

June 27, 2014

## Transcription Neal

**Introduction:** A video in which Neal describes his experience with dysgraphia.

What impact has your disability had on your college or university experience?

Well, I have dysgraphia, so it's a problem usually with reading and writing so anytime I'm reading it would take me a long time to read text or with writing, I have to go nice and slow. If I go like normal paced I've even sometimes heard reading what it says afterwards and other people also always come up and ask, "Well, what does that word say?" So that's some impact it's had. Other impacts it's had, with any kind of disability, when I first came to university, I didn't really want to make it known to other people, so when other people said, "Oh, why didn't you come to this exam?" I would just lie and say, "I was there, I must have not seen you" because I didn't want to tell them I was going up to the Student Accessibility Centre and writing there. And I did that for two years and then going into my third year, I finally kind of told them the truth and then finally known that no one really cared, like "Oh, Ok" and just kind of nodded off. So those are some things that kind of impacted.

What accommodation measures have you received to help you succeed in your studies?

For any kind of tests or assignments or midterms, I go up to the Accessibility Centre and I get time and a half for all my tests and I get to use a computer to write it down. Every year at university, the Student Accessibility Centre offers mentors to come help you and basically they're there to ask any questions to help you with any assignments and I used that the first two years. You can use them in your third and fourth year as well, but I just stuck with what they always gave me which was time and a half on exams and writing at the Student Accessibility Centre.

What other things have helped you overcome your challenges and be successful in your college or university life?

I actually found that with my computer, since I have trouble with reading and writing, after I would write something on my computer, I would get my computer to read it back to me, and that way I would know if I did the punctuation correctly, or the spelling was right, or if I actually spelled the right word. And other things I found was if I'm in a lecture where the professors gave me the notes it was much better because I didn't have to spend the whole time typing as fast as I can, I could listen to the professor more. Well, when I finally decided to let people know that I'm actually writing at the Student Accessibility Centre, I found a huge kind of weight lifted, because I was always lying to people, being kind of nervous and people would text me, "Oh, are you here yet?" and I'd always have to be like, "Oh, yeah," and I'd always have to kind of watch what I said, and to make sure that they didn't find out that I was actually going there. But once I actually told them I was, I found out that no one really cared and I also found out some other classmates, I'd see at the Student Accessibility Centre, so I'm like, "Oh, I'm not the only one going there." It's just you want to be like any other student. You notice some people

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are still writing it, you also don't want to say, "Oh, I'm getting time and a half and you're not" it's like you're getting special treatment and you don't want to see, "Oh, if I could get time and a half, I would do much better on my tests" so you want to be like every other student and you don't want to stand out in getting special privileges. But the time and a half, it's not so I can spend more time on the answers, I actually need that time and I need that little buffer zone to say, "OK, it's taking me a long time to read this and write this to get my thoughts together, and I need that extra time."