

WEBSITE RESOURCE W11.2

Charlie's writing reflections and transcript

I remember from infant school always struggling with reading and writing and I always had the awareness that I wasn't very good. And I was aware that I was in the bottom set for English, especially writing. I always had a very good imagination but I could never express it on paper like in reading and a lot of it was my spelling and sentence structure, I wasn't able to, like . . . I had the ideas but I couldn't put it on paper in sentence structure. And a lot of my memories are crying a lot in English because I found it really hard. In year two I remember we used to have a spelling test every Friday and I used to cry before going to school like it was I don't want to go this Friday and everything erm because I found it so hard and I remember SATs as well in year 2 and always remember being upset then.

And in junior school I still found like writing very hard and spelling really hard and still this awareness of being in the bottom set, erm I remember it in year 6 as well when we had like spelling tests I remember just like hiding my paper so no-one could see erm because I was like I didn't want anyone to see that I was getting like It just felt like I couldn't spell. And then erm that sort of going on into secondary school and we were set into ability groups and this was based around English and I was aware of being in the lower groups for geography and history because I couldn't write. But I always enjoyed books and English and I bought a lot of audio books, my parents did, so that I could read them and things like that. And then in GCSE I remember particularly having to read out what we'd written, it was like a presentation thing and I remember just like mumbling so no-one could hear me reading because I found reading, I was really self-conscious of it.

And then when I did my A levels I took English Literature because I did enjoy literature and Shakespeare; my family had grown up watching plays and things and then I was still struggling so I went to student services in school and they did some testing and they found out that I was really dyslexic, like nine out of ten of dyslexia. And I sort of remember that's when I was like 'Ah, that's why I've got to 16 and I've struggled all the way through English.' And I remember when I went to parents' evening and we'd just found out I was dyslexic and the English teacher called me lazy and my parents were like 'Well we've just actually found out that she's dyslexic, so that's why.' So I just have kind of like this memory of going through education and being told I was lazy a lot of the time because of it. And then I was aware of why I had struggled all the way through school and I sort of had support then and

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I was basically told that I had these advanced coping strategies, that I'd sort of learned to cover up because I'd succeeded in education, I'd got like ten GCSEs but I just like, I basically went through school thinking I was thick because I couldn't read and write well.

And then when I came to Hallam for my undergraduate, I went to a disability support day and they said, 'Put your hand up if you've been called lazy' and like everyone in the room had their hand up because a lot of people . . . because it's common with dyslexia and now my parents always said they always kind of said a lot at school at times 'We think she might be dyslexic' but it was always brushed aside. And they said I always wrote phonetically and I always had the imagination but I couldn't get it down on paper with reading and writing.