

A Mixed Method Study Investigating Dyslexia and Students Experiences of Anxiety and Coping

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Abstract : Adult students with dyslexia can receive support for cognitive needs but may also experience anxiety, which is less understood. This study aims to test the hypothesis that dyslexic learners in higher education have a higher prevalence of academic and social anxiety than their non-dyslexic peers and explores wider emotional consequences of studying with dyslexia and the ways that adults with dyslexia cope cognitively and emotionally. A mixed-method approach was used in two stages. Stage one compared survey responses from students with dyslexia (N = 102) and students without dyslexia (N = 72) after completion of an anxiety inventory. Stage two explored the emotional consequences of studying with dyslexia and the types of coping strategies used through semi-structured interviews with 20 dyslexic students. Results revealed a statistically significant effect for academic anxiety but not for social anxiety. Findings for stage two showed that: (1) students' emotional consequences were characterised by a mixture of negative and positive responses, yet negative responses were more frequent in response to questions about academic tasks than positive responses; (2) participants had less to say on coping emotionally, than coping cognitively.

Keywords : dyslexia, higher education, anxiety, emotion

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