Making Archaeology Accessible

Intergrating Disability Research into Public Archaeology

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My research focuses on the ways in which the field of Archaeology can be made accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility is considered here as not only making the field of Archaeology available to people with disabilities but also making it understandable to each person. Availability is important, but the ability to fully understand what is available is quite different. The term disability implies more than the physical ailments that prevent one from partaking in certain events. I want to address the ways in which the field of Archaeology can break down handicaps it creates for people with disabilities. Handicaps include ways in which one’s abilities are restricted by the environment, and so Archaeology emphasizes peoples’ interactions with the environment. The internet will be an important part of the strategy outlined for people with mobility disabilities while specialized maps and unique descriptions can be employed by people with sensory impairments like vision or hearing loss. The broadest categories of disability for archaeologically accessible information are those that alter the brain’s ability to process information: cognitive disabilities and specific learning disabilities. Nonetheless, I will try and present some possible solutions. By means of this presentation, I will combine two passions of mine hopefully making a difference in both fields.

**Issues**

- Inability to read or process written information
- Poor comprehension of text
- Limited working memory
- Often lack motivation to learn

**Solutions**

- Computers
- Haptic Technology
- 3D Models
- Visual Organizers
  - concept maps, flow charts, etc.
- Speech synthesis programs/Speech Readers
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Multimedia Presentations
  - visual and step-by-step
- Pictures
- Videos
- Interactive hands-on programs
- Summaries

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**Remember**

That any accommodations for people with disabilities can always benefit people without disabilities.

**Generalizations to other fields**

Avoid the use of technical jargon

Strengthen explanatory skills

Know the difference between the terms impairment, disability and handicap

Be familiar with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act

Understand and implement Universal Design

Space for National Mall Braille Map