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<b>Age</b>	<b>31-45</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Project Officer, Archaeological Unit</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Dyslexia</b>

I found out that I was dyslexic about three years ago when I was in the final year of my PhD. I had problems writing, which was a thing they pulled me up on. I had my assessment with Disability Services at the University. They were great, suggesting tips, but I had actually picked up a few of them unknowingly over time.

I was an undergraduate abroad. In terms of writing, the dyslexia did not bother me as I did not recognise it at the time. The field sheets we had to fill in were quite brief and were designed in a way that was not really a huge problem; so many different areas on a little sheet. It was not really a problem for doing fieldwork.

I think with the dyslexia that I am definitely spatially aware. My PhD research for example, it did not occur to me that using lots of photographs was any different from what my colleagues were doing. I tended to photograph everything, it made sense to me at the time, as well as using a Dictaphone. I could get written down what I wanted to say by writing down everything I was thinking. Measured drawings I sometimes find quite difficult. Doing a sketch plan outlining where things are on site, that is fine as I can estimate distances. With the graph paper, tapes and using the actual planning frame I tend to get very confused. The little squares on the grid, it is infuriating. It really depends on the level of detail. With time you get round it, lots of people have trouble with that anyway. It is certainly one of the hardest things I have had to do.

I have no regrets about doing archaeology. Every now and then I think I should do something else for more money, but on the whole I love archaeology and cannot imagine doing anything else. You would not do it to make money; someone pretty early on will put you straight on that. There are great opportunities, spending time outside and inside and at your own level of work.

I was quite shocked to get to 29 and suddenly find I was dyslexic. But now I definitely see it as part of myself and I have other skills over my colleagues. Lateral thinking is very much one of my strong points, I tend not to get stuck over details. In some ways I feel I could get labelled, but as a student I did stand up against being treated differently. My skills

are very much related to my higher abilities. By the second year at University I was facing challenges, but I discovered the talent of thinking things through before actually writing the essays. I have used that in fieldwork, before going out I have it all worked out beforehand. Planning ahead, I do not get stuck.