# ADCET Webinar Supporting Students with dyslexia project

## SLIDE 1

### Supporting Students with dyslexia project.

Chris Maurer-Smolder, Susan Hunt, PhD, Shane Parker and Karin Stokes, PhD

## SLIDE 2

### Dyslexia affects

* accurate or fluent word recognition
* decoding of words
* spelling ability

American Psychiatric Association (2013)

## SLIDE 3

5%

to

15%

## SLIDE 4

Percentages of dyslexia and comparison groups reporting difficulties in higher education (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006, p. 240)

Organising essays – close to 80% Dyslexia (out of 62 students) and close to 10% Comparison (out of 74 students)

Expressing ideas in writing – around 70% Dyslexia (out of 62 students) and around 10% Comparison (out of 74 students)

Expressing ideas orally – just over 20% Dyslexia (out of 62 students) and around 10% Comparison (out of 74 students)

## SLIDE 5

### How can we support students with characteristics of dyslexia at our university?

## SLIDE 6

### Three stages

self-report survey

interviews

staff focus group

## SLIDE 7

### Themes

* History
* Time and effort
* Videos and lectures
* Skills and assessment
* Uptake of assistive technology

## SLIDE 8

### History

## SLIDE 9

“Primary school, I think I failed. I failed primary school, I failed high school, and everything, every subject I failed” (interview 003).

## SLIDE 10

“[T]here's no point in you going to year 12, you should just leave year 10 and go learn something

or do something or get a job” (interview 002).

“You won’t “be nothing [sic] but a checkout clerk” (interview 011).”

## SLIDE 11

“But other times when they choose to hide their condition because they are embarrassed, I can see that they leave, you know, and they go and I don't see them anymore. So, they just, you know, once they - they feel that, ‘Oh, somebody caught me…’” (staff member)

## SLIDE 12

## Accessing reasonable adjustments

A formal assessment from a medical practitioner is necessary for a student to be eligible for reasonable adjustments at a university in Australia (Grimes, Southgate, Scevak, & Buchanan, 2019).

## SLIDE 13

### Emotional well-being and avoiding stigma

* A history of negative experience can impact a student’s belief in their ability to succeed (Livingston et al., 2018; Tanner, 2009).
* Social stigma can make students feel unentitled or afraid to ask for support: “… I feel stupid asking for extensions… I’m not very confident approaching people to say I need to go through that again just makes me feel even more stupid” (Fuller et al., 2004)

## SLIDE 14

There has, up until now, been very little awareness or understanding of dyslexia in Australian schools (MacCullagh, 2014; Serry & Hammond, 2015; Skues & Cunningham, 2011; Tanner, 2009).

## SLIDE 15

SPELD Queensland (2019) charges $785 for an academic assessment and $1,050 fr a psychometric assessment.

## SLIDE 16

Survey data – Students who identified as having significant difficulties

Students with an assessment for dyslexia, ADHD and/or dyscalculia N= 67

No 67% and yes 33%

## SLIDE 17

Grimes, Southgate, Scevak and Buchanan (2018):

of 994 students who reported having assessments for difficulties which would impact learning, 633 of them had not disclosed their difficulties to the university.

## SLIDE 18

Universal Design: "The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Ron Mace, as cited in College of Design, 2008).

## SLIDE 19

### Recommendations

Universal Design in Learning (UDL)

* present information in a variety of formats
* allow for variety and choice of expression
* allow all students access to assistive technology

Develop strengths-based self-report surveys to help identify students that may require additional support.

Find a way to provide low-cost assessments to students.

## SLIDE 20

### Time and effort

## SLIDE 21

How much do you study each week?

Interviewee: I’d be doing about 12 hours a day.

Facilitator: Okay. For those two units? Interviewee: Yes.

(post graduate student, age 56 to 65)

…I would say I [study] close to 70 plus-hour week, at least… I don’t do anything else.

(undergraduate student studying full-time, age 46 to 55 )

## SLIDE 22

At the University of Western Sydney, it was found that lecturers and students differed in their estimations by sometimes more than 400% (Gill, 2013). For example, lecturers believed that an essay should take students around 10 hours to complete whereas students felt it took them more than 40 hours (p. 26).

## SLIDE 23

Week 4.

Video

Research

Lecture

Reading

Referencing

Tutorial

## SLIDE 24

### Recommendations

* maximum 12 hours weekly unit content (including assessment)

## SLIDE 25

I wish that they had, like, something that was official, like the marking rubric, that you open it up, it’s the same document. It says “font”, then it’s got the answer of how they want you to do it, because sometimes, like, I have to chase up two or three or four different assignment documents, that are telling us how to do it. (interview 012)

## SLIDE 26

### Recommendations

* organisation and requirements consistent within a course

## SLIDE 27

### Videos and Lectures

## SLIDE 28

“[B]eing able to go and review lectures and watch them in my own time has been really beneficial for me because I find that I can pause and think about something and then go back to it …when you have dyslexia is that it takes a while sometimes for information to process and sink in” (interview 008).

## SLIDE 29

MacCullagh, Bosanquet, and Badcock (2017): videos were used by students with dyslexia to replace or supplement course readings: 35% of the students with dyslexia reported that they independently sought out additional videos to help them understand course content (p. 13).

## SLIDE 30

### Universal design example

Image: writing icon and video icon

## SLIDE 31

### Recommendations

* best practice in video production
* Zoom instead of live classroom lectures (ISL)

## SLIDE 32

### Skills and assessment

## SLIDE 33

Facilitator: So how many essays though would you say you have to write per term?

Interviewee: So, this term I had one, two, three, four [essays] – I think I had about five.

Facilitator: So, you’re writing those?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, I’m writing those. That’s definitely not without a huge struggle and a hundred different drafts. (interview 008)

## SLIDE 34

Facilitator: Do you think it’s necessary to have all assessment pieces be

written?

Interviewee: Well, post-graduate level it’s not, because you’re assessed on presentations, group presentations and individual presentations. That’s where I got my really high marks, 100 per cent in one case - absolutely unbelievable at university getting a high mark like that. And most of them were up in the 80s and the 90s for those video presentations. So, you don’t have to - it doesn’t all have to be written but you’ve got to show that you can write.

(interview 009)

## SLIDE 35

… apart from the lectures that I try and see every week, all the material that they want us to read, I’m not even touching the edges, because I’m trying to focus on doing these assessments. And if I could sit back and read all those articles, I think I’d have the answers for these assessments.(female undergraduate student, age 25 years or less)

## SLIDE 36

Image: Man seated at desk talking to a monkey, penguin, elephant, fish, seal and a dog “For a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: Please climb that tree”

## SLIDE 37

Preferred assessment types as ranked by students at a university in England (Waterfield & West, 2006)

Students without a disability

70 students

continuous assessment

coursework with discussion

essay assignments

multiple choice

personal research projects

peer and self-evaluation

Students with dyslexia 145 students

continuous assessment

coursework with discussion

oral examinations

portfolios and sketchbooks

personal research projects

critical diaries, learning logs and journals

## SLIDE 38

Other problems with over-reliance on a single type of assessment:

* Not always authentic
* Do not encourage learning of other important skills
* Are not always the most effective way to encourage learning
* Not always valid

(Chanock, 2008; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005; Hanafin et al., 2007)

## SLIDE 39

Waterfield and West (2006) three-year project

* 146 engineering students chose from end of module tests, course work, portfolio or weekly summative tests
* concerns about equity initially a “key issue” but these were resolved (p. 257)

Findings

* additional resources were needed to develop and mark assessments
* no special accommodations were requested
* significant reduction in the number of lowest grades
* significant increase in the number of grades above 60%
* surveys indicated high satisfaction for both students (99%) and time- poor staff (Waterfield & West, 2006, pp. 254-258; 2010, pp. 8-9)

## SLIDE 40

### Recommendations

* variety and choice in assessment

## SLIDE 41

“I love templates. I love them, and they help me a lot. And just when they're really clear, I feel like they say it's not a trick question, but I feel like it is” (interview 001).

## SLIDE 42

Completion rates after 9 years

age 25+

41.6% non-completion

part-time

50.9% non-completion

low SES

31.1% non-completion

## SLIDE 43

### Essay writing skills

* Using the library to conduct research
* Evaluating sources
* Reading a journal article
* Note-taking/paraphrasing
* Writing an outline
* Writing a paragraph/essay
* Writing in a formal, academic style
* Referencing

## SLIDE 44

### Recommendations related to assessment

* explicit, course-wide teaching of assessment skills

research essay

writing with exemplars and templates

paragraphs annotated bibliography

reading and discussion, long answer

## SLIDE 45

### Uptake of assistive technology

## SLIDE 46

In a systematic review of the literature by Pino and Mortari (2014), it was found that assistive technologies contributed greatly to students’ ability to engage materials and, therefore, also improved their self-confidence.

## SLIDE 47

Facilitator: Have you ever used a text reader?

Interviewee: Dragon does that. Dragon does text to speech, which I never used, which would’ve made things easier but--

Facilitator: Why did you never use it?

Interviewee: Well, I think it was just non - I never got there so I got to Dragon late in the piece, as I was starting mid- course. I realised that it would take me some time to learn how to use speech to text. (interview 009)

## SLIDE 48

### Access and use of software

* One student (out of 12 interviewed) was successfully using Dragon, a dictation program.
* Two other students had access to software but did not use it.
* None of the other students has access to or, in some cases, had ever heard of software that might have been helpful to them.

## SLIDE 49

### Recommendations

* Site license for software should be purchased by institutions so that all students can have access (N. Vonthien, personal communication, August 2019).
* Training in software should be made readily available.

## SLIDE 50

### Recommendations for lecturers

* Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
* maximum 12 hours of weekly unit content
* consistent course-wide organisation and requirements
* best practice in video production
* Zoom instead of ISL
* variety and choice in assessment
* explicit, course-wide teaching of assessment skills

## SLIDE 51

### Recommendations for the institution

* Site license for software should be purchased by institutions so that all students can have access.
* Training in software should be made readily available.
* Develop strengths-based self-report surveys to help identify students that may require additional support.
* Find a way to provide low-cost assessments to students.

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### Thank you

Contact Chris Smolder for more information

## [c.maurer-smolder@cqu.edu.au](mailto:c.maurer-smolder@cqu.edu.au)

## SLIDE 53

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