



Accessible Geoscience - Digital Fieldwork

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Accessible Geoscience is a developing field of pedagogic research aimed at widening participation in Geography, Earth and Environmental Science (GEES) subjects. These subjects are often less commonly associated with disabilities, ethnic minorities, low income socio-economic groups and females. While advancements and improvements have been made in the inclusivity of these subject areas in recent years, access and participation of disabled students remains low. While universities are legally obligated to provide reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility, the assumed incompatibility of GEES subjects and disability often deters students from applying to study these courses at a university level. Instead of making reasonable adjustments if and when they are needed, universities should be aiming to develop teaching materials, spaces and opportunities which are accessible to all, which in turn will allow all groups to participate in the GEES subjects.

With this in mind, the Swansea Geography Department wish to enhance the accessibility of our undergraduate degree by developing digital field work opportunities. In the first instance, we intend to digitise three afternoon excursions which are run as part of a 1st year undergraduate module. Each of the field trips will be digitized into English- and Welsh-medium formats. In addition, each field trip will be digitized into British Sign Language (BSL) to allow for accessibility for D/deaf and hard of hearing students. Subtitles will also be made available in each version. While the main focus of this work is to provide accessible fieldwork opportunities for students with disabilities, this work also has additional benefits. Students within the Geography Department will be able to revisit the field trips, to revise and complete associated coursework. The use of digitized field work should not replace opportunities for real field work, but its use by the full cohort of students will begin to “normalize” accessible field work and inclusivity within the GEES subject areas.