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Nationality: British

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## **Resume**



Through combining experience in landscape architecture practice and participatory research, my PhD developed visual communication techniques to better facilitate the participation of people with learning disabilities in the design of urban greenspace. My work with people with learning disabilities highlights the continuing problems encountered by some of the most vulnerable members of society in finding voice as equal and valued collaborators. In my most recent employment as a Leverhulme Research Fellow, I have built local partnerships between academia, the disabled community, service providers and the local authority, which have resulted in change to policy, service provision and training.

I am an Associate of, and contributor to, Experiential Landscape. Experiential Landscape is a research and development unit which has been actively involved in developing understanding of environmental experience from a person centred perspective since 1999. Our work has resulted in the creation of a unique participation process which builds social capital by making socially restorative environments which emphasise the delivery of fulfilled lives.

As a member of UStED (Urban Sustainability through Environmental Design) I have published work on participatory methods when working with people with learning disabilities. UStED is an international network of researcher's educationalists and practitioners, gathering, updating, co-ordinating and disseminating tools of Sustainable Urban Design, with special emphasis on 'public space' ([www.usted-urbandesign.org](http://www.usted-urbandesign.org)).

I also belong to and regularly present at the Disability Research Forum a postgraduate/postdoctoral interactive forum originating at the University of Sheffield (2004). It continues to be controlled and organised by PhD students, whilst also being an integral part of the Centre of Applied Disability Studies (University of Sheffield).

## Professional qualifications/membership

- Panel member of the grant awarding body for the Small Sparks Scheme, Sheffield.
- Board member of Sheffield City Council Mobility Strategy Group
- Board member of Sheffield City Council Learning Disability Advice Project Steering Group, Member of iaps – International Association for People-Environment Studies
- Member of UStED (Urban Sustainability through Environmental Design)
- Member of the University of Sheffield/Sheffield Hallam Disability Research Forum.

## Employment

**Sept 2009 -  
to date**

### **Associate Lecturer**

*Faculty of Development and Society, Sheffield Hallam University*

- Module leader for Third Year Undergraduate Elective 'Removing Barriers to Inclusion'.

**Sept 2008 –  
Sept 2010**

### **Leverhulme Research Fellow**

*Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield*

- Lead researcher for the core learning disability element of this project.
- I manage a large research collaboration between the learning disability community, academics and practitioners.
- I am responsible for the learning disability research fieldwork programme, press and publicity, graphic design, film and animation production and DVD editing,
- Ongoing responsibilities include assisting with the project's child focused fieldwork, development of research theory, production of academic publications and dissemination and the writing of further grant applications.

**May 2009 –  
to date**

### **Peer Reviewer**

*Big Lottery Fund (BIG) research programme*

- I am employed by the Science and Technology Studies Unit (SATSU), Department of Sociology, University of York.
- Reviewing applications from community organisations to the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) research programme.

**Jan 2008 –  
June 2008**

### **Lead researcher: 'Excuse me I want to get on'**

*Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield*

- Knowledge Transfer Opportunities Fund awarded research project.
- I was responsible for all aspects of the qualitative learning disability research project including visual communication participant workshops, film editing and production, graphic design and marketing, administration and the organisation of a large public dissemination seminar day.

**Jan 2008 -  
to date**

### **Associate Lecturer**

*Student and Academic Services, Sheffield Hallam University*

- Individual study support for hearing impaired students.

**Nov 2007**

### **Disability Equality Trainer of Trainers**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

- I was employed by the Department of Social Welfare, Malaysia, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- I organised and delivered an international seminar day and a five-day Disability Equality Training (DET) course.

**March 2003 -  
to date**

**Tutor**

*Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield*

- Undergraduate Social Aspects course
- Postgraduate Social Aspects course (MA and PhD)
- Postgraduate Urban Design course (Diploma and MA).

**Oct 2007 -  
March 2008**

**Research assistant**

*Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield*

- Literature review and editing of academic papers.

**April 2007 -  
to date**

**Guest lecturer**

*Sheffield Hallam University*

- Invited to speak to students attending the Disability and Research undergraduate degree.

**Nov 2006 -  
Oct 2007**

**Support Worker**

*Day Services Sheffield Mencap*

- Responsible for organising projects and activities to progress independence of 12 Mencap members with learning disabilities.

**June 2004 -  
Dec 2004**

**Research assistant**

*Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth, University of Sheffield*

**May 2004 -  
Aug 2004**

**Research assistant**

*Cabespace, UK*

**Sept 1997 -  
Aug 2001**

**Assistant tutor**

*Dilston College, Northumberland, National Mencap*

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## **Education**

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>2004 – 2008</b> | <b>The University of Sheffield</b><br><b>PhD</b><br>'Hidden Voices: the participation of people with learning disabilities in the experience of public open space'. Self designed PhD proposal awarded funding by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) |
| <b>2003 – 2004</b> | <b>Research bursary</b><br>Awarded postgraduate bursary by the University of Sheffield to develop a research proposal leading to PhD  |
| <b>2001 – 2003</b> | <b>Diploma in Landscape Architecture</b>  |
| <b>1998 – 2001</b> | <b>BA (Hons) Landscape Design and Town Planning (2:1)</b>   |

**1997 – 1998**

**Gap Year**

Assistant tutor for learning disabled students  
Landscape design work experience placement  
Adult continuing education black and white photography course.

**1992 – 1997**

**Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, Northumberland**

A Levels: Biology (B), Geography (B), Art (D)  
GCSEs: 9 subjects, grades A\* - B including English, Mathematics  
and Dual Award Science

## **Publications and conference presentations**

Thwaites K, Simkins I.M., and Mathers, A. (April 2009) *Experiential Landscape: an approach to people, place and space: Principles and Practice*. Invited public lecture, The Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.

Simkins, I.M., Thwaites, K., and Mathers, A. (February 2009) *Existing and aspirational neighbourhood place experiences of primary school aged children*. Presentation as part of the Growing in Place 2009 symposium. Natural Learning Initiative, N.C. State University, Raleigh, NC, USA.

Thwaites K, Simkins I.M., and Mathers, A. (February 2009) *Experiential Landscape: an approach to people, place and space*. Invited presentation as part of the ' ARCHAOSUWE Open Lecture series 2008-9', University of the West of England, Bristol, UK.

Mathers, A. R. (2008) '*Hidden voices: the participation of people with learning disabilities in the experience of public open space*', *Local Environment*,13:6, 515 — 529

Mathers, A. (2007) *Approaches of inclusivity Part 1: Listening to and understanding the voices of people with learning disabilities in the planning and design process*, book chapter in: *Urban Sustainability Through Environmental Design: Approaches to Time-people-place Responsive Urban Spaces* by Sergio Porta, Kevin Thwaites, Ombretta Romice, and Mark Greaves.

Mathers, A. (2006) *The participation of people with learning disabilities in the experience of public open space*. Paper presentation at the DSA Conference: Disability Studies, Research and Learning, hosted by Disability Studies Association, Lancaster University, UK.

Mathers, A. (2006) *The participation of people with learning disabilities in the experience of public open space*. Seminar presentation at: Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference. Department of Sociological Studies, The University of Sheffield.

Mathers, A. (2005) *The Participation of People with Learning Disabilities in the Experience of Public Green Space*. Poster presentation at the UK Grad Programme: Presenting Your Research to the General Public in association with Northumbria University, hosted by the University of Leeds, UK.

Mathers, A. (2005) *The Participation of People with Learning Disabilities in the Landscape Design Process of Public Space*. Poster presentation at EDRA 36: Design for Diversity, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Mathers, A. (2004) *The Participation of People with Learning Disabilities in the Landscape Design Process of Urban Green Space*. Paper and conference presentation at the international Open Space: People Space conference, Edinburgh, UK.

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## **Additional Skills**

**Computing** Highly competent user of Microsoft Office and Adobe software.  
**First Aid** Successfully completed St John's Ambulance Life Saver Course.  
**Photography** First in Foundation Level Black and White Photography.  
**Driving Licence** Full clean UK Licence.  
**CRB** Up to date Criminal Records Enhanced Disclosure (passed 2008).

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## **Referees**

### **Dr Kevin Thwaites**

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