

Transcript: Inclusive Description for Equality and Access (IDEA) - Professor Hannah Thompson

1

00:00:14,320 --> 00:00:17,879
(Footsteps and general chatter)

2

00:00:21,359 --> 00:00:22,679
I'm Hannah Thompson

3

00:00:22,679 --> 00:00:26,039
I'm professor of French and Critical Disability Studies

4

00:00:26,039 --> 00:00:28,359
at Royal Holloway University of London.

5

00:00:28,760 --> 00:00:31,559
I'm a white woman in my late 40s.

6

00:00:32,000 --> 00:00:33,719
My pronouns are she/her.

7

00:00:34,960 --> 00:00:38,560
I'm partially blind and I've got
my white cane with me in this interview.

8

00:00:40,039 --> 00:00:47,719
(sound of breathing over music playing)

9

00:00:48,920 --> 00:00:54,280
So as an audio description user,
I realised that often I wasn't getting

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00:00:54,280 --> 00:01:01,679

the kind of detail of diversity information that my non blind peers were getting.

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00:01:04,840 --> 00:01:11,799

So the IDEA project came from a research project called Describing Diversity.

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00:01:11,799 --> 00:01:15,840

We're working with five theatres across England.

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00:01:15,840 --> 00:01:20,239

Ranging from Shakespeare's Globe and the Donmar Warehouse in London.

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00:01:20,239 --> 00:01:22,040

The Royal Exchange in Manchester.

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00:01:22,040 --> 00:01:26,480

And today we're here at Mind The Gap in Bradford.

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00:01:26,959 --> 00:01:31,120

Mind The Gap is Europe's largest learning disabled theatre company.

17

00:01:33,640 --> 00:01:35,439

We're waiting.

18

00:01:36,319 --> 00:01:37,959

We're breathing.

19

00:01:38,400 --> 00:01:40,599
We're clapping together.

20
00:01:40,599 --> 00:01:42,439
We're throwing it up in the air,,,,

21
00:01:42,439 --> 00:01:43,959
And catching it.

22
00:01:43,959 --> 00:01:45,239
Relief.

23
00:01:47,040 --> 00:01:50,200
(applause)

24
00:01:50,959 --> 00:01:51,959
I'm Vicky Akroyd

25
00:01:51,959 --> 00:01:53,640
I'm a white, middle aged woman

26
00:01:53,640 --> 00:01:55,959
with grey shortish hair and a fringe.

27
00:01:55,959 --> 00:01:59,079
I've got a black top on with a silver necklace with notes.

28
00:01:59,079 --> 00:02:01,400
Many audio describers look a little bit like me.

29
00:02:02,079 --> 00:02:04,840
So white, middle aged female.

30

00:02:04,840 --> 00:02:09,360

Perhaps Charlotte you can let us know again
so that we're really comfortable with it,

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00:02:09,360 --> 00:02:11,280

how you prefer to be described?

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00:02:11,280 --> 00:02:12,280

A black Woman ...

33

00:02:13,479 --> 00:02:14,639

... a black woman.

34

00:02:14,800 --> 00:02:19,360

Myself, I would say I'm Liam
and I'm 34 years old.

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00:02:19,360 --> 00:02:24,000

I have Down's Syndrome.
I'm an artist who works at Mind The Gap

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00:02:24,319 --> 00:02:27,879

There's sometimes some difficulty
and some challenge around describing

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00:02:27,879 --> 00:02:29,800

somebody who might look different to me.

38

00:02:29,800 --> 00:02:33,960

Because I might get anxious,
or I might be worried that I'm going to be

39

00:02:33,960 --> 00:02:36,000

say something offensive, get something or wrong.

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00:02:36,159 --> 00:02:39,240

If they don't have the words
or they don't feel confident,

41

00:02:39,240 --> 00:02:41,960

they tend just to not mention anything.

42

00:02:41,960 --> 00:02:46,479

And that is in itself unethical
because it means that difference is erased.

43

00:02:47,520 --> 00:02:50,039

(gentle guitar music)

44

00:02:51,719 --> 00:02:57,199

Mind The Gap are really trying to push the boundaries
of how they work with other access tools.

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00:02:57,439 --> 00:03:02,000

In a previous show, A Little Space,
that was a physical theatre piece.

46

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:05,360

No script,
but because Paul was involved with that.

47

00:03:05,360 --> 00:03:08,759

He was a character in the show
and he did the audio description,

48

00:03:08,759 --> 00:03:13,960

He was able to share a creative
and an emotional journey that nobody would have got.

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00:03:14,159 --> 00:03:15,759

My name is Paul Bates.

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00:03:15,759 --> 00:03:17,319

I'm an artist at Mind The Gap.

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00:03:17,319 --> 00:03:21,039

I'm a white male, short brown hair.

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00:03:21,039 --> 00:03:23,360

My pronouns is him and he.

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00:03:23,360 --> 00:03:28,280

I am 28 years old
and I'm wearing the white t-shirt

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00:03:28,280 --> 00:03:31,280

Well, when we did rehearsals
for A Little Space,

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00:03:31,280 --> 00:03:34,680

we did a rehearsal what's called
an Italian rehearsal.

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00:03:34,680 --> 00:03:37,039

Where we describe what we're doing

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00:03:37,039 --> 00:03:39,639

to try and remember what we're doing in rehearsals.

58

00:03:40,240 --> 00:03:41,599

(music plays)

59

00:03:42,479 --> 00:03:45,759

Like if you picked a cup,
you would describe that you're picking a cup.

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00:03:45,759 --> 00:03:48,840

If you go into the TV, you would describe
that you are going to the TV.

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00:03:48,840 --> 00:03:52,840

"I go to the TV
and move it so I'll be able to see it ...

62

00:03:53,759 --> 00:03:56,319

... and then go back to the bed,
sit in the bed".

63

00:03:56,680 --> 00:04:01,400

And then we've got the idea that
it would be good to maybe audio describe it as well.

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00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:06,400

(sound of tubular bells)

65

00:04:06,840 --> 00:04:08,520

"She goes over to the pipes ...

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00:04:10,879 --> 00:04:14,199

... and starts to tap onto the pipes with sticks".

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00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:20,279

Traditional audio description is quite straight,
it doesn't add embellishments or personality.

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00:04:20,279 --> 00:04:25,759

and that's the design of it,
but Paul brought in lots of emotion, lots of personality.

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00:04:26,120 --> 00:04:27,279

"And everyone ...

70

00:04:27,560 --> 00:04:28,920

(music swells)

71

00:04:29,439 --> 00:04:31,920

... connects as they form a line ...

72

00:04:33,279 --> 00:04:35,160

... starts to connect with the hands ...

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00:04:37,279 --> 00:04:40,639

... as the light goes to blackness".

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00:04:40,639 --> 00:04:44,040

(vocal music swells)

75

00:04:46,160 --> 00:04:47,560

I was very emotional

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00:04:48,360 --> 00:04:50,800

because obviously after we've

come out of lockdown and stuff

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00:04:50,800 --> 00:04:53,560

and then seeing people holding hands at the end.

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00:04:54,360 --> 00:04:56,120

So hello, I'm Joyce Lee.

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00:04:56,120 --> 00:04:58,160

I'm artistic director of Mind The Gap,

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00:04:58,160 --> 00:05:01,560

and I'm a Hong Kong woman in my mid-thirties,

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00:05:01,560 --> 00:05:04,079

I have dark short hair,

82

00:05:04,079 --> 00:05:06,439

wearing a red cardigan and a grey top.

83

00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:11,399

We have worked with Vicky on
audio description for a very long time.

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00:05:11,399 --> 00:05:17,160

And then every time while I make the show
and then Vicky came and do audio description,

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00:05:17,160 --> 00:05:21,160

and then afterwards, my Oh my god,
I was like, you should have just come in earlier!

86

00:05:21,160 --> 00:05:26,319

Did we include every piece of information about people as they were walking?

87

00:05:26,319 --> 00:05:28,199

Alison, why didn't we include?

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00:05:28,199 --> 00:05:31,399

Generally speaking, the look of the individual person

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00:05:31,399 --> 00:05:33,879

was used to describe the clothes but not the person.

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00:05:34,319 --> 00:05:35,279

Absolutely!

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00:05:35,279 --> 00:05:38,360

The new piece we're working on is called Leave the Light on for Me.

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00:05:38,360 --> 00:05:41,879

It's an outdoor performance about the climate crisis,

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00:05:41,879 --> 00:05:45,759

and it's from the perspective of our learning disabled artists.

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00:05:46,240 --> 00:05:49,079

(Actors discussing)

95

00:05:49,199 --> 00:05:54,759

Funding has given us the time and the money
to get the actors in a room

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00:05:54,759 --> 00:05:58,920

with the audio describer
and some audio description users

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00:05:58,920 --> 00:06:06,199

to really talk through the importance of describing
the actors for someone like me,

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00:06:06,199 --> 00:06:12,439

for whom audio description is as central to the play
as any other creative element.

99

00:06:12,680 --> 00:06:16,879

It is quite challenging to do this.
It's not trained in drama schools and things like that.

100

00:06:16,879 --> 00:06:18,920

So we're feeling our way together.

101

00:06:18,920 --> 00:06:21,759

Hi, I'm Zara.
I'm really happy.

102

00:06:21,759 --> 00:06:27,279

This is Howard.
He's wearing a lovely beige hat with a nice ribbon around it.

103

00:06:27,279 --> 00:06:31,360

He's wearing a nice T-shirt with white flowers

104

00:06:31,360 --> 00:06:34,319

We're going to play some games,
so we're going to keep it quite light

105

00:06:34,319 --> 00:06:36,680

and get people playing with words and language.

106

00:06:36,680 --> 00:06:41,839

It's nice to add an extra description into colour
because somebody may have no experience of colours.

107

00:06:44,199 --> 00:06:49,720

If we look at all these different shades of red,
how might we describe some of them?

108

00:06:49,720 --> 00:06:52,079

It could mean the different flavours as well?

109

00:06:52,079 --> 00:06:53,680

Good flavour YES!

110

00:06:53,680 --> 00:06:55,959

Like in cherry red and candy red.

111

00:06:55,959 --> 00:06:59,800

If you describe something as candy red,
are we in a horror film?

112

00:06:59,800 --> 00:07:00,959

Nooo!

113

00:07:00,959 --> 00:07:02,879

Probably not, are we?

114

00:07:03,560 --> 00:07:08,120

So here we have forest green and earthy green.

115

00:07:08,360 --> 00:07:10,439

We got ocean blue.

116

00:07:10,680 --> 00:07:12,759

And then we've got a denim blue.

117

00:07:13,240 --> 00:07:19,040

We got 70s kind of yellow paisley vibe.

Sailing coats that are yellow.

118

00:07:19,439 --> 00:07:24,040

So it's given us time to sit,
you know, in workshops and really

119

00:07:25,639 --> 00:07:33,000

work on the detail of the kind of language
that the describers are going to use

120

00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:35,560

with the characters. With the actors.

121

00:07:36,879 --> 00:07:44,240

It's really important to think about language
and why they're the best people to describe themselves.

122

00:07:44,720 --> 00:07:49,920

We want to view audio description
as part of the creative ingredient,

123

00:07:49,920 --> 00:07:54,439

together with movement and
sound and choreography.

124

00:07:58,759 --> 00:08:03,639

Very aggressive.

She wants to punch out and fire out her anger.

125

00:08:04,279 --> 00:08:08,360

Stops being just the kind of access
thing you add on at the end

126

00:08:08,360 --> 00:08:11,560

and it becomes a way of making theatre.

127

00:08:11,680 --> 00:08:17,279

It just throws up ... a kind of ... like offer

128

00:08:17,279 --> 00:08:21,920

that actually helps telling
of the story and adds a different dimension.

129

00:08:21,920 --> 00:08:28,560

Our hope is that we've kind of sown
the seeds of this in these various companies.

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00:08:28,560 --> 00:08:33,080

And now they will take it and they will use it and
they will maybe share it with other companies.

131

00:08:33,080 --> 00:08:36,919

We're hoping to get a kind of ripple effect.

132

00:08:36,919 --> 00:08:43,840

In 30 years you know,
audio description will just be as natural as lighting.

133

00:08:44,080 --> 00:08:47,279

Bye ... see ya!