

## Professor Mike McLinden

Co- Director of Education  
Programme Lead (Visual Impairment)

School of Education

### Contact details

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### About

With over 25 years' experience of teaching in schools and Higher Education (HE) Mike has extensive experience of curriculum design, delivery and evaluation as a teacher, lecturer, Director of Education and a researcher. Mike's research interests include developing 'research-informed' pedagogical practice within HE with a particular focus on the development of student-centred approaches (including problem/enquiry-based learning). With colleagues in the University he has led a number of funded projects that link to strategic developments within the institution.

Mike is Co-Director of Education for the School of Education a role that includes strategic overview for quality assurance, educational enhancement and all learning and teaching related activities for the School. During 2013 he was the University interim Director of Educational Development at the 'Centre for Learning and Academic Development' (CLAD).

Mike's other professional role is concerned with the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. He is co-Director of the **Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/education/victar/index.aspx>) (VICTAR) in the **Department of Disability Inclusion and Special Needs** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/departments/disability-inclusion-special-needs/index.aspx>) (DISN) at the University of Birmingham and programme lead for the professional development courses in visual impairment. Approximately 100 part time students are registered on programmes offered within the centre, making it the largest single provider of specialist courses in this field in Europe.

With colleagues in DISN and CLAD Mike is involved in a wide range of research and knowledge exchange activities within and beyond the academic sphere (e.g. policy makers and practitioners in the field). These activities include:

- contributing to strategic developments for project funders;
- running workshops and training events for schools, services and other academic institutions;
- invited sessions at national and international conferences;
- national and international consultancy.

Mike is an **Academic Associate of the Higher Education Academy** (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/academic-associates>) and was conferred the status of '**Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy** (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition>)' (PFHEA) in June 2013.

### Qualifications

- PhD, University of Birmingham, 2000
- BPhil Special Education: Visual Handicap, University of Birmingham, 1993
- PGCE, Oxford Brookes, 1986
- MEd Child Development, Institute of Education, 1985
- BSc Psychology, Leicester, 1983

### Teaching

In their roles as co-Directors of Education, Professor Mike McLinden and Professor Richard Dunhill have strategic overview of learning, teaching and educational enhancement activities within the School of Education to ensure these are aligned with the University structures.

Mike's main teaching role is Programme Director for the BPhil/PGDiploma Mandatory Qualification (MQ) for Teachers of Children with Visual Impairment and for the Ad Cert/PG Cert in VI (FE). Other teaching responsibilities include input to SEN modules on various programmes within the School of Education, as well as the supervision of MEd and PhD students.

### Postgraduate supervision

Mike is supervisor for a number of PGR students whose broad research interests are in inclusive education and special needs.

For more information on research degrees, you may visit the **Postgraduate Research** (</schools/education/courses/postgraduate-research/index.aspx>) pages or view one of his student profiles below.

**Önder İŞLEK - An investigation into the balance of the school curriculum content for pupils with visual impairment in Turkey** (</schools/education/courses/postgraduate-research/profiles/onder-islek.aspx>)

### Research

## Research Interests

Mike's research interests in the field of inclusion and special needs have been primarily concerned with the identification and reduction of potential barriers to learning and participation for children with sensory impairment including those with complex needs. Particular themes within this focus have included:

- Role of touch in the learning experiences of children with visual impairment
- Haptic exploratory strategies and children who are blind with additional needs
- Early literacy/communication (including Moon, objects of reference, tactile symbols)
- Role of Low Vision Aids for children with visual impairment and additional needs
- Effective curriculum access for children with multiple disabilities

As co-Director of VICTAR he is engaged in a range of funded research projects that relate to participation in education for children with visual impairment. Recent funded projects he has contributed to within VICTAR include:

- 'Evidence of best practice models and outcomes in the education of children with visual impairment'
- 'Mobility and Independence outcomes for children with visual impairment'
- 'Development of online enquiry-based learning resources'
- 'Inclusion of children with visual impairment in developing countries'

Mike was co-investigator for two recent reviews of literature funded by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in Ireland (*International review of literature in visual impairment and education* and *International review of approaches to measuring educational engagement, progress and outcomes for children with special educational needs*). Following blind peer review, both reviews were launched at conferences in Dublin and are now published and presented on the [NCSE \(http://www.ncse.ie/research/researchreports.asp\)](http://www.ncse.ie/research/researchreports.asp) website. In relation to the former report, two papers which focus on literacy for children with special needs were published in a 2011 special edition of the European Journal of Special Needs Education, which Routledge re-launched as a standalone text in 2013. On the back of these publications Mike has been invited by the Government in Ireland to take the lead in a national review of the Visual Impairment Visiting Teacher Service (November 2013 – April 2014).

Mike has a broad research interest in professional learning and pedagogy within Higher Education and has been involved in a number of funded pedagogical projects in partnership with colleagues in the Centre for Learning and Development (CLAD). This includes the development of web resources to showcase how enquiry-based learning (EBL) approaches can be used to enhance the learning experiences of students at the University of Birmingham in line with the institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy. He was Strand Lead (Part Time Learners) for the 2013 '[Flexible Pedagogies \(http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/main\\_report\)](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/main_report)' project funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

## Knowledge Exchange

With colleagues in VICTAR and the School Mike is involved in a wide range of knowledge exchange activities within and beyond the academic sphere (eg policy makers and practitioners in the field of sensory needs). These activities include:

- contributing to strategic developments for project funders;
- running workshops and training events for schools, services and other academic institutions;
- invited keynote sessions at national and international conferences

## Recent research/consultancy projects as named and/or principal investigator

- National Review of the Visual Impairment Visiting Teacher Service in Ireland (2013 –2014).
- Flexible Pedagogies for Part-Time Learners (Higher Education Academy, 2013)
- DfID / Sightsavers International Early childhood development and education for young children with visual impairment in Malawi (DfID/Sightsavers, 2012-2014)
- Educational Inclusion of Children with Visual Impairment (Sightsavers, 2006-2012)
- Measuring Educational Engagement, Progress and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs (National Council for Special Education, Ireland, 2012)
- A guide to the design, selection and use of outcome measures in services for people with visual impairment (Thomas Pocklington Trust, 2012)
- Mobility and independence for children with visual impairment: Developing measures of indirect outcomes (Guide Dogs, UK, 2010-2011).
- Review of best practice in the education of visually impaired children and young people, and implications for Irish policy (National Council for Special Education, Ireland, 2008-2009).
- Accessibility of public examination systems for blind and partially sight pupils (RNIB, 2009-2010).
- The educational inclusion of children with visual impairment in developing countries (Sightsavers International, 2006-2011).

## Other activities

Joint Editor of the *British Journal of Visual Impairment* (SAGE) between 2006-2012

Mike has served as a reviewer for a range of peer reviewed journals including:

- Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness
- British Journal of Ophthalmology
- British Journal of Special Educational Needs
- European Journal of Special Education
- Australian Journal of Special Education
- Studies in Higher Education

## Publications

### Selected recent publications

## Books

Cleaver E, Lintern, M and McLinden M (2014). ***Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Disciplinary Approaches to Educational Enquiry*** (<http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book239109/toc?&currTree=Subjects&level1=900>). London: Sage.

This text explores broad best practice approaches to undertaking enquiry into learning and teaching in higher education. It provides an introduction for staff who have been educated within a range of academic disciplines, often with high-level but very focused knowledge about, and understandings of, research processes to the potentially new world of educational enquiry. This is complemented by chapters exploring what educational enquiry means in the context of different academic disciplines, including physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, the life sciences, the arts, the humanities, the health professions, and law.

## Chapters in books

Hodges, E., and McLinden, M. (Forthcoming) *Sensory Needs* in Lacey, P. (Ed) in *Supporting Learners with Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties*. Sage: London

McLinden, M. and Douglas, G. (2013). Education of children with sensory needs: reducing barriers to learning for children with visual impairment. In: A. Holliman (Ed), *Educational Psychology: An International Perspective*. Routledge: London

## Peer Reviewed Project Reports

McLinden, M (2013) ***Flexible Pedagogies: Part Time Learning and Learners' Final Report*** ([http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/flexiblelearning/Flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/fp\\_ptl\\_main\\_report.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/flexiblelearning/Flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/fp_ptl_main_report.pdf)). Higher Education Academy: York.

McLinden, M (2013) ***Flexible Pedagogies: Student Learning Pathway*** ([http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/audit\\_tool](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/audit_tool)). Higher Education Academy: York

McLinden, M (2013) ***Flexible Pedagogies: Synthesis of Case Studies*** ([http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/casestudies\\_main](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/flexible-learning/flexiblepedagogies/ptlearners/casestudies_main)). Higher Education Academy: York

These reports have been developed as part of a broader HEA research project Flexible Pedagogies: preparing for the future. Part-time learners and learning is one of five main focus strands embedded within the theme of flexible learning. It offers a summary and analysis of the current state of play, as well as recommendations for developing robust and appropriate flexible pedagogies with a view to influencing policy, future thinking and change within the rapidly-shifting landscape of learning and teaching in HE.

Douglas, G., and McLinden, M. (2013) *A guide to the design, selection and use of outcome measures in services for people with visual impairment*. Thomas Poklington Trust: London.

Douglas, G., Travers, J., McLinden, M., Robertson, C., Smith, E., Macnab, N., Powers, S., Guldberg, K., McGough, A., O'Donnell, M. and Lacey, P. (2012). *Measuring Educational Engagement, Progress and Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs: A Review*. National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Trim, Ireland. <http://www.ncse.ie/research/researchreports.asp> (<http://www.ncse.ie/research/researchreports.asp>).

McCall, S., McLinden, M. and Douglas, G. (2011). *A review of the literature into effective practice in teaching literacy through braille*. RNIB. [http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/research/reports/education/pages/braille\\_review.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/research/reports/education/pages/braille_review.aspx) ([http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/research/reports/education/pages/braille\\_review.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/research/reports/education/pages/braille_review.aspx)).

## Articles

McLinden, M. (2012) Mediating haptic exploratory strategies in children who have visual impairment and intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*. 56(2), 129-39

Lynch, P., McLinden, M., Douglas, G., McCall, S. (2012). Developing participatory approaches for use in an action research project with teachers who support children with visual impairment in Kenya and Uganda: Reflections on the relational praxis between project partners. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. 7(3), 282-295.

McLinden, M. and Edwards, C. (2011) Developing a culture of enquiry-based, independent learning in a research-led institution: Findings from a survey of pedagogic practice *International Journal for Academic Development*. 16 (2), 147-162.

Douglas, G., McLinden, M., McCall, S., Pavey, S., Ware, J., and Farrell, A. (2011). Access to print literacy for children and young people with visual impairment: findings from a review of literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26(1), 25-38.

Douglas, G., McLinden, M., Farrell, A., Ware, J., McCall, S., and Pavey, S. (2011). Access to print literacy for children and young people with visual impairment: policy and practice. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 26(1), 39-46.

**[Full publication list for Professor Mike McLinden \(http://rab.bham.ac.uk/people.asp?uid=70307cb6-ebfe-49b1-ac35-3d701e8ad4ed\)](http://rab.bham.ac.uk/people.asp?uid=70307cb6-ebfe-49b1-ac35-3d701e8ad4ed)**