



Study attributes - indicators of dyslexia?

- There is an unease about pitching the project into the plethora of research about dyslexia due to the wide range of viewpoints on not only the nature of dyslexia as a syndrome (or not) but also the diversity of perspectives on its 'causes' - such that any learning difference may be attributable to a cause. So an attempt was made to explore the prevalence of a range of broadly identified learning and functional behaviour characteristics widely reported in university students with dyslexia.
- It is widely reported that students with dyslexia tend to be poorly organized, unreliable time-keepers, often find reading complicated academic texts challenging and frequently report feedback from their tutors as describing their writing as confusing or poorly-structured. Less widely reported are more positive aspects of study behaviour such as innovate problem-solving and creative thinking.
- A short questionnaire was developed and deployed across the HE sector specifically to dyslexia experts and learning support professionals working with dyslexic students at university.

- The questionnaire comprised a list of 18 characteristics and respondents were invited to estimate and record the extent to which each of the characteristics - called *dimensions* - were encountered in their interactions with students with dyslexia.
- Data was collected using continuous input sliders as a development of the more conventional anchor point-based Likert scale item recorder, which hence provided a much finer degree of response discrimination. This device also served as a highly useful trial for this aspect of the data collection design which was intended to be widely used in the main research questionnaire later.
- Although with hindsight limitations were identified, the data collected was nevertheless substantial enough to enable the Dyslexia Index metric to be developed and included in the main research questionnaire as intended.
- The resulting output of Dyslexia Index values from student respondents has been successfully used as the discriminator for identifying students with an unreported, dyslexia-like study profile - hence enabling Academic Behavioural Confidence between the resulting research subgroups to be compared.