**The language of disability and accessibility**

Dylan Alcott ([00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NU0Dlg5w4yQa2dCa2L_YTeIxqiLO9-bHRJwAsAAPt_TJU4xx8JD683q9dH6Bq4_u7US9dz7Mx6hI6CDcXT7lVv1Nosc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.49)):

Hi, my name is Dylan Alcott, and it's great to be able to discuss with you today the language of disability and accessibility to ensure you're both prepared and comfortable when working with your students with disability, both now and in the future.

Kate Doughty ([00:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gA1eL4g0yn_7F-HNw0WdEynavHnyGXmQKjLGOSpZy8GnKkuDT7f54INKT1VpLTEZxcl8f6UoFEHuum7n2jFqP3wpYqY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=16.88)):

The power of positive and progressive language in the context of disability should not be underestimated. In recent years, the words accessibility and inclusion have been used in parallel with disability, making the focus much more inclusive, uniting the requirements of a diverse range of people with a range of accessibility requirements. That may include older people, parents and carers of young children, as well as travellers. Correct use of language is fundamental to changing community attitudes towards students with disability, not only today, but for generations to come.

Mike Rolls ([00:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rVXgI0OVKZ6-PQw8S0RSjNzem098Zb60EZaIoj0CGsP5cKloC5hQ7buJmwYUHB_yf16QzPXcdekG0a-2KAf8mr_jNbw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=50.73)):

As a teacher, your students will mirror your language, your framework for disability, and your interactions with students and other people with disability, like in a community where car parks, lifts, and bathrooms are now appropriately described as accessible rather than the outdated use of disabled or handicapped. By promoting progressive, positive language, you will play a pivotal role in creating positive outcomes, not only for your students with a disability, but for all students.

Shelley Matheson ([01:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JkXGR6DrWA7pEGhW0AavGhiHDwMMZZLZI8Veyxt2SuX4YFqKxBC-p95HZKDKm4skhRqzHX5nUvkO8KPWjFHiYYhcllg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=77.27)):

It's important we talk about building confidence in understanding the nuances of language in disability. Words, like attitudes, change and often reflect community expectations at a point in time. Words or terms in the context of disability that were common five to 10 years ago may not be acceptable or even verge on being offensive today. One of these is the term disabled person. This term is still used today, but has been widely and correctly replaced with the term person with disability, which is the correct term because it identifies the person first and focuses on the disability second. The term person or student with a disability reminds us all to identify each other as people in a school setting. There is nothing more equitable and dignified than being called by your name and valued for the person that you are, rather than being defined by your disability or any difference that you may have.

Dylan Alcott ([02:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EdI0qTcXlUbusgAjuVe05Pm9oVWqj4TXuWeVudfjK91UgLr6R6UU0WhJY5DPcy9wibOAWDCH9YAa4fbk5YUZRryHDY8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=136.41)):

It's important for you as teachers to have the ability to adapt to the different learning needs of students with disability. Just like no two students are the same, we need to remember that no two students who may appear to have the same disability will be the same. Every student would have learned to adapt and manage their respective disability differently, and this will impact with how they engage in class activity with some students requiring no or minimal adjustments, while others may require significant adjustments. Get to know your student as a person first and how they engage with their disability second, and what has been their learning environment for both life and academics to this point.

Shelley Matheson ([03:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HyTzk14o2FJbaMViC8ZZEkEcqMZn7OmBV8n_HUFr4u-jtx1oV7ebR4FNDhD48m2zlTEtD_QA-3bVvOsYWCv1HL4QoSA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=186.22)):

We need to avoid using terms like special needs, differently abled, students of all abilities, or use language that implies that your student with a disability is inspirational simply because they experience disability. Your students with disability are not victims or objects of pity, and such treatment further embeds a sense of low expectation from others. This will ultimately have both short and long-term negative outcomes. It's important you realise disability should not be viewed as a weakness or deficit, but rather that person with a disability is strong, adaptable, and resilient. Teachers have an amazing opportunity to bring their strengths to the fore, and in doing so, nurture further self-confidence and build on these strengths of the student.

Mike Rolls ([03:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=B_uGCWQ9lHwQegPTlKey0uvLAyxnjLtVhqrKadGXTCsrPiwRJ1NE28xn_bAT1z9Zpof0IyrZNdpEhjbPXmwGOzwbmTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=237.66)):

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 have been developed under the Disability Discrimination Act of 1992, and these standards supported the Australian government becoming a signatory in 2008 to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability. In support of this convention, the Australian government committed to a 10-year-plus plan officially titled The National Disability Strategy, unifying all states and territories to deliver key actions under the strategy. The strategy is based on a social model of disability, not the outdated medical model of disability, and identifies six areas of focus, with learning and skills one of the six priority areas.

Kate Doughty ([04:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KEGizcLyyGnhRTLRzoLivxtGdPRQEP3AKY25n-6TlXOk--zxy5f5jFWOaU_GAgDJl7beg-ceyJDCliGdSPwDWwU8-J4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=281.87)):

The medical model of disability promoted that people are disabled by their impairments or differences, and looked at fixing what was wrong with the person rather than how physical and attitudinal barriers perpetuated their disability. This medical model of disability created little prospects for community engagement, and led to people with disability losing independence, choice, and control in their lives. The social model promotes disability as being caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's disability. The social model of disability identifies ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices with negative language being one such barrier. By engaging with your student from a person-centred perspective with appropriate and relevant language, you are removing medical model perceptions and creating an environment for your student where they can learn to exercise choice and control of their lives now and into the future.

Dylan Alcott ([05:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0xHg6cYHJ47v0Jql4k-KG3WbG7z7ixN7BjClGtdN4DLKAKZ_-lANsBqI8KfiNvhlkZUVs0oi1U9--gEO6tCvKDKAMmg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=337.44)):

Language does matter. And whilst you have developed your own teaching style, it's important you include the information delivered here as you work with your students with disability, ensuring a positive and productive outcome for all.