



Living the Viva Voce: The Impact of Assessment on Students' Educational Experiences in Creative Practice

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An examination of the experience of
students with dyslexia in delivering
a viva in lieu of a written
dissertation



Students with dyslexia experience difficulties with:

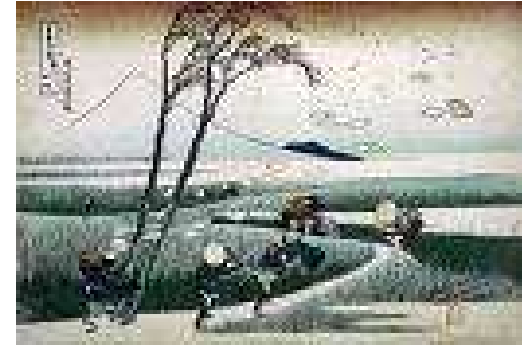
- Short term memory
- Diary transfers and copying with distraction
- Orientation & laterality
- Evidencing sources
- Instructions and information
- Self-esteem and marking
- Prior experiences of support



The students

- Dyslexia – HESA Statistics
- 2,359 -1995
- 24,820- 2006
- Invisible disability but visible students

Student's comments on studying and producing text:



- *I can write essays but it is like walking against the wind'. Why do I have to keep doing this when it just proves that I am dyslexic?*

(Student panellist presentation – RMIT/La Trobe (2007) Doing It Better Conference, Melbourne Australia)

Responses to text continued:

- *We have self-initiated projects, so why not self-initiated assessment? I want to have a choice in how I am assessed. I am a dyslexic student and know I can do a better job by talking; it's what I do.*

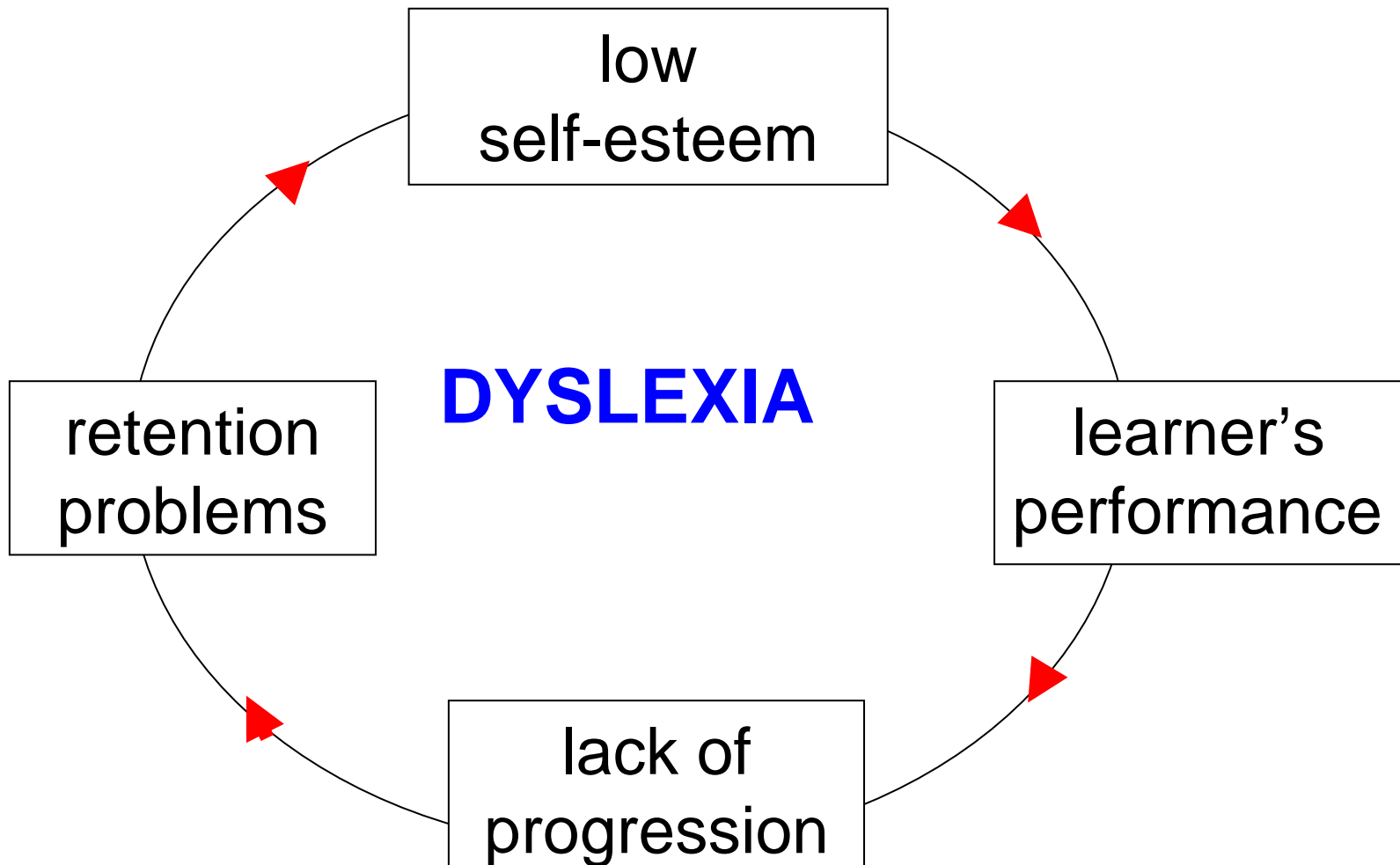
(BA Graphic Design student, LCC, University of the Arts
2008)

Responses to text:

- *I know what I want to say but when I try to write it the words disappear. My spelling is so bad even the spell check doesn't get it. When I speak I feel in control.*

(FdA Photojournalism student, LCC
University of the Arts 2008)

CYCLE OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM



Self-esteem and early education

- **Interviewer:** Have you done any specialist training in the area of dyslexia?
- **Teacher:** Oh God, that - No, no I haven't (*pulls a face*) Why?
- **Interviewer:** Why did you pull a face when I asked you that?
- **Teacher:** Well...I mean it's one of those things that has been conjured up by pushy parents for their thick or lazy children: quite often both.

Intrusive factors and neurodiversity in HE

- **Interviewer:** 'If you haven't had any training in the field of dyslexia do you think you should be making judgements about it?'
- **Teacher:** Yeah, it's a gut feeling. You know, when you have been teaching as long as I have you get to know which kids have problems and which kids are pulling the wool over your eyes.

(Dewhirst,
1995)

- In Higher Education;

'The problems of anxiety and low self-esteem are now being acknowledged as intrusive'.

(Riddick et al 'Dyslexia & Inclusion', 2002)

The viva voce

30 minutes Present argument

30 minutes To defend the argument

A Walkthrough/**Portfolio** to accompany

A **rehearsal** in advance and feedback



PROGRAMMES ACCREDITED BY VIVA VOCE AT UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

- BA Sound Arts Design
- BA Fine Art
- BA Fashion
- BA Graphic Design
- FdA Photojournalism

Viva Voce handbooks

http://www.arts.ac.uk/itrdu/podcasts/accom_assess_01.mp3

Handbook



<http://www.arts.ac.uk/itrdu/podcasts/baphoto.xml>

Supportive resources

Changes in student perspectives

- ‘Defending my work orally was a joy..my viva voce for my dissertation was the most interesting and challenging experience of my life.’
- ‘My increased confidence meant that I improved in other skill areas- like my camera work ..’

Costas Kontos -
Goldsmiths WP
Conference 2006

- ‘Hearing my work praised did me a power of good’

Patrick Cordwell-
2008



Introducing the subject

Benito Mussolini 1922 to 1943

Extract from Patch -
Fascism



Introducing the Subject

Extract from Costas –
Keiji Haino



Being questioned and responding

- Extract from tutor and students
- Avoiding the ‘pitfalls’ of real time and offering guidance without verbosity



A different voice

‘Since starting my work as short vivas
I have gained confidence and feel free
to express myself....

I have had years struggling to write
when it’s my worst nightmare’.

Patch – audio recording

Completing the creative process

- Costas' extracts concerning the Japanese rock guitarist Keiji Haino



- Comments...

Dr Laurence W. Britt

2: Disdain for the importance of human rights

- viewed human rights as of little value and a hindrance to realizing the objectives of the ruling elite.
- **propaganda**, persuaded the population to accept these human rights abuses by marginalizing, even demonizing, those being targeted.
- Tactic was to use secrecy, denial, and disinformation.

(P Cordwell, 2008)



Guantanamo bay 2001

Mugabe Zimbabwe

- Since 2000, state violence escalated
- 2002 and 2005 elections marked by gross manipulation
- Brutal government crackdown on the opposition in March 2007
- Barring of most western media
- human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom

(P Cordwell, 2008)

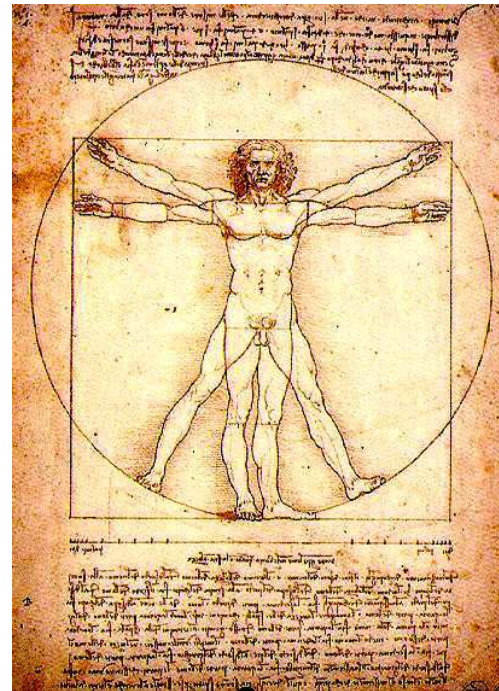


CHOICE and DIVERSITY

- How can I help my students achieve?

❖ research choices:

❖ implement diverse
assessment:



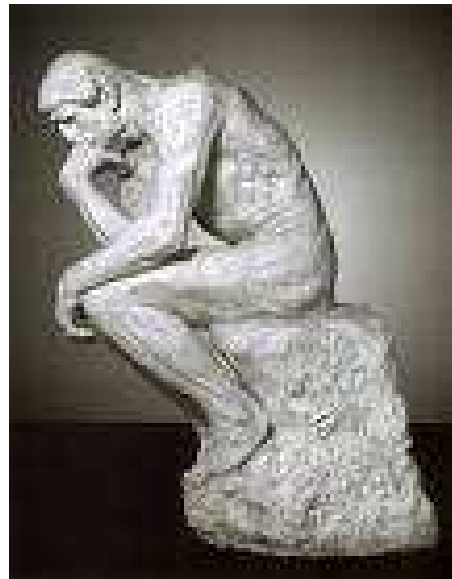
visual



- oral



- kinaesthetic



References

- Riddick, B (2001) Dyslexia and Inclusion : Time for a social model of disability perspective in: *International Studies Sociology of Education* Vol 11, No.3
- Riddick, B (1996) *Living with Dyslexia- The Social and Emotional Consequences of Specific Learning Difficulties* (London) Routledge
- Symonds, H (2005) *Designing effective curriculum for dyslexic students within Art and Design in Higher Education* (www.writing-pad.ac.uk)
- HEA www.incurriculum.org.uk

An inclusive curriculum
in Higher Education

InCurriculum