

## **Appendix 1**

Dyslexia interview questions:

1. How do you feel about having dyslexia?
2. Describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to learning?
4. What helps you cope with learning and studying?
5. What kind of support has been offered to you since starting university?
6. How do you feel when it comes to deadlines, assignments and exams?
7. Can you tell me about the challenges you have overcome while coping with dyslexia
8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **Prompts:**

1. Could you tell me more about that?
2. How do you feel about that?
3. In what ways?
4. How do you feel you are doing?
5. How do you cope?
6. How have things improved?
7. Can you tell me how things are for you now?

## **Appendix 2**

Title of project: A qualitative Study of UWL students with dyslexia and how they cope with the demands of higher education

### **Participant information sheet**

#### **Researcher:**

Naomi Duncan  
Third Year Undergraduate  
BSc Psychology  
University of West London  
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### **The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to get an inside perspective on students who are coping with dyslexia in higher education.

### **Who is doing this research?**

This research study is being carried out by Naomi Duncan at the University of West London.

### **Inclusion criteria**

Any full time level undergraduate UWL student with dyslexia can participate in the study. The students must be proficient in English in order to fully take part in the SSI

### **Once I take part, can I change my mind?**

Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have you will be asked to complete a consent form. If however at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact myself to be withdrawn from the study. You may withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

Participants will be asked to attend an interview lasting no longer than one hour with myself. The interview will be looking at your past experiences of education and any insight on what you think will make your learning experiences better for you.

### **How long will it take?**

The interview will last no more than 60minutes.

### **Is there anything I need to do before the sessions?**

No

**Will any personal information be required from me?**

No and all information will be anonymised.

**Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

The interview will take place in a quiet room in UWL. The interview will be recorded. However once the interview has been transcribed by the investigator the recordings will be deleted. The interview will be completely anonymous. All names and place names and any information that could allow the data to be traced back to the participants will be removed from the interview material. The interviews will be confidential.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of the interview will be used for analysis in order to create a general view on all participant’s views and opinions in order to try and identify other ways for students to cope with dyslexia.

**If I have some more questions who should I contact?**

Naomi Duncan at [Naomi.misha@student.uwl.ac.uk](mailto:Naomi.misha@student.uwl.ac.uk)

**What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?**

Please contact the researcher above, or the supervisor Siobhan Lynam at [Siobhan.lynam@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:Siobhan.lynam@uwl.ac.uk)

**What if I am upset by the interview?**

Visit the one stop shop at the Ealing campus of the University of West London. Tel: 020 8231 2573 / 2991 e-mail: [onestopshop@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:onestopshop@uwl.ac.uk)

**Appendix 3**

Consent form for semi structured interview

**Title of project: A qualitative Study of UWL students with dyslexia and how they cope with the demands of higher education**

**Principle investigator: Naomi Duncan**

**Please tick box**

I confirm that I have read and understood the information participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that the semi structured interview will be audio recorded.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. I understand that the data from the semi structured interview will be anonymised.

I agree to take part in the study.

Signature of participant: Date:

Signature of researcher: Date:

**Appendix 4**

Participant 1 Janice Transcript, 45minutes recording time

**How do you feel about having dyslexia?**

Well, hmmm...it’s an interesting one because I only found out like recently so I haven’t grown with it, I’ve grown up with it but without knowing that I have it. And then obviously when I started uni it was like I got tested for it, because I went to a lecture on dyslexia and I was like I’m ticking all the boxes here and then I had a test and it came back negative which was like Ok, so then I went another few months without thinking I’m dyslexic and then in the last semester doing languages, [blank] asked me to be her guinea pig and I was like yeah no problem and then it hit me, I now understand because there is different types of dyslexia that were not brought up in the standardised test so for me at the moment it’s kind of a feeling of relief, erm, and just trying to learn to work with it and to say to people help if I get stuck with anything so it’s ok.

**When was you diagnosed?**

I was diagnosed with dyspraxia instead of dyslexia first, so in a way I partially diagnosed about four years ago now but really it's just been since the beginning of second year of uni that I was diagnosed with dyslexia.

**So since you have been diagnosed, how do you feel like you are coping?**

I feel like I have these new techniques now like I understand how and why it works so I have the surface dyslexia which is problems with recognising the word as a whole and spelling like it's really difficult when the word is spelt irregular and isn't spelt how it sounds, but I now understand why it takes me longer to read and the way that I read and how to overcome that, how to compensate for that, so when I'm reading a journal, if I don't understand a word I just jump over it because I can't pronounce it so my brain takes a photo of it and then if someone tells me what it means I will then know what it is and therefore I can read like everyone else but until I know what the word is I just jump over it and try to read the whole sentence to try and put words in the place of the word I don't understand to see if it fits the sentence and to make sense out of it. Sometimes I miss the point completely because I haven't got the word that is needed but most of the time I think I'm ok and my mentor helps me by using simpler words that mean the same or are relevant so I can understand.

**What kind of support have you been offered since being diagnosed?**

So I have a disability tutor who reads through all my work and corrects my mistakes which is great and it's great to have that support in place that you know if I'm having a bit of a downer and everything seems to be falling apart I have someone who is there for me to encourage me to continue and motivates me too so I feel more determined, in the first year I had a mentor and now I am mentoring disability students who also have dyslexia which is amazing but I have [blank] and [blank] my key two people who help me the most besides my tutor. They are there for me when I need something or a bit of reassurance which is so uplifting as before uni I never had this. My tutor has been amazing the whole way through and very supportive, and then I have another tutor in third year who has been working closely with me because of my dissertation topic as well so he's incredibly supportive. I have had so much support. The university accepted my application for disability allowance second and third year so I have received extra funds for equipment to help me like a Dictaphone and more books. It's been incredible I have never received so much support from various people before

**You mentioned about you being a mentor, can you tell me a bit more about that?**

So my first year I asked to mentor because I had completed a foundation year at another uni but then I changed my mind as I didn't want to mentor until I had been mentored so I knew how it worked and how I can help others. I needed to know what it was like. And struggling with work load at the time in first year before I had a mentor I didn't know if I was able to cope with helping others besides all my work. When I was being mentored I discovered that actually the needs that I had as a disability student with dyslexia and dyspraxia it was very different to the needs of students who didn't have it but also had a mentor so the mentoring technique was very different. I approached [blank] and we had a conversation about it and so she initiated with the disability team and mentor for me and I took on from there to proceed with being a mentor and now I have three students with dyslexia, and I actually love it I feel like because I'm coming from a place where we share the same problems I can empathise more compared to us not sharing this as it would be like I hear that you have these problems but I don't completely understand what you are going through, whereas getting support from someone who actually knows what you are going through the stresses the pain when you can't get your words out you know you can't read something, so for me it's helping me to grow as well as its helped me see my own learning difficulties and spot new ones that emerge as well as cope with current ones, when I first got diagnosed I thought this is crazy I can't do anything I mean I'm just dumb and [blank] said to me no you're not dumb we are just going to keep going and keep pushing and now I'm about to embark on a masters which is amazing because I never thought I could do it and I'm now saying to students with dyslexia that you can do this too we will get you through it and they come back to me saying I can do this because you are there and you understand so yeah I absolutely love it

**How does that make you feel?**

It feels incredible and it's an amazing experience and I'm so happy I done it and I always encourage others to get involved with mentoring too it's so rewarding.

**So how do manage when it comes to deadlines for assignments and exams?**

So my deadlines so far are ok I kind of look at them and I push them all forward, so I have a deadline 20<sup>th</sup> march I always push it forward a week at least but even then that can be quite hectic but it gives me room to walk away from it and have a break if it becomes over whelming and then go back to it but still have time before the submission deadline and it also gives me time to get my mentor to check through and read through it to make sure its ok to submit, exams on the other hand are harder because retaining that information and having to read all those journals and lectures and past notes and trying to get it from my short term to the long term memory it is very tricky, and I find that is where my biggest difficulty is rather than my assignments

**How do you cope with it?**

I revise from day 1, as soon as we have a lecture I go away from that lecture and write up all my notes diagrams and attractive colours that catch my eye then I write up my next set and I just keep coming back to the first and second weeks etc. and I just keep rereading them, once I feel comfortable that I have the basis I can then build on it to prepare for exams, and I try to separate the lectures I like the most to the ones I like the least so the ones I like I concentrate more on as I find them easier to understand and I think hopefully they will come up in the exam. So exams are tricky, it's so hard to prepare for as no one can look over your work and correct your mistakes, and we only get 15 minutes extra time per hour so it's still not enough time, I do like that I have separate exams to the rest of my class mates with extra time in a smaller room and a lot less people because it does take some of the pressure of the exam feeling and I don't have students around me looking at each other, it's a lot calmer

**Do you find yourself, when you're in an exam just sitting there sometimes trying to get something out but suffer from a memory block?**

It's kind of the opposite, all the information just tumbles out so there is no logic to my writing it doesn't make much sense but all the necessary information is there, I'll write this and this and this but if you ask me to write it cohesively you can forget it. I am covered by the disability scheme that the lectures mark my work in a different way to non-dyslexic students, so if it's not cohesive like it would be in a normal exam paper then they just pick out the bits that are important like the key words and make up the sentences to what it is supposed to mean in order to make sense of what I am writing, so I am marked on the important key words and facts rather than the essays within the exams as a whole

**So what do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to learning?**

My weaknesses are definitely the reading like I absolutely... I like reading and I think I have it easier than others with dyslexia who are more severe but when the words jump across the page it is so hard to concentrate and understand as well as not being able to pronounce some words it's frustrating and can take me some time, it's quite challenging. I do use the sheets that are coloured and you place them over your work to help concentration and to dull the brightness of the page so I kind of try and compensate where I can for the stuff that I find difficult. The strengths, I actually looking back now over the last four years and having all these tests done, I think I found myself. I am finding myself and I have come to believe in myself more like I can actually do rather than I can't do. I've always had acceptance but it wasn't for the right reasons. I was accepted but not as smart and because I didn't understand why I acted a certain way or did certain things I could never explain it to people, people would think I'm just being a bit weird and I would just be like yeah that's fine but really it wasn't. but now I know this is who I am and too bad if you don't like it, so since finding out it has been a positive aspect whereas before it was more negative.

**Can you describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia?**

To begin with it was a relief, it was definitely a relief because you're going through school and education thinking what's wrong with me I can't keep up, then because I didn't get diagnosed till the beginning of uni the anger crept in because it was like how is it possible that they could have missed this, that it should have been dealt with a long time ago, obviously having chatted with my mentor, because my brain is so fast and I wasn't failing completely I was still passing but just not at where I knew I was capable of I slipped through the system and didn't meet the criteria for earlier testing, I was on the higher end of the grade spectrum to be recognised however my downfalls in reading and my jumbled writing were still not enough to be noticed.

**So do you think earlier diagnosis would have helped more?**

Most definitely because then I would have got more support. No one could understand that in class with homework I was absolutely fine because my mum would help me but with exams I was doing ok but I always ran out of time and never finished my exams and no one could understand why. They couldn't marry the two up together because during my work if I had been failing like my essays I couldn't write essays and my words were back to front and it was all sloppy but because this only happened during exams as I had no help they just thought I wasn't revising or I just didn't bother.

**What helps you cope with learning and studying?**

I like learning, I enjoy helping other students and I think that plays into it, so if I'm helping other students who are struggling then I'm enjoying it and find it rewarding, it's not just about mentoring students under me but also those also on the same level. Also it means that my way of learning is if I don't know something I can't teach someone, so if I can teach them it means I have learnt it, so it's a good way for me to know where I am

with learning. I am quite a visual learner I can look at information ex amount of times in order to process it but also writing it down helps even though sometimes my notes don't make sense but I still know what I mean.

**Are there any effective techniques you use to help you're learning and studying?**

I do dim my computer screen and use the coloured sheet to help, and the note writing system of each lecture that I have really helps to move information from short term to long term memory as my memory isn't very good, I use the tools that I have been given like the Dictaphone to record lectures as note taking during class I can't keep up as lectures move on too quick for me to get it all written down, I also use my mentor as much as possible and if I feel overwhelmed I make sure I talk to someone about it as they always reassure me and put me back on track

**How else have things changed in your life now that you know you have dyslexia?**

Everything has actually improved, everyone is more supportive and they understand me better now which feels really good and has made me feel better about myself as I don't feel separate to everyone now I'm just different like everyone else, people understand better that when I need help they are not annoyed like before instead they want to help me and have patience with me, they work through it with me and if I don't understand they take the time to explain it in a way I can. Support is the main positive outcome of it. People understand me as a person better, they can see when I start to feel stressed and overwhelmed and help me out sometimes without even having to ask whereas before people kind of just ignored me because I wasn't worth the time as they thought I was being lazy, that was so frustrating. Some teachers used to think that me saying I don't get it some of the time was an excuse to not do it. I wanted to understand but they didn't have the time sometimes to go through it in a way I understood. Even with people who don't understand dyslexia I can explain it to them so they get it and we both then work together. Before I didn't know I felt dyslexia defined who I was as people saw me as dumb or stupid, and I thought obviously I'm stupid but since I found out I tried to take on that allowing it to not define me, everyone who understands just says it's how I learn it doesn't define who you are so they haven't allowed me to go down that route, it's a weight off my shoulders. I used to do small group socialising as I felt more in control and I distanced myself from big group socialising as I didn't feel in control as I felt stupid and not comfortable, but since I knew I had dyslexia it changed the whole dynamics, suddenly I'm more comfortable being in a social situation and I felt more myself.

**Is there anything else you would like to add about coping with dyslexia in university?**

Here at this uni, they have been absolutely amazing with support and guidance, I could go to any member of staff and talk to them, if I need extra help with assignments or reading I can go to anyone besides my mentor and supervisor, they are there to talk it all through with me. If I want to check anything I can get hold by email to arrange a meeting if need be, this uni for me has been personally amazing, the staff have been amazing. At the moment I feel quite safe, I'm with people who are willing to help and actually want to help not just because It's their job, staff who get it and are really supportive. But shortly I will be heading off to another university which will be a whole different ball game and I have fears it won't be the same, that's when I'm going to know if the support is everywhere or not

**How does that make you feel?**

It's scary when I let myself think about it because like everyone knows me here they know what I do best and what I find harder, they know how I learn and what I prefer, but then I'll have to start again with new people and I don't know if they take people like me on as well as masters is a lot of independent studying and more practical and a lot more workload, its daunting. I've got very comfortable with the staff here over these threeyears and the disability team and I've been very involved with the mentoring scheme, I was involved with the disability student reps too so I took what I had and I did something positive with it and I was allowed to develop it I think all the standardised tests need revising, they need to try and identify it at a younger age, they need to try and look at all the different types of dyslexia so parents are more aware earlier on and can try and identify signs in their children so it can build children's confidence and self-esteem, as children with any form of disability at school get called names and are victims to bullying and I want to do some work with that to help change that system, to get other children to understand those with disabilities, it needs to be raised earlier so children get the most support

**Appendix 5**

Participant 2. Mercy Transcript, 31minutes recording time

**How do you feel about having dyslexia?**

Well it's very hard, it's something you can't control at first and it's hard to explain it. Its stop you from progress. It made me feel less able than others, you want to achieve something but because you have got this

condition, it's not stop you from achieving but it delaying you and slowing you down. So at first I felt negative about the whole thing and I felt lower, but after coping with it since being diagnosed for a few years, I stopped feeling sorry for myself and changed my attitude as I have it for life so I may as well make the best out of it.

**When were you diagnosed?**

When I started uni at 27 years old.

**Since being diagnosed, how do you feel you are coping?**

I feel like I am coping better than before as before it was the fear of the unknown, not knowing what is wrong with me. But I haven't really explored what support is out for me there either so if I did this it could be a lot better.

**What kind of support have you been offered since being diagnosed?**

When it comes to marking I have been offered support, they give me more time to read through it before the deadline so I can understand the question and what is needed. I have a mentor that I send my work to and the mentor goes through it with me that has been helping me a lot so far.

**So how do manage when it comes to deadlines for assignments and exams?**

I find it hard to submit on time and sometimes I feel like I haven't put enough time in for some assignments, well more like I ran out of time. It's the same with exams I always run out of time. With exams I also have a different room and extra time. As soon as I get my module study guide I start straight away and start reading towards assignments, I panic when I don't understand it but then that's where my mentor comes in place to help me. I think I prefer exams however because it comes down to crunch time you know you have to do it and it's only an hour or so, so I prefer preparing for exams as with assignments I know I have to do it but I feel it's a different kind of pressure, I get sleepless nights trying to complete them to the best I can, whereas exams are a quicker process.

**So what do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to learning?**

Reading is my weakness, it takes me time to understand. I have to read over and over again, but when it comes to explaining and writing in my own words, that's what I find easier. I like to listen and interpret things in my own way of understanding. So I record lectures and make my own voice notes that are simple and easy for me to understand.

**Can you describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia?**

When I started university I was 27. Imagine what it was like to go through most of your 20's bouncing through jobs and trying to get by thinking I was dumb. My jobs consisted mainly of retail and caring where little reading and writing was required. Only in my first year at uni which was my foundation year was I diagnosed. I was upset before this time by not knowing what was wrong with me, I would get cross with myself. I wish I was diagnosed earlier, it would of helped me majorly academically. I would get called lazy people thought I didn't want to read, they thought I just used it as an excuse to not go to school. When I was in year 6 my aunt told me about my homework, she said I was lazy and dumb, not knowing that I didn't understand it. It made me awkward and upset, like a failure. But now I try my best to get around education.

**What helps you cope with learning and studying?**

I plan a lot, I try and keep myself organised. I keep my voice notes organised and have a few small easy bullet point notes to help me study.

**Are there any effective techniques you use to help you're learning and studying?**

I use rhyming to help me remember, and I like to listen to music when I revise. My mentor also helped me come up with things like catchy jingles to sing to and I use a dictaphone to record my lectures.

**How else have things changed in your life now that you know you have dyslexia?**

I kept it to myself that I had dyslexia, it didn't affect my social life as they didn't know, but friends in uni know though and they help me. I am still treated like everyone else and that all I wanted whereas before I wasn't. Inner feelings have changed a lot though, I feel better in myself, I still find it difficult in expressing myself though but I am working on that. I feel more confident however as I feel lifted now and relieved. Before I hated being treated differently being called stupid and lazy by my family and teachers. But now they understand why I am the way I am.

**Is there anything else you would like to add about coping with dyslexia in university?**

That's it!

## **Appendix 6**

Participant 3. Alice Transcript, 36minutes recording time

### **How do you feel about having dyslexia?**

Knowing I have dyslexia has changed my life for the better. Every day is still a struggle, 2 however I can cope better with the support around me and because I now understand 3 myself. I feel positive about dyslexia because it makes me unique and not part of some 4 group. I like that I stand out and think differently to everyone else. Without being dyslexic I 5 don't think I would be creative like I am. I would not change who I am, with a choice I would choose to have dyslexia every time. I love that my brain thinks differently and uniquely, I am very creative. I can think in pictures to construct ideas in my head, so I can imagine things vividly before I actually do them. Without dyslexia and the way I use my brain differently, I wouldn't be able to do this. I also feel I have found myself because I am now accepted widely by those around me whereas before, people would constantly put me down and criticise me and I hated that, I felt like no matter what I said or did people would judge me for the worse. Growing up was a negative experience with no support and many teachers calling me lazy and would say 'stop being stupid and just try' like I wasn't trying hard enough. The frustration grew each year I got closer to finishing school completely as work became more challenging. Since having being diagnosed life is simpler and easier to manage.

### **When were you diagnosed?**

I was 18 when I was diagnosed, the beginning of university. I took hospitality as a course which is both practical and literacy based so I have a nice balance between the two. Being diagnosed so late made me angry but then again I am just thankful I didn't go any longer or have to struggle through uni with thinking negatively about myself like before.

### **Since being diagnosed, how do you feel you are coping?**

Before being diagnosed life was difficult. I was always embarrassed and distressed through secondary school as I could not keep up with my friends...finding out what the root of the problem was, it was the biggest relief ever. Knowing what dyslexia was gave me the confidence I needed for a long time as I was able to accept myself and see the positive aspects to dyslexia like my creative side. I am coping so much better now thanks to support of teachers and friends and students in my position, I can manage stressful situations and when I feel overwhelmed I have a good team behind me pushing me and motivating me to carry on.

### **What kind of support have you been offered since being diagnosed?**

so when I came to university open day, I was talking to some of the teachers with my parents, and I came across the mentoring team and they spoke to me about the kind of support they offer, which is exactly what I needed so I signed up to have a mentor for when I started my first year. Then a few months into first semester, my mentor pulled me aside with concern about my spelling and how slow I was taking to read suggested journals. He flagged up that I showed signs of a person with dyslexia and recommended I get tested. So I had a test by a specialist doctor, and it came back positive. I had dyslexia meaning I so I told my mentor and I changed mentors to a specialist in dyslexia which further improved my coping and managing strategies. There has been a great deal of support offered to me I am grateful for and I also get disability allowance too.

### **So how do manage when it comes to deadlines for assignments and exams?**

Assignments are difficult when it comes to reading journals and reading past lectures but exams are the worst. No amount of preparation or strategies can change or improve my exam experiences. Assignments I get my mentor to look over with me, explain things I don't understand and teach me the right way of presenting my work so my grades are still good. Although, when deadlines are set a week apart or sometimes days apart the pressure does build up and I freak out. I try and finish my work a week before but sometimes this isn't possible so my mentor helps me to manage my time and organise the most important work as I am terrible with organisation. Exams on the other hand, I always get anxiety with because it's the fear of the unknown and it's so difficult to prepare. I can't just revise everything we have learnt over like 5 weeks and remember like other people can, my memory is just as bad as my organisation. So what I do is spend a lot of time with my mentor going through lectures and notes repeatedly until I get a general gist of things.

### **So what do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to learning?**

I devour most of my free time in trying to find way to make my weak points stronger and overcome them. I compensate my weakness in reading by balancing it with my strength in art and design. My lecturer helps me to understand and overcome my weaknesses by using my strengths as a way to understand the material, like a

learning style. Without the support and encouragement of my mentor and lecturers, I would have dropped out of uni. Since starting uni I have had many ups and downs but the support is the highlight of uni for me. I learn visually the best so looking at work and making it a way I can visually dissolve it in my brain. I like to use spider diagrams and flow charts and use colours rather than black and white. I've always been good with art and design and I use this strength with the practical side of my course, but when it comes to the written work that's my weakness. I have a lot of assignments in my course but luckily I can be quite creative with some of them like magazine articles and web designing and page designs and drawing besides essays so it's a good balance.

**Can you describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia?**

When I found out, I was not sure what to think as I didn't really understand what dyslexia was. But after taking about it with my doctor and mentors and other students with dyslexia, I began to feel relief like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. Finally I had a reason for my behaviour and way of learning. I just wish I was diagnosed a lot earlier so I didn't have to suffer in my teens. I wanted to tell all my old teachers who put me down I had dyslexia just to see the look on their faces. I am so much happier now

**What helps you cope with learning and studying?**

My mentor! Without my mentor I would crumble just like I did at school. He taught me the different ways to help improve my learning experience in relation to my learning style. So we spend a lot of time editing and redoing my lectures to a way I can understand and learn. More charts and diagrams and bullet points so I don't have to read a lot in one go.

**Are there any effective techniques you use to help you're learning and studying?**

The re-editing of lectures that I just mentioned, and taking breaks in between learning helps to freshen up. Also, I use my art side to jazz up my notes and lectures so a way is visually pleasant for me to look at.

**How else have things changed in your life now that you know you have dyslexia?**

Life has changed drastically. The acceptance of others is a big difference. People take time to understand me now instead of judge me. Like before some of my friends even thought I was being lazy but now they get it and help me out too. The support since diagnosis has been incredible. I couldn't thank my uni enough, not every lecturer takes on board students like me but my mentor has been there the whole way dedicating his time to making sure I succeed and hit my targets which I have and it feels amazing. I think after uni I will be a bit more scared of the real world as I won't have my mentor and not everyone is as educated in dyslexia like him. Then again that gives me the opportunity to explain and educate others which I have always enjoyed and felt proud of.

**Is there anything else you would like to add about coping with dyslexia in university?**

Erm, that's about it I think thanks.

**Appendix 7**

Participant 4. Malcom Transcript, 32minutes recording time

**How do you feel about having dyslexia?**

Being dyslexic gives me a mix of emotions. I'm not quite sure exactly how I feel. I mean I am happy in a way to be dyslexic as I see and think differently to everyone else, but then again sometimes the struggles that come with it are challenging and overwhelming. Don't get me wrong I love a challenge, but challenges with something engaging and interesting, not basic challenges children have with reading and writing. It's frustrating being compared to children being at a similar stage to them with difficulty of reading and writing. It's embarrassing too, but this is my life so I deal with it and make the best of it

**When was you diagnosed?**

I was diagnosed by a specialist doctor at the age of 17. Such a late age but perfect timing just before university which allowed me to sort my disability allowance and all the extra equipment and support was set up that I needed for when I began uni.

**Since being diagnosed, how do you feel you are coping?**

you feel hard done by sometimes, the frustration of not being able to read fluently like everyone else, instead it takes several days to understand, sometimes it gets to me but then overall I feel more determined. I feel since being diagnosed have a lot more positive days than negative because I don't blame myself anymore for my mistakes and I take breaks when I feel stressed instead of completely giving up. I feel a lot more comfortable with myself to and that helps with coping

**What kind of support have you been offered since being diagnosed?**



So when applying for university I was able to put my special requirements onto my ucas application as I was diagnosed just before that process in sixth form. Since being at university I have one main mentor and a mentoring team behind me constantly. I also have extra funding's from the uni for specialist equipment and I also get special one to one sessions with certain lecturers if I need it say I didn't understand something. I prefer this as I don't like asking questions in front of a big class as before when I did this as school, people would huff and call me stupid so it has always put me off

### **So how do manage when it comes to deadlines for assignments and exams?**

I find both challenging and difficult but it's definitely easier dealing with assignments. There is less pressure and you get a lot more help and support and more time to perfect and finish it. I push deadlines forward so it doesn't pile up on me as I have always cracked under pressure in the past. Exams are a completely different ball game, no amount of preparation and revision can calm my nerves, I hate exams I wish they would end it and base all grades on assignments. Exams for me, even though I get a separate room and extra time now, will never be a strength and will always be a weakness. I panic too much. I forget half what I remembered before and my writing is unreadable sometimes. Yet the tutors who mark are kinder than expected. I was sure I would fail every exam yet I have passed them all with decent grades

### **How do you cope with it?**

I'm always striving for better and trying hard to accomplish a target. When I finally reach that target there is no better feeling. It's like dominos, I succeed in something challenging and then I get the acceptance and praise I have always deserved from my peers. It feels wonderful. Then the circle starts again, I become more enthusiastic from my last challenge to start a new one'. So I cope by always thinking about the better outcome of finishing a task or piece of work than quitting and giving up.

### **So what do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to learning?**

My strengths are my enthusiasm and determination. I like to get things finished as soon as possible so I can start the next project, I hate leaving things unfinished which is a good thing because I'm not a procrastinator I am determined to see it through even when I do have meltdowns. Another strength would be my new found patience with myself, before I was diagnosed I just gave up easily and got frustrated and angry with myself like people would be with me, but now I am patient and I know things take time that others would take time for granted like reading, but I am determined to complete anything no matter how long it takes. My weaknesses are exams for sure, essays and long writing is a no no for me. Also long periods of reading as well as writing I just tend to zone out because of the letters jumping around the page and being jumbled. So I have to do things in short spurts.

### **Can you describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia?**

When I found out, relief was the biggest feeling. Without knowing what was wrong with me it affected my life negatively with all the nasty comments and no support. It was tough. So to finally find out I was relieved. I was happy too. No longer was I disappointed in myself or upset. I still get distressed sometimes but that's due to pressure of exams or assignments I am no longer distressed by the people around me.

### **What helps you cope with learning and studying?**

Having a mentor and a good team of support helps, but also the reminder of how life was before I knew I had dyslexia helps too. With learning, I like to listen. I'm a good listener. So I record my lectures and mentor sessions and make little easy simple notes for me to understand on the main points brought up. That's how I learn. With studying I like to listen to music before or quietly in the background as it makes me feel relaxed. I like some lecturers who are quite engaging who don't have a monotone voice otherwise it sends me to sleep!

### **Are there any effective techniques you use to help you're learning and studying?**

Sometimes I like to make little recordings of important points from lectures and play them back to myself during revision period whilst making my little notes. It sticks in my memory for longer that way. I also use the page sheets that dim the brightness of the page as white pages give me headaches if I look for too long.

### **How else have things changed in your life now that you know you have dyslexia?**

Things have changed drastically for the better. Like I said, things are more positive, I feel so much better about myself. No longer do I put up with negative comments and put downs, I am just like everyone else but special. I am happy I have dyslexia overall even with the struggles because it makes me appreciate everything so much more

### **Is there anything else you would like to add about coping with dyslexia in university?**

I look forward to completing university and hopefully moving onto a masters that is my next challenge I have set. Coping is easier and manageable with the right support. So more people with dyslexia should get as much support as they can it is so beneficial.

## **Appendix 8**

Participant 5 Michael Transcript, 30.5minutes recording time

### **How do you feel about having dyslexia?**

At first I felt uneasy by the thought as I thought I had something seriously wrong with me but then I was explained what it was, how it can happen, different methods to cope, the Kind of support out there available to me, and how common it is put my mind at ease. So Now I feel more accepted of it and comfortable with myself. I don't let it affect me, I mean I know it can affect my performance and it can stop me performing as well as everybody else But in a lot of ways it makes me want to push on and perform better than everybody else to Prove that I can do it. Before I was diagnosed, I had no confidence and few friends. I didn't Know how to interact as I felt stupid so I didn't integrate with some of the smarter kids. Then After I was diagnosed I finally understood who I was. I thought better of myself and was less Bitter. Everyone noticed the transition and how much happier I was. It was life changing, I Believed I could achieve anything I wanted to, and I believed I was different but unique. I was able to accept myself.

### **When was you diagnosed?**

I was diagnosed at 18. Such a late age and I wish I was diagnosed earlier I really do. I feel like I have missed out on so much opportunity and potential, I could have done so much better. I know I could have, I just didn't have the support or knowledge what was happening to me Like I do now.

### **Since being diagnosed, how do you feel you are coping?**

I am coping a lot better than before. So much better. Like before I was so quiet and never spoke out in class because I would always get called stupid or dumb for mixing up my words or misunderstanding what is written on the board. It really made me upset and feel down all the time. But now I have more confidence in myself to speak out and ask if I don't understand. I have more support around me from my friends, my family and staff at the university.

### **What kind of support have you been offered since being diagnosed?**

I have been offered help with my assignments and exams and a private tutor but I only discovered this in second year even after being diagnosed so first year I managed to pass but it was a struggle. The tutor proofreads mywork with me and helps me understands the corrections and mistakes. But my memory is terrible so we go through this a lot.

### **So how do manage when it comes to deadlines for assignments and exams?**

I really struggle with my exams and assignments. Exams a lot more than assignments but still struggle with both. I'm not good at managing at all, my tutor helps me manage and keep me calm. I often feel like I'm going to fail and feel overwhelmed but seeing my tutor once a week or contact through an email does help bring me back to where I need to be. I need that push for motivation otherwise I won't do it. I'm really bad with procrastination. I need that weekly track of progress to keep me determined and going as I can fall off track easily. I hate exams. They are too hard. To sit there for 1-2 hours writing constantly is my worst night mare. I can't concentrate. I can't get any help I can't even take a break it's the worst experience ever. Assignments are hard but at least I get help along the way and my tutor to proofread my work

### **So what do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to learning?**

Reading is the biggest weakness, then writing, then my lack of concentration and how easy I can procrastinate. All of which affect my ability to learn still even with the support I get. These are obstacles I have to overcome but I still find it difficult to. Over theyears I have managed to develop ways of coping though. My writing has definitely approved with constantly doing new exercises and I do enjoy it I feel proud and I have accomplished something big when I can write in bigger amounts with few mistakes. I learn a lot verbally so I like speaking too. And I like listening to others speak then interpreting it in my own way so I understand. My strength is my ability to remember certain things, sometimes it takes a few hints but sometimes it just clicks and I shoot off overloading with material. I'm also good at expressing myself through actions and role-play and with words and I apply this to learning, I use rhymes and acronyms and mnemonics to help with revision.

### **Can you describe to me what it was like when you found out you had dyslexia?**

Like I said at first I was uneasy but then after a few weeks I was actually fine with it. It was a weight off my shoulders, a relief really. It made sense especially with my bad spelling. It also wanted to make me get better

and not let it defeat me. I wanted to prove to everyone and myself that I will achieve what I want in life and this won't hold me back. Growing up and moving to secondary school was confusing as well as embarrassing, I was behind on my literacy and I just could not understand why I wasn't like every other kid. Why could I not do things like my friends could? I felt more disappointed in myself every time I brought home a school report with nothing to show for my parents to be proud of.

**What helps you cope with learning and studying?**

As a verbal learner, I like to speak and act out so performing arts skills of talking through scripts and stuff like that helps me learn. It allows me to improve my memory as well.

**Are there any effective techniques you use to help you're learning and studying?**

I like to get a friend who is willing to help me to go through revision notes with me in a script form using different voices or actions to help me remember. Or to proofread work with my tutor as he makes it easy and simple to understand for me.

**How else have things changed in your life now that you know you have dyslexia?**

life is more positive, I am more accepted now and I feel more comfortable in myself, I have more confidence and I believe I can achieve like everyone else too. Without diagnosis and the support from that I would have not come to uni to study for a career that I have always wanted

**Is there anything else you would like to add about coping with dyslexia in university?**

Nothing else to add