Website context: Thinking about Dyslexia ➡ Teaching

Learning to use a GIS software package

> Hannah, a first year student in Geography Business and the Environment, talks with an Academic Support Tutor about how this worked well for her.

AS tutor: What was involved in this module?

Hannah: We had a lecture first on the theory and then we went up to the computer lab for a practical session to learn how to do in practice what the lecture had been about. This made it quite long, which would normally be a problem for me, but with this it wasn't.

AS tutor: So what were you learning in the practical session?

Hannah: How to use a new piece of software. I don't like IT, so I thought this would be a nightmare for me. Usually, I can't follow the instructions quickly enough and get lost with what I am doing.

AS tutor: So how was this different?

Hannah: We could see the lecturer in the top corner of the screen. He was demonstrating what to do, so we could watch him and watch his face and also hear what he was saying. Then we could pause it and copy what he had done.

AS tutor: How did that help you?

Hannah: It meant there was no pressure, you could work through it in your own time with headphones on and pause as many times as you wanted. You could write notes on what you were doing and take as long as you needed. Also, if you came to a word you didn't understand, perhaps it was one you should really know, you had time to look it up on the internet, so you were really understanding what you were doing as you went along and widening your knowledge. Normally that would have passed over me and I would be carrying on in a bit of a fog because I hadn't understood the word.

Methods and Rationale: Module convenor Dr Nick Mount

"The rationale behind the video-based podcast teaching approach was one of ensuring that multiple learning styles were supported through the most flexible teaching strategy and resourcing possible. In this case, that meant that every lecture was supported by a 20-minute video summary of the key elements of the lecture, which students can download and watch on their MP4 players, or through WebCT as lecture preparation or revision. This gave enormous flexibility for students compared to the traditional lecture-based teaching model."

"Paper-based manuals for software-based teaching were also replaced by video podcasts, showing students how to use the software, together with synchronous commentary, and allowing them to copy the tutor's progress on-screen. The practical materials were presented in short bursts - never more than 10-minutes in length, and

++ This document is intended to be read as part of the Thinking about Dyslexia website ++
Thinking about Dyslexia: A Staff Resource for Developing Practice
www.nottingham.ac.uk/dyslexia/

this allowed students time to reflect on their activities (avoiding turning the practicals into simply copying the podcast), discuss with their peers and, if necessary, the opportunity to repeat the practicals in their own time. Once again, the result was greater clarity for students, coupled with increased flexibility and improved comprehension."

++ This document is intended to be read as part of the Thinking about Dyslexia website ++
Thinking about Dyslexia: A Staff Resource for Developing Practice
www.nottingham.ac.uk/dyslexia/