Inspiration

Inspiration 9 Case Study: Helping with Dyslexia

Rebecca Lemon began using Inspiration 9 following a DSA assessment four years ago, when she first started studying in higher education. Rebecca continues to use the product whilst studying for an additional degree at Southampton University.

How did you find the DSA assessment process?

"I went into higher education eligible for a DSA grant due to my dyslexia. My sister had previously been assessed by the DSA and she encouraged me to go see what technology and support would be available to help me with my studies. The assessment helped them to work out what support I needed including the provision of Inspiration 9. Before the assessment, I wasn't really aware of mind mapping software and had previously been advised at school and college to just try and create lists and use bullet points."

Why was Inspiration 9 selected?

"Due to my dyslexia, I struggle to record the ideas in my head as quickly as they come to me. Inspiration 9 was identified as the best software to help me overcome this, as it enables the user to capture their ideas quickly."

How has Inspiration 9 helped?

"I always like to use it when I'm starting out on a piece of work, particularly for essays, reports and presentations. The software allows me to capture all my thoughts, add notes, convert it to outline and then finally convert it to Word or PowerPoint for submission."

How easy was it to get comfortable with the software?

"Initially I was provided with training through the DSA which allowed me to get grips with the basic features of Inspiration 9. Follow-up training was then recommended so that I could use some of the more advanced functionality, which enabled me to hyperlink to other content, mind maps and references within the one map. I found additional support through online tutorials and user guides."

How much of a difference has Inspiration made to you in terms of your learning and what you've achieved academically?

"Inspiration has helped massively. I have a fear of starting with a blank word document - which just terrifies me. And trying to write from scratch is something that just doesn't happen. I tend to use Inspiration the following way:

- Capture all my ideas first
- Link together related ideas and then categorize them using colour and arrows
- Groups of ideas can then be moved around the map to create an initial order
- Once categorised, the map provides an easy way to visually assess where there is less content and helps to identify where more research is needed in order to achieve the right word count balance
- Additional notes, images and hyperlinks are then added to these ideas which will help build up the sentences
- References are added to each of the ideas
- Convert the map into an outline where the order of ideas can be moved around
- Ideas and notes are then built into sentences and sentences into paragraphs until the assignment is complete

Inspiration 9 helps students to capture their ideas quickly. What other feature do you find particularly beneficial?

"Being able to add colour to categorise my ideas is really useful as it helps me to approach the task in a more manageable way. The whole process of creating an assignment becomes less overwhelming when I can focus on just a specific colour coded 'chunk' of work."

Do you have any other recommendations for getting the most out of Inspiration 9?

"I like the way that I am able to use the software in conjunction with other assistive technology such as Claro Read, which then reads my document back to me."

In summary, why would you recommend other students use Inspiration 9?

"Inspiration 9 helps to get ideas out of my head and onto a page in the quickest way possible, especially when using the Rapidfire feature. It stops me from losing my ideas, which my dyslexia makes me easily forget. It also helps me add structure to what are initially just jumbled thoughts. When I've tried to do the same thing using a Word document or by writing on a piece of paper, I just get frustrated by the fact that I have to delete it or rub it out and start again. Since using Inspiration 9, I have found the whole process of creating assignments more achievable and certainly less overwhelming."

Inspiration Maps for i0S - Free for DSA students

Inspiration 9 is the ultimate thinking and learning tool for visual mapping, outlining, writing and making presentations. For new DSA students we are pleased to now offer a free copy of the Inspiration Maps app for students with either an iPad or iPhone. This allows students to use Inspiration for note taking in small lecture halls or on field trips where it would be difficult to use a laptop.