



THE TAP

Technology, Anxiety, Pain

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[QMSU.ORG/DAF](https://qmsu.org/DAF)

DISABILITY AWARENESS FORTNIGHT

Wednesday 1st December to Tuesday 14th December was Queen Mary's first 'Disability Awareness Fortnight', and as the Disabled and Specific Learning Differences Students Union rep I was responsible for organising all events and content. The aim of the fortnight was to show that, despite the challenges faced by people with a disability or specific learning difference, amazing things are possible. The challenges you face do not have to hold you back. It is these challenges that help you grow. When planning the events, competitions, campaigns and content throughout the fortnight, I had 3 main focuses:

- 1) Make the most of it - I wanted to have a different event or content on each working day of the fortnight.
- 2) Online and in person - where possible, I wanted to include an online version of all in person events so that no one was excluded.
- 3) Alone and together - I wanted to provide a mixture of events for people do with other people or independently.

EVENTS, COMPETITIONS, CAMPAIGNS AND CONTENT

Wednesday 1st December

On the first day of 'Disability Awareness Fortnight' we launched an art competition. Students were asked to produce a piece of artwork, based on any subject and made from any medium, using their non-dominant hand. This competition was inspired by Henry Fraser. Henry is an artist, paralysed from the shoulders down, who uses his mouth to hold his paintbrushes and pencils. The two winners both received a Henry Fraser print.



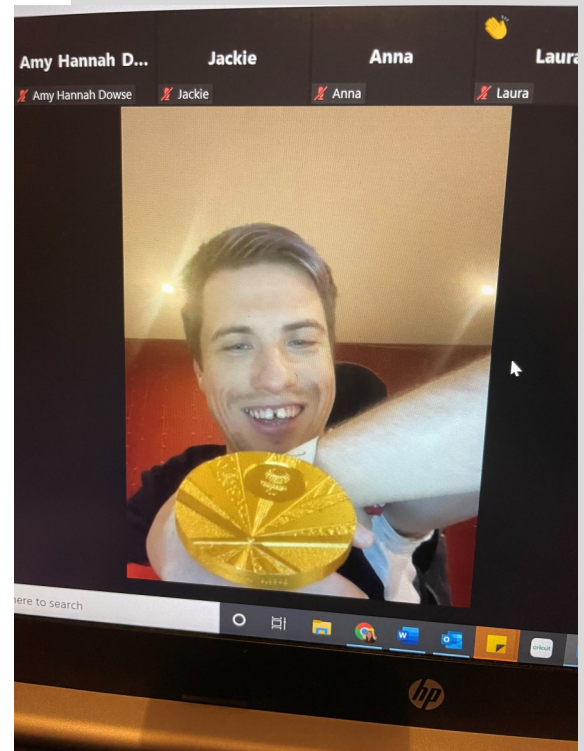
Thursday 2nd December

A Deaf Awareness Training event was planned to take place on the second day of the fortnight. Unfortunately this event had to be postponed due to the instructor being unwell.



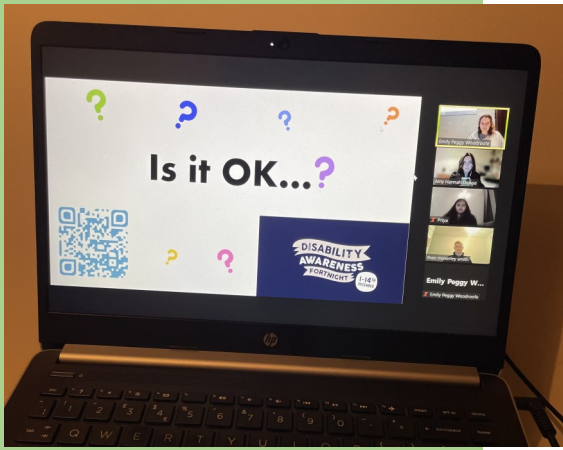
Friday 3rd December

On the third day of 'Disability Awareness Fortnight' we launched a second competition - Puzzle Pages. Students were challenged to complete a variety of puzzles, including a crossword, arrow word, sudoku, and many more.



Monday 6th December

We held an evening with David Smith MBE, Paralympic Boccia Champion. He spoke about the challenges he's faced associated with his Cerebral Palsy, his amazing Boccia career, and his exciting plans for the future.

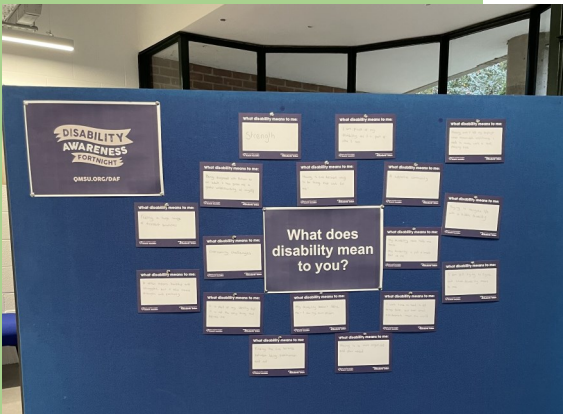


Tuesday 7th December

On this day we held an event called 'Is it ok...?'. This was a relaxed student panel discussion about life as a student with a disability or specific learning difference. It was a chance for students to discuss their experiences and ask questions.

Wednesday 8th December

On Wednesday we held an event in the campus library asking students to anonymously write down their answer to the question: 'What does disability mean to you?'. These responses were added to our wall, allowing other students to read them and get an insight into what disability means to QMUL students.



Thursday 9th December

On the 7th day of 'Disability Awareness Fortnight' we held a private screening of 'Dear Evan Hansen' for 30 students. This is a hugely popular new film – based on the hit Broadway and West End musical – about a high school student with social anxiety disorder and his journey of self-discovery and acceptance following the suicide of a fellow classmate. We hope that the themes covered in this film around mental health helped to start valuable discussions.



Friday 10th December

This was our last in-person event as part of 'Disability Awareness Fortnight'. This event was held in the Assistive Technology room in the campus library and students were given the opportunity to try out some of the amazing assistive technology services available to students with a disability or specific learning difference.

Monday 13th December

I launched my blog - written by students, for students. This was one of my manifesto pledges when I was elected; a blog where students can write about their experiences as a student with a disability or specific learning differences so that other students do not feel alone in the challenges they face.

Tuesday 14th December

On the final day of the fortnight I launched our 'digital library'. This consists of a huge range of books, documentaries, films, series, social media accounts, and podcasts that were created by and celebrate disabled people, raising awareness of the barriers disabled people face.



Guest Blog: Relationship with Writing

Amy, Dyslexia

Computer Science PhD, 2nd year

I opened up a new Word document around 30 minutes ago with the intent of writing a quick blog post about my relationship with writing. The thing is.

Digital Library

Books

Books - Fiction

- A Room Called Earth by Madeline Ryan (Autism)
- One Two Three by Laurie Frankel (Autism, Wheelchair use, communication device)
- So Lucky by Nicola Griffith (Multiple Sclerosis)
- Get a Life, Chloe Brown by Talia Hibbert

THANK YOU

The first 'Disability Awareness Fortnight' was a huge success.

I have received multiple messages from both students and staff congratulating me on the success of the fortnight, and sharing with me how impactful it has been for them.

However, I could not have organised this fortnight alone - I want to say a huge thank you to the SU staff and other SU reps for their support and help in organising and advertising these events.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I hope that you are able to enjoy the festive break and that you are able to spend time with the ones you love.

Thank you for your support with my PhD over the past year, and I look forward to working with you more in 2022.

PHD INTERRUPTION

In my last newsletter I mentioned that due to a family bereavement I was taking a one month interruption from my PhD for the month of November.

However, due to a second family bereavement at the start of December I decided to continue this interruption. Therefore, I have not worked on my PhD since the last newsletter.

I am scheduled to return to my PhD when term starts in the new year, so my newsletter at the end of January will provide you with an update of the work I have been doing.