The Impacts Of Teacher Feedback On Self Confidence in Adults with Developmental Dyslexia

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Contents

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission, additional creative artifact and all work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated. I have cited all sources that have provided critical knowledge to this research and have credited that work according to academic standards. It is my pleasure to present this academic work.

Signed:

Name: Meoghan Ellen Craig

Date: 21/12/2025

Acknowledgements

To my participants

Without you and your contributions, this research couldn't exist. Without your openness, your honesty, without the giving of your stories and your time I wouldn't be able to present what I have now completed. Your voices are the vehicle to which we can all understand the dyslexic experience better. I am overwhelmingly grateful. I hope that I have represented you in a way we can all be proud of.

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Ethics Approval

This study attained final ethical approval by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on the 26th of March 2025, reference number 24/361.

Abstract

This research explores the practice of audio documentary making to present the experiences of dyslexic people within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Based on literature research and wider contextual reviews, this research looks to answer the question: what are the impacts of teacher feedback on self confidence in adults with developmental dyslexia? Also how have these impacts influenced them in their subsequent areas of life. Research within the field of dyslexia is often targeted at children and their early life experiences while this research study looks to expand upon that existing knowledge by giving voice to the continued experience of dyslexic adults. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven participants and the following thematic analysis of the interview transcripts provided three sub-themes (’Equity Through Allowances’, ’Passion Led Learning’ and ’Social Stigma) as well as three core themes (’The Impact of a Diagnosis’, Teacher Feedback’ and Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem) which formed the basis of the audio documentary structure. The ensuing discussion covered the creative process in communicating these themes as well as research analysis supported varying findings; offering non generalisable insights on the adult dyslexic experience, with varying agreements and contradictions depending on each participant’s unique experiences. The choice in medium of an audio documentary through the contextualisation of the audio format was chosen to aid in the accessibility of this research to the dyslexic community to which this study refers.

Chapter 1: The Full Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore the practice of audio documentary making as a means of amplifying the voices and experiences of dyslexic people. In particular, it focuses on the high school experiences of dyslexic people and the ways in which their teachers' feedback impacted their self-esteem and influenced them in their subsequent areas of life. Given that dyslexic people commonly struggle with text (e.g. Hudson et al.,2007; Moriah, 2025), audio documentary shifts both the research site and the findings away from written language and into the realm of the spoken word—through a creative presentation that a 'holistically processing' dyslexic mind can absorb at a higher level (Taylor & Vestergaard, 2022, p. 6). Participant voices are thereby centred—and literally heard. The intended outcome of this shift from the written to the spoken word is primarily to make the research more accessible to dyslexic people who may benefit from the findings.

Teacher attitudes and expectations have been shown to impact relationships with dyslexic students. For example, Hornstra et al. (2010) demonstrated that even when teachers expressed positive explicit attitudes towards dyslexic students, they may still hold negative implicit attitudes. These negative attitudes resulted in outcomes such as being more likely to give lower ratings to the written work of dyslexic students than teachers with positive implicit attitudes. In related research, Martan et al. (2018) highlighted that positive attitudes towards teaching dyslexic students were connected with having the right knowledge and skills. Such positive attitudes, along with the right classroom atmosphere, good peer relationships, and learning opportunities focussed on strengths as well as difficulties were all part of minimising the potential outcome of frustration, low self-esteem and self-confidence for dyslexic students.

Gibson and Kendall (2010) explored dyslexic students' experiences of teacher attitudes towards them and found that negative teacher attitudes were connected with lack of support and low expectations. Interestingly, the role of diagnosis or recognition was important. While teachers ought to be able to recognise learning difficulties and support students to receive assessment, this didn't necessarily happen. The students who had no diagnosis were more vulnerable to unhelpful treatment from teachers and to confusion and lack of self-esteem due to their misunderstood learning difficulties (Gibson and Kendall, 2010).

My interest in this topic arose originally from my own experiences as a dyslexic person. When I returned to university for postgraduate studies, my interactions with my lecturers reminded me of my teachers from my year 13. For me, these were supportive and helpful relationships and the connection between these times of my life was encouraging. I had a diagnosis, supportive parents, and was receiving assistance. Yet I was acutely aware that some of my friends had quite

different memories of high school and their teachers had, at times, been sources of stress, shame, and stigma. When I had to develop a proposal for a project I could care about, I was drawn immediately to exploring this world of the varying influences teachers have on the future choices of dyslexic students.

This format 3 research is an integrated whole, presented in two parts: the creative artifact that is an audio documentary; and this written exegesis. The option of the creative practice-based format (Candy, 2006) was a key factor that made a master's degree seem truly attainable to me. It allows for a neurodivergent and creative mind like mine to take a different path towards a higher qualification. After years of educational conditioning, my academic success has been largely due to my ability to adapt, mask and use compensatory strategies (Tanner, 2010). In adopting a format 3 approach I have found a way to embrace both an academic and creative approach.

The overall project constitutes an original contribution, both in the fields of documentary making and in dyslexia research. In capturing, identifying and reflecting on dyslexic experiences, the audio documentary functions as a narrative that can help to clearly communicate the core themes and stories of the dyslexic adult participants. To contextualise the choice of audio documentary as my creative artifact, histories and research provided by Privitera et al. (2024) and McHugh (2014) both remark on the evolution of storytelling as communication throughout history. In the recent digital era, audio technology and creative techniques that have been developed are a leading example of how we still share our stories; especially noting the rise in podcasting and the expanse of the radio genre in a digital society that is more connected than ever.

This exegesis will accompany the audio documentary as two parts to a whole. The contribution of my work is practice-based research (Candy, 2006; Charles Darwin University, n.d.), meaning that the knowledge presented by my own investigation is shown through a creative outcome as well as to be analysed and contextualised through a written outcome (an exegesis). The exegesis also records the creative process, showing how this audio documentary contributes to research into the dyslexic experience. This exegesis will follow a progression through six chapters of content. The current chapter provides a brief introduction to the study context. In chapter two I will provide a literature and contextual review of knowledge pertaining to my research question. Chapter three provides the rationale and contextualisation of the audio format for the creative artifact and positions the work within the existing media landscape. This includes discussion of media inspirations, interview styles, techniques and practices implemented during the interview process. In chapter four, the methodology of the research is presented, along with how the interview process will be conducted and analysed, the phases of the thematic analysis and the resulting themes. Chapter five presents the creative process, the overarching account of the

planning, editing and creation of my audio documentary. In chapter six, a summary of the findings and final discussions will be presented along with the conclusion of this research.

Key elements of this exegesis are researcher reflections and critical commentaries throughout the research process. These not only show the development of this creative project but also offer a personal insight into the researcher's creative thinking, more sophisticated learnings, recognition of limitations and articulations of active innovation (Lew & Schmidt, 2011). Importantly, the reflections help me to recognise my own lived experience of dyslexia and how I can use this as a lens through which to best communicate the intended outcome of this research through the bridging of academic and practical experiences (Radović et al., 2023). As a dyslexic researcher, it was important for me to recognise that the way in which my mind naturally works creatively is hugely different to how I have been *taught* to function academically. There is a general understanding that a neurodivergent mind processes differently and diverges from the neurotypical norm (Legault et al., 2021), especially in an educational context. However, students with dyslexia, including myself, have had to recognise that, to survive and even succeed in the education system you must still conform with standardised processes.

Researcher Reflection: Why Audio Documentary?

Dear Reader,

Creating an audio documentary was not my original intention. In my mind, when starting my studies, I had pictured the creation of a fully-fledged thesis. There is a promising feeling that comes from such a large undertaking, especially for a dyslexic student like me. It would be an achievement that would show that I could do anything, despite what the world sometimes thinks about learning difficulties and the limitations they put on someone.

I do consider myself ever the optimist. I try to never shy from a challenge, and I wanted to dedicate my time and efforts to a subject I care so much about. I was sharing these feelings with a room of friends when one said to me: "That's hilarious. What dyslexic person do you know who is going to sit there and read a thesis? Let alone know how to read. Might as well make an audiobook."

For some reason what they said really sat with me. Because they were right. If my research is being done with the dyslexic people in mind, then it should be created in a format that is accessible to them. And so, the idea of the audio documentary was born. No one could tell their own story better than dyslexics themselves. Through this medium I would be able to share stories from their source. Memories, experiences, feelings and conversations with dyslexic adults carried directly from them to you. Audio is free of visual distraction and judgement (McHugh, 2014) *acting to deliver a singular*

impact in a medium that can elicit real, emotional responses. I couldn't be more excited to create and share what I already consider to be such an impactful piece of media.

Chapter 2: Literature and Contextual Review (Through My Eyes)

This chapter provides a literature and contextual review relating to the topic of dyslexia, along with the creative precedents that have influenced the work (cdu.edu.au). Thus, it lays the foundations for this research and audio documentary. Each subject within this review functions to unpack core ideas pertaining to my research question: what are the impacts of teacher feedback on self confidence in adults with developmental dyslexia?

I begin by presenting definitions along with a history of dyslexia. These are further explored in the contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand context, including how being dyslexic affects personal identity, generates emotional repercussions and influences the transition into adulthood. I also discuss the relevance of early formative years and the importance of teacher relationships. This is followed by consideration of the wider context of the creation of audio documentaries, including my inspirations through this creative process as well as the theory and technical practices of sound design and interviewing processes.

Each section of this literature review provides the necessary history and context to the dyslexic experience that will help you as a reader to better understand the possible nuances within the interview conversations to come. As a dyslexic researcher, nuances within these conversations may seem clearer to me due to my own dyslexia, which is why I made the decision to dive deeper for good measure.

Definitions and History

Though the term “dyslexia” was first coined by German Professor Rudolf Berlin in 1887 (Wagner, 1973), it was used sparingly throughout his work. It was not until much later, in the 1920s, that the term was championed by Dr Samuel T. Orton. His life's work is considered foundational in its dedication to the general understanding of learning difficulties (Geschwind, 1982; Kirby, 2018), and many of the traditional symptoms of what is now known as dyslexia were detailed by him. The noted symptoms included the phenomena of ambidexterity, superior reading ability when texts were upside down or mirrored, the relationship between accompanying conditions and the high likelihood of similar disorders within the families of his patients (Geschwind, 1982, p. 16). The large-scale curiosity of professionals such as Orton sparked changes in how dyslexia had been perceived.

Though learning difficulties of many kinds would have already been present within the population, it was in the 1980s that dyslexia came to be explored not only through a medical lens but also from a social and educational standpoint. Through the 1980s, dyslexia was conceptualised as a syndrome which brought with it the societal view that those who suffered from the symptoms

of dyslexia were childlike, dumb or slow (Benton, 1980). Such perspective came at a time when educators were focused on the remediation of a child's learning process to combat future problems for them later in life. Through understanding of learning difficulties, it became clear that there would be a need for educators to identify children displaying symptoms of these difficulties to teach them properly (Benton, 1980).

It is of note that both Orton and Benton reached similar conclusions through their independent research, which was conducted 50 years apart. Each conducted a case study of children who had been referred to a medical clinic for being "subnormal", "failing" or "slow" in their schoolwork and showing difficulty in reading (Benton, 1980; Orton, 1925). Both Benton and Orton noted that the children's teachers saw these students as challenging, though it was Benton (1980) who sought to further understand the motivations and perspectives of educators to try and understand why children with now recognised difficulties were still being perceived in such a way.

Benton found that while physicians quickly recognized congenital word-blindness as a distinctive condition... teachers were less ready to accept it as a defined entity. Certainly, this was not because they did not see children who had failed to learn to read. It was a question of a difference in attitude. (p. 22).

This attitude was that a child failing was a direct reflection of the teacher failing, and this was inhibiting teachers' ability to adequately educate students with learning difficulties. Research through the 1990s till the early 2000s helps to confirm Rudolf Berlins' early theory of a biological origin of dyslexia regardless of environmental factors. For example, Démonet et al. (2004) explains that, unlike learning oral language, the impairment in reading comprehension and understanding of the written word can come from a spectrum of disorders of the brain.

In the transition into the 21st century educators were actively seeking and clarifying knowledge of dyslexia (Breznitz, 2005), thus were becoming more informed. It was increasingly understood that the negative experiences of individuals with dyslexia are amplified by the social and educational contexts they are in (Joseph, 2007). If the environment they learn in is responsive and the teachers have a better understanding of their students and their learning difficulties, there is a higher likelihood of achievement (Hornstra et al., 2010). Dyslexia is also recognised under the umbrella of neurodivergence when referring to the biological variation in the way people think. However, neurodiversity is the term most used to differentiate brains that 'deviate' from what would be considered typical processing and functions (Johnson, 2023; Ne'eman & Pellicano, 2022).

The current internationally recognised definition for dyslexia was approved by the International Dyslexia Association's Board of Directors (Lyon et al., 2003) and has remained unchanged through to 2025 (Siegel et al., 2025).

> Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is of 10 unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

It is worth noting that this definition is heavily oriented towards the deficits associated with dyslexia. However, there are strengths that are commonly noted as well. For example, Moriah (2025) highlights qualities such as creativity, problem solving, making connections and identifying patterns. This is consistent with the work of Taylor & Vestergaard (2022) which identifies the holistic processing capacity of the dyslexic brain. Their research emphasises the necessity of recognising these cognitive strengths as benefits to explorative learning within society.

More recently, dyslexia can be understood as a form of neurodivergence under the neurodiversity paradigm (Moriah, 2025; Wise, 2024). The neurodiversity paradigm challenges the idea of brain and learning differences as being disorders. Instead, it recognises neurodiversity as a naturally occurring form of difference between people with the idea of a “normal” brain as a type of social construct (Wise, 2024). Thus, both the strengths and challenges of a particular brain are recognised. Aligned with this is the social model which asserts that the so-called disabilities experienced through neurodivergence are a result of barriers and attitudes from society rather than the brain difference itself (Barnes, 2019). This understanding underpins the importance of accommodations for neurodivergent learners.

The Modern and Aotearoa New Zealand Context

Studies in the United Kingdom have signalled dyslexia as the single most common learning difficulty in school children's classrooms, with 5% of students being severely affected and 5-10% being mildly affected (Sako, 2016). Similarly, in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, it is estimated that one in 10 New Zealanders are affected by dyslexia, including 70,000 school age children (What Is Dyslexia – Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, 2025).

Nnamani (2024) highlighted the need for a change in social understanding of dyslexia alongside systemic changes of the education system. As dyslexia is a unique and innate way a person processes information, having teachers better equipped to understand this learning difference would make it more likely that their needs can be met alongside neurotypical students in the classroom (Martan et al., 2018). In addition, Tanner (2009) suggested that within the western schooling system there is a need to disengage from the premise that writing success equates to future life success. There is a need to look past reductive thought processes of dyslexia and

recognise that dyslexic people inherently perceive, process, analyse and communicate differently from neurotypical people (Neurodiversity in Education, 2023).

This change in thinking has occurred in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2016 the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) became a part of the country's school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2016). This design plan for educators stands on the three pillars of engagement, representation and providing multiple means for action and expression within the classroom. In establishing these pillars, the aim is to create a more inclusive educational environment for students with learning differences. Modern allowances for students with dyslexia may include any of the following: types of presentation (e.g., audio-visuals); response mediums (e.g., oral); settings for tests/exams (e.g., quiet room); and timing/scheduling (e.g., extra time for tasks/tests) (Dyslexia Support South, 2025).

In addition, there is an array of notable strengths that are linked to the presence of neurodivergence and dyslexia. Individuals with dyslexia outperform non-dyslexic individuals with their interpersonal strengths such as levels of curiosity, creativity, empathy, sense of humour and exceptional memory among other abilities (LaFrance, 1997). The act of recognising these strengths "replenishes the self-belief and confidence in individuals who have mostly been failed by the educational system" (Kannangara, 2018, p. 1).

Researcher Reflection: Innate Strengths

Dear Reader,

When writing this section, The Modern and Aotearoa New Zealand Context, I couldn't believe that in my original draft, it hadn't occurred to me to share about the strengths of a dyslexic mind. I think that when collecting material for this research the heavy focus on the challenges faced by a dyslexic person meant that the positives fell under the radar.

However, there is a conundrum when it comes to recognising these positives. It has taken more difficulty than you may realise to know how to present this difficulty. I realise this is because leading with your strengths can unintentionally allow for people to diminish the associated struggles. In no way do I want to make light of how difficult things can be for dyslexic people, but to fail intentionally or unintentionally to remark on what makes a dyslexic person great diminishes them just the same.

Impact on Identity and Emotional Repercussions

Many students with dyslexia experience lasting emotional impacts during their time in education (Handwerk & Marshall, 1998). Shaywitz and Shaywitz (2020) highlighted that these impacts affect not just a person's current emotional state, but they also leach into later life through avenues such

as discontinued education, low earnings and negative health outcomes. Dyslexic students have unique needs that call for specific support (McLoughlin & Leather, 2013), which necessarily entails a change in approach (Hamilton Clark, 2024). This is a delicate process for any dyslexic student who wants to be treated the same as any other student but requires special considerations. The consistent treatment of students in ways that are defined by their learning difficulty can cause these students to see themselves as intrinsically different in negative ways (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003).

Adult dyslexics have not previously been recognised as a distinct group with specific needs separate from children who are dyslexic (McLoughlin & Leather, 2013). The lack of research into the lived experience of adults with dyslexia within university spaces has been specifically noted (Jacobs et al., 2022) as an area in which dyslexic adults may continue to struggle. Indeed, Carawan et al., (2016) showed a correlation between dyslexia and a negative effect on self-esteem, which highlights the distress caused by unsupported dyslexia as a potential risk factor for a well-lived life. This is critical knowledge to expand on, as research on the unsupported dyslexic adult experience has shown a correlation between the formation of low self-esteem, lowered ambition and feelings of shame (Gibson & Kendall, 2010; Hamilton & Clark, 2024; Purvis, 2024; Stets & Burke, 2014). These negative states have long-term effects for those unsupported with their dyslexia.

Recognising this gap in research, Jacobs et al. (2022) carried out a qualitative study of university students who partook in open-ended interviews. Participants were able to validate or invalidate hypothesised theory about the dyslexic experience by directly comparing it to their own personal experiences. Although this study is limited by a small sample size, Jacobs et al. (2022) emphasised, “the importance of researching the perspectives of those who have first-hand experience of the learning environment” (Jacobs et al., 2022, p. 679). Similarly, Cornoldi et al. (2022) noted the necessity of looking deeper into the young adult demographic of dyslexic studies across multiple backgrounds, age groups and countries.

Researcher Reflection: Hitting Home

Dear Reader,

I don't think I’ve ever been so moved by a piece of research before - the work that Jacobs et al. (2022) presented in their paper has been a huge inspiration to me. Reading it was a powerful reminder of why I am doing this research. Reading these small excerpts of Jacobs’ (2022) interviews had me reflecting on just how strong my sense of empathy is towards other dyslexic students because of my own experiences.

> *Oscar - "My teacher singled me out from the whole class [...] and he called me out and said that it was really rough and that I'd rushed it, but I knew that I had spent loads of time on it. I just felt so awkward and so disappointed."* (Jacobs et al., 2022, p. 669)
>
> *Sarah - "I always think of myself as one step behind everything and that shock when someone is like "what are you talking about?" That real feeling like you're an idiot [...]. It's the overwhelming wave of I'm so stupid. Its sits in your stomach and you feel really dumb. But I've tried to embrace that 'I'm an idiot' thing because then it makes you feel much better. I'm an idiot so whatever you say, I already feel, I already know it's coming so you get used to it."* (Jacobs et al., 2022, p. 670)

In the moment, these experiences induce such a feeling of loneliness in me, yet they are characteristic of many dyslexic people's negative experiences in education. Through all the interviews conducted, the saddest part was that none of them realised that their shared feeling through lived experience ties so many people together. People just like myself, reading what they had to say and relating so deeply with them. It's only enhanced my own desire to amplify dyslexic voices in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

Transition to Adulthood

Njoku (2018) highlights the age of 18 onwards, the adult developmental stage, as a critical period during which a person with learning difficulties formulates their adult identity. In the Aotearoa New Zealand educational system, many students would be completing high school at 18 and looking towards work or further study (Ministry of Education, 2025). The experiences through high school are likely to be a crucial factor in whether a young dyslexic adult decides to pursue continued education (Ash et al., 1997), move into the workforce or explore other areas of life (Tanner, 2010). Though struggles with dyslexia are traditionally seen most clearly in an educational context, stigmatising attitudes and behaviours (Wissell et al., 2022) directed towards dyslexic individuals can extend into a person's work life. Navigating this stage is one of the most difficult transition periods as a dyslexic adult (McLaughlin, 2015).

It is important to recognise that many dyslexic individuals may not receive a dyslexia diagnosis until they are into their adulthood (Njoku, 2018). Leading up to this time, they develop coping strategies that have the effect of masking difficulties. This is part of the reason it is harder to diagnose an adult with dyslexia than it is a child. A dyslexic child who is identified as such will ideally grow with the necessary supports to flourish and adapt, while a dyslexic child who is not identified may learn to shape themselves to fit into a society that is not built to understand them (Oliver, 2004). According to Cornoldi et al. (2022), dyslexic children who then move into adulthood would

continue to experience difficulties regardless of coping mechanisms or compensation for personal ability deficits. Because of factors such as this it is vital to understand that there is no linear dyslexia pathway that a person will experience. The impacts of the transition into adulthood for one dyslexic person can be completely different to another. This difference is what can provide a rich perspective on the lived dyslexic experience.

Formative Experience and Teacher Relationships

Research highlights two relevant phases of formative growth in a dyslexic person's life, which together form the focus of this study. The first of these are the high-school experiences of students aged 13-17 (Ministry of Education, 2025); and the second is of adults aged 18-29 (Lundeen, 2023). Consideration of a dyslexic person's high-school years is fundamental, as academic challenges along with teacher support and interaction or lack thereof impact on a student's self-esteem, motivation and the pursuit of higher education (Jacobs et al., 2022). Teachers are an important influence on the young people they teach (Writers of UoPeople, 2024) and they form a core relationship in the life of a young person in their highly impressionable years. According to Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013), the teacher/student relationship is nuanced.

During high school, teachers can directly influence their students over time in their learning environments; however, researchers have challenged the idea of a standard, normative teacher performance (Tobbell & O'Donnell, 2013). Instead, they state that "children and teachers should be considered as people in meaningful and dynamic relationships and should be prepared for the complexity therein" (Tobbell & O'Donnell, 2013, p. 12). Each person in the classroom, be it the teacher or the student, is a complex human being with their own processes and ways of thinking. The specific processes that dyslexic students work through need to be understood and worked with to provide the appropriate educational opportunities for learning diverse students (Snowling, 2012; Tanner, 2010).

Exiting high school and transitioning into early adulthood (18-29) brings new challenges that are laden with mental and emotional charge along with increased autonomy; it is during this new adulthood stage of life that a person moves away from the structured routines of childhood (Auerbach et al., 2018; Bartlett et al., 2010; Lundeen, 2023). McLaughlin (2015) noted that there is a lack of recognition of how hard these transitions are for individuals with learning difficulties due to the associated demands for independent learning and processing skills, effective time management, the self-confidence to adapt to new work cultures and heightened levels of importance being attributed to task management. For a dyslexic person, these components represent a previously unexperienced level of relational instability with society (Auerbach et al., 2018), which proves to be

a challenge that each person needs to learn to cope with. And the ability to cope with this change is shown to be linked with one's own self-belief, self-perception and self-esteem (Tanner, 2010).

Chapter 3: Contextualising the Audio Format

In this chapter the creative precedents that have influenced the work are explored (cdu.edu.au). This is followed by consideration of the wider context of the creation of audio documentaries, including my inspirations through this creative process as well as technical practices and theory of sound design and interviewing processes.

Media Landscape

Media landscape encompasses where communities or individuals can find content, including entertainment, news or other information. Within Aotearoa New Zealand, the media landscape has a large array of alternative and independent media platforms alongside the dominant mainstream media ("The Independent Media of New Zealand," 2021). Every person consumes media content, be it physical or digital, old or new media; Ren et al. (2024) make note of the attention driver role that social media plays in directing the public to leading information on a given subject.

Common attributes of dyslexia are known to be difficulty with processing the written word as well as difficulties with spelling (Everatt et al., 1999), making the consumption of written media more difficult for a dyslexic person. Within this context, use of modern media goes hand in hand with common assistive technology for dyslexic students. For example, audio assistive technology, text-to-speech tools and audiobook platforms such as Spotify and Audible are all recognised and incorporated into the learning processes for students with comprehension deficits and learning difficulties (NCEA Education, 2025).

Dyslexia and Audio

Both the subject matter and the audience for this research is centred around dyslexic adults; therefore, studies comparing comprehension of the written word and audio comprehension within the dyslexic demographic were important in choosing a research output. Studies into audio processing showed that when comparing typical listeners to dyslexic listeners there are distinct similarities and differences. When listening to single isolated words, only subtle differences between the two groups were identified; however, when processing larger pieces of information, it was found that dyslexic individuals listened with reduced selectivity (Geiger et al., 2008) and processed holistically to take in a wider array of information. Research done by Zoccolan et al. (2007) also recognised this auditory mode as well as a selectivity and tolerance trade off: because of their lack of audio selectivity, dyslexic listeners exhibit a greater tolerance and ability to register multiple layers of sound operating simultaneously. This shows that a higher level of listening perception is traded

off for a lack of sensory filtering. This lack of sensory filtering can be linked to studies into the “global precedence effect” (Bouvet et al., 2011), which demonstrate that in the processing of audio, whether it be musical or spoken word, a person's ability to absorb information is influenced by the level of stimuli surrounding a person at a given time.

Inspirations: Media Examples

The core idea of publicising and amplifying dyslexic people's stories to inspire others with the same learning difficulty and identity is a key inspiration for my creative process. There are several accessible disability services within New Zealand that specialise in dyslexia support. SPELD NZ, the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, Inclusive Education and Access Alliance all work in tandem across the country’s media landscape to spread awareness of dyslexia and stories of dyslexic learners' experiences (Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, 2025; SPELD NZ, 2025). However, my personal inspirations for the creation of this audio documentary come largely from dyslexia-specific YouTube content. In my view, these exemplars match the quality of a traditionally high-end television/news production and reflect the level of personal connection I hope to replicate in my own documentary.

Made By Dyslexia is a global charity working to raise awareness of dyslexia and to create change through sharing resources and dyslexic stories worldwide. Their YouTube channel started in 2017 and has garnered over 25,000 subscribers (Made By Dyslexia, 2025). Each video runs for an average of 30 minutes with only the one edited interview as the focus. Guests range from actors and academics to entrepreneurs and teachers, each of whom has a success story and a dyslexia diagnosis. The interview centres entirely around the interviewee and narrative is framed solely by their responses. This is a professional, semi-structured interview where the host is steering the conversation. There are also videos in which there is no host, only the person being interviewed—the interviewer taking on almost a production standpoint.

Made By Dyslexia utilises the success and audience of the dyslexic individuals they interview along with the video audiences to springboard their message. These interviews have helped to create community and an open dialogue in the comment sections below each video. Audiences who previously had little to no idea about each celebrity's difficulties are encouraged to learn from one another and share their own thoughts and feelings; adding to the existing YouTube communities that use comment sections under each video to build users' sense of community (Rotman et al., 2009). For me, this social byproduct is one of the most important elements to any work done in the media around dyslexia.

I was especially drawn to the episode in which Jamie Oliver was the guest (Made By Dyslexia, 2017). I appreciated the adult perspective he provided on his school experiences regarding the negative impact on his self-esteem of social stigma and the treatment by his teachers. This discourse within the episode highlighted the flaws within the academic curriculum he experienced, as well as the general lack of support dyslexic students receive. His personal activism for dyslexic children throughout Great Britian is so clearly deep rooted in his own feelings and experiences. This interview highlights Jamie's key ideas through the prioritisation of clean and concise editing—capturing his train of thought in a way that felt true to the moment while removing any additional content that could muddy the intended message.

Another highlight for me was Andy Cooks' interview on why dyslexic thinking is a recipe for success (Made By Dyslexia, 2024). Within this interview Andy goes into the specifics of what he believes to be the strengths of a person with dyslexia and how those strengths helped him to succeed in life as a chef. These include acute spatial awareness, creative thinking and fast problem solving, leading to a highly cohesive and fine-tuned work environment that allowed him to thrive. This initial feeling of success gave him the confidence to pursue a cheffing digital content creator career path. He continues to build an audience and advocate for dyslexic creatives within the New Zealand digital space.

Researcher Reflection: Interpersonal Connectedness

Dear Reader,

During the planning process it became clear that the way in which I interacted with the interviewees on an interpersonal level during these interviews would have a direct effect on the participants' level of comfort with me and therefore affect the content quality of the interview.

It was of the utmost importance to me that these participants knew that their wellbeing before, during and post interview is one of my top priorities. I both respect and admire that they were all willing to share their stories and standpoints on a subject matter such as their lived experience with dyslexia. I know that talking through this can stir negative memories and emotions, as every dyslexic person has faced adversity in some form during their lives. Talking about these hard feelings and experiences is unavoidable. In some moments it's even the goal.

In unpacking and sharing these stories we could connect with one another and alleviate the sense of loneliness that can come with facing negative experiences. I want to offer that to my interviewees in the same way that they, through taking part in this research, will hopefully leave a similar impact on other dyslexic listeners.

Within the New Zealand mediascape of audio documentary and podcast, *Gone Fishing* is a fine example of the technique of soundscaping —derived from the word soundscape— the overall sonic environment of an area (Porteous & Mastin, 1985). The storyline follows a real-life murder case in New Zealand set in 1989. Gone Fishing has won five separate awards including Best Podcast in the NZ Radio Awards 2019 (Maas & Dudding, 2018). Though the subject matter is a departure from my own subject, it is relevant because of the way the soundscape evokes such strong emotions in the listener.

Auditory storytelling has been referred to as 'theatre of the mind' (Rodero, 2012) because of the ability to create an image in someone's mind through description or the recreating of sounds within a space. Similarly, the technique of soundscaping consists of multiple audios layered together, each serving as a unique aspect of a particular environment to create a mental image for the listener. Here, Blesser and Salter (2006) made specific note of how different architectural spaces will affect the way that sound is portrayed, and therefore how they would need to be re-created. The layers of audio in soundscaping can include natural sounds, synthetic sounds, environmental sounds and musical elements (Feasey-Kemp, 2025). Background music can become distracting when used poorly or is in the wrong tone. However, the utilisation of a variety of background music in *Gone Fishing*—from gritty guitars to emotive low synths—pulls listeners further into the story. In each episode there is a careful and meaningful use of ebbs and flows within the audio production. There are scenes where the only present element is the voice of the narration, others where music builds thematic tension and still others with complex layering of diegetic and non-diegetic sound (Feasey-Kemp, 2025) within the soundscape.

As previously mentioned, Zoccolan et al (2007) presented research on the dyslexic lack of audio selectivity and tolerance trade off. Dyslexic listeners show a greater tolerance of, and ability to register, multiple layers of sound working simultaneously. Given the subject matter and the participants, it makes sense to use soundscaping within this audio documentary in ways that benefit dyslexic listeners. It is this attention to detail and formation of audio narrative that I wanted to apply within my own audio documentary.

Great care was taken to provide the same variety of listening experience as *Gone Fishing* (Maas & Dudding, 2018) through the inclusion of evocative background music as well as the meaningful ebbs and flows of layered, soundscaped moments. A point of departure from this existing media was my focus on creating the school and classroom environment as described by my interviewees. It was vital that the soundscapes I formed within this audio documentary not only reflected the physical environment, but also the *perception* of that environment through what can be an emotionally charged viewpoint.

Researcher Reflection: Capturing Sound

Dear Reader,

When I listen to a story being told, I can't help but think of what that moment in time truly felt like… What the storyteller could see, what they smelt, what they could hear. Was it raining? Were they standing in the sun? Were there birds out singing? Were they standing in a bustling mall? Were they sat on the beach-- with kids shouting and waves lapping. It felt the same listening to my interviewees and them telling their stories.

Being in an exam hall; anxious foot tapping, pens scribbling and caps clicking.
Sitting in their classroom; students talking, fingers typing and whiteboard writing.
The moments of quiet; when it felt like white noise, just them in their heads.

Every moment tells a story of its own. Every element of sound tells you something about how they were feeling, what they could've been thinking.... you can be there with them. One of my ultimate goals in this documentary was to set that scene for the listener. If I'm able to capture that through soundscaping then I will have done a whole lot more than simply record my interviewees' stories. I can help re capture and share their true experiences.

Inspirations: Interview Style, Techniques and Practices

In planning the questions and the way I would ask them, two core interviewing techniques were identified: standardised interviewing (SI) and conversational interviewing (CI). Mittereder (2018) examined each technique and the difference in accuracy of the answers. Standardised interviewing allows the interviewer no room to rephrase the question and instead urges repetition and neutral probes if the interviewee shows signs of confusion. In contrast, conversational interviewing encourages the interviewer to use repetition or to reshape the interview question to provide greater clarity for the interviewee. Through testing, it was found that conversational interviewers clarified their questions more often to make sure their interviewee had the highest level of engagement with the question (Mittereder et al., 2018). These clarifications were done proactively as the interviewer sensed respondent confusion. This echoes Conrad and Schober's (1999) findings that conversational interviewing leads to a higher level of participant understanding of the questions they are being asked. This aligns with the nature of the conversations I wished to have with my interviewees.

Furthermore, though each interviewee is reflecting on the same question, their individual experiences with it will be different. Each dyslexic person is unique and having the ability to extend

questioning holds a higher importance than replicating what other participants have been directly asked each time. Though every interviewee will be asked the same questions, the order and the time spent on each question will differ. Conrad and Schober (1999) underscore the point that conversational interviewing leads to a higher level of participant understanding of the questions they are being asked, with the limitation of this technique being that it can result in a longer interview duration.

An example of conversational interviewing that stood out to me is The Drew Barrymore Show (CBS Media Ventures, 2025). Drew has a unique way of disarming her guests; she is known for her relaxed demeanour and warmth as well as her ability to know when to listen or share experiences of her own that reflect what her guests are communicating. She exemplifies how to develop further insights throughout the interview process (Aspinall, 2023), through elaborating on key words or phrases of interest and creating a shared sense of care towards the current subject matter through reciprocal sharing. An interviewing skill Drew excels at is the contextualising of her guest's commentary. When she has a connection to the subject matter being discussed, her understanding allows her to better contextualise the interview. Drew focuses on highlighting reciprocity to garner a higher naturally occurring trust level, thus has the ability to receive greater pieces of information from the interviewee such as in the interview conducted with Jannette McCurdy (The Drew Barrymore Show, 2022).

Interview practices that build rapport are key to conducting successful research (Garbarski et al., 2016); sharing personal motivations regarding the subject matter and selecting an appropriate style of interviewing can help maintain respondents' engagement. An interviewer that exemplifies this best in my eyes is Louis Theroux. Of particular interest are the motivations that fuel his interviewing capabilities. When being interviewed by *The Diary Of A CEO* (2022), Louis responded to the question "How do you connect with people?" by highlighting the need for an interviewer to have a natural curiosity, and the intent to understand why people think, talk, feel or do what they do. He places great emphasis on being wholly focused on not the outcome of the conversation, but the process and discussion of what has brought this person to this place. What experiences has formed this person in front of me? It is this journey of thought and enquiry that creates a storyline to any interview.

Most interestingly, within this same interview (The Diary Of A CEO, 2022) Louis speaks to the idea of inquisitiveness inspiring inquisitiveness. By allowing your interviewees to know that you care or are intrigued by the subject matter allows them in turn to lean into their own connectedness to that subject. This can create a space of mutual exploration that your interviewee might not have participated in before. These two exemplars of interview styles, techniques and practices directly

influenced the way in which my interviews are positioned within my audio documentary. I reframed the structure from a responsive narrative led by what the interviewer is asking to one entirely centred around the experiences of the interviewee. This challenged me as the researcher to lean into the feeling of mutual exploration and listen to find the linking throughline across the interviews, to follow the shape of the stories that these interviewees want to tell.

Chapter 4: The Interview Process

Methodology

This study aims to answer the question, what are the impacts of teacher feedback on self confidence in adults with developmental dyslexia? It looks specifically at the demographic of adults with dyslexia—age range: 18-29. This is based on literature highlighting the need for continued research into the adult demographic (Jacobs et al., 2022; Lundeen, 2023), the importance of educational experiences in high school and university (Njoku, 2018), identifying new information that hasn't been explored fully due to larger focus on children with dyslexia (McLoughlin & Leather, 2013) and the need to recognise the dyslexic adult experience within the Aotearoa New Zealand context (Ministry of Education, 2016).

To address this need, utilising purposive sampling (Rai & Thapa, 2004) of seven volunteers, each being a dyslexic adult between the ages of 18-29, provided the opportunity to gather data through the semi-structured interviews. Each interview was conducted face to face with the researcher as the interviewer audiotaped for accuracy. Each interviewee was asked the same set of standardised questions, though they could be asked in an order relevant to the conversation, with the interviewer allowing for additional prompts “to facilitate a natural flow of conversation and... encourage participants to talk at length” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 10). It was important to me that specific observations from these sole interviews would become what informed a wider and more generalised conclusion. Taking the specific observations and finding the correlating patterns and relationships between key themes and data points will enable the formation of a wider hypothesis (Woo et al., 2017). These seven interviews form the content of the audio documentary. One of the key aims of the documentary is to give an honest and open representation (Cupchik, 2001) of the participants thoughts, feelings and experiences, as well as influences such as social norms, cultural narratives and institutional authorities—culminating into their collective truth (Lee, 2025). It is my role as a researcher and interviewer to listen and convey these truths in a way that is authentic.

This research will use a phenomenological, interpretivist framework (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) to explore, in depth, the phenomenon of people’s experiences of dyslexia. Each person experiences the world differently and those differences are what can be collectively studied to understand an array of perspectives on a singular subject. Interpretivism is based on the recognition we each interpret the world differently and construct truth and meaning from our own experiences, thus it rejects the notion of objective truth (Crotty, 1998). A study with similar content and analysis method to my own recognised phenomenology as the most apt method for analysing phenomenon

that will appear within firsthand discussions (Strawn, 2008). As this is a qualitative study focusing on the lived experience of dyslexic individuals, it is important to validate their lived experiences -as through an ontological perspective- a person's world is informed and understood based on their own 'lifeworld' experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019).

I used the transcribed interviews as my data set to conduct a thematic analysis—my selected data analysis method—whereby I searched for common themes, patterns or ideas that contribute to answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Jason & Glenwick, 2015). This data analysis started only after all the interviews had been completed so that there was no bias in the questions, I asked or the content that I as the interviewer might have unintentionally prioritised. I used latent thematic analysis as the leading qualitative coding strategy, as it was more important to me to look at the underlying frameworks and meanings of what was said in the interview-based data (Ligteringen, 2025), rather than a semantic thematic analysis where the researcher takes the data at face value. The rational for the choice between these two coding strategies is that latent thematic analysis is that it allows the researcher to take on a more involved role in interpreting codes and themes, meaning the data can be explored within a wider context to reach richer understandings (Byrne, 2022).

Limitations of this technique include a higher level of subjectivity within the analysis (Jason & Glenwick, 2015); findings can rely on the researcher's interpretations of the data and thus have the potential to distort the original perspective. To combat this limitation, the study adopted a reflexive approach: I as the researcher practised self-awareness to actively understand that my own background and experiences of being dyslexic could influence my interpretations (Cunliffe, 2016). Ryan and Golden (2006) make note of how reflexivity involves the ability to be honest and open about how a researcher is not separate from the study but has their own active position in the research process. Active recognition and reflection on this unique reflexive researcher position helps me maintain awareness of how I as the researcher affected the data collection, data analysis, the creative process as well as the final output of the research findings and creative artifact.

Ethical research requires a researcher to recognise how their own biases and backgrounds influence the research process, with specific concerns as to marginalisation and representation (Sultana, 2007). This is especially necessary when collecting data firsthand rather than from a secondary analysis. I am a twenty-six-year-old, cisgender, Pākehā woman holding a bachelor's degree in communications. I understand my own privilege within the Aotearoa New Zealand social context due to my cultural heritage. I also come from a family who valued and championed education, enabling me to imagine and access success in higher education. There is also an epistemic privilege in having a 'lived experience' (Savolainen et al., 2023; Tanner, 2010) that allows access and

deeper insight into the subject matter of intended research. As a neurodivergent, working-class student of the same age demographic (18-29) as the intended participants in this research I acknowledge that my own positionality may influence the research process and the interpretation of research outcomes (Darwin Holmes, 2020), though I will be actively engaging in reflexivity to mitigate any personal biases and enhance the credibility, transparency and positionality of the research (De Souza, 2004).

Further limitations of this study include time constraints (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), sample selection constraints and of representation. To start, the entire process of creating both my artifact and exegesis was constrained to a time limit of one year which required extensive planning on a conservative timeline, including gaining ethics approval. In recognition of this, I went ahead with a smaller sample of participants and a higher volume of interview questions plus conversational clarifications to those questions. Due to this conversational style, the interviews were more prolonged than originally expected, as similarly found in research conducted by Conrad and Schober (1999) in their analysis of conversational interviewing and data quality. However, I believe all these interview process factors had a positive outcome; allowing the interviewees more time to delve deeper into their own experiences and having the space for them to think through how they would like to accurately express those experiences was highly valuable.

I also recognise that though the participants in this research span the stipulated age demographic of 18-29, the gender of the participants is heavily skewed towards female representation. This research is only acting to shine a light on the specific experiences of my participants where “by looking at data from the outsider’s perspective, we have a chance to develop higher level theories and insights” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 11). I cannot speak to the dyslexic experience in countries or cultures outside of the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

Researcher Reflection: What Volunteering Takes

Dear Reader,

I need you to think for a moment what it would take for someone to convince you to donate your time. Now consider having that time be recorded to, in a way, put your difficulties out into the world.

Would you do it?

There is no promise of a reward or compensation. There is no immediate benefit to you. But you see a research poster on the wall as you walk by asking for help, and you consider... Is it worth doing something when I don’t know what's in it for me? I considered this when my research started. What kind of person would sign up to participate in this research with me. Would anyone want to at all? And most importantly, how would I value the people who do?

I was lucky enough to have seven participants who fitted the research criteria for my work. I could not have been more excited to meet them, learn about them, ask them my questions and to let them know how grateful I was. The contemplation of the kind of person they could be leading up to the interviews crossed my mind endlessly; though self-reflection in that way didn't seem to occur to them at all. Each participant mentioned to me in varying ways how they were excited to see someone else with dyslexia doing this kind of work because they knew I would understand. As a researcher I wanted to remind them that it wasn't me who was doing anything special. It was them.

I could facilitate this space but if no one had the courage to go out of their way then this research would never be able to happen. I feel it's more than necessary to help you, the reader, to remember that when the data, I'm referring to my participants and their stories. I would like you to hold that in your mind as we take a journey, exploring the themes and ideas that appeared within these interviews.

Thematic Analysis: Stories Within the Data

The data being analysed are the transcripts from the seven interviews. Each interview ranged in run time from 40 minutes to an hour and a half and the same list of questions was used, with the inclusion of clarifications or added relevant conversational prompts from the interviewer (Conrad & Schober, 1999). The participants chose how much they wanted to respond and had varying levels of interaction with the questions as they related to their own experience. The transcripts from the interviews were manually transcribed by the interviewer on the same day to preserve the accuracy of the written record (Kabir et al., 2025). The interviews were transcribed verbatim, keeping any incomplete phrases and filler words such as pauses, giggles, 'ums' or 'ahs'. This was done to recognise the interviewee cues (McGrath et al., 2019), prioritise complete authenticity and consistency with any sections of interview audio that may be used in the audio documentary rather than prioritising cleaned data.

I worked to familiarise myself with the content of the interviews by re-listening to the audio recordings while reading along with the transcriptions as doing these together helps with information recall and overall immersion into the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). I began the thematic analysis after the completion of all interviews so information gathered at the beginning of the interview process would not affect or create an information bias (Bankhead et al., 2019) in the way that I conducted the later interviews.

Thematic analysis doesn't necessarily involve statistical elements; instead, the researcher works inductively to find themes that are present (Jason & Glenwick, 2015). These themes can be

implicit or explicit within each interview conducted, and the general prevalence of the reoccurring sentiments can enhance the prevalence of a possible theme. Braun and Clarke (2019) note that that there is a difference between domain summary themes which link topics, resulting in underdeveloped themes, and centrally organising concepts based on meaning. Providing deeper meaning rather than topic building is a key distinction that I kept in mind during the process of coding and theme building.

Next, I reflexively cycled through each interview looking to highlight interesting and informative pieces of information. These were universally highlighted and their possible underlying meanings were annotated. I repeated this process through each of the seven interviews. This process of generating codes (Byrne, 2022) involves finding smaller pieces of information that later collapse into one another to form what would become the sub and core themes of the research (Jacobs et al., 2022). Once each interview had been gone over once, I repeated that process twice more. It was important during this process to not develop tunnel vision, and allow the words being spoken in their personal context to find their true and deeper meaning underneath—what is called latent coding (Espedal et al., 2022; Ligteringen, 2025).

I found my capacity as a wholistic thinker — a trait common for dyslexics as noted by Taylor & Vestergaard (2022) —was helpful in pulling the puzzle together. With each wave of analysis, I became increasingly able to recall pieces of dialogue that had linking codes across the different interviews, forming ideas of how to group these codes and highlighting them accordingly. I specifically began to differentiate and colour highlight these codes using *Figma* (Figma, 2025), a digital canvas where you can expansively mind map. I was able to colour code and visualise the formation of themes through categorical colour pallets (Gsellmann et al., 2023). This colour technique is most effective for creating visual groups of items less than ten, which worked perfectly with my lower estimate of eventual themes. The formation of themes is not necessarily inclusive of all the codes that may have been found. Rather, the new goal is the interpretation of aggregated meaning to show the nuance and complexities across the interview dataset (Byrne, 2022; Jason & Glenwick, 2015). Through this process, three sub-themes and three core themes were established.

Thematic Analysis: Themes That Tell Stories

This section presents the final themes of the interviews, which informed the creation of an audio documentary that tells the honest experiences of seven dyslexic adults. The rationale for each of the themes is supported by relevant quotes from the interviewees so that readers can understand how their ideas were directly articulated and act as the window to the wider conversations. The interviewees are anonymous to the public to preserve their personal privacy (Navarro-Arribas &

Torra, 2015); therefore, where quotes and general content from an interview are specified, they are labelled according to the interviewee number in the order of which the interviews took place (e.g., *Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2).* The essence of each interviewee's experience is paramount to preserve. To achieve this, the following questions were asked:

a. If a theme is formed, is it useful for understanding the data set as well as the research question? If so, is there a meaningful amount of data within this scope to support a core theme or sub-theme? (Byrne, 2022)
b. In seeking relationships between themes, which themes (core themes) are fundamental to the emerging narrative structure of the upcoming audio documentary, and which themes play a supportive role (sub-theme)? (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014)

The following six themes are the result of these questions applied to the thematically analysed content. The themes have been categorised into sub-themes or core themes (Byrne, 2022) based on their relevance to the interview question and the importance placed upon them by the interviewees (through explicate statement of importance or the frequency of the coding to which the theme is made up of):

a. Sub-Theme 1: 'Equity Through Allowances'
b. Sub-Theme 2: 'Passion Led Learning'
c. Sub-Theme 3: 'Social Stigma'
d. Core Theme 1: 'The Impact of a Diagnosis'
e. Core Theme 2: 'Teacher Feedback'
f. Core Theme 3: 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem'

Sub-Theme 1: 'Equity Through Allowances'

This sub theme encapsulates the importance that the participants placed on their ability to achieve academically through the usages of allowances. In this context, the term 'allowance' describes a modification or usage of special support in the educational context through style of presentation, type of response medium, different setting for testing/exams and scheduling to allow extra time for tasks/tests (Dyslexia Support South, 2025). Allowances were established by the interviewees as part of what enables them to be on par with neurotypical students. The compiling of codes such as 'Fighting for School Support', 'Unfair Exam Accommodations' and 'Need for Reader-Writer' became the sub-themes of 'Equity Through Allowances'.

The interviewees describe the direct correlation between the effective use of an in-classroom allowances and personal achievement. Moreover, experiences varied when it came to whether allowances were pre-emptively set up by a school or teacher for the student, or if the

allowance had to be advocated for by the student themselves or their family. Those who received a higher level of care through the usage of allowances commented on their privilege and 'luck' when it came to receiving this support; they were aware of or knew students who were not receiving the same level of support. This shows that in addition to the inbuilt inequity between neurotypical students and dyslexic students, varying levels of allowances are offered to dyslexic students for reasons unknown to the interviewees.

Interviewee 5:

If they give me... Read this book, I'm like, okay, I'll listen to an audiobook and read along with it because that's one way I can, you know... And they're like, no, read it. I'm like, no, I need like an audiobook. I need something to help me.

Interviewee 6:

I knew that as, as if I got plucked, that I went to a separate room. It was an even playing field for me. To somebody else who was in a big hall. Yeah. Like it made it even.

Sub-Theme 2: 'Passion Led Learning'

'Passion Led Learning' embodies the concept of educational success being driven by students' passions. In the interviewees' dyslexic experience, they reported receiving the highest grades for, and obtaining the most enjoyment from, hands-on, creative or overall fun subjects. The interviewees found a sense of fulfilment and a lack of self-doubt when taking part in subjects where their passions were at the forefront of the curriculum. In this way, codes such as 'Choosing Subjects by Enjoyment', 'Success in Enjoyable Hands-On Subjects' and 'Extracurricular Compensation for Academic Achievement' became the second subtheme of *'Passion Led Learning'*.

Interviewee 2:

I love history, I love politics, those are two things I'm really interested in. That's a lot of writing. It's a lot of reading. I don't want to do all of that. Well I do, but I probably can't is the thing.

Interviewee 7:

Like I definitely was better in the technical subjects. Like I enjoy drama and performing arts in order to making stuff... But also I, I did better and things that I was passionate about so I could write more if I was really passionate about the subject.

Sub-Theme 3: 'Social Stigma'

Social stigma stems from when the general public holds a negative belief about a specific group of people (Olivine, 2025). In these interviews, the throughline of social stigma was based around the

idea that dyslexia and a dyslexic person is something to be fixed as well as being considered less intelligent or stupid. Such stereotyping was often internalised by the interviewees and carried through their high school experience. Whether or not the other students or teachers around them carried that same negative view of them, the impact of social stigma lasted through into adulthood. As an example, three codes present within this sub theme were 'Teachers Treated Dyslexic Students Differently', 'Dyslexia is Something Wrong with You' and 'Social Standing Based on Perceived Achievement'. These codes and this overall theme are best shown in the following interview quotes.

Interviewee 1:

I was talking to someone about how I have dyslexia, and they were like, oh I thought my son had that, but I didn't want to get diagnosed because that would be something wrong with them... A lot of that is viewed as something wrong. And that is what I hate the most in the world, because it's not something wrong, it's just different.

Interviewee 4:

I'd have like teacher aids sometimes come into my class and sometimes I just felt like I was an outcast, you know, like oh, look at this person. She's got someone there to help her, you know? So I felt like I didn't belong sometimes in high school.

Core Theme 1: 'The Impact of a Diagnosis'

Having a formal diagnosis was one of the criteria for taking part in this research. This is to ensure that the participants can give an authentic attestation to their dyslexic experiences. However, there was no specified timeframe that they had to have been diagnosed by as long as they had the diagnosis before this research took place. This resulted in a participant pool with a variation in the age they were when diagnosed. It was found in the interviews that this variation made a difference in personal understanding, educational treatment and lived experience pre versus post dyslexia diagnosis. Those who were diagnosed with dyslexia earlier in their lives, pre high-school experience, showed a greater level of self-acceptance and confidence through their formative high-school years as opposed to those who were diagnosed during high school or further into their adult lives. The impact of a diagnosis interweaves with all other themes, as it pinpoints the conscious beginning of their personal journeys with dyslexia (though they would have been dealing with it their whole lives prior to this discovery). Codes such as 'Understanding Self Through Diagnosis', 'Age of Diagnosis' and 'Recognition of Different Processing' formulate the theme of 'The Impact of a Diagnosis'.

Interviewee 3:

High school and stuff... It makes you feel quite stupid. Which is why my like, diagnosis was a huge deal to me because it made me realize I'm not stupid, I'm different and I'm not failing the system. The system is failing me.

Interviewee 5:

As someone who got diagnosed as a child, I was, born into a world where they basically just, everyone said, oh, this is like a normal thing. So I grew up with it being normal in my family.

Core Theme 2: 'Teacher Feedback'

The theme of 'Teacher Feedback' is situated at the centre of this research, as it has been found to be the anchor and turning point in the interviewees high school narrative. A teacher is the face of education in the day to day lives of students. Teachers are authority figures that can shape a person's relationship with not only their self-esteem, but their relationship with education (Martan et al., 2018; Tobbell & O'Donnell, 2013). Studies into the student teacher relationship show a strong correlation between academic success and students having an interpersonal relationship with a 'valued' teacher (Martin et al., 2007; Tobbell & O'Donnell, 2013). Students in this study highlighted that what makes a 'valued' teacher is their openness, the ease at which a student felt they could communicate with the teacher and the reciprocity of that communication.

Each student has a unique relationship with their teacher and therefore has the potential for both positive and negative reinforcement to occur. Within the context of the dyslexic experience of the education system, when negative educational experiences in the classroom can compile into the conundrum of failure (Tanner, 2009) where dyslexic students feel inadequate due to the institutional attitudes towards learners who face difficulties or whose academic efforts are not considered adequate. Based upon the interviewee's experiences, the codes of 'Want for Feedback', 'Teachers Creating Safe Spaces' and 'Teachers Understanding Dyslexia' were developed into the overarching core theme of 'Teacher Feedback'.

Interviewee 5:

"Like my teachers, they just like yeah they had a massive issue with me being dyslexic. They were like, read it. And I'm like, I'm trying; read it; I'M TRYING... I don't know how. Yeah they were really aggressive towards that. Some teachers were like, it's okay."

Interviewee 7:

"My relationship with the teachers were pretty good... And they really did understand. Most of them had heard of dyslexia and knew about it. Others, I had to inform a bit more. Some of them just didn't really understand it [dyslexia]."

Core Theme 3: 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem'

As stated in the discussion of core theme 3— 'Teacher Feedback'—teachers can shape a person's relationship with their self-esteem (Tobbell & O'Donnell, 2013), meaning that these two core themes are strongly interlinked. The period a person spends in high school encompasses the formative years of their development (Ministry of Education, 2025), which can have both positive and negative impacts later in life. Supporting dyslexic people well in an educational context can lead to the establishment of their own belief in personal ability, while a lack of support has shown a correlation between the formation of low self-esteem, lowered ambition and feelings of shame (Hamilton & Clark, 2024; Kannangara, 2018; Purvis, 2024; Stets & Burke, 2014). In knowing how vast the spectrum of formative experiences can be, it is important to understand that the 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem' is different for every dyslexic student.

A worthwhile note in the analysis of the interview data was that the interviewees across all seven interviews used the words 'self-esteem' and 'confidence' interchangeably. The wording of the research question only includes self-esteem, but to honour the intent of the interviewees and to deliver a thematic analysis that is as accurate as possible, the development of codes included both confidence and self-esteem. The 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem' is a multifaceted theme; contradictions appeared in the interviews because of the interviewees grappling with their own experiences being both negative and positive. These experiences were synthesised into the codes of 'Differentiation of Social and Academic Confidence', 'Teacher Recognition Building Confidence' and the 'Separation of Self-Esteem from Academic Validation'.

> *Interviewee 1:*
>
> *"I always found more positivity and happiness from social setting, from being social rather than from academic side of things... Any time I didn't get a good grade I'd feel like, I was so like, I'd blame myself and feel like I'm dumb and blah blah blah."*
>
> *Interviewee 2:*
>
> *"I would say that it [dyslexia] probably gave me, um, a low tolerance to, to things that I'm predisposed not to be good at... It's like, oh, well, you're not ever going to be good at this so what's the point of trying?"*

Based on this analysis, what are the impacts of teacher feedback on self confidence in adults with developmental dyslexia? Can this question be answered yet? Together, each interview contributing to this thematic analysis —and the themes derived from it—tells a larger story. This story is now left with me as the researcher to tell. It is the responsibility of the researcher to be reflective and examine the purpose for research action. My own purpose for conducting this

research is to further represent an underrepresented group, my own dyslexic community and their first-hand experiences (Edwards, 2002; Jacobs et al., 2022). These experiences are valued and necessary to the continued understanding of the dyslexic experience and is further explored in the ensuing creative process, discussion and conclusion chapters.

Researcher Reflection: Interlude

Dear Reader,

Here is where I would ask you to stop and listen to the audio documentary itself. You've read every piece of background information and content analysis necessary to understand anything that appears within the audio documentary.

Well, all but the content of the interviews themselves.

These are the stories and backgrounds of dyslexic adults and how their self-confidence in their adult years has been impacted by teacher feedback in their most formative years.

For the next hour and a half place yourself in their shoes. For a period, you were once a young person at school. Working hard, maybe not working at all. But I'm sure you remember your time well enough. Have you ever considered how you were shaped by your experiences and interactions? Whether your teachers praised or reprimanded you. Whether you felt your teachers cared about you or were attentive to your needs. Think back to if you ever thought your worth was dictated by your academic achievement? And if it wasn't, is that a privilege to have not even be aware of it?

Did you ever feel different? Feel stupid? Feel shame? Feel pride? Feel excited?

Feel you achieved something impossible? Feel like you achieved nothing at all?

Maybe someone in this research felt the same way. Maybe, regardless of you the reader having or not having dyslexia, in reading this thesis and listening to this audio documentary you can find value in learning about the experiences of these individuals.

As this research was conducted with participants within the age demographic of 18-29, it makes sense to have mastered the audio documentary to the ideal standard of this demographic's listening preference. For this reason, the mastering has been most suitably balanced and curated for a stereo headphone experience (Sepetys, 2019)*, though the quality and balance is preserved when being played over speakers or other forms of listening apparatus.*

So go find your best set of headphones and settle into a comfy spot.

I hope you enjoy.

Chapter 5: The Creative Process

Welcome now to the unfurling recounting of the creative process. You will have now listened to the audio documentary. I hope you enjoyed it and maybe even garnered a new perspective on the dyslexic experience. This chapter will take you through the rationale and thought processes behind the steps taken in the creation of the audio documentary. All the creative development considerations are supported by research about audio techniques, good practice for audio editing, the formation of narrative and previous content mentioned in chapters two through three of this exegesis. These will form the basis of the creative overview, influences on the audio documentary structure, justifications of the formal creation process and creative pivots made.

Creative Overview

The editing software I used for the audio documentary was Adobe Premier Pro. You might wonder why I would choose what is traditionally a video editing software for audio editing. Though there are other editing software programs such as Adobe Audition, the minimalist yet highly interactive editing system allowed for me to have a clearer view of waveforms, which made audio sequences easier to read as well as extensively colour code (Tobin, 2024). I am a creative thinker who works best with audio/visual sources. I am most confident working in a way that allows me to look at the bigger picture to find connections between perspectives or pieces of information, alongside having a great imagination and keen attention to detail (Cooper, 2009; Taylor & Vestergaard, 2022). The advantages of these skills in this research context are that when the audios from each interview—the music, the sound effects, the diegetic (naturally occurring in the moment) and non-diegetic sounds (not naturally occurring, rather added in) (Cecchi, 2010) —were layered together on a multi-track project file, I could easily understand how each piece of audio information can fit together based on my creative desire for the project. This strength of mine is corroborated in research into the dyslexic experience explaining that dyslexic people have great spatial reasoning and visualisation skills (Moriah, 2025).

This audio documentary was intended to create an experience for the listener of being guided through one continuing story that, with the structural narrative flowing through the interlinking themes as described in Chapter 4: The Interview Process (McHugh, 2014). I wanted listeners to experience emotional atmospheres curated through sound design and the development of soundscape composition (Feasey-Kemp, 2025) to support the content from the interviews. I would like listeners of this audio documentary to come away with a feeling of slight pensiveness,

reflecting on the subject matter and shared experiences with newfound understanding rather than sympathy (Jailalli, 2020).

Influence on Audio Documentary Structure

The final structure of the audio documentary was influenced by a combination of narrative analysis (Delve, 2020), thematic understanding, audio storytelling techniques (Gray, 2023) and creative exploration. For the formation of my documentary's narrative, I considered the following:

a. Humans are storytellers and the world itself is a set of stories (Fisher, 1985). Therefore, to experience the world is to experience the culmination of 'communication situations' ruled by media, culture, personal character and experience. The narrative needed to centre around the personal character of the interviewees through the stories being told as collaborative learning (De Oliveira Neto & Filgueiras, 2008).
b. The formation of narrative as the progression of events—told in or out of order—for the purpose of creating a cohesive plotline to convey perspectives to a particular audience (Ochs et al., 2009).
c. The structure of this documentary needed to be broken down and easily understood.

Therefore, I created five sections (introduction, body section 1-3 and conclusion), while core soundscaped moments are described as scenes. The introductory scene of the audio documentary showed a soundscaped experience of arriving at a classroom setting: walking in from a loud outdoor setting into a more muffled sonic atmosphere. At this moment, the listener would hear: *A shift in ambient sound, having heard students talking in the background, chairs creaking, pens writing on paper, LED lights buzzing overhead, the increasing depiction of nervousness through the background music swelling alongside a barely audible but growing heartbeat.*

Specifically, this example of how soundscaping was used throughout the audio documentary to amplify a narrative. Soundscaping aims to call attention to the human element; the relationship between sound and how people process it (Porteous & Mastin, 1985). This scene reached its peak with a compilation of 'bumpers' (Gray, 2023)—short pieces of audio content used to introduce the story, hook the listener, and highlight the core subjects that will later be discussed. As the interviewer, incorporating my own commentary was for the purpose of setting out the aims and expectations for the interviews. This in turn would allow for the listener to better understand the documentary's position within wider dyslexia research.

The beginning of this audio documentary's narrative structure functioned to establish the necessary contextual information. The idea of scene setting, building the body of the work and forming a narrative conclusion is very much the same whether conveying relevant research as an

academic or telling a story (Mandelbaum & Fuller, 2021). The six themes derived from the thematic analysis were used as subject guidelines to structure the body sections of the audio documentary. I noted patterns across the interviews that could act as links between each of the themes to create a cohesive and flowing narrative.

The first body section was represented by the theme of 'The Impact of Diagnosis'. Though this was only considered a sub-theme in the analysis, the allotment of time given within the audio documentary was large because the interviewees closely linked the stories of their personal backgrounds and early educational experiences with their diagnosis. These insights were fundamental in establishing the interviewees' characters (De Oliveira Neto & Filgueiras, 2008) and laying the groundwork for a more in-depth exploration. The diagnosis impact combined with interviewee background details also allowed for the transition to the second body section, led by the theme of 'Equity Through Allowances', to flow easily.

Based on the first two body sections, it could be assumed that each theme had its own distinct place in the structure of the audio documentary. However, that was not the case for the remaining four themes ('Passion Led Learning', 'Social Stigma', 'Teacher Feedback' and 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem'). In the interviews, the conversations would often cycle through these remaining four themes. For example, when speaking about a negative experience in the classroom with a teacher, that experience had layers to it. This conversation could explain how the 'Teacher Feedback' a participant had received affected their 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem', which in turn reinforced the 'Social Stigma' that they felt within the classroom setting. Similarly, when participants were asked about their favourite teachers, responses often revealed that when they were participating in 'Passion Led Learning'; this resulted in higher levels of positive 'Teacher Feedback' impacting the 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem'. As these interviews were conversational and often moved between subjects, these intertwining themes (Byrne, 2022) come together to create the third body section.

The conclusion of the audio documentary involves the pulling together of narrative threads in a satisfactory way to provide 'meaningful closure' (HRBN Publishing, 2025). For this, I left the ending in the hands of the interviewees, giving them the opportunity to share what they knew would formulate this conclusion. The result of this was the creation of heartfelt reflections, messages to listeners of encouragement, advice and wishes for other dyslexic students to not only fight for their needs but to also learn to rely on each other for moral support.

Formal Creation and Necessary Creative Pivots

The formal creation of the audio documentary began by laying out segments of rough-cut interview audio into the editing software, loosely sorting them into relevant sections (introduction, body sections 1-3 and conclusion), shuffling and piecing together those interview audios to create miniature story arcs within those sections. I systematically went from start to finish through the content in the editing file; with each iteration I alternated between listening for notation of feedback and refinement in an iterative fashion (Sayre, 2023). Once I was satisfied with the complete structure the next steps were to exact formalised edits, adding transitions and forming the intended atmosphere of the project through the addition of background music and soundscaping.

Noticing my own taste and editing to that style (Abel, 2015) was instrumental in creating the feeling of authenticity within the audio documentary. Style refers to the organisation of sound elements and the creative choices made to create a standardised impact across a body of work (Faris et al., 2022; JM Podcasting Services, 2025). Recognising my own media influences as inspirations, but departing from them stylistically, showed how I understood that a narrative should be formed based on the aims of this research. The choice to conduct conversational interviewing strategically provided the personable and raw sounding audio content that would best suit my taste and editing style. It was these same reasons that I chose to not include usage of a narrator. There are arguments for narration being a stylistic device within audio documenting that helps to guide the listener by calling to attention key ideas, but in opposition to this, the lack of narration encourages higher listener agency and engagement with the content that speaks most to them (Delioglanis, 2023). I do not want to lead the listener through this audio documentary; I want them to autonomously experience the ebbs and flows of the narrative and come to their own conclusions during their listening experience.

An overarching consideration was the ethics and the impact of representation for research legitimacy (Fiveable, 2025). While this research is centred on the experiences of the dyslexic participants, there was a potential consideration about choosing segments of their interviews to maximise the audio quality of the documentary. This includes the selection of audio based on narrative relevance but also based on the quality of the interviewee's communication and any disruption to the sound quality (room sounds, tapping, stuttering etc.). Ultimately, I made the decision to include all audio segments that best captured the participants stories rather than conform to conventional prioritisation of quality over substance (Kontis, 2017).

Regarding sound effects, there was a key utilization of a tape recorder click sound to create clean transitions, constitute a change in audio message, and invite an increase in attention (Rodero, 2012). I chose this sound because it is immediately recognisable to the listener and plays on the idea of them witnessing the interviews from beginning to end. In addition, the tape recorder was a major

piece of technology within the educational space, where it was first used to record a teacher's training lessons and eventually as an accommodation strategy for students with learning disabilities (Price, 1984; Vried, 1965). The incorporation of this tape recorder click is an homage to those teachers and students who were navigating the complicated teacher/student relationship in their own way.

I selected five synth instrumentals as part of the non-diegetic soundscape. The songs within this genre were chosen because of their flowing and repetitive nature. The predictability of the specific synth track allows for easier processing of the background sound (Fiveash et al., 2018); this same idea relates to both music and spoken language running on multiple levels. Music itself supports the formation of narrative (Gray, 2023) through the signalling of a continuation or a resolution (Mildorf & Kinzel, 2016) of the various sections and scenes throughout the audio documentary.

There were audio editing elements that did not go to plan, so having adaptability during the creative process enabled unforeseen challenges or to be met with new technologies and strategies to stay aligned with the project's intended outcome (Meegle, 2025). One example was when I discovered that the recording of my seventh and final interview was distorted. There was an electrical interference that had distorted the interview audio, though this wasn't audible in the room at the time of the recording. This also did not show up in the test recording (a measure I used as a prevention tactic to prevent any issue of this nature occurring). I was worried about having to redo the interview and was apprehensive as I did not want the original interview content to deviate or to ask the interviewee to participate a second time.

I knew the cause of the distortion was not from the room itself, so it had to be a technology/recording apparatus malfunction. To investigate further, I broke the audio down into layers to see if there was a way to remove the sound. All of my recordings used the stereo setting which has two independent audio channels—left and right—to create a more realistic, three-dimensional sound experience. By separating the left audio from the right audio, I was able to compare the two (McQuarrie, 2024) and found that all distortion was originating from the lefthand side. This meant I could remove the distorted audio and turn the remaining righthand audio into a mono audio (sound that comes through both sides equally) to 'simulate stereo' sound (Théberge et al., 2015). Consequently, the audio sounded one dimensional, so I underlaid a recording of the same interview rooms ambient sound to rebuild some ambient texture. I used this audio instead of rerecording her interview to keep the original reactions and thought processes from the interview and avoid any ethical implications of re interviewing.

A similar disruption to the audio occurred during the third interview, when questions began pertaining to positive affirmation and acknowledgements from teachers. The participant became passionate, both in voice and physicality, leading her to drop her hands to the table in a repeated motion to emphasise her commentary. This caused major peaks in a section that is offering important insights to her experiences. After deliberation and conducting additional research, I decided that the sound of her physicality helps the understanding of her negative emotion in addition to her voice (Collignon et al., 2008; Rodero, 2012).

In concluding the editing of the audio documentary, I ensured the consistency in overall narrative cohesion through the clarity of narrative order, the balance in participant auditory inclusion and the balancing of sound levels (Feasey-Kemp, 2025; Lu et al., 2016; Moncrief & Venkateshf, 2006; Pieters, 2015), concluding the final audio mastering and export.

Chapter 6: Final Discussions and Conclusions

The aim of this research was to explore the practice of audio documentary making as a means of amplifying the voices and experiences of dyslexic people to answer the question: what are the impacts of teacher feedback on self confidence in adults with developmental dyslexia? This exegesis provided the record of the creative process, showing how this audio documentary acts as the primary site of my research contribution into the dyslexic experience (Candy, 2006) and highlighted the necessary critical knowledge to analyse and contextualise this work. Both parts of this project form my own original contribution, both in the fields of documentary making and in dyslexia research.

The findings of this research were informed by each participant providing their varying responses, based on their own unique experience, but all contributing to the various themes that emerged from the interview data. Through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) it became evident that there is no single answer to this research question, rather that the intricacies of each theme ('Equity Through Allowances', 'Wanting Passion Led Learning', 'Social Stigma', 'The Impact of a Diagnosis', 'Teacher Feedback' and 'Formation of Confidence and Self-Esteem') formed a multilayered argument that the impact of teacher feedback on the self-confidence of the participants was impactful and varied according to context.

Teacher feedback was shown to be influential and was experienced differently based on the participants interpersonal relationship with the teacher and the subject environment. This is consistent with research that demonstrates the importance of teacher/student relationships for the success of dyslexic students (Gibson & Kendall, 2010). A further finding was that the impact on their self-esteem was notably different depending on the understanding the participants had of their own dyslexia. Students who knew they were dyslexic while at school tended to have more understanding of their struggles and thus be less likely to experience their learning differences as an unknown deficit in themselves. This impacted on self-esteem and also how they processed positive and negative teacher. Again, this is consistent with research that highlights the importance of early diagnosis (Jacobs et al., 2022).

These agreements, contradictions and complexities were presented within the audio documentary where the articulation of the participants experiences is best conveyed through their own voices while I work as the researcher to present them in an authentic way. The material relates back to previous research established throughout chapter two. The choice to present this research in an audio format for the purpose of audio accessibility for a dyslexic audience (Everatt et al., 1999) situates this academic work within the scope of dyslexia research. My research expands upon on

studies conducted in the United Kingdom by Jacobs et al. (2022) recognising the necessity of understanding dyslexia from the perspective of students themselves by looking at the lasting impacts of teacher feedback on students' self-esteem past the high school experience as they continue into adult life.

These results reflect the experiences of these interviewees and are not generalisable. However, the opportunity to provide in depth stories of specific people brings a different perspective from quantitative research about dyslexia. Furthermore, this research has limited cultural and ethnic diversity among the participants. It does not speak to the unique experiences dyslexic Māori people may have or to the dyslexic experience in countries or cultures outside of the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Further directions for research could include expanding this enquiry out into other cultures and age groups, and developing more qualitative research that explores lived experience of dyslexia to inform policy and practice. This could help to provide richer information into the continued lived experience of dyslexic adults continuing further into their lives and face new challenges.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Advertisement Poster

Appendix B: Participant Information sheet

Information Sheet: Research Participant

Project title: *The Impacts Of Teacher Feedback On Self Confidence in Adults with Developmental Dyslexia*

Project Supervisor: *Joanne Blackett*

Researcher: *Meoghan Craig*

Date: / /2025

Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to enquire about volunteering for this research study. My name is Meoghan Craig, and I am studying my Master of Communications through Auckland University of Technology (AUT). This research is contributing to my thesis, where I am looking into what impact teacher feedback during the high school experience has on the self confidence levels of adults with developmental dyslexia.

This research will be presented though the format of an audio documentary, as I want it to be an accessible piece of academics for dyslexic individuals in a way that a traditional thesis is otherwise not.

What will this research be about?

While there are many studies out in the world about dyslexia, this research aims to explore the lived experiences of adults with dyslexia. Specifically, this research is looking into a person's high school experience, and the impact of teacher feedback on the self confidence levels of those same adults now.

As someone who also has dyslexia it is no surprise to me that a person's experiences at high school can have an impact on their self-confidence. The aim of this research is to open dialogue about these experiences and translate them into a format that other adults with dyslexia can easily access. This can potentially contribute to them feeling validated in their own experiences. I believe that there is a community of people who would benefit from hearing that their experiences are shared and understood with others just like themselves.

The purpose of this research

The purpose of this research is to gather these lived experiences, identify themes and present them in an accessible format for other adults with dyslexia in the public to hear. I will create an audio documentary that

shares these experiences so that a person listening who may be/have been through a similar experience can feel seen and represented.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

If you have received an information sheet, you will have seen a research advertisement either digitally posted on Facebook or a physical copy on the AUT City Campus and contacted me about taking part. You are being invited to take part because your experiences as a person with dyslexia can make an important contribution to this research project.

The criteria for inclusion in this research (as seen on the research advertisement) is as follows:

- Participants must have a professional dyslexia diagnosis
- Participants must be aged between 18-29
- Participants must be currently living in Auckland
- Participants must take part in both an interview and focus group
- Participants must be able to speak fluent English

Similarly, the exclusion criteria for this research are as follows:

- Participants will be excluded if they are close friends or family of the Primary Researcher

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you choose to participate, there will be a participant consent form which is compulsory to fill out. The consent form must be completed and submitted back to me before either the interview or focus group can take place.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

The consent process is designed to be as clear and informative as possible. I (the primary researcher) am always available to answer any questions you may have throughout this process.

What will happen in this research?

You will be part of a group of volunteers, of which 8 participants will be asked to take part in a 1 on 1 interview with Meoghan Craig (the primary researcher) followed by a focus group on a later date with all 8 volunteers.

The interviews are designed to explore each person's experiences through high school in relation to their dyslexia and the feedback/interactions with your teachers (for privacy concerns, none of which must be named).

The focus group is intended to discuss more generally the same content from the interviews but in an open environment with other participants who share similar experiences. This is to unpack the broad topics shared throughout the interviews.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I understand that sharing personal experiences, thoughts and feelings can at times feel unnerving or raise negative emotions. I endeavour to be an understanding interviewer and group moderator that you will feel comfortable in the knowledge that you can stop at any time, whether that be pausing the interview/focus group, or removing yourself from the study.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

During the interview or focus group process, any participant can stop answering questions, choose not to answer any question, or stop the interview at any time. Your comfort and privacy is of the highest priority.

If you find you are in need of support after you have participated in this research:

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To ess these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health

What are the benefits?

The benefit of this research is that this research is being designed to be accessible to the dyslexic public through the medium of audio documentary. The traditional thesis format does not allow for most of the public to have accessible reading due to its length. However, this creative thesis format enables that openness. You may also gain personal benefit from exploring your own experiences with another person.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy is of the utmost importance. The research data, transcriptions and audio files that are collected from the participants will be stored on the AUT network through the researchers OneDrive during the research period. These files will also be accessible only to myself (the primary researcher) and my supervisor.

At the completion of the research, all data will be transferred to a secure hard drive and stored securely as required by the AUT Ethics Committee for 6 years. This data will not be used for anything else during this time, it is merely a precaution of safekeeping.

Within the audio documentary, the participants can choose if they would like to be addressed by their name or a pseudonym (different/false name) to keep a level of privacy. Participants can also choose to have a piece of personal dialogue stricken from the record, both in audio and transcript, should it make them feel uncomfortable or it breaches their personal privacy. However, within the focus group a participant may not ask for other participants words to be stricken. It is the researcher's goal for all participants to feel safe in sharing what they feel comfortable with.

There will also be the choice of having a voice actor perform the transcription of your interview and/or focus group dialogue should you wish to remove your voice from the audio documentary.

How much time will it take to participate in this research?

The approximate time needed from each participant is as follows:

The interview will run for 30-45 minutes, while the focus group will run for an hour. These times are not inclusive of personal travel time to the AUT City campus where the interview and focus group would take place.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is no cost to participate in this research other than the participants personal transport to the AUT City Campus where the interview and focus group will be held.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Each participant will have two weeks to consider their participation in this research. This allows for enough time so that the prospective participant can ask any questions before confirming/denying their participation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Each participant will receive a 1–2 page report based off the primary researchers' findings. This report will contain discussion of the main themes and analysis of the research. It will be given to each participant prior to the audio documentary being released.

Participants will also have the choice (as shown on the consent form) to receive a copy of their interview audio file and transcript. This is so that the participant has a clear idea of all that was discussed in the effort of full transparency as to what may be included in the audio documentary.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Joanne Blackett, joanne.blackett@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7012.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Primary Researcher: Meoghan Craig, dwm7917@aut.ac.nz 0212348546

Project Supervisor: Joanne Blackett, joanne.blackett@aut.ac.nz +64 9 921 9999 ext 7012.

Appendix C: Consent form

Participant Consent Form

Project title: The Impacts Of Teacher Feedback On Self Confidence in Adults with Developmental Dyslexia

Project Supervisor: Joanne Blackett

Researcher: Meaghan Craig

Interview Consent

I understand that the researcher will be taking notes during the interview; the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

Yes ○ No ○

I understand that the researcher's supervisor will also have access to the participant's audio files, transcriptions and the participant's information during the research period.

Yes ○ No ○

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the interview process and to have them answered.

Yes ○ No ○

Focus Group Consent

I understand that the researcher will be taking notes during the focus group; the focus group will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

Yes ○ No ○

I understand that the identities of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential. I agree to keep all information discussed by myself and the other participants' information confidential.

Yes ○ No ○

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the focus group process and to have them answered.

Yes ○ No ○

General Participant Consent

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd/mm/yyyy.

Yes ○ No ○

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

Yes ○ No ○

I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

Yes ○ No ○

I agree to take part in this research.

Yes ○ No ○

I consent to having my voice used in the audio documentary.

Yes ○ No ○

I give consent for this audio documentary to be shared with the wider public.

Yes ○ No ○

I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

I wish to receive my personal interview transcript (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

I wish to receive my personal interview audio file (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on** type the date on which the final approval was granted **AUTEC Reference number** type the AUTEC reference number 24/361*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Appendix D: Table of Participants

Interviewee Order Number	Gender	Age
Interview 1	Female	26
Interview 2	Male	27
Interview 3	Female	29
Interview 4	Female	21
Interview 5	Female	20
Interview 6	Female	27
Interview 7	Female	25

Appendix D: Indicative Questions

Indicative Questions: Interviews

These questions will be the starting point as to how the interview will be lead. Seeing as how this will be a semi structured interview, there will be space for the researcher to ask the interviewee relevant undocumented questions based off key points the interviewee speaks on during the interview process.

1) In your words, how would you describe dyslexia?
2) How does dyslexia impact you in your everyday life?
3) What do you do for a living right now?
   - Are you a student?
   - Are you working in a career?
4) How would you describe your confidence levels as a person?
   - Is there a difference in your confidence levels academically vs socially?
5) How would you describe your overall high school experience?
6) How would you describe your high school experience from an academic perspective?
7) Do you feel as though your dyslexia impacted on your achievements or personal ability to achieve in high school?
8) How did dyslexia influence/impact on your life during high school?
   (Eg academic achievement, friendships, attendance)
9) Tell me about your relationships with your teachers?
   - Were they supportive?
   - Were they helpful to you specifically regarding your learning processes?
   - Do you have a favourite teacher? What made them your favourite?
10) Do you have a memory where you felt *affirmed or inspired* by something a teacher said to you or did for you?
    - Recalling that feeling, how would you describe it?
    - What specifically about that action made you feel that way?
11) Do you have a memory where you felt *negatively* impacted by something a teacher said to you or did to you?
12) Do you think that your teachers fully understood your dyslexia and how it impacts you?
    Yes/No - Tell me more

13) Do you think that your teachers feedback had an impact on your self confidence levels?
Yes/No
14) If yes, did that impact influence what you could see yourself accomplishing after high school? In what way?
15) Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you think would be worth knowing about your experiences? Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Indicative Questions: Focus Group

These questions will be adapted based off the core themes and messages from the interviews that have already occurred. Listed below will also be prompts to elicit conversation in an open manner that the participants can lead themselves in.

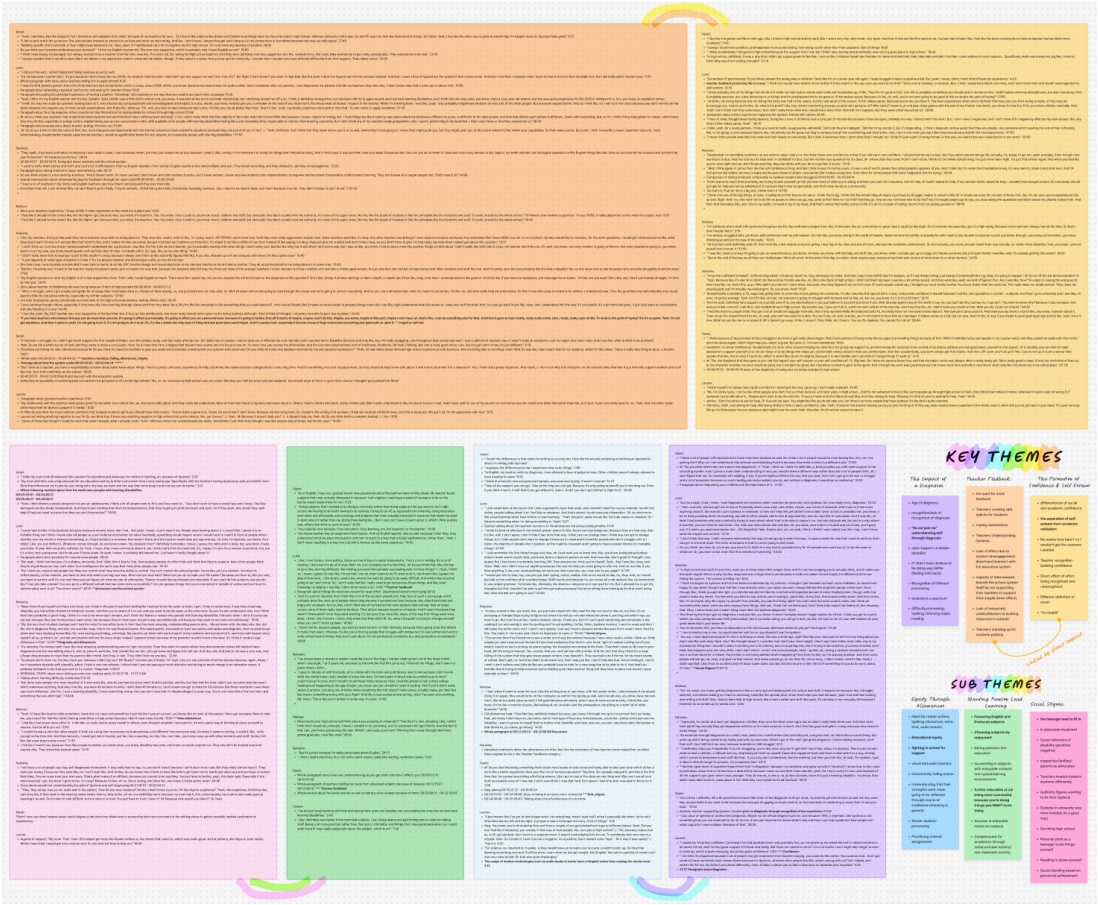
Questions will be adapted to reflect the themes mentioned within the interviews. Questions may also be added/removed in order to accurately reflect the natural narrative that the participants form based on their dialogue in the same interviews.

1) Would anyone like to share their experience of high school with the group?
   - Can anyone relate to this?
   - Did anyone have the opposite or different experience?
   - Why do you think that was? (that your experience was different?)
2) Has anyone in the room shared something that's resonated with you? Or that you can relate to in a similar way?
3) How old was everyone when they got their dyslexia diagnosis?
   - Do you think it made a difference how early or late you got it? If so, how?
4) Do you think your teachers had an impact on you in any way through out high school?
   If so, how?
5) Have there been any moments where a teacher impacted your self confidence through their words or actions?
   - Any positive impacts?

- Any negative impacts?

6) I asked you this in your interviews, but in your opinion, did that impact influence what you could see yourself accomplishing/where you could see yourself going after high school? Whether that be educationally or career wise?
   - Has anyone share something about this that you can relate to?
7) If you could go back and be your high school self, would you ask your teachers for anything that you didn't get the first time around?
   - Such as more encouragement, less encouragement, more 1 on 1 help, less 1 on 1 help?
   - Why is that?
8) Is there any kind of feedback teachers/a teacher did give you that was particularly helpful?
9) Since you've had your interview, have you remembered any more memories of your high school experience that you would like to share?
10) Is there anything you would like to discuss or ask the group about?
11) Are there any last thoughts you think would be important to know?

Appendix E: Figma Thematic Analysis Mind Map



Appendix F: Finished Audio Documentary in Premier Pro