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How can we support learners with dyslexia? An exploration of the lived experiences of undergraduate students with dyslexia.

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Seicoleg | Psychology

This study explores the lived experiences of undergraduate students with dyslexia. Previous research suggests that students with dyslexia face multiple barriers to learning, with these students having to work harder to achieve similar outcomes to students without dyslexia. However, recognition of the condition, targeted support, and teaching staff understanding the perspective of the student with dyslexia may create a more equitable learning environment.

The social model of disability posits that people are not disabled by their differences but rather by the societal barriers they encounter. Therefore, to understand factors that help to overcome barriers and facilitate a successful educational experience for students with dyslexia, this study explored the lived experience of undergraduate students with dyslexia.

Seven undergraduate students with a diagnosis of dyslexia were recruited via student support services. Students participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews, with the narrative transcribed verbatim and the data analysed using Thematic Analysis.

Findings point to students feeling disabled by dyslexia in all educational settings, the importance of early intervention, and the impact of the supportive university environment, which increases confidence in help-seeking behaviour.

It is evident that without individualised support, many learners with dyslexia face academic disadvantage. This experience begins early in their education, and delays in diagnosis leaves students to struggle on without adequate support. The supportive university environment, which increases confidence in help-seeking behaviour, creates a virtuous circle whereby students who experience effective support are more likely to continue to engage with support services.

This session will discuss the main barriers to learning experienced by students with dyslexia, and propose strategies and good practice that could be implemented to support students with or without learning difficulties.

