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A

Case study

Of

Dyslexic students and the FCE B2 Certificate

Supervisor

Prof. Athanassios Katsis

Helen Gerondakou

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“It is written that a fair test is one in which the ability being tested is the primary focus and where all irrelevant barriers to candidate performance have been removed. “

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Key words

English language, dyslexia, certification, FCE b2 Cambridge, examination, foreign language assessment, dyslexic students, educational policies, evaluation, academic performance, fairness, equality, social justice, equity

Abstract

In this thesis it is investigated how students with Dyslexia perform while taking an FCE B2 examination. This study is based on three mock (FCE b2) tests for the first certificate which took place in December, February and April 2017. The sample of the study were twenty-four pupils among them were six dyslexic students. The setting was in a private middle school in Athens. The tests were given to the students before their real participation for the Cambridge FCE B2 First Certificate for schools. The aim was to identify whether students with Dyslexia could succeed the FCE B2 exams and in sequence which parts were challenging and might resulted to a failure and how fairly are they assessed when evaluated by a standardized test which is tip tailored for students who do not have any educational difficulties. It is found that although dyslexic students (KEDDY) were trained and supported in the same educational manner with the rest of the class they failed to pass the exams due to their demanding nature which is in contrast with their educational difficulties. The students with dyslexia were given an extra time limit (25 %) which is the accommodation provided to dyslexic students by the Cambridge Assessment English. This study hopes to contribute to the field of Educational, Social policies and Assessment for dyslexic students and suggests a need for more studies on how dyslexic students should be assessed in a foreign/second language or the creation of another type of evaluation that respects their needs. This study was inspired by all students diagnosed with dyslexia who strive to succeed in language certification tests for a better academic future.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my life partner Panagiotis Manis.

To this wonderful man, I owe this dream come true for he was the one to believe, support and guard me from the start of this journey.

Although, he is not among us anymore never will he leave our hearts and mind.

1. Introduction

The last twenty years, Dyslexia has been in the spotlight and research has shed light on the difficulties that dyslexic students face during their school years. However, studies have been specified upon students having educational difficulties in their first language, *mother tongue*, whereas little research has been done on the difficulties that occur when dyslexic students learn a foreign language and most importantly on how well they perform while being assessed for a language qualification. The foreign language assessment tests are standardized created to serve all students, and prove one's language proficiency. The majority of the candidates are students who are trained from an early young age to sit for the exams, or adults who did not have the chance while in school and need the certification for a better work replacement or for personal growth.

This thesis mainly focuses on students with dyslexia and the way they are assessed for an English language certificate because it holds a great sociolinguistic interest that students who were diagnosed having dyslexia by the Greek public sector (KEDDY) are evaluated in the same way with candidates who do not have any educational difficulties. In the meantime, test designers and language institutions comment on supporting and respecting students' diversity while their tests are made to assess a mass of students addressing all candidates in the same manner.

It cannot be denied that nowadays in a fast-growing multilingual world, what is learnt should also be proved, citizens have the chance and freedom to choose multiple educational institutions, attend programs, change work fields and life path, explore multiple academic identities and exchange ideas. In a lifelong learning world it is essential for people when they have the ability to communicate in a common universal language recognized as a *de facto lingua franca* which is the English language, to be able to certificate this knowledge by earning a certificate which will provide them accessibility to Educational Institutions or working fields in case of studying aboard or having the chance for a better work position.

There is a large variety of language tests which prove the Proficiency of the English language, depending the usage and the orientation. These tests are taken in over 3.000 test centers in 20 countries, including universities and private language schools. They are designed to address a massive number of population and in the case of students with dyslexia varied accommodations are promised to be provided through the exams although after request only a 25 % present of extra time is given to these students.

On the one hand, during their school years, Dyslexic students while sitting in school exams are supported with accommodations such as the use of extra time, a teacher who explains, clarifies and simplifies written directions, the use of a glossary, individualized formation of tests and orally tested. On the other hand, when the time comes for dyslexic students to participate in an English language certification exam, the whole evaluating process changes and they are

assessed by standardized tests with time limits and demanding tasks. The only accommodation provided by the Cambridge Assessment for the students sitting for the FCE B2 qualification is a 25 % extra time and they are not allowed to use any other accommodation.

Standardized language tests like the one mentioned above, follow a standard policy that assess all students in a same way, somebody might object that students with dyslexia should not be categorized due to their educational needs but tests do categorize and do classify students of all ages and backgrounds and moreover, when these students have the same capabilities a test can be defined as fair, but when they do not have the same abilities it can be defined as unethical and in this case, it is worth investigating whether Dyslexic students are able to overcome already designed educational barriers and succeed in this testing.

Thoughts like, are these students fairly assessed based on their needs while participating in an English language certification test? Can they pass the exam when they are evaluated under these circumstances?

This study aims to answer these queries and sensitize test designers and educational institutions as to provide the right testing context for dyslexic students based on equality and fairness.

Chapter 1

1.1. Definition of dyslexia

According to Porpodas (1997), dyslexia is used to indicate learning difficulties in reading and spelling which are not associated with mental or organic deficits but are specific and predetermined organically. Eventually many children with dyslexia will learn to read and write but their performance will be lower than the one expected for their age and intelligence quotient. Dyslexia was studied and discovered by medicine, but soon it was also investigated by other disciplines such as pedagogy and psychology. The result of the involvement of these sciences was not the multifaceted study of the problem of dyslexia but the controversy between these disciplines. In the course of a long-term study of the problem, scholars changed many terms until they reached the term “Dyslexia” (Porpodas, 1997).

According to Jean Cheng Gorman (2004), the term dyslexia is often used to refer to reading difficulties, and is a familiar term for many people. Some people use it to describe all the problems associated with reading and writing, or some perceive dyslexia as a problem with letter inversions (e.g. they write “3” instead of “E”). Despite, all the controversy, dyslexia is well-diagnosed as a type of reading disability, and other types of learning difficulties have been properly understood. The main difficulty of the problem is phonological processing. Each language consists of phonemes. Different combinations of these small sound units create the words. A child with dyslexia has a difficulty distinguishing phoneme when they are grouped together in a word. Correspondingly, a child has difficulty composing phonemes in words when he/she writes. Reading becomes a tedious task because of the difficulty of recognizing the sound units that make up the words. Spelling and writing are challenges for the same reason. Decoding exercises and identification of the number of syllables in a word are extremely difficult for children with dyslexia. This is a serious disorder, which is associated with abnormalities in the brain area responsible for linguistic functions. People with dyslexia are unable to understand the phonological structure of the language, which prevents them from processing linguistic information and memorizing oral speech. There is also difficulty in the attribution of the correct letter-to-phoneme matching, resulting in difficulties in building and acquiring the basic reading and writing mechanism (Athanasiadis, 2001).

Mavrommati (1995) reports that children with dyslexia have no problem with verbal expression, unless there is a coexistence of articulation and speech disorder. Dyslexia means an extraordinary difficulty in processing written language, and consequently difficulty in reading, disproportionately persistent in the student’s age and intellectual potential, and also a persistent weakness in the learning of word spelling and automation of spelling capacity (Mavrommati, 1995).

However, until now no definition can be considered accurate, complete and absolutely correct. Consequently, it can be concluded that all the terms used at times refer to a difficulty or disorder

without a specific clinical picture, for which the etiology could be multiple and the treatment as varied as the phenotypic form of dyslexia.

The division of dyslexia into individual types can be applied in the formulation of the problem's definition, its etiology, and in the development of appropriate curricula and strategies to address it in the school setting. Myklebust & Johnson (1962) noted that dyslexic individuals can be categorized based on their deficits in their auditory and visual pathway and distinguished two types of dyslexia: visual dyslexia and auditory dyslexia (Seymour, 1986).

Visual dyslexia, is now a prevalent form of dyslexia and it is characterized by deficits in visual perception, visual distinction and visual memory (Stasinos, 2000). This disorder is not related to the person's vision. This means that severe vision problems cannot be considered a cause of dyslexia. These specific deficits consist of the difficulty of dyslexic people to accurately decode written symbols and convert them into verbal content. So, they often make mistakes in the orientation and sequence of symbols, objects and instructions. Many times, they see symbols of word fragments and whole words vice versa. They also have problems in short-term memory, in succession and in memorizing (of the days of the week, poems, songs, etc.). Auditory dyslexia, is characterized by a person's lack of ability to represent the distinctive sounds of the spoken language, to mix and synthesize sounds, to name persons and things, and to observe the audio sequence associated with the ability to memorize related information, observing their correct organization and order (Velluntino, 1987). As in the visual, in auditory dyslexia the deficit has a minimal relationship with hearing as such. We could compare this type of dyslexia with the problem of "tone deafness" in music (Stasinos, 2000). In these cases, the person is characterized by a lack of ability to easily distinguish the subtle differences between sounds. The difficulties of children with auditory dyslexia are particularly noticeable when asked to write in dictation. They also find it difficult to read out difficult combinations of letters correctly and to perceive the rhyme between word phrases.

At the same time, Boder (1973) distinguished three types of dyslexia: dysphonetic dyslexia, dyseidetic dyslexia and mixed dyslexia. The first category includes children who have difficulty in analysing and synthesizing sounds and syllables, since they encounter a problem in matching symbols and sounds (graphemes – phonemes). These people read the words in a holistic way. According to Boder (1973), 63% of dyslexic children are dysphonetic.

Dyseidetic dyslexia includes children who have difficulty in understanding the sequences of the letters of words as visual assemblies. They read (unlike the first-category) while spelling the words with the help of the voice method (letter by letter), 9% of dyslexic children are dyseidetic (Boder, 1973). The third category results from the combination of the two previous types and includes children with mixed visual and auditory difficulties, accounting for 22% of the dyslexics studied by Boder (1973).

It should be emphasized that many researchers have come to a different division of the types of dyslexia (Mattis, 1978; Vernon, 1979; Bakker, 1990). We must therefore be especially careful when trying to classify a dyslexic person into some type of dyslexia, since in most cases of dyslexic people there are deficits that are very hard to categorize. In conclusion, it should be stressed that dyslexia, is still a subject of reflection, controversy and disagreement among scholars. The exact wording of the definition, diagnosis and justification of the problem has been a problem for researchers (Frith, 1999). We could therefore classify dyslexia as one of

the most controversial issues that have challenged sciences such as medicine, psychology and pedagogy.

1.2. Causes and symptoms of dyslexia

For years, scientists have been trying to discover the nature of the functional disorder of the dyslexic student that leads to the severe difficulty of recognizing letters through detailed research. Opinions come from different fields, creating a rivalry. Of course, the issue of whether intrinsic or environmental factors are causing the damage has been solved and the inherent nature of dyslexia is now known. What scientists are trying to find out is how this functional impairment manifests itself and, consequently, which functions are not being performed in the right way, resulting in the development of reading and writing disorders. Opinions on this issue are directed by the scientific discipline to which the scientist who will investigate it belongs (Porpodas, 1997).

The following present the various hypotheses about the etiology of dyslexia. These hypotheses are classified in four categories. According to this classification, dyslexia is the result of: (a) neurological underperformance, (b) incomplete hemispherical dominance, (c) genetic abnormalities and (d) functional abnormalities in perceptive and cognitive processing (Porpodas, 1997).

The following reading errors were observed in most dyslexic students and have been highlighted by many scholars, such as Critchley (1970), Miles (1974), Newton & Thomson (1974), Mavrommati (1995).

General characteristics of children with dyslexia

- Confusion of right-left concepts.
- Difficulty in distinguishing the dominant eye, hand, foot.
- Difficulty in orientation and space-time perception.
- Sound discrimination problems. People with dyslexia have difficulty in discerning the sounds of a word.
- Hyperactivity, impulsivity and clumsiness.
- Balance problems. People with dyslexia have problems in the centre of balance due to their mixed laterality, and therefore they are awfully awkward and have difficulty performing exercises that require balance.
- Difficulty repeating multi-syllable words and numbers in reverse order.
- Visual perception disorder, particularly in gestalts and visual memory.
- Difficulty in audio-visual matching of stimuli.
- Inability to concentrate on an activity for a specific amount of time.
- Short span and duration of the short-term memory. They have difficulty in recalling events that happened a short time ago
- Probable difficulties in mathematics (dyscalculia).

- When they express themselves verbally, they do not use much more than they want to express. Many errors of syntactic and semantic content are also encountered.

- They avoid anything related to writing, especially books.
- They are characterized by organizational problems, are clumsy and untidy
- They cannot understand sequence and successiveness.
- Difficulty in identifying rhymes in words.

In reading

- They omit, add, replace, and transpose syllable or word letters.
- They confuse the letters that look the same, e.g. b, d.
- When they begin to learn, progress is steady but still slower than their peers.
- They are easily distracted and then they cannot find the point where they were left.
- They do not pause at the punctuation points but can stop at another point and change the meaning.
- They confuse different words that are composed of the same letters (e.g. tea, eat).
- They have difficulty in reading and pronouncing unusual words.
- They read slowly, hesitantly, syllabically, without making sense.
- They have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the text they read.
- They have difficulty in finding the correct row in their text.
- They pronounce vowels in a wrong way.
- They are characterized by mirror reading
- They add unrelated phonemes during word reading.
- They replace one word with another word with similar meaning.
- They have a weak memory and cannot remember instructions and printed words (Porpodas, 1997; Mavrommati, 2004; Floratou, 1992).

In writing and spelling

The difficulties of dyslexic students in writing relate to the general features described above. These difficulties, however, should not be related to the condition of dysgraphia, which is a functional abnormality due to visual-motor coordination impairment.

The difficulties that children with dyslexia encounter in writing are associated with cognitive deficits. Research has shown that while dyslexic children do not experience any problems in copying, they have great difficulty in spontaneous writing. The writing of dyslexic children is characterized by:

- Sloppiness and smudges in the text, making it unreadable.
- Many misspellings even in words they have learned systematically.
- They skip letters, syllables and words.
- They insert letters, syllables and words.

- They replace letters in words because they confuse the letters that look the same, for example, d-b, m-n.
- Mirror writing of letters and/or words.
- They place unnecessary gaps and eliminate spaces between words.
- No use of punctuation.
- Word accentuation problems.
- Incorrect use of capital letters.
- Incorrect structure of sentences.
- Limited vocabulary and expressive ability.
- Telegraphic way of “thinking and writing”. Limited capacity in meanings and ideas.
- The content of “thinking and writing” does not always respond to the subject matter.
- They may know and say the spelling rules but when they write they do not recall the rule
- Incomplete alignment of words on the row of their notebook.
- They do not generalize the application of a rule easily if they do not practice through specific exercises (Porpodas, 1997; Mavrommati, 2004; Floratou, 1992).

1.3. Difficulties and problems of a student with dyslexia

Dyslexia as a problem of processing written speech is distinguished in two broad and defined categories: 1) acquired dyslexia and 2) specific or evolutionary dyslexia (Porpodas, 1997).

Acquired dyslexia is characterized by a person's difficulty or inability to process written speech. It differs from the specific dyslexia in that in the case of acquired dyslexia the reading, writing and spelling skills were fully acquired but were lost or diminished as a result of brain injury in the lateral temporal area of the left hemisphere. According to Geschwind (1962), acquired dyslexia is distinguished in three types. The first is characterized by severe incompetence in the comprehension of spoken and written language and by a difficulty in producing spelled writing, while the second type is characterized by an inability to read and write, and the third type is marked more by an inability to read (Geschwind, 1962).

Specific dyslexia based on the difficulties faced by dyslexic individuals is distinguished in two categories: visual and auditory dyslexia (Ingram, 1964; Boder, 1973). Visual dyslexia, is the most widespread form of dyslexia and is characterized by the lack of ability of a person to accurately translate the written symbols into corresponding verbal content (Stasinis, 1999). The problem of these people is that they find it difficult to learn through visual function, confuse words or letters that are visually similar, they usually process all words as if they are seeing them for the first time, have limited visual vocabulary and therefore have difficulty reading the words in total, but process them in detail. Children with visual dyslexia have difficulty in spelled writing and are characterized by many vocal errors (Porpodas, 1997).

Auditory dyslexia, is the most difficult form of dyslexia in terms of treatment. The child with auditory dyslexia has difficulties in analysing words, distinguishing auditory details, reproducing sound units, and converting visual language symbols in auditory. These children have difficulty writing a text in dictation, and their spelling performance is low and inferior to their reading performance.

The main problem faced by children with auditory dyslexia is their inability to perceive the similarities of the initial or final sounds of words, i.e. they do not understand the double sound in the consonant assemble of words. These children often replace words with similar meaning (Johnson & Myklebust, 1967).

The mental capacity of dyslexic children is at average levels (Bender, 2004), but this does not rule out the possibility of higher than the average intelligence. While intelligence is not a problem, dyslexic students have problems in the perception and processing of visual and auditory stimuli, attention problems, memory deficits and metacognitive problems. Below are some of the cognitive and metacognitive problems faced by students with dyslexia (Botsas, 2007):

1. Attention and concentration problems. Most of the dyslexic students have difficulty concentrating on the written text that they have before them and starting to read

carefully (Hallihan & Reeve, 1980). They also have difficulty in maintaining the concentration they have achieved.

2. Problems of interpretation. When a dyslexic reader fails to directly identify the interpretation of a word, he or she searches in his/her mental dictionary for an interpretation that fits within the text. But then he/she may be misled and retrieve interpretations of the word that seem like its image (Seymour, 1986). In particular, according to the interactive - compensatory model of reading skills development, word recognition and the construction of meaning are realized through a process of utilizing information from various sources. A central element of this process is considered to be a part of the memory system called the "mental inner dictionary". This system is considered to include the following subsystems (Agaliotis, 2006): a) phonological, which controls the rules of cataloguing, fragmentation and pronunciation of the phonological units of words, allowing the person to recognize the words after processing them in part and recalling matches of graphemes - phonemes, b) the lexical, which processes and memorizes the words as morphological sets and allows the person to easily and quickly recognize frequent words without needing systematic matching of graphemes - phonemes, c) the semantic, which includes the meanings of the words and allows the person to recognize the words on the basis of a combined system of graphemical, phonological and conceptual representations; d) the spelling, which handles the various structured spelling sets of the spelling units, that is, the letters complexes that have a fixed relationship and display mode, the acquisition of which greatly facilitates the recognition of words, since written and spoken speech matches are made at the level of groups rather than individual letters. So, when one of the above subsystems has any malfunction, the reader tries to compensate for it by using more than the rest, so the final reading product does not fully correspond to the text to be read. While the dyslexic student makes a great effort to visually distinguish the syllables, the letters and the words in the text, reads slowly, but also loses the meaning of what he or she reads, precisely because his or her effort focuses on the recognition of words. These two processes, namely word recognition and understanding, present the image of two parallel lines that do not meet, whereas they should coincide and occur simultaneously and automatically, as is the case with the typical reader. Incorrect reading accentuation is also the cause of this. At the moment of reading, the dyslexic student does not know exactly how to accentuate the word he or she reads, and often does not know the word itself (Markou, 1998).

3. Problems in the syntactic function of words. Successful understanding is largely based on the syntactic analysis of the functions of a word. The investigation of the syntactic organization of the sentence assists the reader to regard it as a compact structure that retains the words that make it up in the working memory properly grouped so as to begin the process of their meaning (Norman et al., 1992). Students with dyslexia, however, face significant problems and have difficulty in analysing the texts they read syntactically (Vos & Friedenici, 2003). These difficulties are due not only to the lack of syntactic knowledge but also to the general difficulty of perceiving organized structures based on the poor use of organizational strategies (Comoldi et al., 1996).

4. Persistence in literal understanding. In order to understand the full meaning of a text, readers need to go beyond the information explicitly mentioned therein, linking and comparing ideas in the text to their previous knowledge (Oakhill & Yuill, 1996). At the same time, the polysemy of words, when the understanding of meaning depends on the total semantic content, creates additional problems for dyslexic students. For example, we mention the sets “sharp knife” and “sharp look”. As the child has understood only the literal meaning of the knife’s edge, that is, that with the knife it can cut something off, it is unable to understand the figurative meaning of the other phrases and this leads to a series of misunderstandings.

In addition, students with dyslexia often have a problem in understanding humour, usually based on figurative speech. Only if they practice the flexible use of language will they be able to realize the doubt that humour embraces.

5. Perception of the sentence as a complete text. Generalized difficulties in lexical access and syntactic analysis lead students with dyslexia to perceive each sentence as a complete text (Garner, 1988). The next sentence in the text is something different for these students, and so they do not activate mechanisms to incorporate it into a compact structure of understanding. In essence, they process the sentences of a text in a piecemeal way, and for this reason the meaning they draw is also fragmentary and incomplete (Wong, 1986).

6. Incomplete and vague mental representations of words and sentences. During the understanding, mental representations of the words and sentences present in the written text are created. However, these representations, in the case of dyslexic students, are incomplete and vague (Haberlandt & Graesser, 1990).

This is because they perceive each sentence as a single text, and so the overall mental representation of a text piece is fragmentary and unconnected, and on the other hand the fact that they do not use profound processing and linguistic elements of the text that are more complex (Perfetti et al., 1996).

7. Incomplete and fragmented cognitive base. Peterson (1993) reports that there are two elements of reading: a general one, decoding, and a specific one, the understanding of information. The difference in the performance of understanding each time is due to the reader’s previous knowledge. The school course of students with dyslexia - in the first grades of elementary school - is a constant struggle to acquire the mechanisms of first reading and writing. It is therefore expected that there are enormous academic gaps appear on the cognitive basis of these students, since they have lost so many years of opportunity to structure it in an organized and effortless manner (Haberlandt & Graesser, 1990).

Problems in the cognitive base are exacerbated by the limitations in their working memory, and thus in the procedures of proper storage and recalling of information. A significant lack of organizational strategies does not allow them to easily integrate new information into their otherwise fragmented cognitive base (Peterson, 1993).

8. Problem in understanding the goals of reading. Students with dyslexia have significant problems with goal-setting before reading a text. Their ignorance of the real goals of reading contributes to this, which are the understanding and self-the regulated learning, as well as their difficulty in recognizing the specific requirements of the text they have before them (Butler, 1998). This difficulty leads them either to reading without real conscious processing or to the identification of mistaken goals and requirements for the particular task, and thus a failure in understanding.

9. Problems in using strategies. The selection and use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies by students with dyslexia is of particular interest as it influences performance. Dyslexic students cannot choose the appropriate strategy because of their poor repertoire strategies and their lack of metacognitive knowledge that does not allow them to know which strategy to use (Botsas & Panteliadou, 2003). However, the problems in using strategies exist even when they know which strategy they should use. Thus, when needed, they do not use the strategy properly, they cannot adapt it appropriately and flexibly to make it effective (Papetti et al., 1992).

10. Problems in self-regulatory strategies. Students with dyslexia face significant problems in actively monitoring their understanding while they are reading a text (Botsas & Panteliadou, 2003). These difficulties relate to the assessment of the text in terms of clarity, meaningfulness and consistency. They also face problems in self-regulatory strategies such as control, planning, monitoring. Cognitive strategies refer to ways of processing information, while metacognitive strategies refer to selection criteria, control and review of cognitive strategies (Agaliotis, 2004).

11. Problems in identifying important information. The difficulty in identifying important information and other important supporting information is one of the most important problems faced by students with dyslexia, as it negatively affects the ability of understanding. This problem is particularly complex and is due mainly to the lack or misuse of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. A typical reader creates complete cognitive representations for the entire text, paragraphs and sentences. These representations should have been processed and stored properly in the reader's long-term memory so that he or she can recall them, keep them active in the working memory, and ultimately compare them with the use of deep processing strategies. All these processes are very difficult, especially for children with dyslexia who have problems in each and every part of this process (Cornoldi et al., 1996).

12. Difficulty in linking new information to the old one. Students with dyslexia cannot process the information and knowledge they obtain from the texts they read. One way to do this would be to recall, activate and use their previous knowledge of the subject (Gough et al., 1996). In this process, however, there is a problem due to the lack of activation strategies of prior knowledge, their difficulty in identifying and processing the text information, and the limited knowledge they generally have on academic subjects (Butler, 1998). Also, students with dyslexia face great difficulties in evaluating, logically organizing and coordinating both incoming information and multiple cognitive activities that occur at the same time (Swanson, 1988).

13. Problems in identifying the requirements of a task. Typical students, when faced with a cognitive task, are generally aware of the requirements as well as whether they have the ability to complete it successfully. Conversely, students with dyslexia face problems in understanding the requirements of most of the cognitive tasks they are required to engage in school (Panteliadou et al., 2004). For example, in reading texts they consider their purpose to be simple decoding rather than in-depth understanding. A misinterpretation of the requirements of the tasks by dyslexic students leads them to mistaken choices during their learning effort (Butler, 1998). Moreover, these students are not able to appreciate the difficulty of the task they have before them, so that they can properly adjust their learning effort and, in particular, the cognitive resources they will use.

The serious difficulties faced by teenage students with dyslexia are not solely due to the nature of dyslexia as such, but also to the particular cognitive and organizational requirements created in secondary education. In the Greek educational system, the elementary school and the junior high school (Gymnasium in Greece) are not an organic unit despite the introduction of the nine-year compulsory education. The two educational levels are not uniformly. They are radically different in terms of structure, organization, function, methodology and learning subjects, as well as in terms of the evaluation process. Thus, in junior high school students come in contact for the first time with a large number of teachers, who usually do not know their peculiarities, while the volume of information and cognitive requirements are - compared to primary education - particularly high.

Also, in secondary education, children for the first time face the possibility of remaining in the same grade, while their performance is graded separately for each lesson by different teachers. At the same time, at junior high school, the learning pace is more intensive and the assessment of student performance is an important element in students' life (Dimitropoulos et al., 1997).

Also, at the junior high school level, students and parents shape ambitions and are oriented towards the identification of career choices. The outcome of the school attendance determines the choice of the school unit that a student will attend after graduation from the junior high school to a great extent, i.e. High School (or Lyceum in Greece) or Technological or Vocational School. Beyond that, when entering secondary education institutions, students are challenged to face a variety of situations, such as school environment change, biological changes in puberty, changes in the social roles they are asked to play, relationships with peers, and with the opposite sex. Most typical students manage to meet new requirements, as they have complex cognitive and metacognitive skills to solve problems. Conversely, dyslexic students face major problems at all levels. Also, during adolescence, when friendship and social acceptance are vital issues for all teenagers, problems in social skills are hindering dyslexic students. The accumulation of failure, low self-esteem and self-perception, poor social acceptance, and often disruptive and inappropriate behavior mark those students (Lemer, 2003).

The issue of social acceptance of students with learning difficulties from their peers has been explored. Sociological studies (Sarbonie & Kauffman, 1986) have shown that students with learning difficulties are socially isolated from their classmates, as the latter

do not easily accept them. Other studies (Panteliadou & Botsas, 2004) show that 25-30% of students with learning difficulties face rejection by their classmates compared to 8-16% of students without learning difficulties. Also, 12-21% of students without learning difficulties are popular in their classes, while only self-esteem implies the assessment of the individual for himself and is intertwined with the feeling of acceptance that one has for his/her self (Leontari, 1996).

Self-perception refers to the cognitive aspect of the concept of self, and is a multidimensional aspect that relates to how the individual perceives his/her ability to be appropriate in specific areas such as academic competence, physical appearance, behaviour etc. (Leontari, 1996), 6% of children with learning difficulties rank among the most popular children (Panteliadou & Botsas, 2004).

One of the reasons why students with dyslexia fail to develop social relationships is that their behaviour is significantly inappropriate in different circumstances in relation to the behaviour of typical students. While the data show that students with dyslexia have the same knowledge as their typical classmates about how to behave in any social situation, they fail to function in the right way spontaneously (Panteliadou & Botsas, 2004). Also, the social development of students with dyslexia is hampered by their inability to interpret non-lingual messages during their social interactions (Panteliadou & Botsas, 2004). Also, these students have a particular difficulty in understanding and interpreting emotional expressions when cues are given visually and, especially, when the cues are auditory (Bender, 2004).

Floratou (1996) distinguishes two categories of junior high school students with learning difficulties. Those who for various reasons were not supported in the primary school by a medical-pedagogical service KEDDY (Centres for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support), did not attend a special class and when they went to junior high school they were considered "indifferent" and "lazy". Parents and teachers have accepted that they are not suited for academic achievements and their failure was considered normal. Usually these students leave compulsory attendance after successive failures and after they have accepted the fate of "school failure". The second category includes students whose weaknesses were diagnosed early in elementary school and attended special classes. But in the field of the junior high school with intense competition and excess requirements their performance remains low. Students with dyslexia are aimed at avoiding performance and because of the fear of failing once again, they try to defend and support - as they think - their selves by choosing not to engage in reading texts. So, they withdraw and abandon text reading. This attitude, however, keeps them away from reading experiences and prevents them from building appropriate and important knowledge of vocabulary and metacognitive syntactic knowledge (Stanovich et al., 1996). Students with dyslexia present an ineffective profile of "learned helplessness", attributing their success to the fate and ease of the text, while their failure is attributed exclusively to their poor competence (Borkowski, 1992). They also have low self-efficacy and low self-esteem, resulting in low goals. Low goals, even when they are achieved, do not have a great cognitive value for themselves, and therefore do not offer effectiveness in text-reading tasks (Peterson et al., 1993). However, most children with dyslexia go into

puberty with a taste of school failure and rejection, the feeling of insecurity, fear of tomorrow and professional rehabilitation, the complaint that their effort is rarely rewarded. Yet, the existence of dyslexia, as such, is clearly not a barrier to the development of the individual. On the contrary, all kinds of discrimination and social stigmatization have far more serious implications for the free development of the personality of dyslexic adolescents.

Chapter 2: Examination - Framework by the Ministry of Education for Dyslexic Students

2.1 School level

According to the No. 1846/2000 Circular of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, teachers should, if they observe some particular difficulties in students, refer the parents to the Centres for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support (KEDDY).

According to Article 4 of Law 3699/2008, the special educational needs of students with dyslexia are investigated and identified by the KEDDY and the medical-pedagogical centres of other Ministries certified by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

Diagnostic, Evaluation and Support Bodies (as amended by Article 51 of Law 4547/2018 and effective from 12/6/2018):

1. The special educational needs of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs are investigated and identified by the Centres for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY), the Interdisciplinary Educational Assessment and Support Committees (EDEADY) and the recognized by the Ministry of Education Community Mental Health Centres for Children and Adolescents of other Ministries.

2. By joint decision of the Ministers of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Health and Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, the criteria, procedures and bodies responsible for the recognition of the Community Centres for Mental Health of Children and Adolescents shall be defined in accordance with paragraph 1, as well as the frequency of their evaluation.

3. In the context of individual assessments, the KESY may evaluate students who have not reached the age of 18. Individuals over the age of 18, who have been previously evaluated by the KESY as disabled or with special educational needs fall within the competence of the KESY to issue evaluation reports on attendance in educational institutions, if they have not reached their 30th year of age.

The diagnosis of dyslexia should be carried out in the first grades of the elementary school so that the student can receive special help and individualized teaching both in school and in the family environment, if this is feasible. It is a fact that students with dyslexia find it difficult to respond to the learning needs and need encouragement, understanding and help to be consistent with their school obligations.

2.2 Exam level

According to No. 28722/C2 Ministerial Decision “Examination of students with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs of Daily and Evening Junior High Schools” (GG B / 276 / 16-3-2010), students with special learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dysanagnosia, dysorthographia are examined orally upon request. When students of this case wish to answer some questions in writing, these are evaluated during the evaluation of the examination.

According to the aforementioned Ministerial decision, the examination of students with special learning difficulties, during the few short trimester tests and the promotion and graduation exams, is done verbally (at their request) and if the student wishes it in written form, by teacher at the same time with the students in the class to which they belong and on the same subjects.

The relevant application is submitted to the student’s Gymnasium accompanied by a public document certifying the existence of specific learning difficulties, or a report (evaluation report) from a Centre for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support (KEDDY) operating at the headquarters of the Prefectural Authorities and the Prefectural Departments of Paragraph 2 of Article 12 of Law 3699/2008, or a certificate from a Medical Pedagogical Centre, certified by the Ministry of Education, indicating the specific learning difficulty of the student, and the re-evaluation period.

When there is a divergence of opinion between the KEDDY and the Medical-Pedagogical Centre for the same student, the right to appeal to a five-member Secondary Specialized Diagnostic Evaluation Committee (EDEA), which is constituted by decision of the Regional Director of Education, is given. The decision of the Secondary EDEA is final. In the event that there is a difference of opinion between the KEDDY opinions and the Medical-Pedagogical Centre for the same student and no recourse has been made to the five-member Secondary EDEA, the KEDDY’s opinion prevails. In case of recourse to the EDEA, the relevant application and the report shall be submitted to the Principal of the respective Gymnasium no later than 10 days before the start of the promotion and graduation exams of each year. The reports of the KEDDY and of the Medical-Pedagogical Centres are issued as a matter of priority upon request of the person concerned.

Requests for oral examination and the opinions of the KEDDY and the Medical-Pedagogical Centres shall be submitted to the Principal of the respective Gymnasium no later than the 30th of April each year. In extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances, they may be submitted later.

2.3. University studies

In tertiary education, students encounter difficulties in terms of preserving time, concentrating, organizing the study of courses, spelling (McLoughlin et al., 1994), writing, copying and numbers. There are also weaknesses associated with the information memorization and recalling, expression and especially the written, or the taking of notes during the lecture (Gilroy & Miles, 1996), or the writing of papers or exams (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006).

Also, a large number of dyslexic students, according to Stampoltzis et al. (2010), have negative experiences in primary and secondary education, but it is not clear whether their anxiety is linked to their performance at university or the impact of their past experiences (Stampoltzis et al., 2010). Various investigations have been made on these critical issues.

Some universities include support means such as extra time for exams, access to teachers who were responsible for dyslexia support, and the use of information technology. However, there were unmet needs in a number of areas, such as support for specific matters, organization of courses, learning during the lectures and academic writing skills (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006).

The existence of few available studies on the personality of tertiary education students with dyslexia compared to their peers without dyslexia has prompted Tops et al. (2013) to compare 100 Dutch-speaking students with dyslexia with 100 students without learning difficulties (control group). They used a specialized personality questionnaire that measures Big Five factors, which are extraversion, openness to experience, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The results did not show large differences in the personality between the two groups, a finding that is in line with Swanson & Hsieh's previous meta-analysis (2009). According to the findings, dyslexic students do not perceive themselves differently than their non-dyslexic peers. Also, dyslexic students seem to be more resilient in dealing with additional challenges despite the disappointing situations that occur sometimes (Tops et al., 2013).

Wanting to study the relationship between dyslexia and the learning styles of dyslexic students, Stampoltzis et al. (2010) examined the learning styles and the educational characteristics (academic performance and anxiety) of 20 dyslexic and 40 non-dyslexic students in 3 universities in Greece. The results showed that dyslexics prefer the kinesthetic learning style, while non-dyslexics the visual style. It seems that the kinesthetic learning style that involves hands and touch facilitates the dyslexic people's need for activity and exploration. Non-dyslexics prefer visual learning based on visual stimuli such as charts, illustrations, videos, etc. In terms of primary and secondary school performance, dyslexics ranked themselves lower on a scale of 1 to 5, in relation to non-dyslexics, while there was no difference in the performance between the two groups at the university, which is considered a less competitive and demanding environment than school. For dyslexic students, significant correlations were found between the kinesthetic

learning style and the general and written performance in primary education, as well as the written performance in secondary education.

A further significant correlation was observed between the acoustic learning style and the performance in primary education. Non-dyslexics noted that school stress has a significant correlation with the visual and the kinesthetic learning style. Therefore, school and university need to develop teaching methods that use and combine visual, acoustic, kinesthetic, and tactile learning so that students can improve their learning and achieve their goals (Stampoltzis et al., 2010).

Bruce (1983) monitored the careers of 75 young people with dyslexia who, when they were children, were referred to a London-based Word-Blind Centre for diagnosis and intervention. The sample consisted of 68 men and 7 women aged 18-30 years and followed the semi-structured interview process. Participants remembered having encountered difficulties due to the lack of appropriate corrective measures in schools, such as that the personnel were very hostile to the idea of dyslexia and had negative school experiences. Some said that after their dyslexia was diagnosed there was a shift towards a more sympathetic attitude from the school. They also reported the struggle they had with the local government in order to be able to receive the Centre's services and consider the help they received from it lifesaving. The diagnosis of dyslexia relieved them and made them determined to achieve their goals despite their disability (Bruce, 1983). Participants stated that in order to cope with the difficulties of dyslexia, they used technical means such as: calculators, typewriters, telephones and tape recorders. For spelling problems, they used the dictionaries and resorted to the help from relatives, friends and colleagues. As students and workers, they used various ways to prevent their dyslexia from being revealed. They tried to hide their difficulties in spelling, took assignments that required writing at home or wrote only the key words, developed techniques to memorize information to circumvent reading and written expression. Participants recall that the facilities they received related to the use of a typewriter, the employment of a scribe, the provision of unlimited time for the exams and the fact that they had no penalty for their misspellings. However, the final impression left to the participants was that their educational experience was largely disparaging and their rewards small (Bruce, 1983). Their own efforts and those of their families have helped to tackle the problems.

By comparing the professions of the participants with those of their fathers, there is a separate downward shift in the occupational status of young people with dyslexia. Most respondents (63%) were employed in lower-class professions and 33% in professions of the same class as their fathers (Bruce, 1983).

Michail's (2010) study focused on and examined the experiences of 14 undergraduate and postgraduate dyslexic students aged 18-40 who attended 3 universities in the West Midlands of England between 1999 and 2001. The study, through interviews, aimed to explore the experience of students of tertiary education with dyslexia, to shed light on the impact of dyslexia in their lives, but also to look at how they met the challenges, the strategies they developed to overcome them, and the facilities they received at the university. The family played a predominant role in the lives of the participants,

especially the mothers. The students were generally satisfied with the welfare and support they received from the institutions, although further research should be done on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in relation to dyslexia. Overall, the participants had positive experiences from the university and had accepted the label of dyslexia as it was the cause of their low school performance in the past. The majority of students did not see dyslexia as a disability but focused on its positive aspects such as creative thinking, the ability to visualize things in a different way, determination and power to work hard.

They considered dyslexia part of their lives, although it was sometimes difficult, all students were determined not to let dyslexia hamper their success (Michail, 2010). The participants stated that before they got diagnosed with dyslexia, they experienced negative comments and prejudice, resulting in a lack of trust and insecurity. After their diagnosis, they improved their confidence and self-esteem and stated that at the university they feel they have more confidence in themselves than they did during their school years. Despite that the majority of participants experienced the negative attitudes of teachers during school years because teachers then did not know about dyslexia, believe that this experience was a driving force to succeed. Determination was the only thing that made them continue to work hard. While in school years they linked dyslexia to intelligence, they did not believe so when they went to the university. They focused on the strengths of dyslexia and not on its weaknesses. They were aware of the difficulties and the necessary work with the support professors. They were also aware of the requirements of their courses and that they should work twice as hard as their peers to get the degree. Overall, the participants stated they were ready to reveal their dyslexia to their close friends or their teachers. The difficulties of the students of Michail's study (2010) during their school years referred to writing and spelling, while at the university it was more difficult for them to manage time as they needed more time to study and understand the amount of the material they had to learn for each course. Compared to their peers, dyslexic students had to work twice as hard to manage and submit their assignments within the time limits. Another major difficulty stated by the majority of students was to express their thoughts written on paper, and that is why they felt dyslexia as an obstacle to expressing their potential. They felt that their grades were inferior, because their writing skills did not meet the standards.

Not adopting common definitions of dyslexia, but also of emotional problems, causes problems regarding the consistency of research results and the generalization of findings. According to some research studies, people with learning difficulties and reading difficulties have a high incidence of emotional and behavioural problems (Tovilli, 2003). A student with dyslexia that is not able to develop effective skills and strategies in some important areas of the curriculum faces serious emotional consequences. When poor school performance is attributed to immaturity, laziness, carelessness, attention deficit, defence or when there is opposition between teachers and parents as to the explanation of difficulty, emotional damage occurs.

Several studies show that students with learning difficulties show some emotional disorders at school, outside school or both. The traumatic experiences of the students

during reading and the anxiety cause weakness in concentration, resulting in high levels of stress that interfere with the learning process. Reading may be a threatening process for dyslexic students that causes stress and involves parents, teachers and classmates. Dyslexic students react by manifesting behaviours related to anger, rage, fear and avoidance. However, the causal relationship between stress and learning difficulties has not yet been solved (Papadatos, 2005).

In particular, dyslexic boys at around 9 years of age have emotional problems related to aggression, disorder, stress, withdrawal in their own world, resistance to pressure, addiction tendencies, and learning problems, such as negative reading attitude, easy discouragement, perceiving that success is a risk and generally avoided learning (Tsovili, 2003). According to Freud, stress is the fundamental phenomenon and the central problem of neurosis, which has a significant impact on personality formation. Stress is related to psychological and social problems. Social anxiety stress weakens the memory function and implies reduced academic performance.

Learning difficulties and associated emotional problems arise from the family and school environment. Dyslexics may be stressful in potentially threatening situations, such as reading, due to their reduced performance. This stress results in further deterioration of reading (Tsovili, 2003).

Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou (2008) studied how the individual, educational and psycho-emotional characteristics of 16 students (11 boys and 5 girls) with special learning difficulties (dyslexia) were related. The students were aged 19-26 and attended 8 university and technological institutions of higher education. Researchers used psychometric tools and spontaneous writing (written essay) as questionnaires. According to the results of the study, the majority of the students, who were men, had mild difficulties faced with realism and evaluated their attendance at the university more positively than they did for school. The research proposed addressing socio-emotional pressures as a measure of stress control and improvement of students' self-image with the aim of acquiring the necessary academic skills and completing their studies (Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2008).

Riddick et al. (1999), compared self-esteem, stress and educational experiences between dyslexic and non-dyslexic university students. Each group consisted of 16 students (9 men and 7 women) and completed three questionnaires: The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (Battle, 1992), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger et al., 1983) and a questionnaire on past and present educational experiences; in addition, dyslexic students were interviewed. The dyslexic group showed significantly lower self-esteem than the control group, but there was no difference in stress. However, the group of dyslexic students reported that when they were in primary and secondary schools, they felt more stressed and less able to write assignments compared to the control group. At the university, there was no significant difference in anxiety between the two groups. Many dyslexic students considered the university to be a nice environment, but they rated themselves less capable in written assignments and their academic performance.

Students with special needs who disclose a disability may be stigmatized. Students with invisible disabilities prefer to hide their disability to avoid the consequences of their diversity (Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2007).

The emphasis on the diagnostic and individual needs of students continues to require students to disclose these needs to their teachers. Despite existing procedures to encourage students to make clear their particular learning needs, many choose not to do so because they worry that their fellow students and staff will consider them lame, lazy or that they do not try, and even that they are lying if they are people with invisible disabilities (Matthews, 2009). The reason for concealing dyslexia is the negative attitudes of students and teachers due to their limited knowledge of the specific learning needs of disabled students and the necessary adaptations of the workplace for their support and the perceptions that these students are slow or lazy (Griffiths et al., 2010). Students have difficulty approaching supervisors in the academic departments who are unaware of their difficulty. They are concerned about the prejudices and characterizations of other students and teachers about dyslexia because they judge the presentation, organization, grammar and spelling of their papers unfavourably (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006).

Corrigan and Watson (2002) have shown that public stigma can sometimes be internalized and so is called self-stigma, which may reduce levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Mullins & Preyde, 2013).

According to their research, at a university in Ontario, Canada, on a sample of ten female students with invisible disabilities, the negative perceptions of the public were causing public stigma to students with disabilities, and it was likely to suspend the support they could receive, as they believed that the use of facilities would lead to disappointment (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). It should be noted that when the facilities were provided in ways that made students with special needs “very visible” had a negative effect, they reduced the willingness of students to ask for these facilities (Mullins and Preyde, 2013). Students with special needs should not be treated differently and the disability should not be used as a label to define the person. Students may have advantages in other areas and may contribute to a team (Griffiths et al., 2010).

Abroad, the attendance of tertiary education from dyslexic students began in the 1970s, and since then research studies have been carried out to address issues related to students’ needs, studies and the policy of the institutions. Research in English-speaking countries has focused on the extent of dyslexia at the university level, and on the ways in which students with dyslexia can be supported. The experience of all these years has led higher education institutions to develop a set of supportive measures to bring them into line with the laws that ensured the rights of people with disabilities in order to tackle the issues arising from the attendance of students with dyslexia, to enable them to successfully complete their studies, to reduce the leakage of students from the university and to make use of the assets and positive features of people with dyslexia when they enter the labour market as professional practitioners or scientists. In the past, dyslexic students were unable to respond to the degree of difficulty of the courses, which meant that they were dropping out of their studies, shifting to easier studies, delaying getting

their degrees or taking their degrees with low marks. Richardson and Wydell, as reported by Taylor et al. (2009), found that students with dyslexia in the UK were more likely to drop out of their studies in the first year and less likely to complete them, although with adequate support the pace of completion of dyslexic studies matched that of students without any difficulties. In the research by Taylor et al. (2009), 2 out of the 22 students in the sample dropped out of their studies and this was done during the first year (Taylor et al., 2009).

The stigma of dyslexia often prevents students from receiving the support provided by the university. Universities could cope with the stigma of students by informing new entrants about services and support, while creating a climate of confidence for students that they will not be stigmatized. At the same time, university staff should be aware of the dyslexia and the difficulties faced by students and adopt policies that are guided by a model of empowerment, which recognizes the advantages of students, highlighting their motivation and persistence in overcoming obstacles to their studies (Herrington & Hunter-Carsch, 2001). According to two national surveys in Canada, the two biggest categories of disabilities are dyslexia (23.9%) and mental disorders (17.8%). Students with dyslexia, compared to students with physical disabilities, were less likely to report positive attitudes towards their institution and pointed out that few people from their faculty were interested in helping them as students. Their institutions have also expressed fewer positive reactions to them as students (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2008).

Therefore, it is important to ascertain the reason why students with invisible disabilities have negative experiences (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). In Greek universities, the number of students with dyslexia is rising year on year, as prospective students make use of oral examinations and additional examination time as prescribed by the law.

Greek universities mainly use the measure of oral examination, which is applied according to the judgment of each professor. This measure is inexpensive, but it is not enough to help students with dyslexia in their studies because students face difficulties in attending higher education institutions, and if there is no provision for facilities then there is an increased risk that they will not be able to complete their studies. The research by Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou (2008) explored the recognition practices as well as student support in order to tailor educational needs. The support measures for dyslexic students implemented by the various universities abroad constitute an important information tank for the development of supportive policy by Greek universities. According to Michail's (2010) research, in three universities with specialized staff for dyslexia support, the dyslexic students wishing to receive disability allowance were helped by support teachers to complete the application. The majority of students used the extra time they were entitled to and received support for workload and exams. Some were assisted in writing assignments and organization, and some were given the support of scribes to take notes for them in the auditorium. Although the students had a positive opinion about the learning support groups at their universities, there was no overall support from the institution that approached the particular needs of individuals. There were no national guidelines on what a "reasonable regulation" is, and this decision

lies with universities. The oral examination can be considered as a reasonable arrangement, but there is no consensus, so other universities apply it, while others do not. To identify dyslexic students, some universities use special stickers on the test papers during examinations so as to avoid rigidity for spelling mistakes. The participants asked for information on all available support options and stressed that there should be a better teacher information network for students with dyslexia as well as facilities that lead to more positive learning experiences. Students' views on academic staff varied, some teachers provided notes, while others did not. In addition, there was confusion as to the fact that the teaching staff was informed by the support professors about which students are dyslexic because of the privacy of personal information.

Mortimore (2012) conducted a study in the UK at a university of seven academic faculties with undergraduate and postgraduate students. The university claimed a fully inclusive identity, commitment to widen participation, and maintained partnerships with local authorities and non-governmental organizations. The number of students claiming disability support allowance increased from 6.1% in 2004/2005 to 8.2% compared to 4.7% of students at national level. At the time of the study, 360 students claimed the disability support allowance. This case study with mixed methodology design examined policy documents and explored the experience of staff and students through interviews and questionnaires and the suitability of the model of Fuller et al. (2004) as a measure of participation in higher education institutions. Fuller et al. (2004) developed a uniform six-stage progress model towards an inclusive institution that shows that different individuals or departments can remain at different stages of development, delaying the transformation of the whole system. The study investigated the extent to which this model is reflected within the University in order to allow confirmation, identification and elimination of discrimination against disabled people, as well as its development as fully inclusive. The study also explored the progress of the University towards full participation, the gaps between policy and practice, and how and where practices of bias and discrimination against people with disabilities could survive (Mortimore, 2012). The findings support the assertions of Fuller et al. (2004) that different individuals at different levels of an organization are likely to be at different stages and support the need for clearer support systems and enhanced training for staff.

The findings also confirmed the existence of examples of an inclusive culture at all levels of the University, alongside the need to strengthen and clarify systems by confirming the links between the management policy and the work of the officers and professors. An inclusive institution should show uniform roles, responsibilities and compensation to the representatives who are responsible for dyslexia, training for easy access and recognition of consequences for the workload of staff.

At the level of the School of Education, despite the dyslexia deficit model, there is little evidence of the practices of bias and discrimination against people with disabilities. The Fuller model (Fuller et al., 2004) ensured a clear and practical way of mapping the institution's journey towards full participation, demonstrating that, although participants at all levels were mostly willing travelers, the inconsistencies of the systems linking the

levels could potentially allow bias and discrimination practices against people with disabilities to survive. Once these gaps are identified, they can be connected by promoting the creation of a fully inclusive institution. Effective co-ordination between the academic units, support units and central government units responsible for the evaluation is required. This also requires the formal recognition of the special needs of the students in the exams. Universities should identify the reasons for preventing a significant proportion of dyslexic students from absorbing available support facilities and develop strategies to address them. A case study at a Department of Computer Science at a University of the United Kingdom, lasting more than 4 years, was conducted by Taylor et al. (2009) to which 22 students took part in a total of about 80 students with disabilities. The research was based on long-term case studies at this university. The tools of the study were interviews/discussions and observation of staff and students, as well as the examination of academic, official and technical documents on special education provision. The data was related to how the students did with the teaching, evaluation, and types of settings that were carried out. The findings showed that higher education UK providers are required to have a variety of arrangements for students with dyslexia, such as organized school-college transition or work to higher education, diagnosis, assessment, teaching, as well as supervising/guiding students. The diagnosis of dyslexic students must be carried out in a timely manner so that the planned grant can be processed quickly and the necessary equipment or software delivered before the beginning of the academic year. In addition, it is important to agree with each student concerned which arrangements are appropriate for him or her, as it would be inappropriate to make the same arrangements for any dyslexic student. Research suggests that by providing appropriate settings in higher education students with dyslexia can achieve similar results with their non-dyslexic peers (Taylor et al., 2009). By studying the services and support measures used by higher education institutions abroad, it could be said that they provide counselling services to all students. Students with learning difficulties are provided with some facilities such as: modification of teaching methods, exam arrangements, tutorials, supervision by a teacher for learning difficulties, help with lecture notes, provision and use of technology aids, and use of the library. Also, in some universities, assessment and diagnosis takes place within the university, and allowances are provided. Assistance for notes includes securing notes from lectures to dyslexic students, or help by a scribe for taking lecture notes, as well as notes on coloured paper or in large fonts.

Open access days have been proven a good practice for universities in which they inform the public about their studies and facilities in order to attract new students.

There is also the help line, the access centers and the national network of problem-solving co-ordinators (Reid, 2003). Also important sources of information about the student's difficulties are the completion of the paper application and the students' interview for their admittance to the institution. In addition, there is a special chapter on the facilities provided for dyslexic students in the study guide or the university's website. The provision of counselling services during some difficult times is a very important support for all students, especially those with dyslexia, in order to cope with intense work pace,

stressful situations such as exams, personal improvement such as strengthening their self-esteem, in teaching skills, in their career orientation and in organizing their time. Special arrangements for the exams include oral examinations, more time, examinations in a separate room, and reading of exam questions by an assistant or their recording and listening during the exam. The provision and use of technological aids involve laptops and appropriate software, scanners, tape recorders, recorded books, colourful transparent filters during reading, etc. Software that facilitates students with dyslexia includes programs that convert audio to text without having to type or convert text to sound, that is, the computer reads, text editors, spellcheck, dictionaries, electronic calendars, etc. Library support includes help from the librarian and assistance in using the database as well as access to resources.

Some universities have a separate library space for students with special needs. Teachers modify their lectures by applying multi-sensory methods such as PowerPoint presentations, use of large fonts, highlight the goals and main points of the lesson and write them on the blackboard or in the presentation, paraphrase the same thing, provide appropriate notes so that students can focus during the lecture, and use of examples (Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou, 2007), appropriate and accessible language in the course books and lecture notes, assistance in assignments and the ability to learn from the responsible professors and other faculty members (Reid, 2003). Teachers responsible for students with dyslexia, according to the model of Griffiths et al. (2010), are encouraged to observe the students and to refer them for evaluation earlier. It is important that they do not feel that they have borne the whole burden but to be supported effectively by the university and the staff. Effective guidance in practice is central to the success of this model (Griffiths et al., 2010).

Matthews (2009) discussed the concerns expressed by university academics about how to meet the needs of students with hidden disabilities in the classroom. She refers to the social model of disability, which argues that universities should avoid medical labels to describe the learning needs of students with difficulties, as well, and that they should establish a diversity of inclusive teaching strategies as part of their daily practice. Matthews (2009) highlighted the variability of policies and practices in promoting higher education inclusion in the UK and the need for staff development for a more inclusive educational system. She also stressed the need for the higher education institutions to adapt for a more complete inclusion because by providing physical or technological access for students with disabilities ensures that institutions are protected from litigation. The survey also suggests measures such as designating specific university professors who will be responsible for the policies and procedures relating to disability and the adoption of individual learning programs for students with disabilities, which will minimize their reliance on labels and the medical diagnosis assumptions telling teachers everything they need to know about the needs of the students. Therefore, she suggested that the social model of disability should present new paths towards a more inclusive higher education (Matthews, 2009).

The classroom facilities for students with learning difficulties in higher education have been investigated by Quinlan et al. (2012). Ten students, 19-29 years old, of a US

university participated in the semi-structured interviews. The nine had reading/writing difficulties, two had difficulties in mathematics and four had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The attitude of teachers towards students with learning difficulties was classified into three categories: no facilities, formal facilities as defined by law and facilities for all students. Although higher education institutions have a mandate to facilitate students with learning difficulties, students have reported how some teachers are tough, reluctant and provide no facilitation. Some others deny the existence of students with difficulty, and in another case, they tell the student that he or she has no difficulty and should not think poorly of him or herself. Such cases cause reluctance to students to expose their difficulty, or they delay their graduation, limit their academic success and ultimately undermine their ability to use higher education to achieve important goals in life. As far as the provision of formal facilities is concerned, some teachers do not know how to implement them, while others do so in a way that students feel discriminated and isolated. Although existing literature offers students strategies to improve their efforts to find facilitation, it neglects to suggest ways for teachers to learn how to facilitate students with learning difficulties. Since students are asked to disclose their learning needs prior to their application for help, the teachers should also respond to these needs.

Quinlan et al. (2012) proposed various techniques that could help not only dyslexic but all students in their studies: a) the discovery of student interests would help to select appropriate topics and examples; b) linking and applying theory to daily life; c) repeating the course material visually and verbally; d) creating accessible sources, such as recordings and slides, and making them available on the course webpage; e) determining the course material and giving feedback to students with a repetition insertion before the exams; f) defining and providing an outline of the learning objectives of the course; g) providing more office hours for the convenience of students. According to the findings of the research by Taylor et al. (2009), students with dyslexia should be provided with arrangements during lectures such as: a) lecture notes/workshops and exam questions should be written in large fonts, because this can facilitate reading; b) coloured test papers because it is believed to soften the symptoms associated with visual impairment. The use of coloured paper may be more preferred than the use of dark lenses, which some students feel uncomfortable and embarrassed to wear; c) laptops for lectures/courses/workshops; d) group or individual enhancing teaching for the purpose of help with basic mathematics and essay writing; e) use of a virtual learning environment with the help of the blackboard because it provides the information sources to all students before the lectures, which prevents the embarrassment of some dyslexic students when they are given notes on coloured paper and also contributes to an inclusive curriculum; (f) provision of more time for the assignments to be submitted. Professors should be aware that dyslexic students are making great efforts for seemingly simple tasks, so they need support and understanding to make the most of their abilities. It is important to provide more time for the exam, as well as the recruitment of a scribe for the written exam and alternative evaluation methods.

All students considered that they could complete all the required assignments of their courses. However, they may have needed a little more time or some alternatives (such as computer use in examinations). The comparison of the dyslexic students' grades with their non-dyslexic peers suggests that the facilities provided resulted in approximately equivalent performance.

The interesting finding that emerged was the highest grades obtained by dyslexic students who used the right of the extra time compared to dyslexic students who did not use the extra time, which is 25% more exam time (Taylor et al., 2009). This finding suggests that extra time in the exam was beneficial for students, as there were no visible differences in the academic qualifications of the two groups when they entered the university (Taylor et al., 2009). Griffiths et al. (2010) presented a case study and concluded that the continuing education/training of the university staff and engagement on raising the awareness on special education issues, as well as the special preparation of counsellors and liaison professors, are vital for students with disabilities before beginning their placement. Cooperation with other universities and institutions at national and international level leads to information and dissemination of good practice. The cooperation of students with special needs who have been motivated to make full use of their potential, with university professors and services is necessary in order to develop a dynamic, flexible and tailored model that will benefit them largely. The first phase of the tripartite model of Griffiths et al. (2010) relates to the disclosure of the disability by students as well as the identification and assessment of these needs. This is why the university organizes an open public information day before enrolling in the university, informing prospective students and among them those who are wondering if they could meet the requirements of the study.

In this case study, a prospective student communicated her disability and then the university invited her to a nursing skills session to analyze some of the related tasks, such as making the bed, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and injection technique, in order to identify early possible areas that will require reasonable adaptation in practice. After the student's work was positively assessed, she was referred to the Department of Health and the Disability Service for further advice and evaluation. After the evaluation process, the student was offered an unconditional place in the program, which she accepted. The second phase concerns the creation of support systems and procedures in practice. In particular there was a confidential communication between those responsible for future studies and the development of the student. Also, the Disability Service and the placement team discussed the needs of the placement and secured critical services such as: colored paper and overlays, special equipment, a quiet room to write notes, counselling, additional skills training, as well as flexible working hours during the placement with frequent breaks.

In order to ensure proper support, the relevant professor and counsellor were informed of each placement and counselling was provided by the counsellor who received appropriate preparation, such as a leaflet prepared by the Disability Service, as well as support for the student to participate fully in the learning environment. In the third

phase, the placement team, the Disability Service and the coordinator of the placements reviewed and defined alternative strategies. They reviewed the student's progress on the action plan and the reasonable adjustments agreed at the start of the placement. The fourth phase consisted of the development of detailed plans and support models and the creation of an information base. Based on the student experience and support teams' experiences, from pre-registration to graduation, a pathway analysis was carried out to develop and implement detailed action plans and procedures for different student situations, contributing to the development of the practice models for enhancing critical decisions on reasonable adjustments. The fifth phase included a critical evaluation and a review to identify which aspects of the support were functional and which not in order to effectively manage the support framework for students.

The sixth phase focused on the review of the support strategy. Through the critical discussion, the team examined the support strategy and the student was invited to participate and express her point of view. The tools used by the university to improve disability awareness included the following activities: a) annual counselling; b) disability awareness workshops; c) information for counsellors/mentors in a virtual learning environment; d) special leaflets with advice from the university's disability service; and e) the publication of a journal with guideline issues (Griffiths et al., 2010).

Chapter3

3.1 FCE CAMBRIDGE B2 Certification and Examination Framework

The features of dyslexia do not manifest to all people to the same extent. In some areas, the difficulties faced by a student with dyslexia may be more severe than in others. Each person is different and this diversity must be taken into account in dyslexia as well as the age of the person, early/specialized learning intervention and other factors (family and school). In addition, it should be noted that there are languages that are “obscure” (that is, phonemes and graphemes matching is not constant), such as in English, and that is why it is considered to create additional difficulties in learning it as a foreign language. On the other hand, French and German are characterized as phonologically “translucent”, while in terms of phonological coherence, Spanish and Italian are easier to learn (Crombie, 2000).

Interlinguistic intervention refers to the direct influence of the structure of the native language to a person, which interferes with the learning of a foreign language, often leading to mistakes (Shore & Sabatini, 2009). Sparks (1995) first introduced the “Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis”, according to which poor phonological awareness or phonological-spelling processing is often the reason why dyslexic students have a weakness in learning a foreign language (Knudsen, 2012). According to this hypothesis, even the slightest difficulty in the processing of the native language will come to light when learning a foreign language and this explains why even students who have compensated their dyslexia through the use of learning strategies may need to re-learn these skills when they try to learn a foreign language (Nijakowska, 2010; Schneider, 2009).

In addition to phonological awareness, morphological awareness and syntactic awareness constitute linguistic awareness, since the morphological processing of a word presupposes the simultaneous processing of phonological, syntactic, semantic and spelling information. It is therefore expected that dyslexic students will face difficulties in the field of morphology (Helland & Kaasa, 2004). It should also be noted that a large percentage of students with dyslexia experience difficulties in the short-term (Peer & Reed, 2003), the working, and the long-term memory, but also in the speed of processing information (Reed, 2005).

Students with dyslexia appear to have difficulties in the initial stage of verbal coding of information and it is necessary to systematically check the various dimensions of the memory’s function (Polychroni, 2011). According to Reed (2005), learning through the auditory pathway is perhaps the weakest way of learning for children with dyslexia. Instead, visual and kinesthetic stimuli help more. Thus, the multi-sensory approach to learning is considered necessary for the teaching of dyslexic students (Reed, 2009; Pappa, 2013). Most of the current research studies in the literature examine children with

English as their native language and are exploring areas of difficulty that these children face in learning foreign languages.

The way to prove one's knowledge in a foreign language is mainly by gaining a level of language certificate. All certificates today are based on the six (6) levels of the Common European Framework for Languages, levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.

The initial stages of learning a foreign language are those of A1 and A2 where the user is a basic scholar, with more limited basic knowledge. That is, at level A1, the user can, for example, be able to understand and use familiar daily basic phrases to meet specific needs, such as recommending others, asking and answering questions about personal information. In general, he can only talk in a simple way only when his interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly. The A2 level certificate user can understand sentences and phrases that are often used in everyday life and relate, for example, to basic personal and family information, to the market and to work. It can communicate simple and common obligations requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar matters. Finally, he can simply describe events of the past, his future and his immediate environment.

On levels B1 and B2 the user is independent. In particular, at level B1, the user's abilities are to understand the main points that are clearly presented to him regarding work, school or leisure time. It can handle situations that are likely to arise during a trip to an area where the language is spoken and produce plain text related to topics that are known to him or which concern him. Finally, he can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and aspirations, summarize his point of view as well as describe his plans. On the next level, in B2, the user is first able to understand the basic information of a more complex text, for specific and abstract topics. He can then talk with enough comfort and spontaneity with natural language speakers. He is also able to produce clear text with details on a variety of topics and express his point of view, giving the pros and cons to each of them.

The final stage that one can reach by learning a foreign language is level C1 and C2 where the user is capable of too many things. In the first case (C1), the user can understand more demanding and lengthy texts and express themselves with comfort and spontaneity in all sorts of issues. It can also use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Finally, he is able to produce clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex issues, formulated with organization, consistency and consistency. At the next level, C2, the user can generally more easily understand almost everything he hears or reads. It can make summaries of information from different oral or written sources, and organize them using coherent arguments. Finally, he can express himself spontaneously, with great ease and clarity, in every kind of circumstance.

The renewed B2 First for Schools exam consists of four test modules:

1) Section: Reading and Use of English (1 hour 15 minutes). Content: 7 parts / 52 questions.

Students should be able to understand the content of a set of texts, as well as the structure and views expressed in them. The texts come from sources familiar to schoolchildren,

such as magazines, articles, fiction and advertisements. Students are examined in the proper use of English with exercises focusing on vocabulary and grammar.

2) Section: Writing (1 hour 20 minutes). Content: 2 parts.

Students are asked to write two texts. The first, which is mandatory for everyone, is a 140-190-word report. For the second text, candidates must choose one of the following: article, email / letter, essay, critique or short story 140-190 words.

3) Section: Listening (about 40 minutes). Content: 4 parts / 30 questions.

Students should be able to watch and understand a series of recordings, such as news programs, public announcements, and other sources that respond to the interests of school-age students.

4) Section: Speaking (14 minutes per pair of candidates). Content: 4 parts.

This is a face-to-face exam where one or two candidates and the examiner are present. Students need to demonstrate their ability to communicate in English by answering the examiner's oral questions, making a dialogue with the other candidate or speaking for themselves (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/en/exams-and-tests/first-for-schools/exam-format/>).

The British Council is committed to providing all students/candidates with open and equal access to opportunities. For candidates with hearing, speech, visual or motor problems, there are special arrangements. Similar arrangements are also provided for candidates with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia.

Special provisions may include: longer exam time, breaks with supervisor's presence, alternative test methods, e.g. in Braille or with large fonts, wheelchair access, a copyist or scribe (someone who types the words dictated), Listening exercises with lip reading.

A prerequisite for the above special provisions is the presentation of a medical certificate by the relevant doctor. The medical certificate must be legible, report precisely the problem and needs, be an original document and bear a header with the information or official stamp and the name and specialty, as well as the signature of the registered doctor.

For candidates with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia), additional criteria apply. The most important are: a) medical certificates must have been issued up to two years before the date of the examinations and b) a sample of the handwriting may also be requested, specifically a short-handwritten report in English.

The information collected through this procedure is used in order to apply the special provisions that are appropriate for each candidate. There are a number of special arrangements that can be envisaged, such as: a) extra time since it may take longer to complete a test unit, thus extra time is provided by 25% more than normal. For example, if a module lasts one hour, the student will have 15 extra minutes to complete the test. The extra time may exceed 25% if deemed necessary. b) Breaks with a Supervisor's

presence where along with the provision for extra time, or instead of it, there can be breaks with the presence of a supervisor. In this case, the student may stop the exam and take a break in another room. During the break there is a supervisor's presence. This can help if concentration problems occur.

More specifically the manuals of the exams mention:

- Candidates with specific learning difficulties are also normally allowed 25% extra time but may apply for more if their difficulty is severe.
- Candidates with special requirements (including candidates with specific learning difficulties) may apply to write their answers using a computer if they are unable to write their answers by hand. If using a screen-reading program, candidates may not use any spellcheck, grammar check or thesaurus functions.
- For reasons of test security, in the first instance, the exam centre's hardware should be used e.g. PC, laptop. However, use of the candidate's own laptop may be permitted where necessary, if all security requirements can be shown to have been complied with (please refer to the exam centre for further advice).
- Candidates may also apply to use screen magnifier/CCTV systems and other reading devices as an alternative (or in addition) to printed question papers.
- Candidates with specific learning difficulties are not allowed to have an amanuensis but may apply for a copier (transcriber) if their handwriting is difficult to read. This means that someone copies (makes a transcript of) the candidate's work at the end of the exam. The candidate will read out their answers to the copier, including all the punctuation. The copier will write down an exact copy of the answers, including any mistakes in grammar, spelling or punctuation.
- Modified Large Print versions are for candidates with visual difficulties, and candidates who have a physical difficulty which makes it hard for them to read smaller print, or focus on pictures/photographs. Candidates with specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia, and other disabilities may also request enlarged material.
- Modified Large Print versions of Reading and Use of English papers contain adapted material, a simplified layout and standardized fonts (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/170888-guidance-notes-for-special-requirements-reading-and-use-of-english-tests.pdf>).

Chapter 4

4.1 Methodology: “Case study”

This research follows the case study approach. When the research interest is transferred to a specific, complex and functional situation, then the approach of case study is used to characterize the research strategy. The case is deliberate, it has space-time limits, functional parts and its own identity. The case is usually people, groups, programs, educational institutions or bodies and, more rarely, events and procedures (Stake, 1995). The native case study that will be used in this research, focuses on a particular person, group, event or organization. The research interest arises from the need for the researcher to learn as much as possible about the specific case (Hancock & Algozzine, 2014).

Case study as a research strategy is used in a number of research fields. Economics, sociology and education are mentioned. The evaluation of programs appears mainly from the 1970s onwards. The criticism of the traditional forms of evaluation and the experimental approaches, as well as the emergence of the qualitative methodology, enriched the theoretical and methodological scope of the evaluation of the programs, enabling researchers-evaluators to use it more and more (Crowe et al., 2011).

A case study has its own research design (Stake, 1995). Although there are differences between researchers, mainly due to their different scientific and epistemological starting points, most of them agree that during the design phase decisions are made on what will be explored, for what purpose and with what criteria the success will be judged investigation. Particular importance attaches to the definition of the case and the unit of analysis, the questions under consideration, the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data and the writing of the evaluation report. An equally important role for the successful outcome of the evaluation exercise is the provision of access clearance, the organization of the first visit to the field, the engagement with the actors, the investigation of their intentions regarding the publication of the study and the confidentiality conditions, the allocation of resources and the role the evaluator will attach to it (Crowe et al., 2011).

5. Thoughts

5.1 The importance of an English language Certificate

In today's fast-growing multilingual and globalized world, English Language is universally spoken and it is essential for all young people to be able to prove their English written and oral communication skills, by holding a certificate. English is the most widely learned language. In Europe in 2005 more than the two-thirds (67.3 per cent) of students in the Primary education studied at least one foreign language, in 2014 this was risen up to 83.8 per cent, in Secondary school 97.3 per cent of the students study English, which in some countries like Greece or Italy, is taught as a mandatory first foreign language in state schools. Exchanging populations, global citizenship, studying abroad and world wide open work spaces, define the English Language certificate as a necessity since it is the key access to Educational Institutions and Working fields.

5.2 English Language Certificate

Children in Greece start learning English from the age of six or seven years old. The variation of learning time needed to complete the learning process and sit for the first English certificate depends on the students' personality, educational needs, the methodology, private or public-school attendance and usually takes up to seven years of preparation for the upper intermediate level (B2). Costs include educational materials, private tutors, schools and last but not least fees to participate in testing as to acquire the desirable level certification. There is a large variety of certificates which prove the proficiency of English language depending the usage and the orientation. These tests are standardized and are taken in over 3.000 test centers in 20 countries, including universities and private language schools. They are tip- tailored designed to address a massive number of populations and usually the fees start from seventy euros rising up to three hundred and more. Based on a research done by the Private Teacher's Union, Greeks pay annually the amount of 15 million euros for fees while 160 thousand students sit for the English language exams. Students might pass the exams but in case they do not they have to pay again as to participate one more or even more times for the certification. All students who have taken English courses can sit for the English certificate since these tests are made to assess all school population, the same test evaluates the knowledge of students who suffer from Dyslexia -which is defined as a learning disability - whom difficulties are well known world widely and have been written down.

It is notified that dyslexic students struggle to overcome their educational difficulties in their first language through their academic years, making the acquisition of a foreign language even harder for them. The extraordinary here is that when these students are sitting for their school exams in their native language they are supported by various

accommodations whereas when they have to prove their acquisition of a foreign language these accommodations are absent or limited down.

After a request made to the Cambridge Assessment to provide information about the number of dyslexic students who have passed the FCE B2 the last ten years the answer was that due to students' personal data they do not keep any records.

5.3 Consideration

An Educational Assessment Institution should keep records as to identify all test-takers' needs and not to exclude by any means any potential student who has educational difficulties and decides to participate in an English language test. In any case evaluation tests and their policies should be examined regarding their content, context, correctness and fairness among student populations. Measuring student's success or failure ensures an equity education environment which ensures that every student has an equal chance to succeed and develop. Educational policies should consider equitable inclusion for all people and reassure that they are assessed in a fair matter. Students not being fairly assessed by institutions- which define their policies as fair and equal towards all school population- create a Societal injustice that affects 700 million people worldwide since according to Dyslexia Action (2017) around 16 % of the population or 11.5 million people experience dyslexia.

6. Problem statement

Dyslexic students sit for the English language certificate FCE B2 for schools trying to succeed and work hard to achieve their goal while test designers and test providers continue to assess them in the same way as they assess students with no educational difficulties. Not having found any data on how dyslexic students perform during an English language exam this thesis aims to investigate whether Dyslexic students can pass the FCE B2 English certificate for schools, and if not, if they are fairly and equally assessed by the standardized test which is designed to address all kinds of test takers.

6.1 Results

Based on their scores in Reading and Use of English and Listening parts of the mock assessments it is shown that:

The students diagnosed with Dyslexia did not pass none of the three mock tests of the FCE B2 test. The structure of this test cannot facilitate dyslexic students due to its tasks which demand strong working memorization skills and correct spelling. The extra length of time given to them was not efficient to support their needs as to achieve their goal. The FCE B2 English certificate seems like it cannot address in a fairly manner all test takers and in particularly students with dyslexia, due to the complexity of the test.

7. The case

This is a case study of twenty-four students who were assessed for the FCE b2 paper tests.

7.1 Sample – Participants

In this research the participants were twenty-four students in the 2nd grade of a private Middle School in Athens, Greece, among them were six students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia by the public sector KEDDY. This group of pupils was selected because they were in the same age and had a common educational training since they all attended the same school and class since the 1st grade of Primary school. The participants had been trained from an early age to take the Cambridge examination. They have all practiced with the same material, taught by the same teachers and learnt how to apply the methodology needed to achieve their goal. The students have already sat for the KET and PET Cambridge tests during Primary school and have been familiarized with this kind of evaluation and examination from an early age so they were aware of all the exam procedure. In the first and second grade of Middle School they were intensively taught, guided and practiced on writing FCE tests. The school provided students with the latest educational materials and a consistent curriculum which aimed to their successful achievement of the FCE B2 certification. The students were considered as the perfect sample class of a case study for all the reasons mentioned above because they had a well-known student profile which excluded any hidden surprises that could mislead the research.

7.2 Reasons of this research

The interest for this research was triggered, when the school asked the Cambridge Assessment on behalf of the parents, what kind of accommodation is provided for their children who had Dyslexia, during the FCE examination and the answer was just an amount of 25 % extra time.

Dyslexia is world widely accepted and recognized as a learning disability and its effects have also been acknowledged. Teachers are being constantly educated through seminars and master degrees on how to treat, support and encourage dyslexic students, schools have changed their ways of evaluating these students and teachers have adapted and reformed their evaluation procedures as to meet their student's needs. Accommodation have been introduced to all school levels and universities, awareness has been applied on how to provide these accommodation and address students during exams. For example in Greece all Dyslexic students are examined in both Greek and English classes

orally even when they sit for the National Greek Exams which define in which university a student will be accepted a Dyslexic student is evaluated orally and this is a right given to them by the law according to No. 28722/C2 Ministerial Decision "Examination of students with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs of Daily and Evening Junior High Schools" (GG B / 276 / 16-3-2010 .

In this case these six pupils would either participate in a written or a computerized exam for the FCE b2 for schools, like not having any educational needs although officially recognized by a public sector (KEDDY) since this examination frame does not take into consideration their educational needs. Clearly, as these students have been trained for only one and specific way of being evaluated, they chose to sit for the FCE examination because they do not want to differ from the rest of their classmates or be discriminated due to their educational needs.

Knowing all of the above , the concern was if these students would be able to overcome their difficulties and pass the three mock FCE B2 exams. Seeing this matter from a social academic view a limited accessibility to dyslexic students to this kind of exam could lead to labeling the Cambridge certificate as the most prestigious one to have among students that would create a social academic gap in school environments between the elaborated students and the restricted ones. Academic institutions and organizations are supposed to open roads and build bridges for every student to be able to have an equal and safe access to language qualification and not to create social discrimination.

While the performance of students diagnosed with Dyslexia when participating in foreign language examinations is not fully investigated this thesis was an opportunity to raise awareness about this matter.

7.3 Material

The students were given three FCE mock tests photocopied from the Cambridge University Press Test Book based on the ones given to a real exam participation, The first test was given on December, the second test on February and the third test on April. The time length left in between these tests was to identify any score changes, monitor process, compare different scores, observe difficulties and take into consideration factors such as fatigue, stress and nervousness that could alter the results. The research focused particularly on the task "Reading & Use of English" which consists of seven parts and the Listening part which consists of four parts .In a case study three tests would provide a better observation on scores .The reason of not handing out questionnaires was to monitor the whole evaluating test process .Analyzing the student's performance could help to understand their challenges and identify whether evaluating changes should be applied in the standardized test , or more accommodation to be provided during the FCE B2 test .

7.4 Setting

The FCE examination has taken place within the school environment in real time exams, students were seated in the same way when they sit for the real exams, detailed and clear instructions were outlined, procedures were applied and testing sequence was like in an actual FCE b2 exam with time limitations and teachers monitoring.

7.5 Case study

A group of 24 students (six of them diagnosed with dyslexia) were given three mock FCE B2tests (Reading & Use of English and Listening) in order to investigate how well they perform in this kind of exam.

7.6 Strengths of the Case study

Having in hand the material used in this case study and the scores of the students, it is feasible to identify the parts of the exam that were difficult for the students to overcome due to Dyslexia. In addition, knowing that students have been trained the same way and monitoring their eight-year educational journey from Primary school to the second grade of Gymnasium, makes this research distinguished and notable due to the students' continuing progress. The dyslexic students did not feel discriminated or observed since all test-takers were participating in the FCE mock tests.

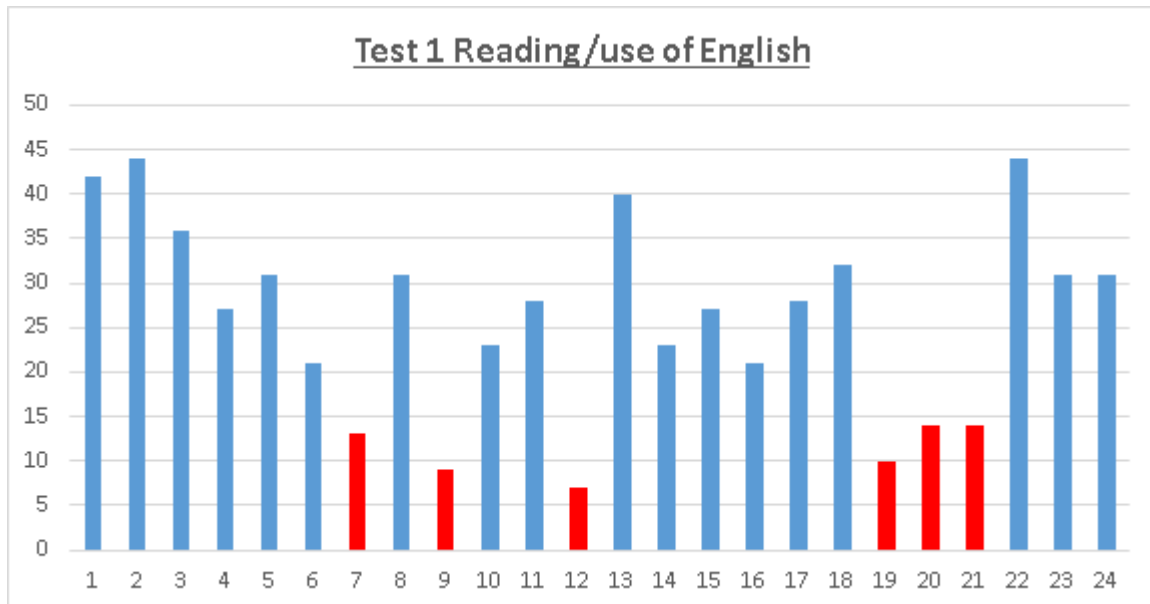
7.7 Limitations of the Case study

A research may suffer limitations or factors that cannot be identified due to human nature. In this case, even though students have been taught the same way with same material and methodology and have been together all the way from the 1st grade of Primary school till the 2nd grade of Gymnasium school, due to this research, some students could have been taken private English language lessons in the privacy of their homes without the researcher being aware of, in this case performance or test scores could be altered only in a positive way and not in a negative way by been led to low scores. Another limitation here can be that we cannot possibly have or compare official test material given in an actual testing, since they are never given or shown to publicity in contrast with the ones that the researcher used for evaluating the test takers. The tests that were used for the case study had been photocopied from a Cambridge University Press test book.

“Reading and Use of English “

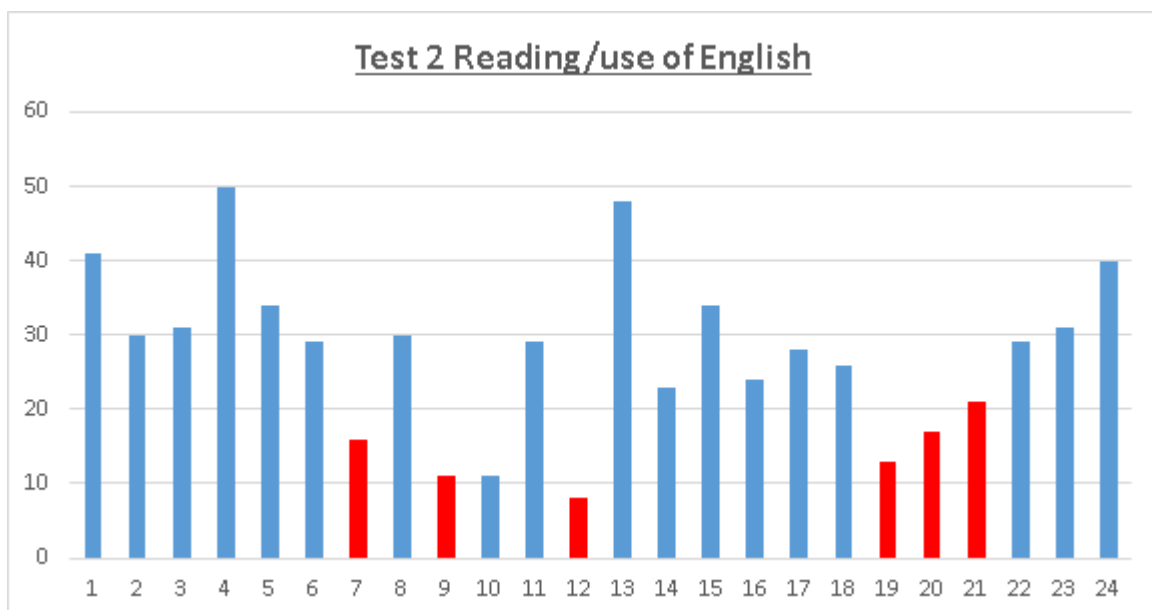
8. (December) Test 1

The scores of the dyslexic students are in red and as it is shown they have the lowest marks of the group between 7 % and almost 14 % in total in their first mock test.



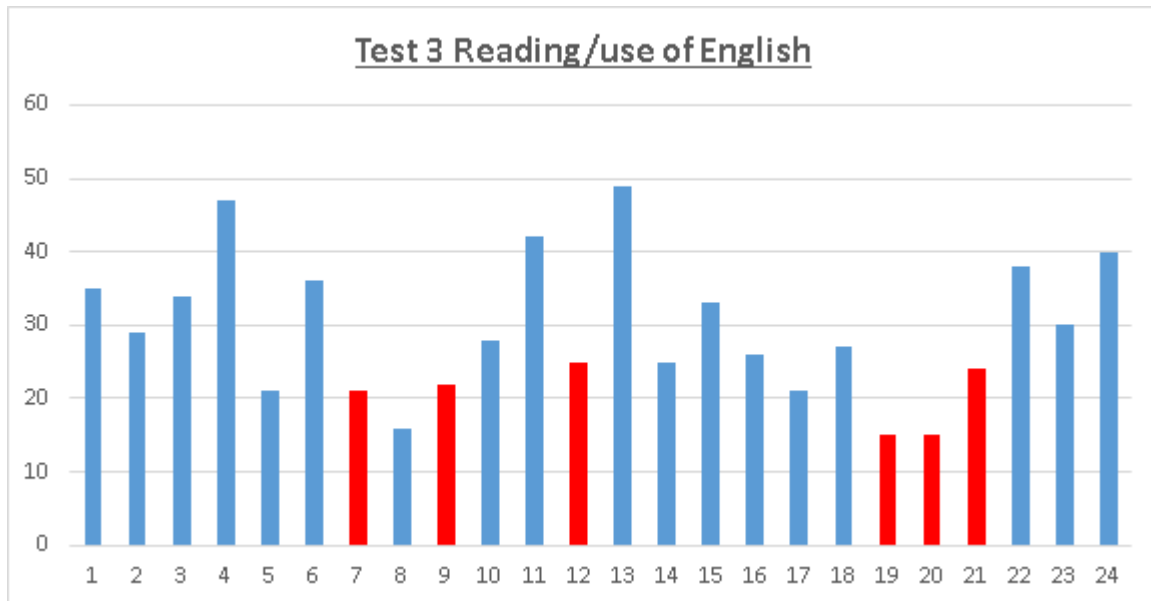
8.1 (February) Test 2

There was a slight marking increase from 8 to 21 in the second mock test .



8.2 (April) Test 3

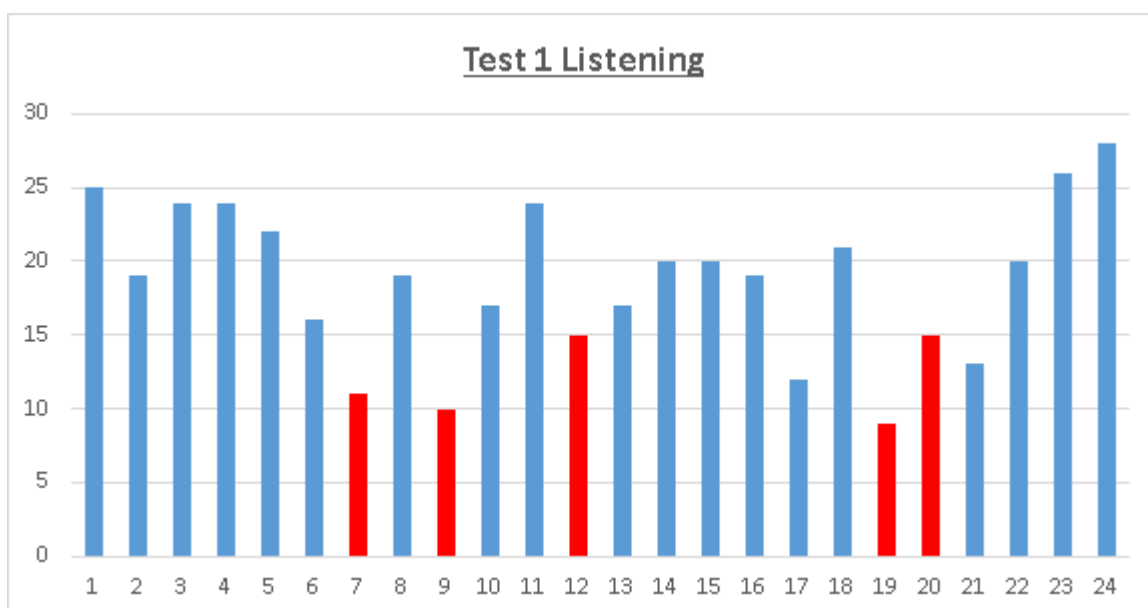
There is a significant increase from 15 to 25 total score in the third mock test but students were not able to succeed the test.



Listening

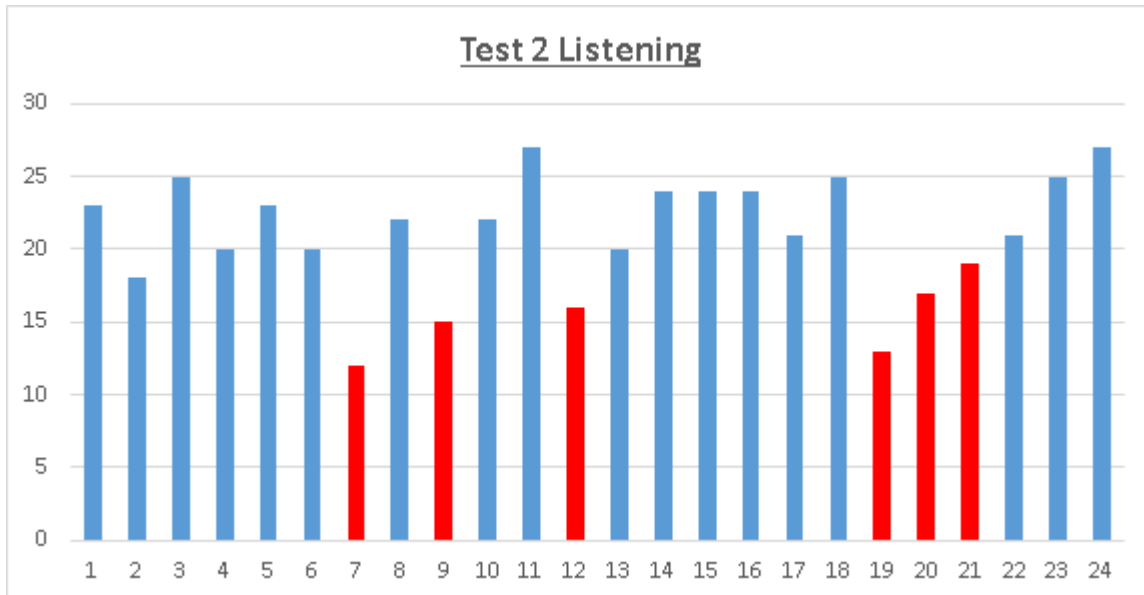
8.3 (December) Test 1

Dyslexic students scored from 9 to 15.



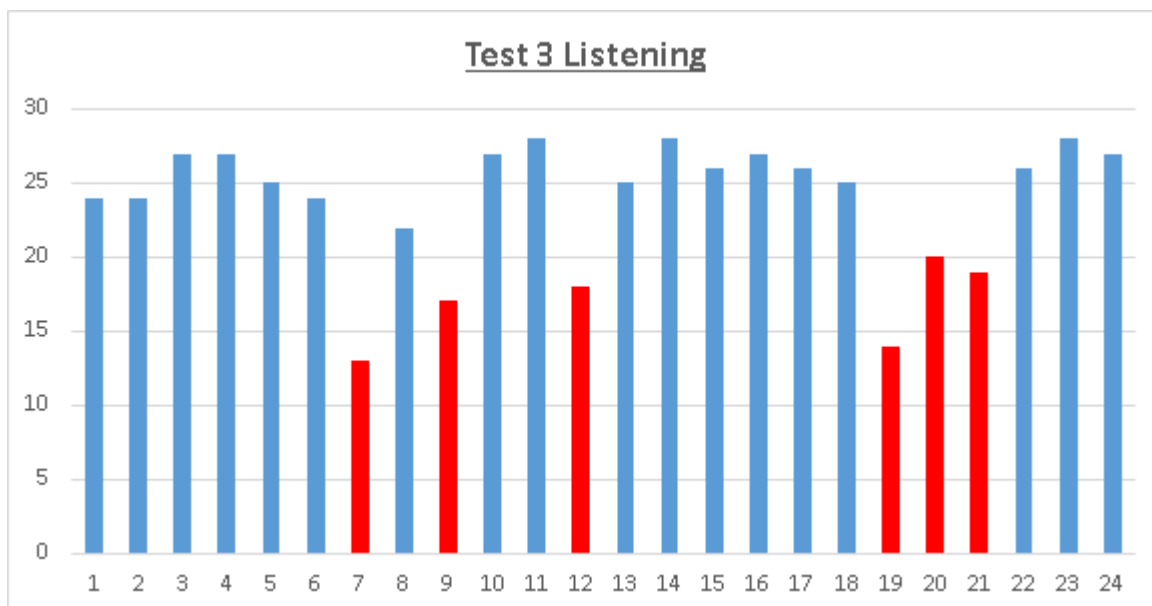
8.4 (February) Test 2

There was an increase from 12 to 19 total score.



8.5 (April) Test 3

There was an improvement from 13 to 20 total score.



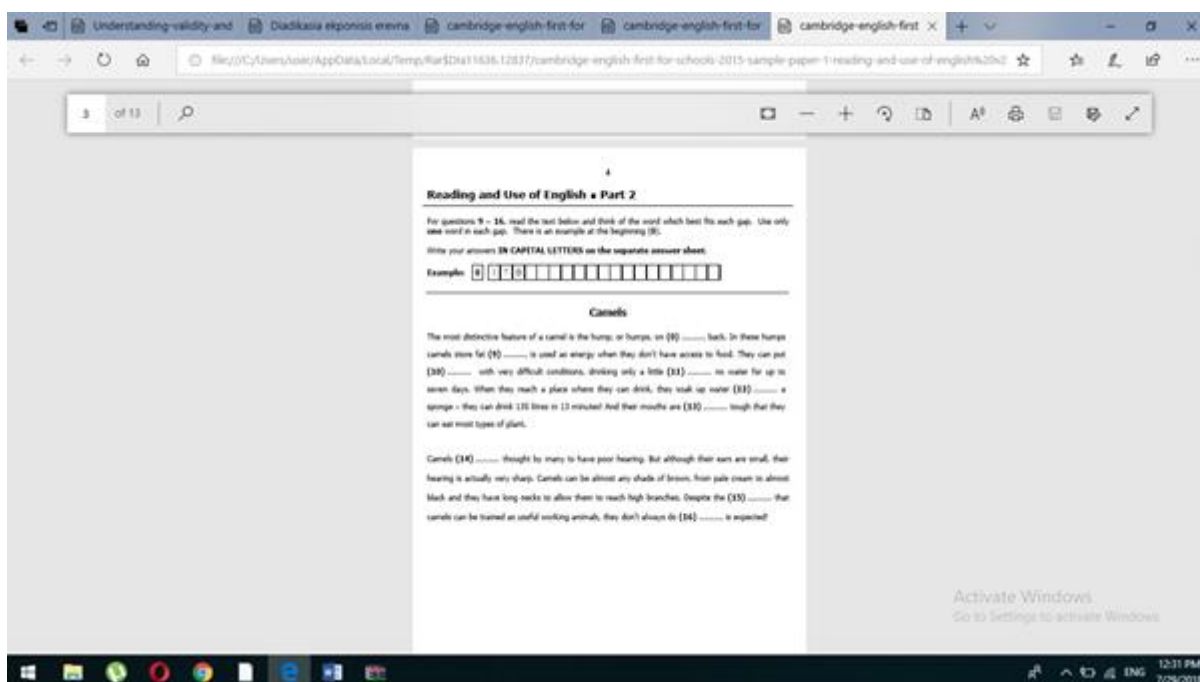
8.6 Analysis

After data collection, it was shown that students with Dyslexia although they have had increased their scores during the three mock FCE tests, still did not succeed none of the examinations, due to their learning disability and the difficult nature of the tasks that comes in contrast with their needs.

8.6 Reading and use of English

In the Reading and use of English section, parts 2, 4 and 6 were the most strenuous ones to solve due to their nature.

In part 2 the students had to read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap, this particular task demands a strong memorization and correct spelling. It is well known that students having dyslexia lack of these skills since they have weak working memory and do spelling errors.

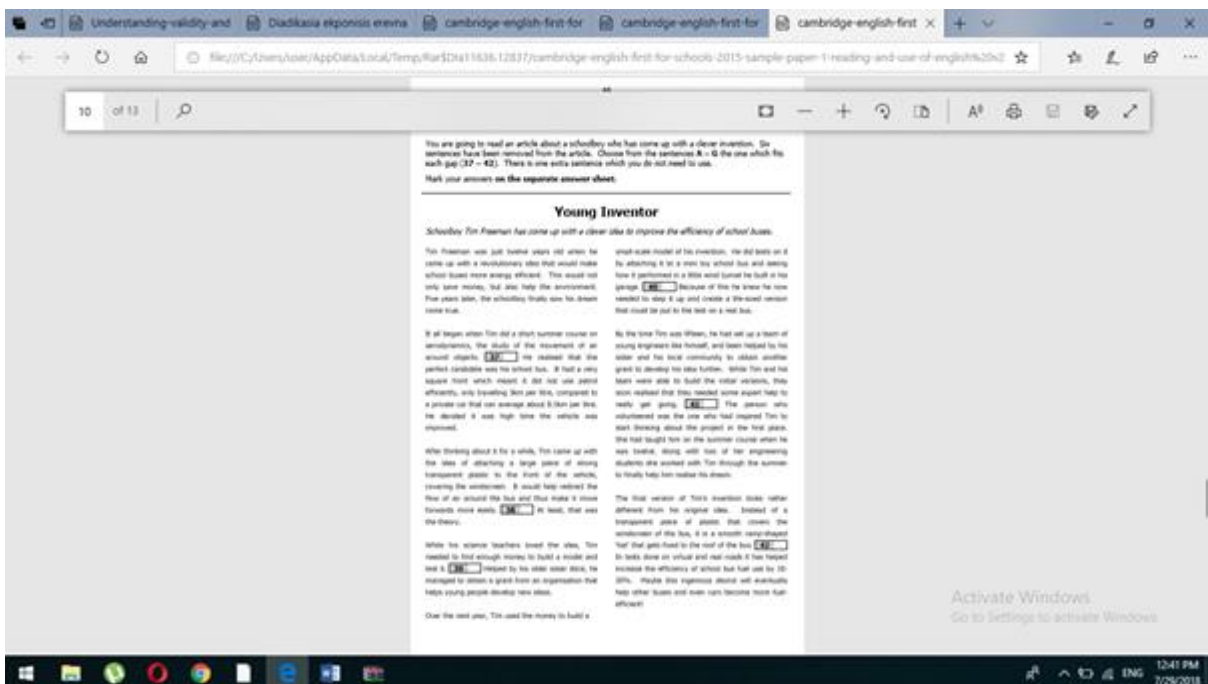


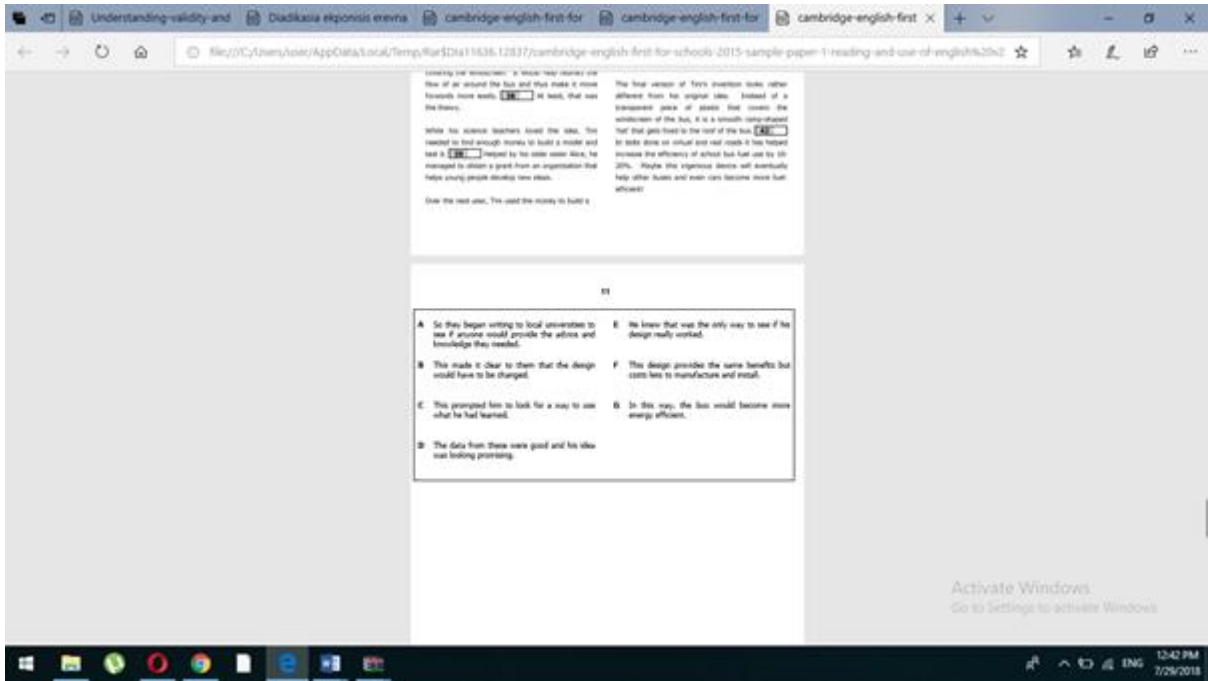
In part 4 students are given an original sentence, a single word in capitals and in bold and a second sentence with a gap. Here they have to use the single word without changing its form and also add up to four more words to fill the gap, so that the second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence, known as word transformation.

Grammatical phenomena such as modal verbs and semi modal verbs, phrasal verbs, multi – word verbs, transformations from active voice to the passive, questions on verb patterns and transformation from direct speech to reported speech are required as this task to be answered and correct spelling. All these grammar patterns mentioned above command for a strong memorizing ability and fast thinking skills.



In part 6, six sentences have been removed from an article and the students have to choose the one which best fits each gap which means that the reader needs to hold on to information long enough to put the sentences together and understand the text, a demanding, even overwhelming task for students with dyslexia. It could be defined that these tasks are prohibited or made in such way that exclude students with dyslexia making a new societal norm of a prestige certificate that only few can hold and which classifies people. Overall, students with dyslexia did show an improvement in the above parts during the second and third mock test but this it was not enough as for them to pass the mock tests.





8.7 Listening section part 2



8.7 Listening Analysis

Analyzing the students' scores, it was realized that parts 2 and 3 were difficult since students had to fill gaps and memorize words by hearing a monologue. Both parts of the listening demanded strong memorization skills, a great ability of concentration and a correct spelling capacity, skills which in the case of these students are affected by Dyslexia. However, all the above do not imply that they have a lack of communication in the English language or cannot apply it. The formation of these test seems to examine skills and not communicative language. Having the ability to remember a word or write in correct spelling does not show a student's fluency of a foreign language. Maybe it did decades before but learning by heart does not appeal nowadays. When lots of ink and paper has been invested on theories and ways of supporting students during their school years, less has been invested on students' performance while being assessed and which kind of accommodations should be provided. The students with dyslexia are not fairly and equally assessed based on the principles of equity and opportunity in education. In a more socially view this kind of test does not take into consideration their needs and strains, the consequences of the test takers' failure in the economical, psychological and social angle that has a significant impact on them and society.

The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying a listening test page. The browser's address bar shows the file path: file:///C:/Users/.../AppData/Local/Temp/Rar\$D1a1209246961/cambridge-english-first-for-schools-2015-sample-paper-1-listening%20v2.pdf. The page content includes the following:

5

Listening • Part 3

Questions 19 – 23

You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about photography. For questions 19 – 23, choose from the list (A – H) what each speaker says about it. Use the letters only once. There are three extra letters which you do not need to use.

A Learning to use new photographic software is fun.

B I have found some useful advice online.

C Photography helps me to remember events.

D It's my goal to become an expert in photography.

E Doing photography means I go to new places.

F I can express original artistic ideas through photography.

G My friends have helped me to develop my skills.

H Taking photos gives me more confidence.

Speaker 1

Speaker 2

Speaker 3

Speaker 4

Speaker 5

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

4:34 PM
7/26/2018

9. Conclusion

The Educational industry demands more exams which will lead to more certificates as to serve more students, for this reason there is a need for observing and monitoring the difficulties that students with dyslexia face while sitting in a language exam, while focusing in the design of tests which can address dyslexic students in a more fairly way .

This study was able to identify a test deficiency and ring a bell to the ones who are responsible to line up regulations, reformations, approaches and create exams as to decide if changes should take place in the way Dyslexic students are evaluated.

It tried to show the challenges that students diagnosed with dyslexia face during their participation in an English examination, where the majority of the tasks are based in strong thinking skills, correct spelling, and complicated grammar phenomena in which dyslexic students are weak to perform , still , they go through this hostile way of being examined .

Low test performance and scoring were associated with students' skills being affected by Dyslexia such as slow pace reading, incorrect spelling, and weak memorization. The formation of these tasks is in contrast with their educational difficulties and needs and this results to their failure. Filling word gaps, have correct spelling, strong concentration skills and filling grammar phenomena, elements of which typically FCE B2 is composed of cannot be supported by the students without having the right accommodations for support.

Standardized tests automatically block dyslexic students from a good performance leading them to failure when they are assessed to a foreign language.

10. Suggestions

All students should be evaluated in a manner that is suitable for them as to be able to respond back proving their knowledge, when there is not any barrier then knowledge can be fairly performed.

Test creators should introduce task changes to evaluate Dyslexic students either by creating new tasks that will neither level down the Academic outcomes nor challenge them by targeting in skills which lack to have due to their learning disability.

Another solution could be to evaluate them in a computerized form and accommodate them with tools that empower their weak skills such as a word processor and simplified instructions appearing in the one side of the screen. After all being able to communicate efficiently and fluently in a foreign language has not so much to do with correct spelling, many native speakers do spell mistakes but this does not lead them to an academic isolation or being discriminated by a testing frame.

Having in mind how well-established educational institutions manifest their sensitivity towards diversity, they should take into consideration all groups of students by reassuring a safe testing environment for all.

Ending this thesis, it should be underlined and remembered that an Educational Certificate system should not exclude by any mean any potential student with Educational difficulties who decides and has the social right to sit in a language test. Educators, test creators and Institutions should discover, design and explore all possible evaluating formulas that ensure correctness of their content and fairness among all student populations, measuring success or failure by equal standards so as to build an equal environment for human development.

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12. Appendix

Scoring tables.

Reading and Use of English test 1

Listening test 1

C	Date: Dec 2017								Listening				
	Reading and Use of English												
Students	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (8)	Part 3 (8)	Part 4 (6)	Part 5 (6)	Part 6 (6)	Part 7 (10)	Total (52)	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (10)	Part 3 (5)	Part 4 (7)	Total (30)
1	8	7	8	4	4	6	5	42	8	8	2	7	25
2	8	7	8	4	4	5	8	44	3	8	2	6	19
3	6	7	4	4	2	6	7	36	8	6	3	7	24
4	7	7	4	3	2	1	3	27	8	7	2	7	24
5	7	6	6	1	3	2	6	31	8	4	4	6	22
6	4	3	6	2	0	3	3	21	7	3	3	3	16
7	3	2	2	1	3	1	1	13	3	3	2	3	11
8	5	7	3	2	6	6	2	31	8	3	3	5	19
9	2	1	1	0	3	1	1	9	2	0	3	5	10
10	6	4	3	4	3	3	0	23	8	3	3	3	17
11	7	8	5	4	2	1	1	28	8	7	4	5	24
12	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	7	6	1	3	5	15
13	7	7	2	4	4	6	10	40	6	2	4	5	17
14	5	4	5	0	0	5	4	23	8	3	4	5	20
15	5	6	4	2	4	4	2	27	8	4	3	5	20
16	5	5	2	1	5	0	3	21	8	3	4	4	19
17	5	4	4	1	3	5	6	28	5	2	2	3	12
18	5	5	4	2	5	6	5	32	7	3	5	6	21
19	3	1	2	0	0	2	2	10	4	1	1	3	9
20	2	2	2	2	2	0	4	14	6	4	1	4	15
21	3	2	1	2	2	1	3	14	6	3	3	1	13
22	8	8	5	3	6	6	8	44	7	7	1	5	20
23	6	5	4	2	3	6	5	31	8	8	4	6	26
24	7	4	3	2	3	4	8	31	8	8	5	7	28

Test 2

Test 2	Date: Feb 2018								Reading and Use of English					Listening			
	Students	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (8)	Part 3 (8)	Part 4 (6)	Part 5 (6)	Part 6 (6)	Part 7 (10)	Total (52)	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (10)	Part 3 (5)	Part 4 (7)	Total (30)			
1	7	4	5	4	5	6	10	41	8	5	3	7	23				
2	5	1	2	2	5	5	10	30	3	6	3	6	18				
3	7	6	4	6	4	2	2	31	7	7	4	7	25				
4	8	8	6	6	6	6	10	50	5	6	3	6	20				
5	7	4	3	3	5	4	8	34	8	3	5	7	23				
6	7	4	3	2	3	2	8	29	8	4	3	5	20				
7	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	16	4	2	2	4	12				
8	5	2	6	2	3	3	9	30	7	5	5	5	22				
9	2	1	1	0	3	3	1	11	5	1	3	6	15				
10	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	11	8	5	4	5	22				
11	7	8	5	3	3	1	2	29	8	8	5	6	27				
12	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	8	5	2	3	6	16				
13	7	7	6	6	6	6	10	48	6	5	4	5	20				
14	6	3	3	0	3	4	4	23	8	5	5	6	24				
15	7	5	3	3	4	5	7	34	8	6	4	6	24				
16	6	3	5	1	3	3	3	24	8	6	4	6	24				
17	5	4	4	1	3	5	6	28	7	6	3	5	21				
18	4	3	5	2	3	2	7	26	8	5	5	7	25				
19	3	1	2	0	3	2	2	13	5	1	2	5	13				
20	2	2	3	2	4	0	4	17	6	3	3	5	17				
21	6	2	2	2	4	3	2	21	6	4	4	5	19				
22	5	4	2	2	5	6	5	29	7	5	3	6	21				
23	7	4	3	2	3	4	8	31	8	6	4	7	25				
24	8	6	5	4	4	5	8	40	8	8	5	6	27				

Test 3

Test 3	Date: Apr 2018								Reading and Use of English					Listening			
	Students	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (8)	Part 3 (8)	Part 4 (6)	Part 5 (6)	Part 6 (6)	Part 7 (10)	Total (52)	Part 1 (8)	Part 2 (10)	Part 3 (5)	Part 4 (7)	Total (30)			
1	7	6	5	5	5	5	2	35	7	7	4	6	24				
2	5	5	7	2	3	1	6	29	5	8	4	7	24				
3	5	6	7	5	4	4	3	34	8	7	5	7	27				
4	8	7	8	3	6	6	9	47	7	8	5	7	27				
5	5	2	4	1	1	0	8	21	8	6	4	7	25				
6	7	5	6	3	3	4	8	36	8	7	3	6	24				
7	3	4	3	2	5	1	3	21	4	2	2	5	13				
8	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	16	7	5	5	5	22				
9	4	3	3	2	5	2	3	22	6	2	3	6	17				
10	6	2	5	1	4	0	10	28	8	8	5	6	27				
11	7	6	7	5	6	3	8	42	8	8	5	7	28				
12	3	3	3	4	3	5	4	25	6	2	3	7	18				
13	8	8	8	5	5	5	10	49	7	7	5	6	25				
14	4	2	5	3	4	1	6	25	8	8	5	7	28				
15	5	6	6	2	4	1	9	33	8	7	5	6	26				
16	6	5	4	1	2	1	7	26	8	8	5	6	27				
17	4	5	3	2	1	2	4	21	8	8	4	6	26				
18	3	6	4	3	2	2	7	27	7	7	5	6	25				
19	5	0	1	2	3	0	4	15	4	2	2	6	14				
20	4	2	4	1	4	0	0	15	7	3	3	7	20				
21	6	2	4	2	4	2	4	24	6	3	4	6	19				
22	7	7	7	3	5	1	8	38	7	7	5	7	26				
23	5	5	5	5	2	2	6	30	8	8	5	7	28				
24	8	6	5	4	4	5	8	40	8	7	5	7	27				