

KUMMISSJONI NAZZJONALI PERSUNI B'DIÚABILITÀ

national commission persons with disability

DISABILITY ISSUES

ASSIGNMENT BOOKLET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 About this booklet	3
1.2 About the tutor marked assignment.....	3
1.3 The assignment: general approach.....	3
1.4 When is the assignment due?.....	3
1.5 Preparing your TMA.....	4
1.6 Writing your assignment	4
1.7 Understanding the question.....	4
1.8 Planning.....	4
1.9 Assignment DOs and DON'Ts	5
1.10 Marking Scheme	5
SECTION 2 - THE ASSIGNMENT	7
2.1 The Assignment.....	7
2.2 Marking.....	7
SECTION 3 - NOTES FOR GUIDANCE	8
3.1 Avoid the Medical Model Approach!	8
3.2 The Social Model vs. the Medical Model Approach.....	8
3.3 Presentation guidelines.....	9
3.3.1 Titles of books.....	10
3.3.2 Colloquial Forms.....	10
3.3.3 Abbreviations.....	10
3.3.4 Punctuation	10
3.3.5 Quotations	10
3.3.6 Acknowledgements	11
3.3.7 Bibliography.....	12
3.3.8 Supplementary material	12
3.3.9 Final remarks	13

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this booklet

This booklet sets out the tutor marked assignment for the credit course entitled Disability Issues. It also provides advice on how to produce the assignment. You should read through the booklet as soon as possible so that you may familiarise yourself with the nature of the assessment for the course.

The first five pages of this booklet explain the purpose of the assignment, how the marks for the course are divided, and describe the marking scheme. They also give you general advice on how to approach the assignment, how to lay out your answers, and what to do when you present the assignment for tutoring and marking. The booklet then sets out the assignment question, giving more guidance on how to tackle the assignment and explain how marks are allocated.

1.2 About the tutor marked assignment

There is ONE tutor marked assignment (TMA) for this course. It has been designed to help you consolidate your understanding of the course lectures, interviews and course materials.

The assignment has three main functions:

- to provide us with an opportunity to review your work and give you some feedback on your general response to the course: the **tutorial** function;
- to help us - and you - assess your progress on the course: the **assessment** function
- to promote dialogue between us: the **support** function.

1.3 The assignment: general approach

The assignment puts you in the position where you are asked to consider what steps you would take to try to reduce the social barriers encountered daily by persons with disability, to suggest practical solutions and to encourage more cooperative working practices among disabled persons, their families, associates, professionals and non-government organisations working in the field. To do this you must reflect on the theories, issues and ideas discussed in course. You will be expected to take both a practical, pro-disability, as well as an academic perspective. The selected readings prepared for you in the Disability Issues Reader, together with the booklets you will be given, supplemented by your own readings should be of particular value to you in this assignment.

1.4 When is the assignment due?

The assignment must reach the course co-ordinator by the date shown on the time-table provided.

The course co-ordinator reserves the right *not* to accept any assignments that arrive two

weeks after the agreed deadline.

Exceptions will only be made in the case of extraordinary circumstances over which you have no control. In such cases *a written explanation from your Head of Department, or tutor*, will have to be presented together with the assignment.

1.5 Preparing your TMA

While we are anxious that the assignments should not dictate what you learn, it's always a good idea to read the question and notes for guidance as you follow the lectures in the course. This will help you to focus your thinking and begin preparing your answers. As you work through the lecture topics, we suggest you make careful notes and highlight sections of the course materials which you feel may be particularly useful in writing your assignment answers. You will see that much of the material in the lectures relates to parts of the assignment. You might also build up a collection of relevant quotations from the lectures, relevant books you have read and the Disability Issues readings to support your arguments.

We would advise you to re-read the assignment from time to time, as you work your way through the course, so that they are kept in the back of your mind as you study. This way the task of writing your answer will not seem so daunting when you come to it.

1.6 Writing your assignment

This booklet contains brief 'Notes for guidance' for the final assignment. These notes tell you how long your answer should be and what main points you should cover. Your task is to put the information together in an original, coherent and effective way.

1.7 Understanding the question

Before you write anything, look carefully at the question itself - do you understand it? Don't make the classic mistake of writing a long answer that misses the point of the question. Use the skills you have developed in your reading and note-taking - use your pen or highlighter, and identify what is required of you. Is this a simple, one step task, or does it require several answers? Mark the key points and refer back to the question often as you plan - and then write your answer.

1.8 Planning

Writing is never easy, whether it is a report or an essay. Planning the structure of your whole answer before you start will make the task of writing much more straightforward. It may help you to go back to a lecture you have enjoyed and try to identify how the writer has led you logically from one point to another. You will find the structure of the lectures a useful guide to planning your own written work.

Essays should have an introductory paragraph; a definition of the key terms you use; a statement of your aims or main points; an orderly expansion of those points; and a concluding paragraph. Reports should have an introduction; a separate section for each main point; and a summary conclusion. Each section should be clearly numbered.

Think about how to present your points. The assignment will not ask you merely to report known facts. You may be asked to speculate, theorise and put forward specific recommendations. You must be prepared to give reasons for your choices and theories - to argue from a number of different points of view and come down on the side you identify with most.

1.9 Assignment DOs and DON'Ts

DO	study the question before you start
DO	plan the structure you intend to follow
DO	spend time drafting different parts before putting them together
DO	use logical connectors such as 'firstly', 'secondly', 'finally' 'consequently' 'next', 'of course' where appropriate, to reinforce the structure and give flow to what you are writing
DO	be objective, even if you come down on 'one side of the fence' at the finish
DO	use evidence to support your arguments
DO	give acknowledgements/references when you quote from an author

DON'T	panic!
DON'T	plagiarise
DON'T	expect too much of yourself (at least early on)
DON'T	expect to write just one draft. You will probably need to write and re-write and your assignment before you hand it in.
DON'T	put off writing your assignment - fix a time to start and do it!

1.10 Marking Scheme

The assignment will be marked according to the norms laid down by the educational establishment you are registered with (e.g., the University of Malta). This means that there may be some difference in grading between one course and another.

The following table intended to provide you with *a general guideline* only.

Letter Grade	Numerical Score (%)	Performance Standard
A	85-100	Distinction
B	60-84	Good Pass
C	45-59	Pass
D	35-44	Bare Pass
E	Below 35	Fail

SECTION 2 - THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 The Assignment

Disabled people have to confront many different disabling barriers in their daily lives. Focus your attention on ONE of these disabling barriers:

(a) clearly illustrate the effect it may have on the quality of life of disabled people and

(b) suggest the steps that need to be taken in order for the disabling barrier to be removed

- 2.1.2 Here are a few examples of **Disabling Barriers** you may choose to discuss: Accessibility (physical access; access to means of communication; access to information; access to services); Public Attitudes (negative and positive); Charity vs. Civil Rights; Disability & Gender; Education; Employment; Equal Opportunities; Inclusion; Anti-Discriminatory Legislation, Media Portrayal of Disability, Supported Living, Accessible Public Transport,; Religious Attitudes, etc.
- 2.1.3 Your assignment must draw on all the lectures in the course and go to the heart of how disabling barriers in society affect the quality of life of persons with disability and their families. Remember that besides giving a description of the present situation you must also analyse the current situation and make recommendations justifying possible changes on both individual and social levels.

2.2 Marking

The marks for this assignment will be allocated as follows:

Description of existing systems	20%
Quality of analysis and use of supporting evidence	30%
Quality of recommendations and supporting justification	30%
Organisation and clarity of presentation	20%

SECTION 3 - NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

Your assignment may be written in either, Maltese or English and it should not contain less than 1,500 words and it should not exceed 2,000 words. It is important that your answer should not exceed this limit.

This assignment draws on all the lectures in the course and goes to the heart of how disabling barriers in society affect the quality of life of persons with disability and their families.

3.1 Avoid the Medical Model Approach!

We are interested in first hand experiences of Disability. We are less interested in what professionals have to say about Disability. In view of this your assignment should concentrate on the experience of disability as seen through the eyes of the individual with disability and/ or the family unit. Therefore,

AVOID	focusing on the experiences of the professionals.
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AVOID	basing your assignment on material which takes a medical approach to Disability.
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Do not focus your work exclusively on the experiences of health care professionals. Focus through the eyes of the persons who have direct experience of disability. Don't forget that most professionals only focus on impairment (the biological aspect). On the other hand, persons with disability constantly experience disability (i.e., disabling barriers). Clearly, we are talking about a vast difference of perspective. So, don't forget that in this course we have been trying to emphasise and value to the first-hand experiences of people with disability, NOT the experience of individuals whose first reaction is to pathologise the experience of disability.

All this is not intended to under-value the work and commitment of health care professionals. It is just that the perspective of persons with disability needs to be brought more to the forefront in the debate on disability and this unit is the place where we attempt to do this.

3.2 THE SOCIAL MODEL VS. THE MEDICAL MODEL APPROACH

Guard carefully against developing a stereotypical professional approach: detached, aloof, omniscient, omnipotent. You are encouraged to treat the topic in a personal way, that is from your own point of view. A commitment to the social model of disability presupposes a readiness to view disability as a civil rights issue, as a struggle for equality. A struggle that takes place on the national, political level, more than on the individual level.

Therefore, you are encouraged to illustrate your arguments by referring, wherever possible, to the first-hand experiences of disabled persons. You can do this by interviewing persons with disability &/or their relatives, friends, personal assistants, etc. But always focusing on the social issues of disability.

You should attempt to refer to local policies and practices. For example, in education, employment, equality of access, social, cultural, religious attitudes, etc.

Be as creative as possible.

3.3 PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Please follow these guidelines carefully when writing and submitting your assignments.

- Make a copy of your assignment, so that if the first one gets lost you can still send in another copy (after all accidents do happen).
- Write or type your answers on A4 size (210 x 297 mm) paper if possible.
- Use 1.5 or double line spacing.
- Leave a spacious margin (approximately 2 inches wide) down the right side of the paper so that the course co-ordinator can write comments where necessary.
- On the FRONT PAGE put your name, your course title, intake year and the title of the assignment. For example:
- Put your name, course and intake year on the top of EVERY PAGE.

Disability Issues Assignment (YEAR)	[NAME & SURNAME]
DATE [assignment handed in]	[COURSE & INTAKE YEAR]
[ASSIGNMENT TITLE - that is your own title, not the one that appears here!]	

New paragraphs should be clearly indicated, either by indenting the first word at least half an inch to the right, or by skipping a line at the end of each paragraph.

Use headings. These will help to break up your work, orientate the reader and help you to plan your argument.

Pages must be numbered, and the fastened together. Fastening with paper clips or staples is adequate, but it would be preferable if you presented your work in a plastic folder (which will be returned to you).

It is important to remember that some marks may be deducted if presentation is poor.

3.3.1 Titles of books

If you are writing by hand, or using a typewriter, you should present titles as follows:

- Books underlined (e.g., Doing Disability Research);
- Journals underlined (e.g., Disability & Society);
- Articles between single inverted commas (e.g., ‘Breaking the Mould? An Introduction to Doing Disability Research’).

If you are using a computer, you should present titles as follows:

- Books in **BOLD** print (e.g., **Doing Disability Research**);
- Journals in *ITALIC* print (e.g., *Disability & Society*);
- Articles between single inverted commas (e.g., ‘Breaking the Mould? An Introduction to Doing Disability Research’).

3.3.2 Colloquial Forms

Forms like *doesn't*, *isn't* and *it's*, instead of *does not*, *is not* and *it is*, are to be avoided except in the comparatively small number of contexts in which they are appropriate; for example, if you are quoting something someone has said.

3.3.3 Abbreviations

If abbreviations are used at all, they should be used sparingly. Titles must be written in full when they appear in the text of an assignment. A long title may be abbreviated after you have (a) written it out in full once and (b) followed the full title with the abbreviation in brackets. For example: *World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons* (WPA).

3.3.4 Punctuation

Punctuation should be clearly marked. Slovenly punctuation affects the clarity of what you are trying to communicate. If you do not have some knowledge of the principles of punctuation, you are advised to study a text book on Maltese, or English, composition.

3.3.5 Quotations

Quotations must be relevant to the subject; must always be enclosed in inverted commas; and must be accurate. To make mistakes in quoting another writer, or to misquote the title of a book, betrays a slovenly mind. Quotations of not more than three or four lines should be introduced into the body of the discourse so that they continue the thought of the sentence without a jolt. For example:

Again, this is an issue which the disability movement is increasingly aware of in relation to its own practices. As, Mason (1996) maintains “.... we must not become the new oppressors.We must fight for the right of individual, disabled people to disagree with

us violently.”

Longer quotations should be introduced as separate paragraphs or indented.

‘We as a Union are not interested in descriptions of how awful it is to be disabled. What we are interested in is the ways of changing our conditions of life, and thus overcoming the disabilities which are imposed on top of our physical impairments by the way society is organised to exclude us.’ (UPIAS, 1976: 4-5)

Passages omitted from a quotation should be indicated by dots (eg., ...). See example above.

When a passage quoted from a writer includes another quotation, both quotations must be marked, the first by double inverted commas (e.g., “ “), the second by single ones (e.g., ‘ ‘). Remember to close both quotations at the proper places.

After you have quoted from a source, you should always include a *brief* reference. This should always contain:

- the author/ editor’s surname, (or an abbreviated title, for example: the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons = WPA);
- the year of publication;
- the page reference.

For example:

‘We as a Union are not interested in descriptions of how awful it is to be disabled. What we are interested in is the ways of changing our conditions of life, and thus overcoming the disabilities which are imposed on top of our physical impairments by the way society is organised to exclude us.’ (UPIAS, 1976: 4-5)

Author’s surname/ or abbreviation,
year of pub., page nos

Quotations should not be used as substitutes for your own argument.

3.3.6 Acknowledgements

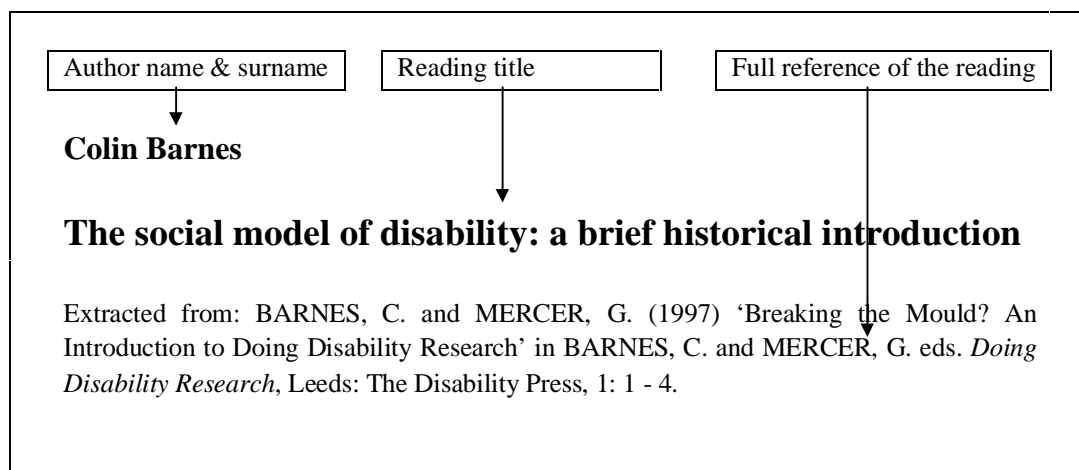
The author and source of any quotation must be acknowledged. Not to do this is a grave breach of academic good manners. The name of the author and the title of the book from which the quotation occurs should be given.

Moreover, you should always acknowledge your indebtedness to other writers for suggestions used and opinions adopted, even though actual works are not reproduced. Not to do so is a breach of good faith.

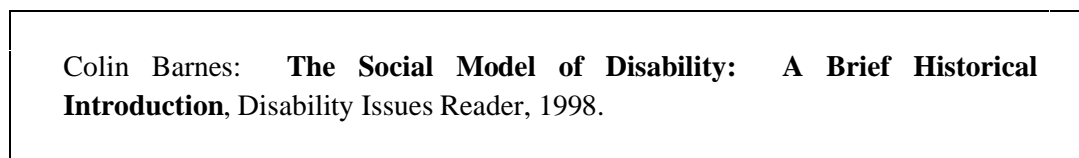
3.3.7 Bibliography

If your faculty/ department uses a standard, recognised system of presentation (eg., APA) you must use that system. Bibliographical information given in this booklet is given as an example to be used where you have no other guidelines. When several books have been used for an assignment they should be listed at the end in alphabetical order and in bibliographic form. A bibliography of relevant readings, presented in a scholarly manner *is a must*. Marks will be deducted for assignments which overlook this essential detail.

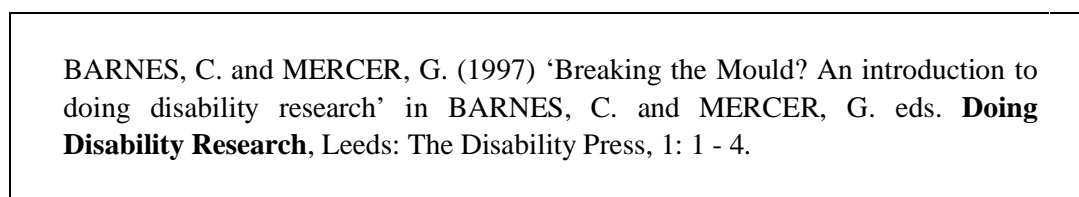
You will have noticed that the individual readings provided as part of the course materials have the source indicated clearly beneath the title, thus:



This is the **WRONG** way to present your bibliography:



This is the **CORRECT** way to present your bibliography:



Look at the example above. Note that the title of the article/ chapter is in single inverted commas. The title of the book is in bold print. The title of a journal, or newspaper should be in italics.

3.3.8 Supplementary material

You may include **supplementary material**, such as: illustrations and audio/ video

recorded material. These may take the form of interviews with a disabled person, or with relatives/ assistant(s) of disabled persons. However, no matter what extra material you present by way of illustration, the marks awarded will be based on your written material. Supplementary material should not be used to 'pad out' the assignment.

3.3.9 Final remarks

Assignments which do not conform to these requirements will be returned unread, to be rewritten. Your assignment will be returned with an individual comment. The final grade will conform to the requirements laid down by the course of studies you are following.

If you have any questions, I can be reached on telephone numbers: 487789, or 448521.

Joseph M. Camilleri
