurodiversity: An Introduction

Labels are not often helpful in understanding people who learn and think differently (LTD). Have you heard of any people who could be neurodiverse? [Let's try](#) Benjamin Banneker, Dan Aykroyd, Elon Musk, Emily Dickinson, Jerry Seinfeld, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, and Thomas Jefferson. Each of these well-known people was able to achieve in various fields despite having variations in their learning abilities and styles. Could a "Steve Jobs" be in your classroom or in your unit as a peer? [According to NIH](#), neurodiversity "describes the variation in the human experience of the world, in school, at work, and through social relationships." When the learning (or work) environment is supportive, creativity, "out-of-the-box thinking," and problem-solving can be released.

Learners with varying differences will most likely not represent like other students addressing the same tasks. The tangram activity about IPE/IDE communication in the IPE 415 Ethics course is a great example. Interdisciplinary teams of students are trying to solve a puzzle of shapes without talking. Students start gesturing, signaling, and mouthing to each other, yet they are not solving the puzzle. Then one seemingly disengaged student who has sat back watching other students leans forward and takes the pieces solving the puzzles. Their peers are astounded as to how the single quiet student could solve the puzzle.

Neurodiversity is not interchangeable with Autism Spectrum Disorder, as frequently assumed, and no single definition is broadly accepted. It represents cognitive diversity and seeks to describe the variation in an estimated 15-20% of all people. A neurodivergent person may represent with a mental health diagnosis or a learning disorder discovered in their K-12

learning experience. However, access, economics, and stigma create greater barriers for more students who never receive diagnosis, testing, treatment where possible, services, or care. Many of these students sit in our classrooms without ODS accommodations which illustrates the importance of the CHBS Learning Access for Universal Design efforts seeking to make all classrooms more accessible to all students. These students have often found ways to help themselves in their K-12 experience, but it may not be enough for some college courses. Longer time on tasks or struggles with details is compounded by expectations and personal blame for not being "smart" enough without recognizing how much effort they are putting into their studies. The video [Be My Reason](#) highlights this for parents of K-12 students.



The Overlapping Skills and Strengths of Neurodiversity Credit: Created by Nancy Doyle, based on work by Mary Colley. [NIH](#)

The stigma and negative assumptions thrust upon students by peers, siblings, and parents can create an unhealthy relationship with learning. Shaming students associated with learning and thinking differences comes in the form of family secret-keeping, ignoring needs with failure to seek assistance and insensitive teaching that calls out students who may make a simple mistake or who might come with a disorganized assignment. At the college level, students are already trained not to draw attention and to become invisible in hopes of not being “outed”. Stigma and societal responses to learning and thinking differences heavily influence one's beliefs in themselves.

“Neurodiversity is the way we think, move, act, communicate and process information. We are all different. Some people have challenges and strengths associated with conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, Autism, Dyscalculia, Developmental Coordination Disorder/Dyspraxia, Developmental Language Disorder. There is not one person or one condition that defines our differences (or our similarities). We are too often defined by what we can't do and not by what we can.”

[From Professor Amanda Kirby](#)

From a strength perspective recognizing and learning how to assist students in accelerating their strengths can make big differences in a class despite other neurodivergent characteristics such as difficulty with organization or sensory issues. How faculty organize syllabi, put information on a page, deliver content accessible in many forms (written, video, audio, visual), and evaluate students with many methods throughout the semester are so students with neurodiversity may succeed and represent their strengths.

Did you know?
Neurodivergent people are over-represented in STEM fields.

Consider what you can do in the future to make your courses more accessible to all students with attention to this possible 20% of students in your classroom who might represent neurodiversity. Select just one thing to do next year using the CHBS LAUD Canvas Website. Sign up for the summer LAUD Fellowship (See page 6). Join us for the CHAT GPT PLC (See page 6) to talk about how it might be helpful to students.

What we do for one helps all. It does not provide an undue advantage. Equity = providing fair opportunities based on need.

Digital Inequities Addressed

Pew Research Study: *Mobile Technology and Home Broadband 2021*
Adapted from Sarah Cheverton, JMU, Spring 23

*“While there has been slight growth in the share who say they subscribe to high-speed internet, about a quarter of the population still does not have a broadband internet connection at home. And **broadband non-adopters continue to cite financial constraints as one of the most important reasons why they forgo these services.** Among non-broadband users, 45% say a reason why they do not have broadband at home is that **the monthly costs of a home broadband subscription is too expensive**, while about four-in-ten (37%) say the **same about the cost of a computer.** Beyond costs barriers, a little fewer than half of non-users cite having other options for internet access or the fact that their smartphone does everything online they need as a reason why they do not have high-speed internet connection at home.”*

At least 18 million U.S. households still do not have access to any form of broadband for a variety of reasons. Slower broadband speed and capacity have greater impacts on some communities and are found lacking in rural and Tribal communities. Internet “dead zones” can be identified in rural and urban communities.

The implications are that students may still not have adequate access to appropriate technology to succeed easily. This may be more important to our local commuting students from surrounding communities not living in designated student housing where the Internet is often part of the package. During the heart of JMU's COVID-

19 response, a small percentage of students identified completing most of their academic work on their cell phones.

Students need access to adequate devices and quality Internet speed to succeed, especially as the semester end draws near. Share these resources: JMU Libraries offers [laptop checkout](#) and a 24-hour/7 day-a-week [study space](#) with Internet access in Rose Library. Students may need to know that the campus police routinely monitor the 24/7 study space and not to be alarmed by their presence.

Upcoming CHBS Student Identity Research

Inclusive Excellence Research Team

To better assist the college in providing learning opportunities and to build students' sense of belonging, it has become important to gain insight into the profile of our students. We are doing this by gathering information from the university each semester on our known compositional diversity. Dr. Kevin Apple leads this effort. University data does not provide the full information needed to meet our goals. The IE Research Team was formed and is attempting to gain information on identities that JMU does not collect but to whom we are responsive in our CHBS community. The IE Research Team members are Drs. Nie, Melchiori, Reis-Bergan, & Bryson.

Research statement:

To learn more about our students, their identities, and their experiences, the college will be asking units to send an IRB-approved survey to our undergraduate and graduate students. Academic Unit Heads will receive an email requesting your assistance in inviting students in your identified majors and/or programs to the survey, including an IRB-approved announcement and a QR code to disseminate to students. Students only need to complete the survey once. The results will be shared with units for further discussion.”

Please encourage your students to complete this important survey. Faculty are asked to share the QR code. The PowerPoint slide will be posted starting this week.



Scholarships & Resources for Master’s-Level LGBTQIA+ Students
[Please share these resources.](#)

JMU SOGIE & Madison Equality PRIDE Week!

For students-by-students events

Madison Equality and the students who use SOGIE have curated a series of events for students who identify within the LGBTQ+ Spectrum. Faculty and staff are encouraged to support and encourage student participation where possible, recognizing that these spaces are developed to provide safety and a sense of belonging for students. Find the listing of these events [here](#).



Among the PRIDE Week activities will be an opportunity for students to hear from **Nicole Amber Maines**, actress and transgender rights activist who was the anonymous plaintiff in the *Maine Supreme Court case Doe v. Regional School Unit 26*. The court ruled in 2014 that barring transgender students from the school bathroom consistent with their gender identity is unlawful, considered the first such state court ruling. The case argued that her school district could not deny her access to the female bathroom for being transgender.

[PRIDE month](#) started in June 1970 to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, often identified as the start of the modern-day gay rights movement. Currently, PRIDE month, week, and days happen at times relevant to community members all over the world.

Visibility and promoting safety for those in the LGBTQ+ community continue to be needed, given national attacks on Trans Rights. In a recent discussion, Associate Vice Provost Brent Lewis shared that JMU does not collect data on this population. Developmental perspectives identify that students with a variety of identities often emerge during their transitional adult years coinciding with the college ages. A long-held conservative estimate is that at least ten [percent of the population](#) is within the LGBTQ+ community and that this is rising given the knowledge and support young people are exposed to through societal debates, community supports, access to technology, or social media sites. It is likely that the actual numbers will never be known, only estimates built on available research. Access to resources or experiences does not make students part of the LGBTQ+ Spectrum, but it does provide language and information normalizing what is often kept secret for fear of harm and the stigmatizing behaviors of others.

Equity

To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response. [From the JMU posted/accepted [Glossary](#) available on all units' webpage].

For Staff – From JMU Talent Development

Session
<u>We Can Talk About Race at Work</u> Wednesday, April 19, 2023 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
<u>Insider-Outsider Dynamics of Inclusion</u> Wednesday, May 3, 2023 1:30 – 3:30 PM

For Faculty -

Faculty Wellness and Wellbeing Week: Brian Smallwood, Faculty Burnout

Monday, April 10, 2023
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
The Union, Warren 256

During this roundtable discussion, Brian Smallwood will discuss his book and unpack faculty burnout and the culture that promotes burnout.

For more information – Gilpatrick Hornsby, hornsbqd@jmu.edu

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CHBS Professional Learning Community Session

Session Title: **Building and Strengthening Capacity for Inclusive Teaching**

Presenters:

Ana Abad-Jorge, Modjadji Choshi, Jeanie Corey, Lori Gano-Overway, Raihan Khan, Jill Lassiter
April 14 at 11:00am - 12:30pm (90-minute Virtual Workshop via Zoom)

[Register](#)

Description: This interactive workshop will focus on ways that attendees can build further capacity to engage in inclusive teaching practices. Attendees will self-assess their current inclusive teaching practices using the Inclusive Teaching in Higher Education Rubric prior to the workshop. During the workshop participants will share resources and strategies they have used in their areas of strength, and learn from others how to modify their own inclusive teaching in areas self-identified for improvement. Presenters will share additional resources and a guidebook for continuing to build capacity and evaluating teaching practices.

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Learn About CHAT GPT3

Faculty members are hearing about the new AI CHAT Bots, which seem to have features that will impact student assignment engagement. Many have heard or watched media stories about CHAT GPT 3, fearing its impact on higher education and students' writing assignments. If you have not heard of CHAT GPT here is a [five minute video](#) of a teacher trying to detect student use. HOWEVER – could there be features that help to make the classroom and course content/evaluation more accessible to students who may struggle in our courses?

CANVAS will have a CHAT GPT detector coming in April. Come join the discussion as this new technology emerges. *This is a hybrid session offering in-person and virtual participation.* Link will be provided prior to the session. Location TBA.


Friday, April 28, 2023
2:00 – 3:00 PM

Sign up here by April 10: <https://forms.office.com/r/N4QhAZMusQ>.

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LAUD Fellowship Program

The **LAUD Fellowship Summer 2023 Program** provides an opportunity for three CHBS faculty to learn and develop course content that might be shared as examples for others using the knowledge and skills of universal design with the support of JMU Libraries design team members. There are two in-person meetings (May 23 and 30, Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 synchronously). Three additional faculty from across campus will join this learning activity. Each fellow will receive a stipend of \$500 as evidence-based participation and co-development.

Learn more about this opportunity -  [LAUD Fellowship.docx](#) and application form is at <https://forms.office.com/r/Qm0mKm10ik> Apply by Monday, May 1, to reserve your six seat.

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