

Education Overview

The impact of educational experiences for dyslexics



The personas highlight how different each individual journey can be. However, regardless of the pathway, the stories featured show that experiences from education can have a long lasting impact for dyslexic individuals.

Looking at education (school, college and university) through the eyes of the personas, and the results of other interviews we have conducted with students and their parents, we can make the following observations:

(As part of this section, we have also highlighted a collection of typical comments from our interviews with dyslexic individuals.)

- **Awareness of dyslexic abilities at school is often limited.** It can be a frustrating and exhausting experience for children and parents, when teachers and schools have limited knowledge of dyslexic abilities.

"Every day is a struggle — dyslexia is really tiring and sometimes I get so frustrated that it makes me cry."

"Dyslexia is very misunderstood, most people don't know much about it and have a lot of preconceptions, such as dyslexic individuals are a bit stupid or lazy."

- **The early recognition of dyslexia is essential.** A dyslexia assessment can provide clarity for recognising both the challenges and strengths of dyslexia and is fundamental to reduce the psychological impact associated with cyclical school failure.

"Seeing the results is a relief, it helps take the pressure off knowing my strengths and makes me more confident."

"The assessment opens doors for the required support — getting assessed was the best decision I ever made."

- ▶ **Dyslexia screeners and assessments should be accessible and readily available.** The affordability of dyslexia screeners and assessments can inhibit those seeking to gain support for their dyslexia.

"We are fortunate that we can afford extra help and make sure our child gets the correct support. It can put financial pressure on families."

"I get so much support that others don't get but need."

- ▶ **Tailored support to the individual can be fundamentally important to dyslexic success.** Support provided by schools and particularly, 1-to-1 and small group specialised targeted support, coaching and mentoring can contribute significantly to building confidence in dyslexic abilities.

"1-to-1 tuition contributes massively to my success. It got me on the right track."

"The coaching and tuition helped me to understand myself better and unlocked this new way of thinking."

- ▶ **It can make a real difference when schools focus on improving strengths as well as supporting the challenges.** Openness about different abilities and promotion of inclusivity is key to support and nurture dyslexic strengths.

"My school is good at making it easy for students with learning difficulties, this helps build my confidence."

"My daughter is dyslexic but she still gets good marks because she's judged for her ideas and that really contributes well to her confidence."

- ▶ **Traditional approaches to exams can play against dyslexic strengths and accentuate challenges.** Generalised approaches to testing can lead dyslexic individuals to become frustrated and lose confidence in their ability early on in life, which can lead to long-term impacts when applying to university and later in employment.

"At school I don't feel I'm judged on my real skills."

"I learn really differently, exams can be very stressful."

- ▶ **Support networks can provide an opportunity for dyslexic individuals to be open about their dyslexia.** Talking to like-minded individuals gives those who feel like they're alone the chance to talk to someone with similar experiences and helps build their confidence.

"I like working in groups and bringing people together — it's important to have a support network."

"I'm really close with my friends who have dyslexia as well. We support each other a lot and it's good talking to people with similar experiences."

Conclusion:

- ▶ The experience from education can facilitate a negative perception of dyslexia. A focus on dyslexic challenges, generalised approaches to testing and a limited awareness of dyslexia can accentuate this perception, and influence the confidence of dyslexic individuals in education.
- ▶ Dyslexia screeners and assessments are key for dyslexic individuals to understand their challenges and strengths, though they are not accessible to all.
- ▶ When knowledge of dyslexic challenges and strengths was present, and dyslexia screeners and assessments, tailored support and support networks were in place, this greatly helped dyslexic individuals in education.

“Schools need a better understanding and recognition of dyslexic thinking skills and strengths — focusing on strengths is a must and there needs to be a better way to enable children with different abilities at school.”

Kate Griggs, Founder and CEO,
Made By Dyslexia

“A focus on rounded skill development is the wrong way to focus. For the future we need those who can put their creative minds to solve some of the world's most complex problems — focusing on strengths must play a part of this.”

Andrew Pike OBE, Director, International
Communications, Prime Minister's Office and
Cabinet Office Communications

“If I was assessed at an early age then exams wouldn't have been so difficult — it had a huge impact on me at school. I used to panic as I couldn't spell, this led me to get bullied. We must find a better way.”

Kelly Hoppen MBE, CEO Kelly
Hoppen Interior Design

“I was a little bit different at school — I was always called up in class for storytelling and ideas, but I was in the remedial class for reading and writing. The early classroom generally made me feel dumb — we need to create positive experiences at school for everyone.”

Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE, Space Scientist
and Science Communicator

“Schools view dyslexia as a deficit — this can lead to low self-esteem and confidence when you're young which can have a big impact on what you decide to do — we need to change this mind set.”

Professor Sara Rankin, Leukocyte and Stem Cell Biology at
the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial
College London

Reference:

The Value of Dyslexia-Dyslexic Strengths and the Changing World of Work
In association with *Made by Dyslexia* and *Ernst and Young*
Adapted for a global Audience by *Get into Neurodiversity*