

# Final year written exams replaced by oral assessment

## Student with dyslexia

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### Presenting situation:

When I was Disability Advisor for UMIST one student in my own department (I was an academic also) came to see me. He had dyslexia and was convinced that the traditional forms of assessment were not doing him justice. We came to an arrangement that some of his final year exams would be oral ones (all but one it turned out).

### Alternative assessment:

The protocol was that the student came for the exam and was left alone with the exam paper for about an hour to prepare his answers. Then he was asked if he was ready and proceeded to answer verbally the questions he had chosen, with the examiner for the subject and another invigilator present. Clarification could be asked for by the examiner, the invigilator was there to see that no leading questions were asked of the student. When the student had finished all his answers the invigilator checked that he had finished. Then both the student and the examiner were asked by the invigilator if they thought the whole experience was fair.

### Outcome:

The student did a whole grade better in these exams than his second year.

### Reflection:

The experience was very staff intensive, both the examiner of the subject and an invigilator were present. This, obviously, was not appropriate for several students.

As an experiment, however, it did prove that alternatives were better and fairer.