

Delivering accessible fieldwork: preliminary findings from a collaborative international study

Alison Stokes (1), Christopher Atchison (2), Anthony Feig (3), and Brett Gilley (4)

(1) School of Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Plymouth University, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, United Kingdom (alison.stokes@plymouth.ac.uk), (2) Department of Curriculum & Instruction, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45220, United States (atchiscl@ucmail.uc.edu), (3) Department of Geography, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858, United States (feig1ad@cmich.edu), (4) Department of Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, Canada (bgilley@eos.ubc.ca)

Students with disabilities are commonly excluded from full participation in geoscience programs, and encounter significant barriers when accessing field-learning experiences. In order to increase talent and diversity in the geoscience workforce, more inclusive learning experiences must be developed that will enable all students to complete the requirements of undergraduate degree programs, including fieldwork. We discuss the outcomes of a completely accessible field course developed through the collaborative effort of geoscience education practitioners from the US, Canada and the UK. This unique field workshop has brought together current geoscience academics and students with disabilities to share perspectives on commonly-encountered barriers to learning in the field, and explore methods and techniques for overcoming them. While the student participants had the opportunity to learn about Earth processes while situated in the natural environment, participating geoscience instructors began to identify how to improve the design of field courses, making them fully inclusive of learners with disabilities. The outcomes from this experience will be used to develop guidelines to facilitate future development and delivery of accessible geoscience fieldwork.