

Making Archaeology Accessible

Intergrating Disability Research into Public Archaeology

Stephanie Cross

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 such people. 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 since Archaeology emphasizes peoples' interactions with the environment, it should not create new handicaps for people with disabilities. By researching new technologies and teaching strategies, I will propose some ways that Archaeology can present itself to people who have one or more of four different categories of disabilities. 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 hardest 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

Generalizations to other fields

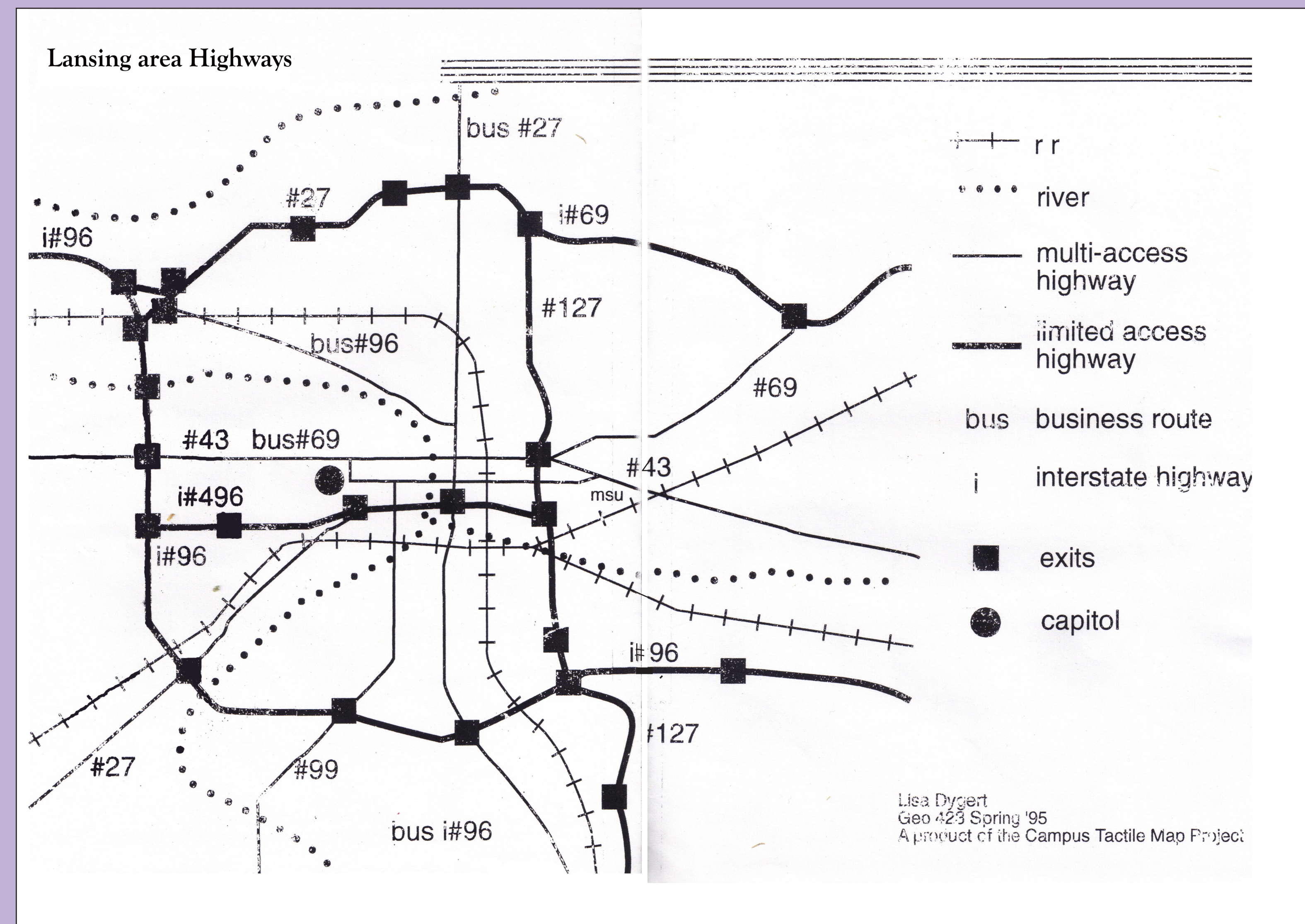
Avoid the use of technical jargon

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 whenever possible



These Braille Maps of the Lansing Highway system and the National Mall exhibit the technologies that Archaeologists could use to make their excavations visible and understandable to people who couldn't otherwise see them. Maps like the one to the right can be used with a computer program that will give its reader information about the areas of the map with dots on them. Technologies like this could be used by Archaeologists to succinctly give accounts of their uncovered artifacts in a given area.

Remember

that any accommodations for people with disabilities can always benefit people without disabilities



Tactile Maps like this one in Northern Italy, are used in parks and cities all over the world to help people orient and maneuver their surroundings. These Tactile Maps were originally designed for use by individuals with visual impairments but are now used by individuals with other disabilities and individuals with no disabilities.

- Forgave, Karen E.
2002 Assistive Technology: Empowering Students with Learning Disabilities. The Clearing House 75(3):122-126. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30189719>
- Howard, William
2009 Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education, 9th Edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Holden, Constance
1998 Leveling the Playing Field for Scientists with Disabilities. Science, New Series 282(5386):36-37. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2897750>
- Jones, Gail M., James Mingoie, Tom Oppewal, Michelle P. Cook, and Bethany Broadwell
2006 Visualizing without Vision at the Microscale: Students with Visual Impairments Explore Cells with Touch. Journal of Science Education and Technology 15(5/6):345-351. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40188653>
- Kumar, David and Cynthia L. Wilson
1997 Computer Technology, Science Education, and Students with Learning Disabilities. Journal of Science Education and Technology 6(2):155-160. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40188517>
- Meredith, Dennis
2010 Please Explain: Training Scientists to Be Better Communicators. The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 16. <http://chronicle.com/article/Please-Explain-Training/65560/>
- Tincani, Matt
2004 Improving Outcomes for College Students with Disabilities: Ten Strategies for Instructors. College Teaching 52(4):128-132. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27559200>
- Vash, Carolyn L. and Nancy M. Crewe
2004 Psychology of Disability, 2nd edition. Pp. 165-192. New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- Photo Credits:
Tactile Map: <http://www.stessigochi.it/images/6/Region/Veneto.jpg>
Runner: <http://www.ng.mil/newsarchives/2009/05/052909-Marathon.aspx>
Wrestler: http://www.internatwrestle.com/rankings/college_ (weight class: 125)
CAP Screenshot: <http://campusarch.msu.edu/>



Space for National Mall Braille Map

MSU Campus Archaeology Program

tweets...

RT @captain_prime: w00t! new uber GIS desktop has arrived at Consortium! 9 hours ago

Our CAP interns are hitting the home stretch...
#UURAF
posters almost done! Check them out next Friday at the Union!

<http://bit.ly/asplH>

home about capblog staff education engagement research

About

MSU Campus Archaeology is a program that works to mitigate and protect the archaeological resources on MSU's beautiful and historic campus. The premier Land-Grant College, MSU has a cultural heritage that exists not only in our rich traditions and academic values, but also underneath our feet, below the ground that we walk on every day.

Campus Archaeology works with multiple departments across the University to make sure that this cultural heritage is protected. Each construction project on campus that disturbs the earth is properly mitigated by CAP. Almost the entire process of completing an excavation project, from design to historical research to excavation to reporting to outreach is completed by MSU undergraduate and graduate students, advancing their education in unique ways. CAP also works to contribute to the public understanding of MSU's cultural heritage, through contributions to academic journals, giving talks and presentations on campus, and developing outreach opportunities throughout the community.