

You, Me and Dyslexia

I have a disability called Dyslexia.

I can't spell but I can see.

I can't read but I can hear.

Some say that because of this, you're not 'clever'

And 'you wouldn't be able to do that' they say.

However, since then I have completed two University degree's,

So are these people not 'clever' either?

I have an ABILITY that some people that changed the world also had.

I have a drive and motivation like nobody else because I've had to work so hard at everything.

I am a unique person, just like everybody else on the planet.

So does that mean we all have disabilities if were different?

I have Dyslexia but that's fine.

I can't spell but that's fine.

I can't read but that's also fine.

Whatever you can't do, that's fine.

Because there are thousands of things you can do.

By Una Buckley

Additional information:

I was diagnosed with Dyslexia when I was 15 years old and struggled greatly throughout both school and college. I received a number of recourses such as software etc but none of these really made a huge difference.

I grew up in a very driven family who thought my disability would greatly affect my life. As a result, I never spoke about this issue that I faced. I had a very difficult time in school wondering why it took me so long to do homework and prepare for tests and never getting the result that I felt I deserved. This made me work harder and harder.

I found the leaving cert to be one of the most difficult things I've ever had to do as there was so much pressure associated with it and you had to wait so long until you could sit the exams. Thankfully, with the Dare program, I got the points for Commerce in UCC and started studying there in 2012.

Initially, I found the course as difficult as school with having to do maths and statics modules, I was sure I won't make it to second year. Thankfully, I got a tutor and was able to do very well in both exams because these papers don't change much year on year.

I worked incredibly hard throughout college, receiving a 1.1 degree and received Scholar of the year award in my final year. As I started progressing and enjoying UCC more, I decided to do a MSc in Food Marketing.

This course was a constant battle. With little structure and organisation, a variety of different modules and a number of compulsory exams, it became very difficult. I failed an exam at Christmas, which was supply chain, which I now do as my day job, but failing this exam greatly affected my life. When I finished up the summer of the course, I suffered a great deal with mental health issues and wasn't sure if I would be able to complete my thesis to finish the course.

Eventually, I submitted my thesis and finished the course. As outlined here as some of the challenges that I faced and I'm sure a lot other students face the same challenges and I would hope that no other student will go through a difficult time that I had to go through.

I now work both with the DSS and Vice President of UCC in designing a program to be inclusive for all students. I am also on the board of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland in order to help make change in the education system.

As mentioned in the outline, the request is for, outlined challenges, some which are named above and recommendations for the future. I have a number of recommendations that I think would make a huge difference:

1. Lecture training- a formal training for lectures and UCC staff to inform them off people with both visible and invisible disabilities and what resources are available to them.
2. Informal bi-weekly group- where students or staff can meet people with similar issues and talk about what issues there facing and try to get some peer support help this way.
3. More access to additional and more relevant software and hardware such as C-Pen.
4. Panopto- to be accessible to call students for call lectures across UCC. This is vital as it save the student a great deal of time taking down notes in such a time constraint setting of a class.
5. Liaise more with schools and meet future students both with and without disabilities to inform them of what UCC has to offer student with disabilities.
6. Expand the DSS staff, there is not enough staff to cover the whole university and therefore students often don't use this service as they think they will be waiting a long time before they get any resources.
7. Marketing campaign in order to encourage current students to disclose their disabilities to get help. I know several people in UCC that had disabilities and never registered with the DSS.
8. Link with other universities/ colleges and schools in order to share knowledge and see what services they have on offer that UCC don't have.
9. Link with UCC Careers to include a program especially for students with disabilities to help them find jobs or work experience. Additionally, have a dedicated program for final year students with disabilities to prepare them for the workplace.

These are just some of the suggestion that I feel would had a huge help to incoming future students. Of course, there isn't an easy fix and these solutions take times, manpower and money however, in order to be one of the leading Universities in the world then this is the way forward.

As mentioned I am currently trying to help in the best way that I can but if you need any help on anything in particular, I would love to get involved.

Thanks for taking the time to read my application and my challenges that I faced. Hopefully we can work together in making UCC an ever greater place to study.

Regards,

Una Buckley