

Name	Nigel
Age	<20
Degree	Archaeology
Year	2
Full-Time/Part-Time	Full-Time
Disability	Dyslexia

The first time that I noticed that I was having problems was in my first few lectures at University. I found that I could not keep up with the lecturers. I kept losing my concentration. I would start writing something down and forget it half way through. I have always had messy handwriting and bad spelling. The Archaeology Department has a student who is the Disability Representative. He provides all the information about the support available. I went to see him and he helped arrange an appointment for dyslexia testing. They found out that I was dyslexic and had dyspraxia as well. From then on, things were a lot easier. The staff are very clued-up about dyslexia and there does not appear to be any stigma attached to it. The same on fieldwork, they are not bothered if you are dyslexic, everyone is equal.

It mostly affects my studying, reading is quite a chore. I sometimes have to read things twice. My lecture notes are awful, just full of scribbles everywhere, and I have to write them up. Essays are a bit harder to write, it takes a bit longer. The University has a lot of things in place. I can library books out for a bit longer and it is taken into account in essay marking. I managed to get support from my LEA for equipment. I have a laptop now and a printer, instead of rushing to get things done using the University facilities. I actually had a problem with my LEA. I applied for assistance just after starting at University, but it did not get sorted out until the end of my first year. I tried phoning up, but it seemed to be a very confused system. Although I got it, I am not quite sure if I am entitled to support or not!

I really enjoy everything about fieldwork from the social side to the digging. The whole experience is brilliant, learning new techniques and gaining knowledge from people who have worked in the field for a long time. There is a marked difference in me since I started, I have really improved. There is also such a great social side associated with archaeology. If you are happy in the social side, you are going to be more happy in your work. That is important, especially if you are camping on a dig. I was really apprehensive when I first went camping, but everyone is all in it together having the same experiences. It bonds everyone together, and you tend to dig better as well. Good co-

operation on the social side, you get better co-operation working and you get more done. I have met people with dyslexia from other Universities on digs and that helps as well. You see how they are coping with it out in the field and in the work environment.

My biggest problem is the context sheets. I start writing things out and it can take me several attempts. I keep going back to the list of instructions because I keep forgetting. I get it wrong – misread it or write it down in the wrong place. There have been a number of times when I have had to rip up several context sheets and re-write them. Apart from that, there have been no major difficulties. I have not really associated my dyslexia with fieldwork in a sense. I am not sure if it having a different spatial awareness has helped me. My best marks on the dyslexia tests were for looking at shapes and putting colours in the right order. In my experience the dyslexia has not really hindered me in fieldwork, apart from a few problems with the context sheets. On my last dig, the site supervisor was more dyslexic than me. If he can get up to that level with it, it is a good thing to think about. The supervisors obviously have much more paperwork to fill out. I hope to go on to do an MA. Even if I cannot get a career in Archaeology, I will always have a hobby.

I cannot see being dyslexic hindering me; some people have it much worse than me. I wonder if they should grade it for different levels. On essays we just put that we are dyslexic and it is taken into consideration. If you are only mildly dyslexic you could be getting an unfair advantage. It affects the extra time in exams as well. It would be much fairer if they graded it by severity.