



**University of Cyprus**  
Department of English Studies

**Secondary Education in Cyprus: EFL Teachers' beliefs and training  
needs about Dyslexia in mainstream classrooms.**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's  
Degree of TESOL, University of Cyprus

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching English to dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms in Cyprus. The study focused on the secondary education of both the public and private sector. I also analysed the level of teachers' knowledge and awareness about dyslexia and the practices they follow during the lesson to facilitate the learning process by dyslexic learners. It also dealt with the training needs of EFL teachers in Cyprus. This thesis shed light on a general picture of how dyslexic learners are encountered in public and private schools. Additionally, it aimed to clarify whether the Ministry's standards restrict the involvement of dyslexic students in mainstream classroom settings and whether the private sector appears more equipped than the public sector.

The research design of the study had two stages. The first stage was the collection of the questionnaire data, which was distributed among EFL teachers; 66 teachers filled in the questionnaire. Thirty-four of them work in public gymnasiums or lyceums and 32 work in the private sector. The statistical analysis of the data showed that EFL teachers believed that for the better learning experience of dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms, it is important to have collaboration with a group of professionals. Collaboration with dyslexic students' parents was also considered important. The level of education affected the way teachers perceived online teaching. EFL teachers with an MA believed more strongly than teachers with a BA that dyslexic learners were more comfortable in an online teaching environment rather than face-to-face. They were also more in line with the statement that these students' anxiety levels were lower when taught online. Another important factor that played a role is the teachers age and years of teaching experience. The older the teachers were, the stronger belief they had that dyslexic learners were struggling in

online lessons. Also, there was a difference between the private and public sphere regarding how supportive the system they work in is towards dyslexic learners. In general, all participants believed that they need more training on the topic.

For the second part of the analysis, I conducted an interview with a small sample of participants who volunteered to be interviewed. I interviewed 18 EFL teachers (9 teachers of public sector and 9 of the private sector). Through qualitative analysis it was concluded that all teachers need and would like to have further training regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners. Institute owners that took part in the study seemed to offer training opportunities to their employees, something that does not happen in the public sector. Also, the public sector has some issues that make inclusive teaching difficult. For example, the curriculum needs to be modified and updated while taking into consideration dyslexic learners.

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I would like to thank all the participants who gave up some of their free time to complete the questionnaire and interview. Also, I want to show my appreciation to the people who helped me find participants through their personal relations with colleagues, relatives, or extended friends.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that significantly impacts learning experiences, particularly in the realm of language education. It is important for educators to have knowledge on dyslexia and inclusive practices to facilitate dyslexic students' language learning process because this learning difficulty is very common in mainstream classrooms; 10-15% of people are diagnosed with dyslexia (European Dyslexia Association).

The goal of this research was to understand and address the needs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers with regards to their dyslexic learners in order to foster more inclusive and effective classrooms. This study was focused on Secondary Education in Cyprus, analyzing the perceptions, beliefs, and training needs of EFL teachers regarding dyslexia within mainstream classrooms. It also investigated issues such as the implementation of technology and how it can form inclusive practices to facilitate the learning process by dyslexic learners and other factors such as age, years of teaching experience and type of experience teachers have had and how these affect their views on dyslexia. Furthermore, I tried to shed some light on the curriculum each sector, private or public, follows when it comes to dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms. The results of this study provide a general picture of how dyslexic learners are encountered in public and private schools and mainstream classrooms. It was also shown in which ways the Ministry's guidelines are in favour or burden dyslexic learners' inclusion and that the private sector follows different approaches in comparison to public sector.

Even though Nijakowska et. al. (2018) have studied this topic for the case of Cyprus, I believe that there is a necessity for another study of this context that is not only focused on Cypriot public schools but also on private sector. In the period of five years, not only new practices are forming but also new technology, that can be used for a more dyslexia-friendly classroom environment.



Also, I believe that the Covid pandemic and the digital turn in education had a positive impact on teachers' knowledge on dyslexia as online teaching expanded their technology skills. Another aspect that I analysed whether pre-service teachers are more trained and prepared to face dyslexic learners after their graduation. So, this study offers a portrayal of the reality that dyslexic learners have to face in their EFL learning journey in Cyprus and evaluates the educational strategies of the private and public sector.

In chapter 2, literature review was presented. There was an analysis of previous research on the topic and a presentation of the Ministry of Education's curriculum for dyslexic learners in secondary education. The purpose of the study with the research questions were also part of chapter 2 as well as the need for the study. In chapter 3 the methodology was introduced. The study was conducted in two stages: a questionnaire answered by 66 EFL teachers working in the public and private sector and an interview that was answered by 9 public sector's participants and 9 private sector's teachers. Then, there was a statistical analysis of the questionnaire's results using the program SPSS. After the quantitative analysis, there was a qualitative analysis of the interviews. In chapter 5, the discussion section, the two parts of analysis were compared, and then further comparison was conducted in line with previous research. Chapter 6 was the conclusion of the study, where the main findings were once again stated along with implications for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### *1.1. Dyslexia*

Dyslexia is a neurological learning disorder that is characterized by issues with accurate and/or fluent word identification as well as poor spelling and decoding skills, according to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). No matter a person's country, social status, or gender, dyslexia affects between 10% and 15% of people (European Dyslexia Association). People with dyslexia, whom I will mention as “dyslexics” from now on, find it harder to do "basic" tasks. They appear to have issues with working memory, auditory sequential memory, and occasionally problematic speaking language. Additionally, difficulties with phonemic awareness, decoding, sight word knowledge, and reading fluency hinder the development of their literacy (European Dyslexia Association).

The difficulties that dyslexic students face can be reduced by following an inclusive approach to education. Firstly, inclusive education recognizes needs and characteristics of all students, eliminating any discrimination, and accepting difference in a mainstream classroom setting as an asset rather than a barrier (Sharma et.al., 2013). By differentiating instruction and encouraging active learning, it involves optimizing possibilities for happiness and belonging and ensuring that all students have access to high-quality education, including foreign language training (Sharma et.al., 2013). This inclusive education is a matter of the educational system of each school of private or each national educational system. Either of the two, regardless of different skill levels and learning styles, the system should be adaptable enough to satisfy the demands of special needs students (Sharma & George, 2016). Teachers must possess a variety of skills and pertinent knowledge that may not have been covered in their teacher training programs in order to use inclusive methods when teaching EFL. Self-efficacy among teachers and instructional strategies

are closely related. A greater awareness of effective inclusive teaching tends to transfer into the capacity to foster welcoming environments where a variety of learning requirements, learning styles, and skills are accommodated (Sharma & George, 2016). The self-efficacy of EFL teachers to implement inclusive teaching practices is typically poor. They struggle with adapting educational strategies, tasks, and modes of presentation or evaluation, as well as differentiating instruction and diversity (Nijakowska et.al., 2018). Increasing teachers' inclusive efficacy is essential because their self-efficacy views about their capacities can predict their classroom behavior more accurately than what they actually know or are capable of (Sharma & George, 2016).

### *1.2 EFL Teachers and their knowledge and preparedness on dyslexic learners*

A study by Lemperou and colleagues (2011) investigated the training needs of teachers for teaching dyslexic learners in a mainstream classroom in Greek primary schools. The participants were 94 employed EFL teachers. They answered questionnaires that aimed to evaluate teachers' knowledge about dyslexia and show their needs for training when it comes to dyslexia. It also aimed to investigate what EFL teachers expect from an in-service teacher (INSET) course focused on dyslexia. The results showed that 51% of the teachers were aware about the issues and the difficulties dyslexic learners face when learning a foreign language and forty-five percent said they had little knowledge about their difficulties. 53% of the teachers said that this awareness comes from attending seminars that were not offered as part of their training and twenty-nine percent of them said that it comes from reading relevant materials. With respect to teachers' personal experience with dyslexic students, eighty-nine percent of teachers have encountered dyslexic students and more than half of them said they had a negative experience with them, such as issues in classroom management. A crucial point of the results is that when asked about the curricula,

only five percent of teachers believe that course books facilitate the teaching of dyslexic learners. Teachers argued that they need training on how to assist dyslexics in reading and writing practices but also in classroom behavior, where dyslexics tend to be usually distracted, have low self-esteem, and high anxiety. So, the majority of in-service Greek EFL teachers at primary schools would like to gain knowledge on effective learning strategies to help dyslexics by raising their motivation and self-esteem and becoming integrated in mainstream classrooms instead of isolating them into special schools.

A relevant study on the practices that EFL teachers use to include dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms is by Rekaki (2022) which explored the impact of inclusive practices (dyslexia-friendly) on dyslexic and non-dyslexic students in EFL classes based on their motivation and performance. The study was focused on 3 classrooms of Greek primary schools: each classroom had at least one dyslexic student. Teachers were trained by the researcher and followed inclusive practices for a short period of time. After collecting and analyzing data from interviews, observations before and after the intervention, the results showed that dyslexia-friendly practices increased most students' motivation (in both groups) but with not much change in their performance. The low motivation of dyslexics in the pre-test indicates that they tend to have low motivation. That could be because of internal factors and because of external ones such as educational exclusion (Rekaki, 2022). From the interviews, it was observed that during group work, dyslexic learners appeared to be hesitant and anxious. That is because non-dyslexic learners showed negative attitudes towards them. Mainstream learners segregate dyslexic learners because of their difficulties. Thus, peer relationships are of crucial importance; the positive outcomes of inclusive practices are dependent on non-dyslexic learners' attitudes towards their peers (Rekaki, 2022).

Nijakowska and colleagues (2018) examined the effect of demographic variables of three countries: Cyprus, Greece and Poland, effect on the beliefs of EFL teachers about their preparedness to include dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms. They also tried to identify teachers' professional development needs. In this study, they investigated: the country teachers work, level of training, overall teaching experience, type of experience relevant to dyslexic learners, the teachers' education level and the type of school they work at. The results show that Greek teachers feel better prepared for inclusion than Polish and Cypriot. Also, participants with some teaching experience feel better prepared than inexperienced teachers. More than 50% of the experienced teachers said that they did not learn about EFL and dyslexia during university courses or mandatory courses during their career. The majority were self-educated and learned through available sources (Nijawoska et.al., 2018). Ninety-four percent of the teachers felt that they need to gain more knowledge and they are willing to get professionally trained; all 3 countries need more training.

### *1.3 Dyslexia and its effects on the behavior of learners*

Huang et al. conducted a study in order to investigate how and if personality, behavioral characteristics and life quality impact children with dyslexia. In their paper, they investigated how the family environment impacts dyslexia, how children's personalities and dyslexia interact, and whether or not dyslexics have behavioral or life-quality problems. Additionally, they sought to lessen the severity of symptoms in dyslexic children by offering suggestions for future, effective prevention in children, based on the study of home environment factors. After collecting the data from the case group (dyslexic children) and the control group (typically developing children) they analyzed them. The results showed an association between children's dyslexia and family environment factors, as well as parents' education and occupation and monthly household income.

The results indicated that parents of dyslexic children had a low socio-economic status (Huang et al., 2020). Another issue that was shown in this study is that children with dyslexia had less frequent communication with their parents. They also illustrated more negative personality traits such as introversion, psychoticism, and neuroticism. They are not as social, and they are more emotionally unstable than their classmates (Huang et al., 2020). Dyslexics have poorer academic performance, lower self-esteem, and higher anxiety levels because of the negative experience they have during classes: they scored lower in the dimension of teacher-student relationship than the control group; they felt that they were often neglected and ignored by their teachers. The same happened in the dimension of peer relation which corroborates the findings by Rekaki (2022).

#### *1.4 Integrating technology in teaching dyslexic learners*

Another aspect that should be taken into consideration when observing dyslexic learners and their needs in teaching practices is the role of technology. It is suggested that educational technology offers a better learning experience for dyslexics as it offers a safe and controlled environment, allowing teachers to give rapid feedback, encourage interaction among the students, increase students' motivation, and helping with the development of their working memory and visual processing abilities (Kalyvioti & Mikropoulos, 2013). Technology has the ability to deliver information utilizing multimedia components like voice, video, and graphics. For dyslexic students, many of the usual interventions can quickly become tedious and demanding. According to Kalyvioti and Mikropoulos (2013), because they combine immersion, presence, interaction, transduction, and conceptual change, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are resources that can fill the gap. According to Rodriguez-Cano et al., (2021) since teaching and learning a new language is an involved relationship and there is a commitment on both sides, feeling the teacher's assistance is fundamental. The growth of learning and motivation is also significantly

influenced by peers and teamwork; these are a rich source of knowledge, where working together with peers is essential to academic, emotional, and social growth. In their research, Rodriguez-Cano et al., (2021) sought to reveal whether technology attracts dyslexic pupils more than the traditional educational system and whether technological tools aid or assist these students' attention. They gave questionnaires to 30 dyslexic students aged 10-16 years. The results showed that extrinsic motivation was significantly higher than intrinsic. In terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), most students had positive attitudes towards using it while learning and completing tasks and homework. Participants also felt more motivated when they used technology to complete their tasks (93.3%). So, ICT can work as a strategy to improve dyslexic learners' motivation and thus their performance.

A study by Eden and Shmila (2022) investigated if and how hybrid technology could facilitate dyslexic students in learning vocabulary in English as their foreign language. Hybrid technology can help dyslexic learners as “it combines physical and virtual worlds with multisensory approach” (Oliveira et al., 2020) that takes advantage of the human senses and involves the body of students to facilitate their learning. In this study there were two groups of dyslexic learners aged nine to twelve years old: the HT group (that used the hybrid technology learning using an app), and the other one (TT) using “traditional technology” such as PowerPoint presentations. Another group of typically developed students was part of the pre-test in order to compare the scores of the groups. In the pre-tests, typically developed learners had higher scores and both the dyslexic groups had lower. In the post-test it was found that HT learners had significantly higher scores than the TT group. The two-weeks post intervention test showed that both groups' test scores decreased but the HT group still had a lead. Finally, the last test that was conducted 2 weeks after the two-week post intervention test showed no significant difference between the two groups of dyslexic

learners. What was found in this study is that the multisensory nature that hybrid technology offers help to learners with dyslexia, as dyslexic students that learnt English vocabulary through HT performed significantly better than those who were taught in a more traditional way with no multisensory activities. The decrease in the two-weeks post test results seem to be expected as students did not have a constant repetition and practice with the vocabulary learnt. In general, it was concluded that hybrid technology has a positive effect for dyslexic learners regarding learning L2 vocabulary (Eden & Shmila, 2022).

One teaching practice that is mostly based on technological features is the flipped classroom. The flipped classroom is a pedagogical approach frequently used in higher education as direct instruction that traditionally comes from the teacher during the lesson, now takes place outside the classroom. The goal of this approach is that students learn individually outside the classroom before each lesson; when they meet in the classroom, they focus on engaging with their peers and the teacher and analysing or applying the knowledge they gain. This approach has a more interactive and collaborative nature and is student-centred (Zou & Zhang, 2021). Zou and Zhang's study (2021) showed that learners felt more motivated and confident in their learning. It was also proven that it was beneficial for low language proficiency learners; they could watch instructional videos as many times as needed to understand the target language before class, so they engaged more in classroom activities (Zou & Zhang, 2021).

Another benefit of the flipped classroom, the students get "trained" on how to teach themselves and gain their freedom for autonomous learning (Chen, 2021). Also, the flipped classroom provides learners with multimodal materials, such as videos, sounds and online games in the classroom which is beneficial in the teaching of dyslexic learners (Chen, 2021). Another important aspect of the flipped classroom as mentioned before, is the opportunity students have to repeat



lessons which can improve learners' skills and possibly shorten the gap between dyslexic and their non-dyslexic peers (Chen, 2021).

### **3. Background knowledge**

#### *3.1. Ministry of Education's guidelines for dyslexic learners in secondary education of Cyprus.*

The existing guidelines of the national public-school system in terms of dyslexia suggest that dyslectic learners are supported by educational programs which effectively respond to pupils' individualized needs at an early stage and applies the appropriate therapeutic intervention (MOECCY, 2023). According to the Ministry of Education, apart from the main provisions given to SEN (Special Education Needs) pupils, such as special education, speech therapy, individualized education program, they offer special facilities and special technological equipment. They also implement actions and inclusive educational policies, defined by the values of equality, recognition and acceptance of diversity. Provincial Committee for Special Education and Education (P.S.E.E.) of each province has as its competence the adequate assessment of the needs of each child deemed likely to have special needs (MOECCY, 2023). Therefore, special education and training is provided, following a decision of the P.S.E.E, to children with special needs, who attend general public-school classes, according to the detailed program, which is adapted to the individual needs of children. Public schools are provided with the appropriate infrastructure and equipped with the necessary staff (MOECCY, 2023). Also, the P.S.E.E. has the duty to decide on the type of support provided, on possible exceptions, exemptions, modifications, or adaptations to the curriculum of children attending Secondary Education, on the necessary

building and environmental changes in the school, as well as on the provision of the necessary technological equipment (MOECCY,2023). Additionally, in Elementary Education, each teacher can apply any teaching approach/practice he/she wishes, based on the level/profile of the children in his/her class (e.g., differentiation of teaching, homework, and competition). They can also implement various actions, in collaboration with the school's specialist teacher (MOECCY, 2023).

It seems that the Ministry is well organized in terms of evaluating dyslexic learners; there is a team of specialists that test possible dyslexic pupils. The team consists of a clinical psychologist, a special needs educator, a dyslexia specialist, educational psychologist, and a speech pathologist. The goal of each evaluation is to investigate the skills and the needs of each pupil and their specific mistakes. They then create an individual program for them with different goals set (MOECCY, 2023). As it is not as easy for dyslexic learners to copy from the board, one suggestion made by the Ministry is that teachers should give dyslexic learners printed versions (MOECCY, 2023). There are some general guidelines given to teachers on how to help dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms. For example, these learners should sit in the front of the classroom so the teacher can easily check and help them. Teachers should also give more time when conducting a written exercise. Also, they should decrease dyslexic learners' work and set smaller goals such as instead of asking them to know many details, asking them to do a summary (MOECCY, 2023).

It is important to say that whilst reading the Ministry of Education's website and after personal communication with the special education department, I assume that there is a possibility that the guidelines have not been updated for a long time. Phrases like "the usage of tape recorders" instead of tablets or smart boards can lead to the conclusion that these texts have been written in the 2000s and not edited since then.

#### **4. Purpose of the study**

The aim of this MA thesis is to investigate the knowledge of Cypriot EFL teachers in terms of dyslexia and the needs and challenges of dyslexic learners. Teachers' personal experience, their beliefs about their abilities, the educational system, the curricula, and their training needs are analysed. There was also an analysis of the factors that may influence dyslexia friendly practices and how the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has affected EFL teachers' knowledge and skills both in terms of teaching and of dyslexia and the practices that are more inclusive. This information will then lead to a general picture of how dyslexic learners are encountered in public and private schools and mainstream classrooms. It will also show if the Ministry's guidelines facilitate dyslexic learners' inclusion and if the private sector follows the same strategies or each institute follows different approaches in comparison to public sector. The aim of this MA in TESOL thesis is to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes and beliefs of EFL teachers in Cyprus about inclusive education with respect to dyslexic students in public and private sector?
- 2) Which factors (level of education, length and type of teaching experience, type of school, shift to online education due to pandemic) do affect their teaching practices regarding dyslexic students?
- 3) What are the needs, challenges, and opportunities of EFL teachers regarding their teaching practices, training and preparation with respect to teaching learners with dyslexia?

## **5. Need for the study**

Even though Nijakowska et al. (2018) have studied this topic for the case of Cyprus, I believed that there is a necessity for a similar study that is only focused on Cypriot public schools but also the private sector. Since 2018, new practices have been formed and new technology, that can be used to create a more inclusive classroom environment. Also, I wanted to investigate whether the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the digital turn in education had an impact on teachers' knowledge on dyslexia. Furthermore, online teaching has expanded many teachers' technology skills that can benefit multiple practices and the use of different materials. Another aspect that I analysed is whether pre-service English teachers are more trained and prepared to face classes with dyslexic learners after their graduation.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1.1 Participants**

The number of participants in this study were 66 EFL teachers, 34 of them are employed in Cypriot public gymnasiums and lyceums. The other 32 teachers have been working in the private sector teaching pupils of ages 11 to 18. In both groups, I tried to have participants with different years of experience- from less than a year to over 25 years. By having in both groups more and less experienced teachers, I tried to observe whether EFL teachers that graduated more recently leave university more trained to face dyslexia in EFL classrooms than teachers who graduated years ago, whether universities provide more training regarding dyslexia and teaching dyslexic students. The goal of the study was to have data from multiple geographical areas of Cyprus. I recruited participants via contacting school principals and private institute owners from Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Famagusta.

### **3.1.2 The researcher**

I, Christina Procopiou, am a MA in TESOL student in the University of Cyprus. There is no relationship between me and the participants of the study, so there was no bias.

### **3.1.3 Materials**

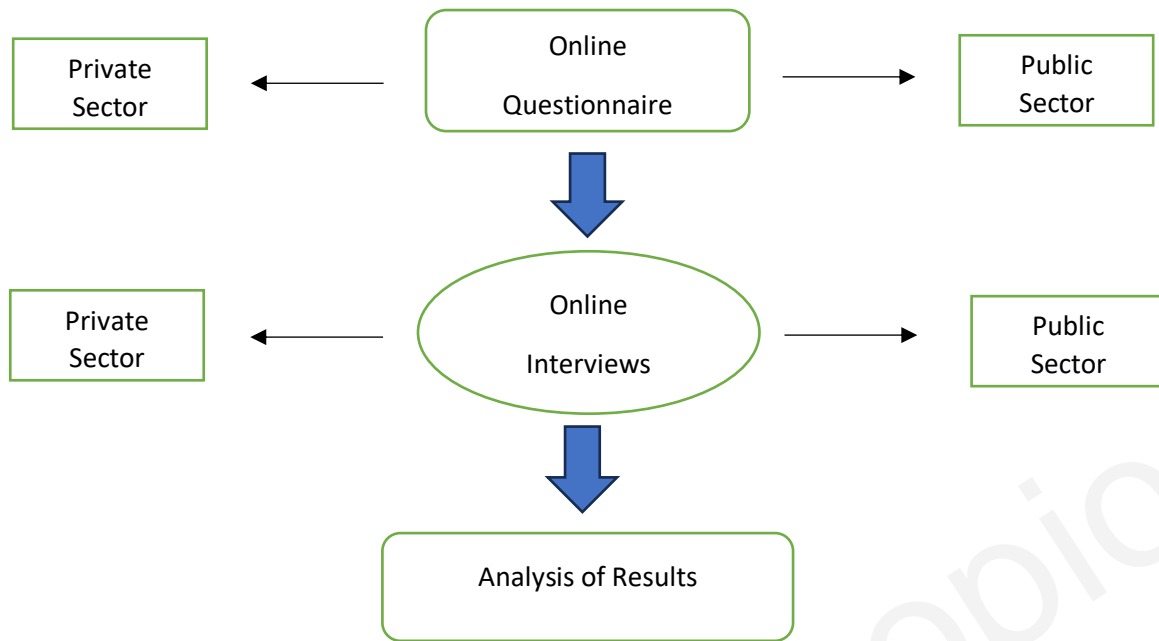
One of the materials used in this study is a questionnaire that was given online to EFL teachers to answer. The questionnaire is based on the DysTEFL-Needs Analysis Questionnaire Revised (DysTEFL-NAQ-R) created and revised by Nijakowska et al., (2014, 2018) with some adjustments by me. It has four parts: the first part consists of questions about teachers background (age, gender, experience etc). The second part is questions about their beliefs on their preparedness to teach dyslectic learners. The third part evaluates the factors that affect EFL teachers' practices regarding

dyslexic learners. Finally, the fourth part has to do with teachers' knowledge on inclusive practices and dyslexia. This quantitative part of the research aimed to gather data to perform statistical analysis and investigate individual reactions and responses of EFL teachers in a comprehensive manner (Palgrave, 2018).

I implemented a semi-structured interview with 18 teachers who volunteered to participate. Nine teachers work in the public sector and nine in the private sector. The interview questions were focused on teachers' teaching experience in EFL classrooms with dyslexic students, the strategies they use when they have dyslexic learners in a mainstream classroom, if and how they adapt materials for the dyslexic learners and more. The participants had the opportunity to elaborate their answers and give me a deeper insight on the issues addressed in the research questions.

### **3.2 Procedure**

The first step of the procedure was finding the participants. An email was sent to them to invite them to participate in the study. In this email all information about the study and its purpose were included, as well as that the participation is voluntary and anonymous. In terms of the public sector, this email was sent to the secretariat of each school, was accepted by the principals, and then forwarded to EFL teachers. For the private sector, the email was sent to the institute owners. In this email, the link of the online questionnaire was attached for any of the teachers that would like to participate in the research. The questionnaire takes around 15 to 20 minutes to fill. The first part of it was a question for consent; each participant had to consent to the use of their data for the purposes of this study before they moved on with the questions. For the second part of the data collection, an interview was arranged with 18 volunteers. All interviews took place via zoom meetings and were around 15 to 30 minutes. (See Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Research Design*

### 3.3 Methodology

#### 3.3.1 Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, this research is based on a mixed method approach for data collection and analysis. Firstly, a quantitative approach is important when analysing data because it is considered as having more generalizability, reliability, and validity while the qualitative end emphasizes dependability, credibility, and confirmability (Brown, 2004). Mixed methods research employs aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods and designs to better understand the phenomenon under investigation. The importance of following qualitative methods along with quantitative is that it provides the research with a more authentic lens to view the phenomenon in question (Hashemi & Babaii, 2013). More specifically, I followed the strategy of triangulation; both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in one phase and received equal weight during analysis (Creswell, 2003). In this way, I was able to compare and contrast quantitative statistical

results with qualitative findings or validate or explain quantitative results with qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The questionnaire was used to measure EFL teachers' beliefs about their preparedness to include dyslexic EFL learners in mainstream classrooms and verified EFL teachers' professional training needs on dyslexia and inclusive instructional practices. It also helped measure the factors that affect dyslexic learners' inclusion in mainstream classes (Nijakowska, 2014 & 2018). The data collected from the questionnaire were statistically analysed. I have used numbers to abstract the qualitative nature of the data to facilitate quantitative analysis through the use of a five-point Likert scale (Palgrave, 2018). The interview was used to get more in-depth answers and elaboration on EFL teachers' beliefs. In this way, there was a qualitative approach on the topic and I explored the research questions from multiple angles in order to avoid the limitations inherent in using only one of the two approaches independently (Mackey & Gass, 2015). So, a mixed method approach was implemented in order to limit the biases that might rise from following just one method (Palgrave, 2018).

### **3.3.2 Method of statistical analysis**

For the data analysis I followed a mixed-method approach; a questionnaire, following a quantitative analysis, and the interview that consisted of open-ended questions, that was qualitatively analysed. In terms of the questionnaire, a quantitative analysis of the data took place; there was a statistical analysis of the data using the program SPSS. I conducted a statistical analysis in order to summarise, but also further analyse the data to have a general picture of teachers' beliefs. For the data analysis of the interviews I followed a qualitative analysis.



### **3.3.3 Timeline**

Data were collected from May to August of 2023.

### **3.3.4 Significance of the research and expected outcomes**

The significance of this study is that it will offer a better knowledge and understanding of the awareness and preparedness of Cypriot EFL teachers to teach dyslexic learners efficiently. After the analysis of the results, readers will also be able to have a clear image of the Ministry of Education, as well as the private sector's policies about effectively teaching dyslexic learners. Such an analysis is important so that there can be an improvement, if necessary, for the best teaching experience possible for dyslexic learners in EFL classrooms.

## Chapter 4: Results

### 1. Questionnaire results and analysis of teachers' answers.

#### 1.1 Demographics of the participants:

##### **Public sector:**

Overall, the following participants took part in the research, 34 in the public sector, 4 of whom were males and 30 females. 73,5% of the participants were aged 46 years and above (25), 20.6% were aged 36 to 45 years old (7) and 2 participants were from 26 to 35 years old. Twenty-six teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience in the public sector, 7 participants have from 6 to 10 years of experience, and one teacher has been teaching in the public sector for less than five years. When it comes to the level of education of the participants, most of them have a Master's degree (23), 10 teachers have a Bachelor's degree, and one has a PhD (See Table 1).

When asked about their teaching experience and the teaching environment, 97% of the teachers (33) answered that they did have classes where there was at least one dyslexic learner. One teacher said that they only taught classes with no dyslexic learners. Six out of the 34 teachers (17.6%) said that they had one-on-one sessions with dyslexic students, see Table 1.

Participants (N)	34		
Gender	Males	Females	
	4	30	
Age	26 to 35 years old	36 to 45 years old	46 years old and above
	2	7	25
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years
	1	7	26
Level of Education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD
	10	23	1
Teaching Environment	Classes with at least one dyslexic student	Always classes with no dyslexic students	One-to-one sessions with dyslexic students
	33	1	6

*Table 1. Participants: Public Sector*

### Private sector

In total, 32 participants who work/ have worked in the private sector took part in the study, 3 males and 29 females. When it comes to the age of the teachers there was some variation; most of the teachers were in the age group from 36 to 45 years old (10), 9 of them were aged 46 and above, 8 teachers were from 26 to 35 years old and only 5 of them were 25 years or below. Most teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience (20), 4 participants had from 6 to 10 years and 8 participants were teaching for 5 or less years. The participants' level of education was mostly Master's degree with a percentage of 59.4% (19), 12 of them had a Bachelor's degree (37.5%) and only one teacher had a PhD (See Table 2).

Regarding the question about their teaching experience and the environment they have taught, 3 out of the 32 participants (9.4%) responded that they have not taught a classroom with dyslexic learners; the rest of the participants (29) have taught mainstream classrooms with dyslexic learners. Ten participants (31%) said that they also have one-to-one sessions with some dyslexic students and two teachers said they only do one-to-one sessions with dyslexic learners and not mainstream classes, see Table 2.

Participants (N)	32			
Gender	Males	Females		
	3	29		
Age	25 years old or below	26 to 35 years old	36 to 45 years old	46 years old and above
	5	8	10	9
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	
	8	4	20	
Level of Education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD	
	12	19	1	
Teaching Environment	Classes with at least one dyslexic student	Always classes with no dyslexic students	One-to-one sessions with dyslexic students	Always one-to-one sessions with dyslexic students
	29	3	10	2

Table 2. Participants: Private Sector

## 1.2 Attitudes and beliefs of EFL teachers regarding inclusive practices to facilitate dyslexic learners

The first research question explored the attitudes and beliefs of EFL teachers in Cyprus about inclusive education with respect to dyslexic students in the public and private sector.

### **Public sector**

On average, participants working in the public sector stated that it is definitely true for them that teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem. They find it extremely important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners. They strongly believe that foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom and that collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia (See Table 3).

Moreover, on average, participants working in the public sector stated as mostly true for them that developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important and that foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners. The participants supported as mostly true for them that they are familiar with the difficulties that learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning and with the nature of dyslexia and with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams and the signs of dyslexia. They also find it mostly true for them that they can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem, and they can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia and differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia. They believe they are almost fully familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning. They

believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia and they know what to do if they think that one of their students is dyslexic. According to their replies, it is mostly true that they can modify the way materials are presented to accommodate the learning needs of dyslexic students and help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies. They stated as mostly true for them that they are familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia, they can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate their dyslexic language learners' progress and they are familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia (See Table 3).

In addition, on average, participants working in the public sector stated that it is neither true nor false for them that foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education, see Table 3.

### **Private Sector**

The attitudes and beliefs of teachers working in the private sector were also explored. On average, participants working in the public sector stated that it is definitely true for them that it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners and that EFL learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream classroom. Collaboration with a range of educational professionals was also found important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia, see Table 3.

Moreover, on average, participants working in the private sector stated as mostly true for them that teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem and that foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners. They stated as mostly true that developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important. They feel

almost fully familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning, the signs of dyslexia, the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams and the principles of multisensory teaching and learning and they can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem. They feel mostly true for themselves regarding the statements that they are familiar with the nature of dyslexia and that they can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia, see Table 3.

In addition, on average, participants working in the private sector stated that it is neither true nor false for them that they are familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia and they can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia and help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies. According to the participants, neither true nor false were the statements that they can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia and modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia and that they can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia. They are neutral on the statement that foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education and they can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate their dyslexic language learners' progress. They also have a neutral stance towards the statement relevant to them knowing what to do if they think that one of their students is dyslexic and to statement that foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia. Participants were also neutral to the statement whether they are familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia, see Table 3.

Statement	Public sector Mean scores	Private sector Mean scores
1. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education.	3.41	3.25
2. I am familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning.	4.12	3.97
3. I can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem.	3.94	3.63
4. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom.	4.62	4.78
5. I believe teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem.	4.79	4.47
6. I am familiar with the signs of dyslexia.	3.91	3.91
7. I can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia.	3.85	3.41
8. I can modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia.	3.71	3.31
9. I am familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning.	3.76	3.66
10. I can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate my dyslexic language learners' progress.	3.59	3.25
11. I believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia.	3.74	3.13
12. I am familiar with the nature of dyslexia.	3.97	3.63
13. I believe developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important.	4.5	4.28
14. I can help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies.	3.62	3.41
15. I believe foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners.	4.47	4.41
16. I can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia.	3.68	3.31
17. I believe it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners.	4.76	4.81
18. I know what to do if I think that one of my students is dyslexic.	3.74	3.16
19. I am familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia.	3.62	3.47
20. I believe collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia.	4.56	4.56
21. I am familiar with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams.	3.94	3.69
22. I can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	3.68	3.38
23. I am familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia.	3.56	3.03
24. I can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	3.85	3.53

Table 3. Attitudes and beliefs of teachers in the private and public sector.

**Comparison of public vs private sector regarding EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs on inclusive practices to facilitate dyslexic learners.**

Furthermore, likely differences between the public and private sectors were explored. With the use of independent samples t-test, statistically significant differences were observed regarding two statements. Thus, it was found that participants working in the public sector had a stronger belief than participants working in the private sector that teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem ( $t=2.255$ ,  $df=55.767$ ,  $p=0.028$ ) and that foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia ( $t=2.303$ ,  $df=64$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). No other statistically significant differences were observed between the views of the teachers who work in the public and private sectors, see Table 4.

STATEMENT	t	df	p
1. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education.	.594	64	.555
2. I am familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning.	.725	64	.471
3. I can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem.	1.636	64	.107
4. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom.	-1.270	64	.209
<b>5. I believe teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem.</b>	<b>2.255</b>	<b>55.767</b>	<b>.028</b>
6. I am familiar with the signs of dyslexia.	.029	64	.977
7. I can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia.	1.905	64	.061



8. I can modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia.	1.650	64	.104
9. I am familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning.	.401	64	.690
10. I can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate my dyslexic language learners' progress.	1.197	64	.236
<b>11. I believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia.</b>	<b>2.303</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>.025</b>
12. I am familiar with the nature of dyslexia.	1.683	64	.097
13. I believe developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important.	1.263	54.890	.212
14. I can help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies.	.860	64	.393
15. I believe foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners.	.357	64	.722
16. I can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia.	1.604	64	.114
17. I believe it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners.	-.377	64	.708
<b>18. I know what to do if I think that one of my students is dyslexic.</b>	<b>2.301</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>.025</b>
19. I am familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia.	.595	64	.554
20. I believe collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia.	-.020	64	.984
21. I am familiar with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams.	.966	64	.338
22. I can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	1.275	64	.207
23. I am familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia.	1.855	64	.068
24. I can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	1.229	64	.223

*Table 4. Differences between the public and private sectors*

### 1.3. Important factors that affect EFL teachers' teaching practices regarding dyslexic learners

The second research question explored the factors (level of education, length and type of teaching experience, type of school, shift to online education due to pandemic) that affect EFL teachers' teaching practices regarding dyslexic students. On average, participants were neutral on the statement that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment. They also stated as neutral that after the pandemic, they use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners and that after the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, they find more digital

materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students. They were neutral for the statements that online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices they use concerning learners with dyslexia and if it is easier for them to adapt materials in an online setting for their dyslexic learners. They believe as neither true nor false that the anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching. Also, they were neutral towards the statement that dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment and dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment. They felt neutral towards the statement that the experience they had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult and made them anxious and that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners. They answered as not true nor false that they were prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom and that the school system where they work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms. Lastly, they expressed as neither true nor false that the experience they had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was poor, see Table 5.

FACTORS	Responses (%)					MEAN
	Definitely not true	Mostly not true	Neither true nor false	Mostly true	Definitely true	
I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.	4.5	13.6	34.8	19.7	27.3	3.52
After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.	6.1	13.6	30.3	33.3	16.7	3.41
After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	3.0	9.1	47.0	25.8	15.2	3.41
I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.	7.6	13.6	31.8	28.8	18.2	3.36
It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.	6.1	15.2	50.0	15.2	13.6	3.15
The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	7.6	10.6	50.0	22.7	9.1	3.15
Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	15.2	10.6	40.9	24.2	9.1	3.02
Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	12.1	18.2	43.9	10.6	15.2	2.98
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.	6.1	22.7	47.0	19.7	4.5	2.94
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.	9.1	16.7	53.0	16.7	4.5	2.91
I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.	19.7	13.6	39.4	19.7	7.6	2.82
I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.	15.2	25.8	42.4	9.1	7.6	2.68
I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	22.7	25.8	30.3	12.1	9.1	2.59
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.	13.6	33.3	39.4	10.6	3.0	2.56

Table 5. Factors affecting teachers' teaching practices

### 1.3.1. EFL teachers' level of education

In this section, I analyzed the potential differences among categories of education level regarding influencing factors. In order to do so, I used One-way ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc test. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers with Masters' degree and teachers with Bachelor's degree. Regarding EFL teachers with a Master's degree, they had a stronger belief that dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment ( $F(2, 63)=10.162, p=.000$ ) and the anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online rather than face-to-face teaching environment ( $F(2, 63)=7.615, p=.001$ ), see Table 6.

STATEMENT	df	F	p	I	J	Mean Difference (I-J)
Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	2, 63	10.162	.000	BA	MA	-1.154
The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	2, 63	7.615	.001	BA	MA	-.931

*Table 6. Statistically significant differences for education level*

### 1.3.2. Length and type of teaching experience of EFL teachers

In addition, potential differences were explored among EFL teachers regarding the different teaching experience every participant had, using Independent samples t-test. No statistically significant differences were found between teachers who taught in classes with students with dyslexia. However, some statistically significant differences were found between the views of the teachers teaching in other types of classes. In particular, it was found that teachers that had not taught classes where there were some students with dyslexia had a stronger belief than teachers who had taught classes with some students with dyslexia that the school system they work at supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms ( $t=-2.030, df=64, p=.047$ ). In addition, it was found that teachers who had taught in special classes for students with dyslexia had a stronger

belief than teachers who had not taught in special classes for students with dyslexia that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment ( $t=10.613$ ,  $df=63.000$ ,  $p=.000$ ). It was also found that teachers who had not taught classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia supported more strongly than teachers who had taught classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia that after the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, they find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students ( $t=-3.485$ ,  $df=60.000$ ,  $p=.001$ ). Finally, teachers who had taught one-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia believed more strongly than teachers who had not taught one-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia that dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment ( $t=3.044$ ,  $df=64$ ,  $p=.003$ ), see Table 7.

STATEMENT	t	df	p
CLASSES WHERE THERE ARE SOME STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA			
I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	-2.030	64	.047
SPECIAL CLASSES FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA			
I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.	10.613	63.000	.000
CLASSES WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE EXEMPTED FROM ASSESSMENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE DYSLEXIA			
After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	-3.485	60.000	.001
ONE-TO-ONE SESSIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA			
Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	3.044	64	.003

Table 7. Statistically significant differences based on the type of class taught

Then, I implemented a Pearson correlation statistical analysis in order to check the relationships among the factors of online teaching and learning, the years of teaching and the age of participants. No statistically significant correlation was found between the factor of online learning environment and years of teaching. On the other hand, one statistically significant correlation was found between online teaching and age, regarding the teachers' feeling that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment ( $r=0.310$ ,  $p=.011$ ). This means that the older

the participants the more strongly they believe that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment, and vice-versa, see Table 8.

FACTORS	Stats	Years of teaching	Age
I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.	r	-.027	.108
	p	.832	.386
After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.	r	-.003	-.025
	p	.983	.844
It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.	r	-.114	.013
	p	.362	.915
After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	r	-.157	-.078
	p	.207	.533
<b>I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.</b>	r	.126	<b>.310</b>
	p	.313	<b>.011</b>
I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.	r	-.076	-.019
	p	.543	.877
Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	r	-.029	.025
	p	.820	.845
Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	r	.153	.204
	p	.219	.100
The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	r	.051	.046
	p	.685	.714
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.	r	.182	.068
	p	.144	.585
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.	r	.097	.015
	p	.438	.908
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.	r	.076	.021
	p	.545	.864
I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.	r	-.141	.021
	p	.258	.865
I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	r	-.188	-.172

Table 8. Relationships among factors, years of teaching and age

### 1.3.3. Type of school that EFL teachers work at

In addition, potential differences between the public and private sector were explored with independent samples t-test. Only one statistically significant difference was observed. In particular, it was found that teachers working in the private sector had a stronger belief than teachers working in the public sector that the school system they work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms ( $t=-2.075$ ,  $df=64$ ,  $p=.042$ ), see Table 9. Likely differences between

categories of workplace were explored with One-way ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc test. No statistically significant differences were found.

STATEMENT	t	df	p
I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.	-.288	64	.774
After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.	-.200	64	.842
It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.	1.641	64	.106
After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	.533	64	.596
I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.	.522	64	.604
I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.	1.503	64	.138
Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	1.171	64	.246
Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	.313	64	.755
The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	.454	64	.651
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.	-1.839	64	.071
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.	.016	64	.987
The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.	-.236	64	.814
I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.	.866	64	.390
I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	-2.075	64	.042

Table 9. Differences between the public and private sectors

#### 1.4. Needs, challenges and opportunities of EFL teachers regarding their teaching practices and students with dyslexia.

The third research question explored the needs, challenges, and opportunities of EFL teachers regarding their teaching practices, training and preparation with respect to learners with dyslexia.

On average, participants stated as mostly true for them that they need to have more information on the effective language teaching methods for dyslexic learners and that they learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia on their own from available resources. They also stated as mostly true for them that they are interested in teaching English to learners with dyslexia. On the other hand, on average, participants stated as mostly not true for them that they learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia in courses at college/university/ teacher training institutions, see Table 11.

STATEMENT	AGREEMENT (%)					MEAN
	Definitely not true	Mostly not true	Neither true nor false	Mostly true	Definitely true	
I feel the need to have more information on the effective language teaching methods for dyslexic learners	3.0	1.5	7.6	31.8	56.1	4.36
I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia on my own from available resources	4.5	6.1	22.7	33.3	33.3	3.85
I am interested in teaching English to learners with dyslexia	4.5	10.6	30.3	22.7	31.8	3.67
I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia in my courses at college/university/ teacher training institutions.	39.4	18.2	22.7	9.1	10.6	2.33

Table 10. Professional training needs, opportunities, and challenges of EFL teachers in Cyprus

According to half of the participants (50%), the ideal format for a course on dyslexia and methods of teaching foreign languages to learners with dyslexia would be face-to-face training workshop. One quarter of the participants believes that the ideal format is an online learning course (25.76%) or online resources that they can use for self-study (24.24%). Few participants consider that the ideal learning course includes printed self-study material (9.09%), see Figure 2.

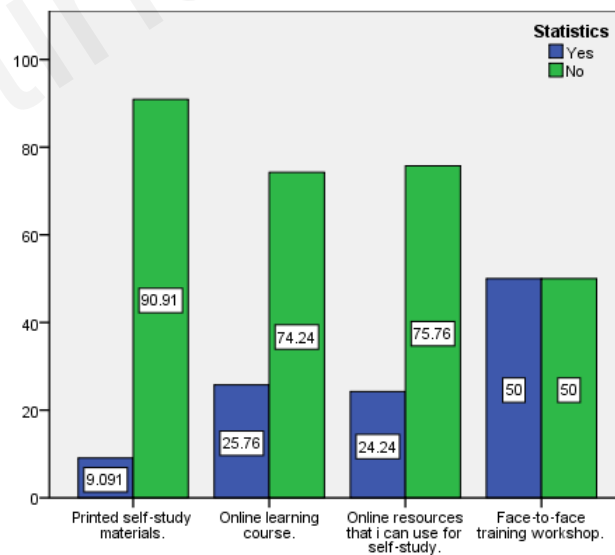


Figure 2. Ideal format for an EFL training course on teaching dyslexic students

One participant suggested working with dyslexic children while being trained. Likely differences between public and private sectors were explored with independent samples t-test. No statistically significant differences were revealed.

Most participants identified as a training need to learn language teaching techniques that assist language learners with dyslexia (87.9%) and some general teaching and classroom management tips for teaching language learners with dyslexia (81.8%). They also need training on assessment of learners with dyslexia in the language classroom (72.7%). They would like to learn more about the problems that dyslexia can cause in language learning (69.7%) and learning difficulties associated with dyslexia (62.1%). Approximately half of the participants feel that they need to learn about accommodations that dyslexic learners can have in high-stakes exams (53.0%) and how dyslexia is diagnosed (47.0%). Less than half of the participants stated that they need to learn more about the nature of dyslexia (40.9%), see Table 11.

LEARNING NEEDS	YES (%)	NO (%)
Language teaching techniques that assist language learners with dyslexia.	87.9	12.1
General teaching and classroom management tips for teaching language learners with dyslexia.	81.8	18.2
Assessment of learners with dyslexia in the language classroom.	72.7	27.3
Problems dyslexia causes in language learning.	69.7	30.3
Learning difficulties associated with dyslexia.	62.1	37.9
Accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in high-stakes exams.	53.0	47.0
How dyslexia is diagnosed.	47.0	53.0
Nature of dyslexia.	40.9	59.1

*Table 11. Teachers' training needs regarding teaching dyslexic students*

Potential differences between the public and private sector were explored with independent samples t-test. A statistically significant difference was found between teachers working in the public and private sector, with the former believing more strongly than the latter that they need to learn language teaching techniques that assist language learners with dyslexia ( $t=3.187$ ,  $df=33.000$ ,  $p=.003$ ).



Finally, the useful tools in a training course for most participants included watching videos of classrooms (81.8%) and learning how to design language teaching materials for learners with dyslexia (74.2%). Also, they found it important to listen to interviews with learners with dyslexia (66.7%). Participants believe that they need training on designing lesson plans so that the needs of learners with dyslexia are catered for (66.7%) and on evaluating language teaching materials designed for learners with dyslexia (57.6%). Approximately half of the participants point as useful tools listening to/reading interviews with teachers of dyslexic learners (54.5%) and brief lectures (53.0%) (see Table 12). Few participants indicated that useful tools include reading online resource materials (36.4%), reading articles (21.2%), evaluating lesson plans (16.7%) and reading book chapters (10.6%) (see Table 12). Likely differences between the public and private sector were explored with independent samples t-test. No statistically significant differences were found.

USEFUL TOOLS	YES (%)	NO (%)
Watching videos of classrooms	81.8	18.2
Learning how to design language teaching materials for learners with dyslexia	74.2	25.8
Listening to/reading interviews with learners with dyslexia	66.7	33.3
Designing lesson plans so that the needs of learners with dyslexia are catered for	66.7	33.3
Evaluating language teaching materials designed for learners with dyslexia	57.6	42.4
Listening to/reading interviews with teachers of dyslexic learners	54.5	45.5
Brief lectures	53.0	47.0
Reading online resource materials	36.4	63.6
Reading articles	21.2	78.8
Evaluating lesson plans	16.7	83.3
Reading book chapters	10.6	89.4

*Table 12. Useful tools in a training course for EFL teachers regarding teaching dyslexic students*

## **2. Analysis of teachers' interviews**

The analysis of qualitative results in a research study is a crucial phase where the richness and depth of collected data are transformed into meaningful insights and findings. It is in this stage that the voices and experiences of participants come to life, offering a nuanced understanding of

the phenomenon under investigation. In the following sections, I present the outcomes of our interview analysis. The results are separated into six sections that are the main themes.

## 2.1 Demographics of the participants

### **Public Sector**

Overall, 9 participants, who were all females, agreed to be interviewed. Most of the them had little teaching experience in the public sector. Seven of them had been teaching in public schools for 5 or less years. Only two participants had more than 10 years of experience in the public sector. Almost every participant had a Master’s degree (7 out of 9). One participant had a Bachelor’s degree and another one has a Master’s degree and is currently doing her PhD, see Table 13.

Participants (N)	9		
Gender	Males	Females	
	0	9	
Teaching experience in the public sector	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years
	7	0	2
Level of education	Bachelor’s degree	Master’s degree	PhD
	1	7	1

*Table 13. Participants Public Sector: Interview*

### **Private Sector**

In total, 9 participants took part in the interview. All teachers were females. The teachers who were interviewed, varied in their teaching experience; Three out of 9 teachers had 5 or less years of teaching experience, two of them had from 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, and 4 teachers had more than 10 years of experience. Most of the participants (6) had a Master’s degree. Two participants had a Bachelor’s degree and another one has a Master’s degree and is currently doing her PhD, see Table 14.

Participants (N)	9		
Gender	Males	Females	
	0	9	
Teaching experience in the public sector	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years
	3	2	4
Level of education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD
	2	6	1

*Table 14. Participants: Private Sector: Interviews*

## 2.2 Teachers' perceptions of dyslexic students.

The first section has to do with teachers' perceptions about dyslexic students- or better say- mainstream classes that have dyslexic students. Most of the teachers that have taught classes with some dyslexic learners said that at the beginning they did not know how to treat or help them, but as they gain more knowledge on the subject and more experience, they feel more prepared (Appendix G). It is important to note that being more prepared does not mean they are ready and confident to teach these learners, see the following excerpt:

- (1) In the beginning I was actually a bit intimidated because I didn't really know how to approach him and how to adjust my teaching in order for the learning to be more accessible to him but now as the time goes on, I find the very easy to be honest. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

One teacher who does not teach dyslexic learners, not by choice but because "it has not happened yet" says that she would not feel prepared and confident to teach them. This teacher works in the private sector; she has her own institute and works on her own (Appendix G). She suggests that training is a must before and if it happens to come across a dyslexic learner, see the following excerpt:

- (2) Before, I wouldn't feel confident enough to teach dyslexic students. Now (I wouldn't teach them), unless I was prepared, and I knew what I was doing, and I had some kind of training- retraining because it wouldn't be fair for them. (Private 6, Female, 25 years teaching experience)

One thing that every teacher agreed to, was the lack of qualified professionals. Both in the private and public sector, teachers think they are not trained enough. They themselves as educators know that they are not qualified to teach dyslexic learners, and this is something that they believe has a negative impact on dyslexic students' learning experience, see excerpts 3 and 4:

- (3) I think that the problem lies here that we are not all qualified -me included- we are not all qualified to teach dyslexic children. I think we're doing them and injustice if we take things in our hands without having the education and the background to help them. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years of teaching experience)
- (4) I don't think there is enough training to teachers of mainstream education but after all these years of teaching, and after my personal interest in learning difficulties I think that I am at the level where I don't offer special education, but I can still help them to get through. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

Most of the teachers both in the public and private sector said that they are not 100 percent confident of how to teach these students. They believe they lack relevant knowledge and skills. Many suggest that they learnt how to help these learners through their teaching experience (Appendix G). Encountering dyslexic students makes teachers want to learn more about this difficulty and better themselves for the sake of their students, see excerpts 5-8:

- (5) I am happy to teach them, but I believe that they need extra help basically and I think that they'd be able to probably benefit from an experienced teacher rather than myself. (Private 6, Female, 25 years teaching experience)
- (6) I think I have some skills, I'm not that expert I mean I couldn't advertise that I'm a center that teaches English for dyslexic students. (Private 8, Female, 18 years teaching experience)
- (7) Well, it's always a challenge (having a dyslexic student in the class), I mean it's not as if we are 100% aware of how we need to deal with these students. It's basically experimenting, trial and error I would say. (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)
- (8) I'm not qualified to give guidance or to really help these students. It's through experience that I have learned a few tricks or ways to help them. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

A crucial point raised by the participants who work in the public sector is the lack of time.

Teachers support that they cannot facilitate inclusive teaching to help dyslexic learners because of time constraints, see excerpt 9:

- (9) We need to have differentiated material to work on with them and we know that, but we don't have the time. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Another issue in the public mainstream classroom is the large number of students; a typical classroom consists of at least 20 students, and this leads teachers to have a difficulty in managing the class yet along having the chance to pay attention to dyslexic learners (Appendix G). They also believe that the syllabus is too demanding, so they do not have extra time to help dyslexic learners and they keep on covering each target language very fast to be able to cover all the units by the end of the academic year, see excerpts 10 and 11:

- (10) I feel that in a typical mainstream classroom the environment is not helpful enough for them (dyslexic students), it's not supportive enough and they definitely don't benefit from the big number of students in the class. They get distracted very easily, they need some more personal attention and as a teacher I sometimes feel frustrated because I don't have the luxury, the time I need to help them personally at the at the one-to-one basis. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (11) I wish I had the chance to pay more attention to them, focus more on the problems they face and help them like differentiate but because of the fact that there are 25 students in each class I don't really have the chance to help each one of them. So, I would wish to have more time with them and to actually address their difficulty but that's not really the case in public schools. You just have 25 students, and you always try to cover the syllabus (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

### 2.3 Dyslexic learners in EFL classrooms

Moving on, the next topic that is going to be discussed, the dyslexic student in mainstream classes.

Apart from any type of bullying that can take place and affect students' psychology or performance in the classroom, dyslexic students differ from non-dyslexic students in other ways as well (Huang et al., 2020). In this section teachers shared how they view dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms; that is how they behave or how they feel. Some of the participants believed that dyslexics could participate and actually learn in a mainstream classroom (Appendix G). Most of them suggested that in order to do so, the teacher needs to somehow adapt the lesson to facilitate their learning, see excerpts 25-27:

- (25) In my opinion they can definitely learn but I think the teacher must be aware that dyslexic learners progress in their own pace and that the teacher is the one who has to be responsible to adjusting and adapting to the learner's needs. But of course, I think they can be a part of a mainstream classroom. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (26) I think that they can fully participate in mainstream classrooms, and I don't think they have any problems learning in a normal classroom. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience).
- (27) If you have the right time and the right number of students in the class, I think you're able to help them so that they can participate and they have the same resources in order to get educated. (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)

Some ways to facilitate dyslexic students' learning process by adapting the lesson are different activities with maybe less bits. Also, focusing on oral activities rather than writing activities includes dyslexics more as they can express themselves better and participate more when speaking instead of reading or writing (Appendix G). This comes in line with a previous study on the topic that support this teaching approach using multimedia to facilitate learning (Kalyvioti & Mikropoulos, 2013). See excerpts 28 and 29:

- (28) You give them smaller bits that they can focus on, exercises that do not need elaboration or big essay. So maybe you give them a paragraph instead of an essay, a smaller text to read their exams maybe a little bit, you may remove a few exercises that may be challenging for dyslexic students. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (29) They can participate a lot especially in the oral, in an oral activity sometimes they are my best. They are the students with the most interesting and original ideas, very clever (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

Participants of the public sector believe that the system (number of students in each class, time constraints, school syllabus and most importantly, the lack of training and instructions EFL teachers have) are not sufficient for dyslexic learners (Appendix G). According to them, these students "don't reach their full potential" if they only learn English at public school, see excerpts 30, 31:

- (30) However, there is not enough time, and I don't think there's enough guidance when it comes to teachers. (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)
- (31) They reach below their average potential in the public sector. They can never reach their full potential in the class because we cannot give them the time that they need or the special material that they need (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Some of the participants of both the public and private sector suggested that dyslexic learners can benefit by being a part of a mainstream classroom as long as it is combined with one-to-one lessons. As teachers said, the mainstream classroom provides dyslexic learner more interaction with their classmates and the sense of belonging. They believe that dyslexics feel better being part of a group and work in pairs or having group activities or discussions but in order to be sure that they can follow the rest of the classroom and not get lost, it is wiser to have extra lessons outside classroom/ school hours (Appendix G). The combination of one-to-one sessions with mainstream classroom lessons have the best possible results for dyslexic learners, see excerpts 32-34:

- (32) I feel that there should be a combination of having them in mainstream classrooms and also having some maybe one-on-one lessons so that the lesson is customized in a way that would help them. Because I don't think that the lesson as it is, is suitable for a dyslexic child per se. I mean there should be some adjustments. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)
- (33) But I think that they belong in a mainstream classroom as long as it's combined with either when lessons are adjusted to cater their learning disability or if they also have an extra lesson once a week let's say in order to fill in the gaps you know. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)
- (34) If they have extra help like a private tutor in the afternoon or if they attend lessons in small groups in the afternoon, they are more willing to actually participate in the morning lesson. If they don't, they really struggle (Public 6, Female, 8 years teaching experience)

#### 2.4 Society's perceptions of dyslexic learners.

The next section analyses society's perceptions of dyslexic students in mainstream classrooms. Issues such as teachers' attitudes towards teaching mainstream classes with dyslexic learners, classmates' behavior-, and society's attitudes in general (Appendix G). What can be generalized from the interview answers of the teachers is that the private sector could be considered as a "safer" space for dyslexic learners when it comes to classmates' attitudes, see excerpts 12 and 13:



- (12) None of the other students has a different attitude towards these students. They are all friends, they're very cooperative. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (13) I think that learners have become quite accepting of learning difficulties because they do have them in their mainstream classrooms in primary school, in their secondary schools. So, I don't feel that the students you know are marginalized in some respect. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

Teachers that work in private institutes appeared to be sure of their classroom environment; many of them support that it is the teacher's attitude and behavior towards dyslexic learners that shapes or allows classmates' behavior towards them, see excerpt below:

- (14) The way that you (the teacher) handle the classroom it's what determines what happens in the classroom. If you yourself accept and promote and boost people's confidence, then the students will follow. If you allow bullying and if you allow for the dyslexic child to become a target or if you kind of tag a flag on them then yes but it's up to the teacher what happens in the classroom (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

Unfortunately, the public school does not look so inclusive towards dyslexic learners. A private sector teacher explains that in her private classroom, the student does not have any negative treatment from his classmates but when he is in school (public sector) he is not perceived positively even by his teacher, see excerpt 15:

- (15) I am very lucky to be in a setting that all the students are acceptive but actually this specific learner has told me that in school sometimes he does face some criticism from his peers. They have called him slow in some instances or even a teacher sometimes has asked him "why you cannot read something". I'm not quite sure if the public sector is always ready to face dyslexic learners. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

For the public sector opinions varied; some teachers believe that dyslexic learners but also learners with other learning impairments get bullied and some others that believe that dyslexia has become common and students have learnt to accept their peers, see excerpts 16 and 17:

- (16) I have not witnessed a lot of bullying because the student is dyslexic or has learning difficulties... I think they are more or less accepted within the classroom. Maybe they will be labeled as bad students, but it finishes there. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (17) Sometimes they might be kind of rude to their fellow students because they do not realize the problems they might have or sometimes some children show great understanding. They support them, they can sit next to each other and help them. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Another important factor that seems to play a role in being inclusive towards classmates with dyslexia is age, or else years of learning experience. As “participant 6” of the public sector suggests, bullying instances in public lyceums are less than public gymnasiums. That could be because lyceum students get more attuned with dyslexic learners in their classroom, they get more comfortable, they learn how to approach, work with them or even help them through the years (Appendix G). The reason could also be because they get more mature, see excerpt below:

- (18) In gymnasium, like lower secondary school students I think sometimes they notice the difference... I would say sometimes they don't have the patience to wait for the dyslexic student to give the answer or to think of the answer and then respond. But in the upper secondary school, lyceum, I think it's OK, they don't really bother, they don't really focus on that. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

When bullying takes place, there are many negative effects on these learners. One of the biggest issues that bullying creates is an unsafe learning environment for the dyslexic learner (Appendix G). When a dyslexic- or any kind of learner- gets bullied or gossiped around about their learning abilities, knowledge or skills during classroom time, then their classroom behavior will change; bullied learners lose their desire and willingness to learn and participate in the lesson, or better, they get scared to participate, give answers or ask questions, see excerpts 19 and 20:

- (19) If their classmates are making fun of them, I think they will try to hide their difficulties and by trying to hide their difficulties it means that they won't make any questions, they won't understand and they won't talk, they will just remain silent which is not beneficial for them. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (20) If they feel that they are being bullied or that someone is going to make fun of them of course this will make them unwilling to respond or this might discourage them from responding (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

Another issue that comes as a result of this negative behavior of their peers is the lack or insufficient student participation. As mentioned above, when dyslexic learners do not feel safe inside the classroom, they do not participate, they do not ask questions, and this leads them to get left behind and not understand the lesson (Appendix G). For this reason, their grades get lower, thus they are not as confident, see excerpts 21 and 22:

- (21) They do not sympathize with them, they might joke around or you know, make comments that are really inappropriate. if you feel ashamed or embarrassed then you don't want to participate then this technically affects your performance and your grade. (Private 9, Female, 5 years teaching experience).
- (22) The problem starts when their learning difficulty has an effect on their psychology and their confidence. I think that this is when the problem starts, because when they lack confidence, they don't socialize easily, they don't express themselves adequately (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

The last, but one of the most important social factors that affects dyslexic students' school performance is their family environment. Some teachers supported that dyslexia in Cyprus is not yet as accepted as other countries. Some parents of dyslexic learners do not accept that their kid has any type of learning difficulty (Appendix G). They treat dyslexia as a "disability" using it as a negative issue that they need to hide from the whole world, see excerpt below:

- (23) Apparently, dyslexia is still considered a disability, so even parents do not admit that the kids have got a kind of form of dyslexia. (Public 7, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Unfortunately, when this is the case with the dyslexic student's parents, the problems that this student will face are greater. As with any difficulty of a child, parents have the first and most important role. They are the ones who spend their most time with, they are those that need to find out about dyslexia and if their child is dyslexic and then get informed on what dyslexia is and what are the ways they, as parents, can help their children (Appendix G). If they do not accept that their child is dyslexic then they will not get informed and they will not try to facilitate their learning experience along with their child's educators, see excerpt 24:

(24)If there's cooperation with parents, if the problem is quite serious, things are not bad.  
(Public 8, Female, 12 years teaching experience)

## 2.5 Implementing technology in EFL classrooms dyslexic learners

This section will deal with the use of technology in the classroom. There is going to be a comparison of pre and post Covid pandemic implementation of technology in the EFL classroom and teachers' opinions on technology and its use in the lesson. When it comes to online teaching and how it benefited dyslexic learners or not, the opinions varied. The teachers supporting the positive effects of online teaching state that dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in such a teaching environment. For example, they explain that these students feel more included because in an online lesson they get to participate more; that is because there is not so much writing involved (Appendix G). Dyslexic students, who have some kind of difficulty when writing, often participate more in the online classroom as the tasks were transformed into speaking and not writing, see excerpt 35:

(35)I would listen to them much more, they would participate much more than in the classroom. Also they didn't have to write a lot of things so in in many cases we have oral discussions so that helped cause most of the times they have difficulties writing and they need more time probably more help. But as regards their oral participation they can excel. (Public 6, Female, 8 years teaching experience)

Another reason that teachers support that dyslexic learners benefitted from online lessons is because of the audio-visual input the learners got (Appendix G). Teachers stated that one of the reasons dyslexic learners were more comfortable and willing to participate in an online classroom setting is because the lesson was totally audio- visual. That was also supported in previous research by Kalyvioti and Mikropoulos (2013), where multimedia approaches facilitated learning. The skills that dyslexic students have difficulties with, such as writing as mentioned above and reading, were replaced with oral discussions, audios of each text instead of them reading it, and videos, see excerpts 36-38:

(36)For my specific learner, he's very visual, he enjoys seeing the visuals or listening to words out loud. And I think with software and programs that have been developed after the pandemic it's much easier for him to grasp the meaning or the structure of some words or phrases. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

(37)I think they might be more benefited in in an online environment. Because it's totally visual there and I think the visual part helps them a lot. (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)

(38)A lot of audio-visual input instead of focusing on spelling and on reading and focusing on other things that help dyslexic children. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

Lastly, it was suggested that dyslexic students may preferred online teaching because if they had a writing assignment/ exercise they would type it instead of writing it on a piece of paper (Appendix G). This comes in line with the findings of another research that reported that dyslexic learners were more motivated to finish tasks while using technology (Cano et.al., 2021). As some

teachers state, dyslexic learners feel more comfortable and confident in their writing skills when they type; they do not feel as much pressure about writing- their letters or their spelling, see excerpts 39 and 40:

- (39) I think maybe they would be more comfortable when typing actually rather than writing, because, for example, my dyslexic learner is very comfortable with computers. He actually has expressed to me that he feels more comfortable when he's typing because he's not that self-conscious about his handwriting or his choice of letters. He thinks that it's easier for him to recognize the letters in the keyboard. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (40) They definitely benefited by the use of technology because when you're dyslexic it's more easy for you to type let's say instead of write. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

On the other hand, there was a teacher that does not have a clear opinion as to which setting is more suitable for dyslexic learners. She appreciates the positive outcomes that both teaching environments offer to dyslexic learners, see excerpts 41 and 42:

- (41) I've had both types of reactions: students that benefited from an online learning experience and others that benefit from one to one or a classroom experience (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (42) Technology is something that comes easy to them. They enjoy being in front of a computer, as with the majority of students I think, and they may benefit. But again, I like the school environment; I think it's good for kids, dyslexic or not." (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Some teachers believe that face-to-face teaching has more benefits for dyslexic learners. One participant suggested that online lessons demotivated all kinds of students (Appendix G). Another agreed with her that online learning lead them to not feeling included in a team like they would in a face-to-face classroom, see excerpts 43 and 44:

(43)I think that online education was not suited for them (dyslexics). They felt not included, they felt like they there was no motivation let's say. To be honest there was not a lot of motivation for all of the students and so you can imagine how it affected the dyslexic children. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience).

(44)Possibly in a face-to-face environment they might feel more included than online. I think they might feel more lost. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Another reason that teachers did not prefer online teaching is because their students would avoid working. For example, teachers state that because there was no face-to-face interaction, students would “hide”, they would not participate and interact in an online setting, see excerpts 45 and 46:

(45)I think online is more difficult for students with learning difficulties in general.

Teenagers prefer to avoid working so it's easier to hide in an online environment especially because we could not see students as well when we were teaching online so I think it was more difficult. (Public 8, Female, 12 years teaching experience)

(46)I think classroom (face-to-face) is more inclusive, in a class you can do more things, you can use online material and you can see students face to face. (Public 8, Female, 12 years teaching experience)

When asked about what the pandemic offered them as teachers when encountering a dyslexic learner in the classroom, most of them supported that their technological literacy skills have been improved. Because of the pandemic and the shift to online lessons, teachers did not have a choice but adapt their teaching practices, the materials they were using and the way of assessing (Appendix G). Teachers learnt new platforms and implemented them in their teaching to facilitate dyslexic students' learning process, see excerpts below:

(47)I used a lot of tools before the COVID era and during the COVID era I enhanced my program with online tools and I gave them the option to use the speech-to-text let's say options, they type the essays and they got feedback from some platforms I used to have so I believe that in that respect they were aided with technology. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

(48)I got acquainted with platforms like zoom and teams and some other platforms which again was a result of the pandemic and the fact that we had to find friendly ways to communicate with our students (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)



They got better in handling computers in general. This was also a “push” to update not only their materials but also their teaching practices and resources, see excerpts 49-52:

- (49)I, myself became more comfortable in using online platforms such as zoom or Microsoft Teams (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (50)It was eye opening for me. I think that it was great, you know, it was a blessing in disguise because it did push us to use technology more and we have found so many resources and ways of... we have adjusted, adapted, discovered, experimented. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)
- (51)I'm not afraid of technology anymore, I have learned how to download stuff and how to include them in my work, how to how to do a lot of things that I was unaware before the pandemic. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (52)“I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic? T: Definitely that's 100% true for me.” (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Another issue that was talked about was the way the use of technology in the classroom was presumed. Before the pandemic, as said by a teacher working in the public sector, the Ministry of Education did not pay as much attention to implementing technology in the classroom (Appendix G). After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, schools encourage teachers to use technology when they teach, see excerpts 53 and 54:

- (53)I use more online tools nowadays, so before the covid pandemic I wouldn't use let's say kahoot but nowadays I use it really often. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)
- (54)Before the COVID pandemic and online teaching we didn't really... we weren't encouraged to use them but nowadays after the covid pandemic we're actually encouraged to use these tools. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

## 2.6 Continuous Professional Development – Training Needs

This section will focus on EFL teachers’ training needs regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners. Issues such as teachers’ university courses on the topic, if they try to have continuous professional development on their own and how they achieve it, if they did have any pre-service training about dyslexia, and the training opportunities their place of work offers them.



### 2.6.1 Dyslexia courses in University

The first topic that is going to be analyzed around teachers' knowledge is the training or the knowledge they gained from the universities they attended. More or less, teachers do not seem to be pleased with the training and courses they had in university. Some teachers claim that these courses were not enough, they were not as informative as they would have wanted them to be. Some others said that they did have a course that focused on learning difficulties, but they felt like it was not enough- hands-on experience is different from theories (Appendix G). Teachers felt that the courses- if they had them- were not sufficient enough, see excerpts 55-60:

- (55) I don't think general university like tertiary education is helping you with dyslexic kids. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (56) In my undergraduate degree we didn't have any kind of knowledge about it. My postgraduate degree, yes, we did have some guidance through special education needs but not dyslexia. (Public 7, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (57) They teach you (in university) the methods, but the problems are in action. I mean when you teach you start teaching then are the real problems because at the university everything is mostly theoretical (Public 9, Female, 20 years teaching experience)
- (58) I had one course that was if I remember well, it was about dyslexic students and dyslexia in general and how to have it in our teaching and how to help them. But we only had that one, we didn't have anything else. (Private 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)
- (59) At the university they only teach you some basic things (Private 3, Female, 10 years teaching experience)
- (60) When I was at the university of Cyprus in the first, during my bachelor studies we did have some courses for teaching which have helped gain an insight into what happens in the classroom but for students with learning difficulties, I think it lacks in that aspect. And for my masters as well it's the same thing. I didn't get as much as I would want to and they do not offer course for this type of things. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

Two participants seemed to be pleased with the courses they attended in university. Both teachers are quite recent University of Cyprus graduates; one participant graduated in 2016 and the other in 2022, see excerpts below:

(61) We had a course that focused on those difficulties and dyslexia as well. So, for the whole semester we would research dyslexia and other difficulties (UCY) (Private 9, Female, 5 years teaching experience).

(62) I did attend some courses that were very informative about the topic actually. (UCY) (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

Two teachers that had graduated a long time ago, one of them in 1998 (Private 2) from the University of Cyprus and the other in 1995, stated that they were not satisfied with their learning experience when it comes to dyslexia. One of them suggested that the courses were limited, and the other participant said that she did not receive any training (Appendix G). As one participant suggests, during that time, almost thirty years ago, dyslexia was not as known and accepted, thus was not taken into consideration as much as today, see excerpts 63 and 64:

(63) They were very limited. I think that if I could go back in time, I would definitely have taken a course after university to address dyslexia. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

(64) My university degrees and experiences, even when I went to a teaching college to learn teaching techniques, during my time, they did not help me at all. Because as you know I finished university in 1995 so it was very vague at the time. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

### **2.6.2 EFL teachers' efforts for Continuous Professional Development regarding dyslexia**

A lot of teachers supported that they try to be involved in continuous professional development. They find seminars or lectures with focus on dyslexia and other learning difficulties, they find articles and videos online and they attend workshops (Appendix G). One participant also suggested that the parents of the dyslexic learners could advise EFL teachers as to what is dyslexia and how to approach dyslexic learners, see excerpts 65-71:

- (65) I have tried by myself by reading things by watching videos and whatever. (Public 9, Female, 20 years teaching experience)
- (66) I think I certainly have to take part maybe to more lectures about the topic or read about it a bit more, but I think I'm in a much better place than in the place I was when I started teaching this specific learner because I tried to inform myself and read about it. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (67) Yes, I try to read about it a lot, finding articles online. The other day I was watching a lecture about the topic, I'm trying to find some small videos that are very educative about the topic. But I have to admit that I do all of this by myself. (Private 1, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (68) I also attended three workshops by dyslexia specialists. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)
- (69) If there is a seminar, course, even an article I always read in order to learn something, even an article. I think it's really important. If you want to be up to date you have to be informed and educated all the time. (Private 8, Female, 18 years teaching experience).
- (70) I have attended a lot of seminars, workshops and presentations and I have tried to apply some of the theory into my class. So, it's a combination of your personal effort to get informed about what dyslexia is and how to deal with it. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (71) In the first years when I realized that some students were dyslexic I tried to go online and study what their difficulties would be, how I could help them, I watched videos on YouTube and then I had a friend who was doing her masters on dyslexia I asked her to give me some advice and I also talked with the parents. That helped me as well because to be honest I find parents much more important than educators. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

### **2.6.3 Place of work: their plan for training EFL teachers about Dyslexia**

When it comes to training opportunities through their workspace, public sector educators supported that the training they get throughout their teaching years in the public sector is not enough- or sometimes- nonexistent. Some teachers stated that they had never heard of a seminar conducted by the Ministry of Education. Some others said that the Ministry does offer some seminars on Educator's Day that have to do with multiple topics. One of the topics that was mentioned by participants was learning difficulties; the seminar was not only focused on dyslexia, and it was too theoretical (Appendix G). Teachers seemed to not get any new information that was helpful for their teaching, see excerpts 72-75:

- (72)“I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners? T: A few. I: For example? T: There may be a seminar, but not really.” (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (73)In my case that I have never attended a seminar in dyslexia organized by the Ministry of Education. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (74)It does (the Ministry) offer some seminars, maybe on teaching students with difficulties but not specifically for dyslexia or any specific difficulties they have. There are some things in general. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (75)What they do is give us on the day of the educationalist that they hold twice a year. They usually give us seminars [...] they don't give us guidelines as what do to deal with it, it's so theoretical, it's more of a wide exists, the different approaches, what you see in each child, the different kinds of signs, how many symptoms a child must have before we consider them as dyslexic. So, it's not a hands-on experience. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Teachers said that they do not wait for the Ministry of Education to cover their training needs or for their professional development. Participants stated that they work by themselves with materials they find on their own. According to them, the ministry does not support continuous professional development and they are alone in the journey of becoming better educators, see excerpts 76-78:

- (76)I'm more prepared now because I have read things myself not because I have been taught on how to teach (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)
- (77)Whatever I did up to now was just the result of me trying to find resources or adapting in a way that I feel that I help. I don't really have proper training on that. I don't know if there was like 1 seminar or something but even if there was one that's not enough. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)
- (78)They don't give us much education. What we learn we do it by ourselves. (Public 9, Female, 20 years teaching experience)

Participants also expressed their willingness to get educated and trained in dyslexia. They support the idea that if they had the opportunity and access to seminars or courses on teaching dyslexic learners they would participate, see excerpts 79-81:

- (79) I usually suggest, in every school that I have been to, that there should be a special teacher in each school that could guide us, help us, support us and give us knowledge that we don't have access to (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (80) If somebody came from the ministry and told me to educate me on this stuff I would love to, but for the time being no I'm not I'm not as confident as I should be. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (81) I would really like to have specialized training in that. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

What the ministry does offer, as two teachers mentioned, is pre-service training. Before starting to work in the public sector, teachers have some training. This training takes place in the University of Cyprus and is organized by the Ministry of Education (Appendix G). These participants stated that during this training they did get some knowledge on how to teach dyslexic learners and how to be more inclusive in the classroom in general, see excerpts below:

- (82) We had some training during the pre-service training for the public schools so I had some training after university. (Public 8, Female, 12 years teaching experience)
- (83) Personally, for me it has helped me a lot attending the pedagogical institute that we do as teachers in state schools, the pre-service program that need to do at the University of Cyprus. That has helped me more in gaining more experience, gaining more knowledge concerning adapting materials, using technology in class etc. (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

When it comes to the private sector, as mentioned earlier, things differ between each institute but when discussing with institute owners, they seem willing to train and get trained on dyslexia. They find seminars or courses regarding dyslexic learners, and they encourage, if not oblige, their employees to attend them, see excerpts 84-86:

- (84)Whenever there are courses regarding dyslexia, I pay for the workshops myself, I promote anything that could help my staff, my employees to better themselves and improve. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)
- (85)So, when there are any workshops or things that are either free or there is an admission fee, I give them the opportunity to do this. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)
- (86)I always ask the teachers that I work with to attend because I think you have to learn. (Private 8, Female, 18 years teaching experience)

## 2.7 Schools’/ Institutes’ curriculum on dyslexic learners

### **2.7.1 Private sector**

When discussing the strategies and the curriculum that the ministry of education and the private sector follow, I came across important differences between them. To begin with, in the private sector, institutes do not follow the same policy; each institute follows its own strategies. In general, it seems that most private institutes that their EFL teachers participated in this study, take into consideration dyslexic learners, see excerpt 87:

- (87)Our lesson plans are designed in respect where they can include students with dyslexia or other attention deficits in the spectrum of attention deficit, mild autism, yes. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

Some of the participants mentioned the use of inclusive books. They suggested that the books were chosen carefully with dyslexic students in mind. These books have big, simple fonts with no extra and unnecessary information to tire dyslexics. The important advantage here is that every student gets the same book (Appendix G). Dyslexic learners do not feel inferior to their classmates by having a different book than them, see excerpts 88 and 89:



(88)Our books are not crowded with information - they have bold big fonts, not crowded with pictures as well. We follow a system where they learn dictation based on pictures.  
(Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

(89)“I believe I find that the material, the books that we use are for mixed-ability classrooms.

I: So, every student has the same book, but this book is beneficial let's say for dyslexic learners and so on?

T: Yes, it's got different kinds of tasks and approaches so that everybody gets it.”  
(Private 7, Female, 6 years teaching experience).

The issue with the private sector is that institutes work like a business would. This means that educators and institute owners have to prove their ability to teach English and this proof usually comes with exam results (Appendix G). So, as an institute owner said in the interview, she would not accept dyslexic learners in a mainstream classroom if they cannot keep up or slow everyone else down. She of course seems willing to help those students with private lessons so the group is not affected, see the following excerpt:

(90)If the child cannot follow the rest of the children let's say because the students who come to my classes do not come just to be educated. They come to pass exams there is a target, so as cold as it may sound, I cannot sacrifice 10 students and their need to pass an exam I cannot sacrifice for a child who needs special education. But apart from being an educational institute it's also my business it's also a place where students come to pass exams that is the target that is the aim and as cold as it may sound sometimes if a child slows everybody else down then we must either give them private lessons or refer them to teachers who have these certain specialties. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

Another important aspect of the private sector is that they can choose which students they will accept in their institute. If an educator believes that they do not have the knowledge, skills or time to effectively teach dyslexic learners then they can refer them to other professional that are better trained on dyslexia. In this way, dyslexic students can get the attention they need in an EFL lesson, see excerpt 91:

(91) We are not qualified so we might refer the child to a professor, to a teacher who has the qualifications and the means to help them. I'm not saying we're rejecting dyslexic child; it depends on what level of this dyslexia we're dealing with. (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

Another strategy that the private sector can follow is the way dyslexic students are going to be taught. Private institutes have the freedom to choose if the student will be part of a mainstream classroom or if they need one-to-one sessions for better learning, see excerpts 92 and 93:

(92) One-to-one lessons are very efficient. I think it's very efficient especially when the lessons are combined. If we have a child in a mainstream classroom combined with a one-to-one lesson, then we have excellent results (Private 2, Female, 25+ years teaching experience)

(93) We do offer some private lessons depending on the diagnosis and we also- first we recommend them to attend a regular group so they would interact with their peers etc. and maybe if we notice they can't cope with this, we offer private lessons. (Private 5, Female, 11 years teaching experience)

On the other hand, the public sector differs a lot. First, each classroom has around 20 students- a large number that cannot be easily managed, let alone be multiple- level- students friendly, see excerpt below:

(94) In English we have a full classroom of every ability and absolutely no help. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

### **2.7.2 Public sector**

#### *Instructions on how to approach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms*

The strategies the Ministry of Education follows when it comes to dyslexic learners seem to be non-existent according to most EFL teachers' beliefs. Teachers stated that they did not receive any instructions as to how to teach or approach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms; they were not trained in how to use inclusive practices or the type of materials that facilitates dyslexic



students (Appendix G). This does not align with the guidelines of the national public-school system in terms of dyslexia that is published by the Ministry of Education (MOECCY, 2023) where it is stated that teachers get specific instructions for dyslexic learners. EFL teachers suggest that the only instructions they get from the Ministry is on how they assess dyslexics, see excerpts 95-97:

(95)It's been two years. I didn't receive any instructions. Apart from grading, assessing students with dyslexia, I didn't have any specific instruction like on how teach them, on how to adapt my material, on how to help so yeah, I wouldn't say they are helpful in that sense. (Public 6, Female, 2 years teaching experience)

(96)When it comes to English classes we don't have like specific guidelines as to what we are expected to do in order to accommodate these students' needs it's up to the teacher and the teacher's experience and teacher's professional knowledge to deal with dyslexic students. (Public 7, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

(97)To my knowledge I haven't come across any strategies as to the inclusiveness of dyslexic learners. I haven't seen anything like this or policy documents or guidelines when it comes to English classes (Public 7, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

### *SEN (Special Education Needs) program*

A positive strategy that the Ministry of Education follows is called “στήριξη” in Greek or SEN in English; students that follow this program, must leave their mainstream classroom for a few periods per week and have lessons in small groups or on their own. During these periods they get extra help and attention from the teacher (Appendix G). The issue with this program is that again, the teachers of the program are not qualified to teach dyslexic learners, so students do not get the specialised learning process they need, see excerpt below:

(98)They have these supportive lessons, they're called “στήριξη”, so they spend a few periods a week in a separate room having lessons on a one-to-one basis. I think this is a good thing, I wouldn't object to that. My question is whether the people who are teaching them are qualified enough to offer them exactly the help they need because they are not special educators, they're not special education teachers. They're just, you know, English teachers let's say and I'm not sure if everybody's qualified enough or capable enough of helping these kids. So, I think we need more specialized staff. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)

Another issue with this program is that it is only offered for lessons that have final exams in the end of the year such as Greek and Maths. Teacher participants supported that students do not go to these “special lessons” for English (Appendix G). Even dyslexic students who chose English as a main subject and are in the second and third grade of lyceum, probably preparing to take the Pancyprian exams, do not get the extra support they need for English, see excerpts 99-101:

(99) Usually, they are not allocated extra hours, they are not allocated the so-called support system that other lessons have. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

(100) They have “αλφαριθμητισμός” and they get extra help for their main subjects but not for English. And they have teacher assistants within the classroom, so I guess students do get a lot of help when it comes to the main subjects that have exams but not for English. (Public 1, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

(101) Students are not supported in the Lyceum in the second and third grade in English. Even if they have a chosen English as one of their main courses, they don't get extra support, and this is a problem. They only get helped, they only have extra classes for Math and Greek and not for foreign languages (Public 8, Female, 12 years teaching experience)

Furthermore, this program has effects on dyslexic students’ psychology as mentioned by one teacher. She believes it is very important to have these students be part of their mainstream classroom and not leave during the lessons to go to “στήριξη” (Appendix G). She states that by taking them for their class to have these “special lessons” they make them feel inferior to others which negatively affects their confidence and psychology, see excerpt 102:

(102) These students could have lunch or something or a snack or whatever and then do the “στήριξη” the supporting classes that the Ministry of Education suggests and works out so that they are kept in their class, and they don't feel that they are separated from the rest of the class, and they don't feel inferior to the others. We are hurting them and harming them psychologically speaking, but we are not actually helping, I think. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

### *Ministry of Education's Curriculum for dyslexic learners*

When asked about their opinion about the curriculum they are given by the Ministry of Education, most teachers supported that it is neither helpful nor efficient for dyslexic learners. One teacher supports that the curriculum was not designed with dyslexic students in mind. She states that the books are not dyslexia-friendly, and the teaching approach does not include many audiovisual materials. Two more teachers believe the same about the books and they too think that the teachers need to adapt the materials and lesson accordingly (Appendix G). One participant also supported the idea that she would do many more things than just follow the book, but she states that she is obliged to follow the curriculum, see excerpts 103-105:

- (103) The curriculum is not for dyslexic kids. It's a lot of material, the passages are too long for them, so you have to simplify, differentiate, highlight and do all the things we have to do to make it clearer to dyslexic. Sometimes the books are not for them, so you still have to change the books; add more visuals, have more acoustic material. So yeah, I don't feel that they have been designed with dyslexic kids in mind. (Public 2, Female, 1 year teaching experience)
- (104) I don't think they (curriculum and instructions) are helpful and efficient because the books that we use are mainstream publishers' books which are addressed to the public, they address to the majority of children who have no difficulties. But you have the chance to either adapt or to give them extra material (Public 3, Female, 3 years teaching experience)
- (105) At the moment we are doing the worst book ever and we always have to find material outside the book the curriculum and we could be doing other stuff, more creative. We could do lots of other things, but we are obliged to follow the guidelines of the ministry, and this is a disaster actually. (Public 5, Female, 3 years teaching experience)

Lastly, a teacher who has worked in the public sector for 6 years now, states that the curriculum for dyslexic learners has not changed. She states that the Ministry did change the assessment instructions; they give dyslexic learners extra time for example, but the problem is not how to assess these students but how to teach them. This is in line with the published guidelines of the national public-school system in terms of dyslexia (MOECCY, 2023), see excerpt 106:

(106) About the curriculum for dyslexic learners: I started teaching like six years ago, I think the same way things were six years ago they're more or less the same. It's anachronistic for the students of 2023, the curriculum hasn't changed. They are trying to change some ways, but those ways are not helpful either. For example, extra time; it doesn't make a difference whether they have extra time, that's not the issue. The issue should be change the way these children are taught and the way they get information the way they are asked to deliver things (Public 4, Female, 5 years teaching experience)

Christina Procopiou

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This section of the study is focused on a discussion and comparison of the results presented in Chapter 3 and I will try to answer each research question individually.

### 4.1 Public and Private Sector's EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs about dyslexic students in mainstream classrooms.

For the first research question, it was found that in both the public and private sector, participants agreed with the following statements: The first statement is that it is important for EFL teachers to collaborate with the parents of their dyslexic students. Huang et al. (2020) also highlighted the importance of family, and more specifically parents in the learning process of a dyslexic learner and their psychology and motivation as well (Huang et al., 2020). The second statement also shows the importance of collaboration, this time with a range of educational professionals.

After statistical analysis of the questionnaire results some statistically significant differences were observed between the public and private sector. It was shown that participants working in the public sector had a stronger belief that teacher behaviour in an EFL classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem. As mentioned in previous research, dyslexic learners may have more negative feelings or personality traits due to their classroom experience; if they have negative experiences due to their classmates' behaviour, they tend to get higher anxiety and a lower self-esteem (Huang et al., 2020). Another statistically significant difference is that EFL teachers who work in the public sector had a stronger belief that they should have high expectations for their dyslexic students.

When it comes to the qualitative results of the study, the interviews' analysis, it was stated that most of EFL teachers that took part in the interview, were not prepared to teach dyslexic learners at the beginning of their career but they gain knowledge and skills through experience. This is in line with previous research in the context of Cyprus that concluded that participants with more teaching experience were more prepared to teach dyslexic learners (Nijakowska et al., 2018). Most of the teachers both in the public and private sector said that they are not 100 percent confident of how to teach these students. They believe they lack relevant knowledge and skills (Nijakowska et al., 2018).

Another finding when it comes to the public sector is that, according to the participants, the mainstream classroom of a public school is not an ideal place to teach dyslexic learners; the classrooms have a large number of students, and the teachers have a heavy curriculum and limited time.

An issue raised by EFL teachers who work both in public and private sectors is the importance of the sense of belonging for these learners; it is crucial for students to feel part of a group. Although participants believe that dyslexic learners may need private lessons to facilitate their learning and keep up with their level, teachers also believe in the importance of being part of a classroom. They consider that dyslexics feel better being part of a group and work in pairs or having group activities or discussions and this comes in line with previous research that highlights the positives of providing dyslexic learners with teamwork activities with their peers (Cano et al., 2021).

Some teachers believe that dyslexic learners, but also learners with other learning impairments, get bullied and some others consider that dyslexia has become common and students have learnt to accept their peers. With respect to the private sector, the participants stated that they have more control of the classroom environment, thus they do not encounter such behaviors. In the public

sector the opinions varied. There was also a difference between gymnasiums and lyceums according to some participants; lyceum students are more accepting towards students with learning difficulties than gymnasium students, thus there is less bullying taking place. In any case, bullying affects learners' performance and willingness to participate in the lesson (Huang et al., 2020).

#### 4.2. Factors that affect EFL teachers' teaching practices regarding dyslexic learners

Concerning the second research question, the factors that might affect EFL teachers' teaching practices when it comes to their dyslexic learners were analysed. The factors analysed were the participants' level of education, the length and type of teaching experience they had, type of school- whether it is private or public- and the shift to online education due to the pandemic.

Starting with the level of education of EFL teachers, there was a statistically significant difference between EFL teachers with a Master's and a Bachelor's degree. The difference was that EFL teachers with a Master's degree believed that dyslexic learners felt more comfortable in an online learning environment. They also had a stronger belief that the anxiety levels of these students were lower in an online mode rather than face-to-face. This could be in line with the research by Cano et al. (2021) that suggested the higher motivation of learners when technology is involved in their learning journey. Focusing on the length and type of teaching experience, it was found that EFL teachers who have not taught classes with dyslexic learners had a stronger belief that the school system they work at supports these students in mainstream classrooms. When analysing the age factor, I found a statistically significant correlation between age and online teaching; the older participants were, the more strongly they believed that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning setting and vice-versa. The last factor was the type of school. It was found that

teachers working in the private sector had a stronger belief that the school system they work at supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.

The analysis of interviews for the implementation of technology and online lessons showed that opinions varied. Some benefits that teachers stated is the audio-visual input learners get in an online classroom environment. In online lessons, teachers supported that they used more audio-visual activities than in a physical classroom and this facilitated the learning process of dyslexic learners. That was also supported in previous research by Kalyvioti & Mikropoulos (2013), where multimedia approaches facilitated learning. Another finding that is in line with previous research is that dyslexic learners preferred tasks that involved technology and are more motivated to complete them (Cano et al., 2021). Lastly, according to the interviews, one could conclude that EFL teachers that completed their studies in earlier years believe that they had more knowledge on dyslexia and other learning impairments due to their university courses than teachers who graduated earlier.

#### 4.3 Needs, challenges, and opportunities of EFL teachers regarding their teaching practices, training and preparation with respect to learners with dyslexia.

For the third research question it was found that participants felt that they need information and training on effective language teaching methods for students with dyslexia. Participants stated as mostly true that they learnt about how to teach dyslexic learners on their own. This comes in line with the interviews' answers; as seen in the results sections, EFL teachers mentioned that they need to find articles, seminars, courses or even videos on their own to gather information and knowledge for dyslexia-friendly practices. Similar results were found in previous research:



Lemperou's (2011) study stated that more than half of the participants' awareness came from their own studying and willingness to learn about inclusive practices.

Another issue that most of them mentioned in the interviews but was also shown from participants' answers to the questionnaire, is that teachers did not learn about how to teach dyslexic learners in their universities. Two of the most important training needs according to EFL teachers, is EFL techniques that assist language learners with dyslexia and general teaching and classroom management tips for teaching a mainstream classroom with dyslexic learners. These results are in line with Nijakowska et al. study (2018), where they found that more than half of the participants did not learn about dyslexia and inclusive practices in university.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this MA in TESOL thesis was to investigate EFL teachers' preparedness to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms, their knowledge and awareness about dyslexia and their training needs. The study was focused on both public and private sectors. Another issue that was analyzed is whether and how EFL teachers implement technology during lessons to facilitate dyslexic students' learning.

The analysis of the results showed that most of the teachers are willing to help their dyslexic students. Some teachers, on the other hand, do not seem willing enough to get the necessary education to facilitate EFL learning for their dyslexic learners. Another crucial conclusion is that EFL teachers who work either in the public or the private sector need constant training on issues such as dyslexia. Based on these findings it can be concluded that not much has changed in the past five years when it comes to EFL teachers' preparedness to teach dyslexic students in mainstream classrooms. In previous research conducted in 2018, the same results were found: teachers struggle adapting educational strategies that facilitate EFL learning for dyslexic learners (Nijakowksa et al., 2018).

One of the most important problems that burden inclusive practices lies in the public sector, as classes have a bigger number of students and time is more limited in comparison to the private sector. However, things could become better if teachers had more knowledge about dyslexia and had clearer instructions as to how to teach, rather than how to assess dyslexic learners. According to the public sector's participants, it is up to each educator to find seminars, courses or any materials and implement them in their teaching. Again, Cyprus faces the same situation as five years ago, where more than half EFL teachers of the public sector who participated in a research

stated that they did not learn about EFL and dyslexia from any mandatory courses of their place of work (Nijakowska et al., 2018).

It is also important to state that English is neglected in the public sector; students with learning difficulties are taken from their English classes to have private lessons on courses such as Greek and Math, and they do not get to have extra private lessons for English even if they choose it as a main course. Unfortunately, it seems that English is a subject that is taken more seriously in the private sector and that dyslexics do not reach their full potential in the public sector.

As mentioned earlier, an important factor that affects EFL teachers' teaching practices regarding mainstream classrooms with dyslexic learners is the type of school. It was also concluded that another factor that has a role in teachers' practices is the use of technology. Most teachers feel more confident to implement technology after the Covid-19 pandemic, not only in an online teaching environment but also in face-to-face classes. They believe that it facilitates not only dyslexic learners but everyone. A similar finding was concluded in Cano's et al. (2021) study; it was proven that students were more motivated to finish a task while using technology. Also, Eden & Shmila (2022) suggested that the multisensory materials technology offers have a positive effect on dyslexic students' learning journey.

In conclusion, this MA in TESOL thesis has offered a better understanding of the awareness and preparedness of Cypriot EFL teachers to teach dyslexic learners efficiently. It shed light to the Ministry of Education's guidelines as to how to approach and teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms, as well as whether they train their teachers to use inclusive practices to facilitate dyslexic student's learning experience. Some of the private sector's policies about effectively teaching dyslexic learners were also discussed. Such an analysis is crucial so experts

can indicate the problems and then improve the system, if necessary, for a better and more sufficient learning experience for dyslexic learners in EFL classrooms.

### Limitations:

This research did not come without limitations. The most important limitation of the study was the small sample. I started collecting data in the beginning of June, thus a lot of participants were unavailable due to final exams and other tasks that take place in the end of the academic year.

Also, some participants may not have answered truthfully, because they lacked previous information on the study and its aims. Another reason that could lead to false answers could be that the questionnaire was long and participants might feel like it was time consuming.

Lastly, when it comes to the questionnaire results, I used a Likert scale that consisted of five choices. This led to having the choice of “not true nor false” and most participants could have chosen the middle answer when unsure.

### Implications for future research:

It is important to continue this type of research in the context of Cyprus because this country needs to improve EFL teachers skills and knowledge in inclusive practices to facilitate dyslexic students' learning process. A study similar to this one with a larger sample is needed in order to be able to have a clearer picture of the needs of EFL teachers and practitioners and changes in language policy and curriculum suggested by the Ministry of Education. It would also be very informative to have dyslexic students' parents' opinions on the topic as well as the students' themselves. It would be also interesting to view EFL teachers' perceptions and preparedness to deal with other learning difficulties as well.

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Christina Procopiou



## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Questionnaire**

An edited version of Nijakowska's questionnaire (2018) "Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language—NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE REVISED (DYSTEFL-NAQ-R)" aimed to collect data about:

- 1) English Teachers' Preparedness to Include Dyslexics.
- 2) Factors that affect EFL teachers' training practices regarding dyslexic learners.
- 3) Professional training needs on EFL and dyslexia.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the awareness of Cypriot EFL teachers in terms of dyslexia and the needs and challenges of dyslexic learners. Teachers' personal experience, their beliefs about their abilities, the educational system, the curricula, and their training needs are analysed. There will also be analysis on how the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has affected EFL teachers' knowledge and skills both in terms of teaching of dyslexia and the practices that are more inclusive. This information will then lead to a general picture of how dyslexic learners are encountered in public and private schools and mainstream classrooms. It will also show if the Ministry's guidelines are in favour or burden dyslexic learners' inclusion and if the private sector follows the same strategies or each institute has different approaches.

Participants will have access to the outcomes of the research project and get better knowledge and understanding of the awareness and preparedness of Cypriot EFL teachers to teach dyslexic learners efficiently.

- The anonymity of the participants will be ensured.
- Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences.
- The data collected will be used only for the purposes of this specific research.

Please fill in the following questionnaire.

#### **Part A. General information**

Please tick the statements that describe you best. In some questions more than one answer is possible.

A1. I am:

1. male
2. female

My age is:

1. 25 years or below
2. 26-35 years
3. 35-45 years
4. 46 years or above

A3. I have:

1. no teaching experience
2. 1-5 years of teaching experience
3. 6–10 years of teaching experience
4. more than 10 years of teaching experience

A4. I teach at (more than one answer is possible):

1. public gymnasium
2. public lyceum
3. private sector (ages 11- 14)
4. private sector (ages 15-18)

A5. My highest level of education completed is:

1. secondary school
2. Bachelors degree
3. Masters degree
4. PhD
5. Other, please specify .....

A6. I have taught ... .. (more than one answer is possible):

1. classes where there are no students with dyslexia
2. classes where there are some students with dyslexia
3. special classes for students with dyslexia

4. classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia
5. one-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
6. not applicable

Part B: Accommodating the learning needs of EFL learners with dyslexia – TEPID –  
Teacher of English Preparedness to Include Dyslexics Scale

Please consider the statements below referring to teaching foreign language learners with dyslexia and indicate to what extent the following statements are true for you.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
1. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education.					
2. I am familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning.					
3. I can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem.					
4. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom.					
5. I believe teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem.					
6. I am familiar with the signs of dyslexia.					
7. I can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia.					
8. I can modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia.					
9. I am familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning.					
10. I can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate my dyslexic language learners' progress.					

11. I believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia.					
12. I am familiar with the nature of dyslexia.					
13. I believe developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important.					
14. I can help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies.					
15. I believe foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners.					
16. I can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia.					
17. I believe it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners.					
18. I know what to do if I think that one of my students is dyslexic.					
19. I am familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia.					
20. I believe collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia.					
21. I am familiar with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams.					
22. I can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.					
23. I am familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia.					
24. I can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.					

Part C. Factors that affect EFL teachers' training practices regarding dyslexic learners.

Please consider the statements below referring to teaching foreign language learners with dyslexia and indicate to what extent the following statements are true for you.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
25. I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.					
26. After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.					
27. It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.					
28. After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.					
29. I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.					
30. I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.					
31. Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.					
32. Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.					
33. The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.					
34. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.					
35. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.					
36. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.					
37. I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.					
38. I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.					

Part D. Professional training needs on EFL and dyslexia.

D1. Please consider the statements below referring to professional training needs on EFL and dyslexia and indicate to what extent the following statements are true for you.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
39. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia in my courses at college/university/ teacher training institutions.					
40. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia on my own from available resources					
41. I feel the need to have more information on the language teaching methods effective with dyslexic learners					
42. I am interested in teaching English to learners with dyslexia					

D2. An ideal format for the course on dyslexia and methods of teaching foreign languages to learners with dyslexia is ... .. (more than one answer is possible):

1. printed self-study materials.
2. online learning course.
3. online resources that I can use for self-study.
4. face-to-face training workshop.
5. other preferred training formats, please specify.

D3. In a training course, I would like to learn about the following ... .. (please tick the topics you would find relevant; more than one answer is possible)

1. nature of dyslexia.
2. learning difficulties associated with dyslexia.
3. problems dyslexia causes in language learning.
4. assessment of learners with dyslexia in the language classroom.
5. how dyslexia is diagnosed.
6. accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in high-stakes exams.

7. language teaching techniques that assist language learners with dyslexia.
8. general teaching and classroom management tips for teaching language learners with dyslexia.
9. other topic, please specify ... ..

D4. In a training course I would find the following useful: (please tick the tasks and activities you would find relevant; more than one answer is possible)

1. brief lectures
2. reading articles
3. reading book chapters
4. reading online resource materials
5. watching videos of classrooms
6. listening to/reading interviews with learners with dyslexia
7. listening to/reading interviews with teachers of dyslexic learners
8. learning how to design language teaching materials for learners with dyslexia
9. evaluating language teaching materials designed for learners with dyslexia
10. designing lesson plans so that the needs of learners with dyslexia are catered for
11. evaluating lesson plans
12. other tasks and activities, please specify.....

Do you have any further comments you would like to add? If yes, please write them here:

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References:

Nijakowska, J., Tsagari, D., & Spanoudis, G. (2018). English as a foreign language teacher training needs and perceived preparedness to include dyslexic learners: The case of Greece, Cyprus, and Poland. *Dyslexia*, 24(4), 357–379. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.1598>

## **Appendix B: Interview**

(For interviewer's use only.)

The purpose of this study is to investigate the awareness of Cypriot EFL teachers in terms of dyslexia and the needs and challenges of dyslexic learners. Teachers' personal experience, their beliefs about their abilities, the educational system, the curricula, and their training needs are analyzed. There will also be analysis on how the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has affected EFL teachers' knowledge and skills both in terms of teaching of dyslexia and the practices that are more inclusive. This information will then lead to a general picture of how dyslexic learners are encountered in public and private schools and mainstream classrooms. It will also show if the Ministry's guidelines are in favour or burden dyslexic learners' inclusion and if the private sector follows the same strategies or each institute has different approaches.

Participants will have access to the outcomes of the research project and get better knowledge and understanding of the awareness and preparedness of Cypriot EFL teachers to teach dyslexic learners efficiently.

- The anonymity of the participants will be ensured.
- Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences.
- The data collected will be used only for the purposes of this specific research.

Please answer the questions based on your experience and opinions.

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
3. What level of education do you have?
4. When did you graduate? From which university/ institute, country?
5. What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?
6. How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?
7. To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in a mainstream classroom?
8. Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms of Cyprus?



9. Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a mainstream class with dyslexic learners in it?
10. Are you allowed to adapt the lesson when there is a dyslexic student in the classroom? If yes, how do you do it?
11. What are the attitudes and behaviours of their peers towards dyslexic learners?
12. Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners affects their performance? In what way?
13. Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or face-to-face environment? Why?
14. Can you follow each of your teaching practices when you do online teaching such as group discussions or peer observation? If not, why?
15. Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes through online games (e.g. Kahoot) when you do online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching? Elaborate.
16. Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic? In which way? Please provide examples.
17. Do you believe that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners? If yes, in what ways?
18. Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?
19. Do you think the courses you attended in university/ college/ professional training courses were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?
20. Are you trained to teach dyslexic learners? What about dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms in Cyprus?

21. Does the Ministry of Education or the institute you work at offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?
22. Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners? How?
23. Do you think the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education due to the shift to online or hybrid teaching? In which way?
24. Do you think the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching overall and regarding dyslexic students? In which way?
25. Compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality, confidence, decision making, lesson planning, adaptation of materials, classroom management, time management when it comes to dyslexic learners in your classroom.
26. Compare the system that your work institution followed at the beginning of your career and now when it comes to dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.
27. Are you allowed to choose a teaching practice or adapt materials for dyslexic learners at your place of work?
28. Do you find the Ministry of Education/institute's curriculum for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient? Why?

## Appendix C: Cover letter

Γεια σας,

Είμαι η Χριστίνα Προκοπίου (99782740), μεταπτυχιακή φοιτήτρια στο τμήμα Αγγλικών Σπουδών του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου.

Διεξάγω την διπλωματική μου εργασία που είναι έρευνα σχετικά με τους δυσλεκτικούς μαθητές και το πώς αντιμετωπίζονται στο μάθημα των Αγγλικών και χρειάζομαι τη βοήθειά σας για τη συλλογή δεδομένων. Παρακαλώ προωθήστε το μήνυμά στους καθηγητές Αγγλικών.

Σας επισυνάπτω το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης (στα ελληνικά και αγγλικά) που επεξηγεί την έρευνα και τον σκοπό της. Το έντυπο αυτό πρέπει να υπογράψει ο κάθε καθηγητής που θα λάβει μέρος στην έρευνα.

Επίσης επισυνάπτω το ερωτηματολόγιο για όποιον ενδιαφέρεται να το συμπληρώσει. Αν υπάρξει ενδιαφέρον, θα ακολουθήσει προσωπική συνέντευξη.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmWdMVTBWSI15NPvzpR4E3aEQ\\_1WuMuJZEOCXDs-385NjMxg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&usp=mail\\_form\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmWdMVTBWSI15NPvzpR4E3aEQ_1WuMuJZEOCXDs-385NjMxg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&usp=mail_form_link)

Ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων,

Χριστίνα Προκοπίου.

**Appendix D: Analytical demographics of the questionnaire participants:**

Participant s	Gender	Age	Teaching experience	Workplace	Level of education	Teaching environment
P1	Female	46 years and above	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P2	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P3	Male	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P4	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P5	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Special classes for students with dyslexia; Classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P6	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P7	Female	36 to 45 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	PhD	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P8	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia

P9	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P10	Female	26 to 35 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P11	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P12	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia
P13	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P14	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P15	Female	26 to 35 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium; Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P16	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P17	Male	46 years and above	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia

P18	Female	46 years and above	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P19	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia
P20	Male	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P21	Male	46 years and above	6-10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P22	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P23	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P24	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P25	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P26	Female	46 years and above	1-5 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P27	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia

P28	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P29	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P30	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P31	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium; Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia
P32	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P33	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium; Public lyceum	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P34	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia

Table 1: Questionnaire demographics of the public sector's participants.

Participant s	Gender	Age	Teaching experience	Workplace	Level of education	Teaching environment
P1	Female	26 to 35 years	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P2	Female	26 to 35 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions

						for students with dyslexia
P3	Male	25 years or below	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P4	Female	25 years or below	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P5	Female	25 years or below	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P6	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P7	Female	26 to 35 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P8	Female	26 to 35 years	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P9	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P10	Male	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P11	Female	26 to 35 years	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P12	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia;



						One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P13	Female	25 years or below	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P14	Female	36 to 45 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P15	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of P16teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P16	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia
P17	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P18	Female	26 to 35 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Special classes for students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P19	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia

P20	Female	26 to 35 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P21	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P22	Female	26 to 35 years	6-10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P23	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	PhD	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P24	Female	25 years or below	1-5 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P25	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P26	Female	36 to 45 years	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia

P27	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia; Classes with students who are exempted from assessment because they have dyslexia; One-to-one sessions for students with dyslexia
P28	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia; Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P29	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum; Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P30	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium; Private sector (ages 11-14); Private sector (ages 15-18)	Master's degree	Classes where there are some students with dyslexia
P31	Female	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public gymnasium; Public lyceum; Private sector (ages 11-14)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia
P32	Male	46 years and above	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Public lyceum; Private sector (ages 15-18)	Bachelor's degree	Classes where there are no students with dyslexia

Table 2: Questionnaire demographics of the private sector's participants.

**Appendix E: Analytical demographics of the interview participants:**

Participants	Teaching experience in the public sector	Level of education	Date of last degree	Place of degree
P1	3 years	MA	1995-1996	University of Buckingham
P2	1 year	MA	1999-2000	University of Exeter
P3	3 years	MA	2010	Middlesex University
P4	5 years	BA	1994	Wartburg University (USA)
P5	3 years	MA	2018	Open University of Cyprus
P6	2 years	MA	2014	University of Cyprus
P7	3 years	PhD student (MA)	Currently (2015-2016)	University of Cyprus (University of Nicosia)
P8	12 years	MA	1996	UCL Institute of Education London
P9	20 years	MA (BA)	- (1985)	University of Limassol (Kapodistriako University Athens)

Table 3: Interview demographics of the public sector's participants.

Participants	Teaching experience in the private sector	Level of education	Date of last degree	Place of degree
P1	1 year	MA	Currently	University of Cyprus
P2	25+ years	BA	1998	University of Cyprus
P3	10 years	BA	2014	University of Cyprus
P4	5 years	MA	2017	University of Leeds
P5	11 years	MA	2014	University of Cyprus
P6	25+ years	MA	1983	Sheffield Hallam University
P7	7 years	MA	-	University of Nicosia
P8	Around 20 years	PhD student (MA)	Currently (2010)	University of Cyprus (-)
P9	5 years	MA	2017	University of Leeds

Table 4: Interview demographics of the private sector's participants.

## Appendix F: Quantitative Results

### PUBLIC SECTOR

#### 1) Teachers' knowledge on dyslexia and dyslexia friendly practices.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
1. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education.	2	2	18	4	8
2. I am familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning.	0	0	10	10	14
3. I can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem.	0	0	12	12	10
4. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom.	0	0	1	11	22
5. I believe teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem.	0	0	1	5	28
6. I am familiar with the signs of dyslexia.	0	2	8	15	9
7. I can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia.	1	3	6	14	10
8. I can modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia.	1	4	7	14	8
9. I am familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning.	3	1	7	13	10
10. I can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate my dyslexic language learners' progress.	3	4	6	12	9
11. I believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia.	1	3	9	12	9
12. I am familiar with the nature of dyslexia.	0	2	6	17	9
13. I believe developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important.	0	0	1	15	18

14. I can help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies.	2	2	10	13	7
15. I believe foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners.	0	1	2	11	20
16. I can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia.	2	3	6	16	7
17. I believe it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners.	0	0	0	8	26
18. I know what to do if I think that one of my students is dyslexic.	0	4	7	17	6
19. I am familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia.	1	3	11	12	7
20. I believe collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia.	0	1	2	8	23
21. I am familiar with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams.	0	2	11	8	13
22. I can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	3	2	9	13	7
23. I am familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia.	0	5	8	14	7
24. I can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	1	3	8	10	12

2) Factors that affect EFL teachers' training practices regarding dyslexic learners.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
25. I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.	2	6	10	11	5
26. After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.	3	4	9	13	5
27. It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.	2	3	16	7	6
28. After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	2	0	17	10	5
29. I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.	1	4	12	8	9
30. I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.	4	5	14	8	3
31. Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	4	3	14	9	4
32. Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	2	8	16	3	5
33. The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	3	1	19	8	3
34. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.	6	15	10	1	2



35. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.	2	7	18	5	2
36. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.	3	5	21	3	2
37. I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.	6	7	13	4	4
38. I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	10	9	12	1	2

3) Professional training needs on EFL and dyslexia.

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
39. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia in my courses at college/university/ teacher training institutions.	16	6	7	3	2
40. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia on my own from available resources	3	2	9	9	11
41. I feel the need to have more information on the language teaching methods effective with dyslexic learners	2	0	4	11	17
42. I am interested in teaching English to learners with dyslexia	1	5	9	8	11

An ideal format for the course on dyslexia and methods of teaching foreign languages to learners with dyslexia is ...	Printed self-study materials	Online learning course	Online resources that I can use for self-study	Face-to-face training workshop	Working with dyslexic kinds while being trained
	1	8	10	13	1

### PRIVATE SECTOR

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
1. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia benefit from attending regular classes in mainstream education.	2	3	19	1	7
2. I am familiar with the difficulties learners with dyslexia experience in foreign language learning.	0	2	5	17	8
3. I can give feedback to learners with dyslexia in such a way that it boosts their self-esteem.	0	1	14	13	4
4. I believe foreign language learners with dyslexia need adjustments in the mainstream language classroom.	0	0	1	5	26
5. I believe teacher behavior in a language classroom influences dyslexic learners' self-esteem.	0	0	3	11	18
6. I am familiar with the signs of dyslexia.	0	0	8	19	5
7. I can provide differentiated instruction to cater for the individual needs of learners with dyslexia.	0	5	11	14	2
8. I can modify the way teaching materials are presented to accommodate individual learning needs to learners with dyslexia.	0	7	9	15	1
9. I am familiar with the principles of multisensory teaching and learning.	1	3	8	14	6

10. I can personalize assessment techniques to evaluate my dyslexic language learners' progress.	2	5	10	13	2
11. I believe foreign language teachers should have high expectations for their learners with dyslexia.	2	7	12	7	4
12. I am familiar with the nature of dyslexia.	0	2	13	12	5
13. I believe developing self-determination in foreign language learners with dyslexia is important.	0	0	7	9	16
14. I can help foreign language learners with dyslexia to develop effective learning strategies.	1	4	10	15	2
15. I believe foreign language teachers should differentiate their approach to learners.	0	0	4	11	17
16. I can foster autonomy in foreign language learners with dyslexia.	0	2	20	8	2
17. I believe it is important for foreign language teachers to collaborate with parents and families of their dyslexic learners.	0	1	0	3	28
18. I know what to do if I think that one of my students is dyslexic.	3	5	12	8	4
19. I am familiar with other learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia.	0	6	11	9	6
20. I believe collaborative teamwork with a range of educational professionals is important for teachers of foreign language learners with dyslexia.	0	1	1	9	21
21. I am familiar with the accommodations that learners with dyslexia are entitled to in taking foreign language proficiency exams.	2	3	6	13	8
22. I can manage the classroom environment to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	0	7	9	13	3
23. I am familiar with the local educational legislation/policy concerning learners with dyslexia.	5	2	15	7	3
24. I can differentiate tasks/assignments to cater for individual learning needs of learners with dyslexia.	1	4	9	13	5

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
25. I believe online teaching has changed some of the teaching practices I use concerning learners with dyslexia.	3	3	11	8	7
26. After the pandemic I use more digital materials that benefit dyslexic learners.	1	5	11	9	6
27. It is easier for me to adapt materials in an online setting for my dyslexic learners.	2	7	17	3	3
28. After the pandemic and the shift to online teaching, I find more digital materials that can be more easily adapted for dyslexic students.	0	6	14	7	5
29. I feel that dyslexic students were struggling more in an online learning environment.	2	5	11	5	9
30. I think that online teaching has good impact on dyslexic learners.	9	4	12	5	2
31. Dyslexic learners feel more comfortable in an online teaching environment.	6	4	13	7	2
32. Dyslexic learners perform worse in an online environment.	6	4	13	4	5
33. The anxiety levels of dyslexic learners were lower in online teaching rather than face-to-face teaching.	2	6	14	7	3
34. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was bad.	3	7	16	6	0
35. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms was difficult.	2	8	13	8	1
36. The experience I had with dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom settings made me anxious.	3	6	14	8	1
37. I felt like I was prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classroom.	4	10	15	2	1
38. I think that the school system I work in supports dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms.	5	8	8	7	4

Statement	Definitely not true of me	Mostly not true of me	Not true nor false of me	Mostly true of me	Definitely true of me
39. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia in my courses at college/university/ teacher training institutions.	10	6	8	3	5
40. I learnt about how to teach English to learners with dyslexia on my own from available resources	0	2	6	13	11
41. I feel the need to have more information on the language teaching methods effective with dyslexic learners	0	1	1	10	20
42. I am interested in teaching English to learners with dyslexia	2	2	11	7	10

Christina Procopio

## **Appendix G: Transcripts of the interviews**

### PUBLIC SECTOR 1

Date: 16/6/23, Duration 15:32, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: I'm an English teacher and I've been working at St. John's gymnasium for the past three years.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I've got a master's degree, postgraduate.

I: And when did you graduate and from which university or institute?

T: I graduated from the University of Buckingham with my first degree, I think it was back in 1994 and then I did my masters around 1995-96.

I: What were your past experiences if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Well, yes, I've had plenty of dyslexic learners over the years, for many years now but I'm not a qualified dyslexic assistant or educator. So, to begin with, the idea about learning difficulties changed over the years however I'm not qualified to give guidance or to really help these students. It's through experience that I have learned a few tricks or ways to help them.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I find them challenging learners because often they become disillusioned with learning and education so at times, they may even become naughty or destructed within the classroom. However, most of them are intelligent and good with languages as well.

I: To what extent do you think that they can learn and they can participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: It depends on their level of difficulty I suppose. I don't know how it goes. There are students that become lost and there are others that found ways to deal with problems and spelling errors and this and that, so there are different types of dyslexic students within the classroom.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Prepared yes, confident that I will really help them and guide them not so much.

I: And do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice?

T: Yes of course

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson when you have a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes we're allowed to.

I: How do you do it?

T: First of all, you give them smaller bits that they can focus on, exercises that do not need elaboration or big essay. So maybe you give them a paragraph instead of an essay, a smaller text to read their exams maybe a little bit, you may remove a few exercises that may be challenging for dyslexic students.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: Nowadays is a common phenomenon so, at least in my experience, I have not witnessed a lot of bullying because the student is dyslexic or has learning difficulties. I have not witnessed so much bullying because of that, I think they are more or less accepted within the classroom. Maybe they will be labeled as bad students but it finishes there.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners affect their performance?

T: Yes, because they, I mean even educators' attitude towards dyslexic students may affect their behavior because they're labeled as not good students, or they are naughty students or distracted students. Yes of course any kind of label effects in the long run.

I: And have you taught online as well?

T: Yes, yes.

I: Do you think dyslexic students feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face environment and why?

T: I'm not sure I can answer that. I don't know really because if they don't have the confidence they then will just switch off within the online classroom. I mean they won't participate or some of them may participate because they can speak and not write. So, it really depends on the level of confidence of the student. I've had both types of reactions: students that benefited from an online learning experience and others that benefit from one to one or a classroom experience so I cannot really answer that.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Yes, we do have lots of materials and students find this very interesting because they love technology. But I cannot really dismiss the benefits of coming to school.

I: And do you think you improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: With my students personally as a teacher?

I: Personally, as a teacher.

T: Oh yes, I have improved, I have definitely improved. I was useless and I am now a little bit better.

I: Could you use some examples in which ways you have improved?

T: I'm not afraid of technology anymore, I have learned how to download stuff and how to include them in my work, how to how to do a lot of things that I was unaware before the pandemic.

I: And again, do you believe that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners?

T: With this kind of variety of material maybe yes.

I: Are they more included? Are they more motivated?

T: Yes because technology is something that comes easy to them. They enjoy being in front of a computer, as with the majority of students I think, and they may benefit. But again, I like the school environment; I think it's good for kids, dyslexic or not.

I: After the pandemic and all the digital literacy you've gained, do you find it easier to adapt materials for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes because I have found the resources online to use during my teaching at school.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university or any professional training courses were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, “παιδαγωγικό” was quite helpful to differentiate within the classroom. However, my university degrees and experiences, even when I went to a teaching college to learn teaching techniques, during my time, they did not help me at all. Because as you know I finished university in 1995 so it was very vague at the time.

I: Do you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Trained through experience, but I have not trained per se. I did not receive any formal education that has to do with dyslexia.

I: And does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: A few.

I: For example?

T: There may be a seminar, but not really.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: No.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education, with more online seminars?

T: Yes, and really, I was working just as hard, even harder during the pandemic because it was very challenging to me. I spent a lot of hours preparing for lessons during the pandemic and sending information to students and receiving and marking so yes.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching overall and regarding dyslexic students?



T: I'm not sure, I don't know.

I: have you attended any online seminars?

T: Yes, but I wouldn't say that I attended any that were solely focused on dyslexia.

I: But it was easier for you to follow seminars because they were online?

T: Yes, still it is quite easy, and we still follow seminars online seminars and that's it very easy solution.

I: Now could you compare yourself at the beginning of your career and now in terms of your personality, confidence, classroom management?

T: Yes, I'm better in some ways are worse in others. I have lost my initial enthusiasm maybe, but I have become a better classroom manager. I am more skilled at helping students emotionally and guiding them through their days at school, and I have become a lot better in getting students before I even speak to them, understanding what they're about and feeling them as a whole and not purely on their skills as students. I have become that way much better, but maybe a little worse when it comes to teaching enthusiasm.

I: And what about dyslexic learners in the classroom, such as the lesson planning adaptation of materials, how have you changed?

T: I have become better at understanding their abilities and lowering maybe the level, the volume of things that I want them to learn. I want them now to focus on a few important things than learn maybe how to spell 25 words as was the case 20 years ago. Now I do not expect them to learn how to spell 20 difficult words.

I: I know you said you've been in the public sector for three years, it's not a long time, but do you think there is a difference at the beginning of your career in the public sector and now in terms of dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Yes, but I mean I was teaching that in a private school for a long time before that.

I: The curriculum they've given you, the instructions they give you about?

T: Oh no, nothing focuses on dyslexic students really. They have “αλφαριθμητισμός” and they get extra help for their main subjects but not for English. And they have teacher assistants within the classroom, so I guess students do get a lot of help when it comes to the main subjects that have exams but not for English.

I: Are you allowed to choose a teaching practice or adapt the materials for dyslexic learners in the public sector or you need to follow their instructions?

T: No for English I guess we can change and adapt materials. We're free to change if it's for the benefit of the students. I mean there will be still in the syllabus, but we can adapt material it's no problem.

I: And lastly, I think you answered that already, do you find the Ministry of Education 's curriculum about dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: No, not really.

I: So, you would say that the curriculum is helpful for the for the main subjects, the four main subjects they have but not for the other courses such as languages?

T: Yes, languages for both languages I think, especially English because we have a full classroom. During French, students may go out and have their little extra practice with “αλφαβητισμός”, but in English we have a full classroom of every ability and absolutely no help.

I: OK thank you very much, that was it.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 2

Date 23/6/23, Duration 15:53, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x, I have been an English teacher for like 23 years, teaching English as a second language. I have worked in different sectors, different levels and I'm currently working as an English teacher in state mainstream education, upper high school and I'm preparing students for their Pancyprian exams and their IGCSEs.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have in the public sector?

T: The public sector. This is my first year, so I started in September.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: Master's degree.

I: And when did you graduate and from which university?

T: Well, my master's degree was between 1999 and 2000 and I graduated from the University of Exeter in the UK.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: In mainstream classrooms I have a lot of experience. It's a very common thing to have a dyslexic kid in the class of 20 or 25 so I can say that I have a lot of experience in dealing with.

I: How do you feel about dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I feel that in a typical mainstream classroom the environment is not helpful enough for them, it's not supportive enough and they definitely don't benefit from the big number of students in the class. They get distracted very easily, they need some more personal attention and as a teacher I sometimes feel frustrated because I don't have the luxury, the time I need to help them personally at the at the one-to-one basis.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: I think they can learn to a great extent. I believe in improving learning progress for all students including dyslexic kids. Now what for the second part of the question?

I: If they can participate.

T: They can participate a lot especially in the oral, in an oral activity sometimes they are my best. They are the students with the most interesting and original ideas, very clever I don't think that especially in in oral in oral discussion I mean class discussions there is nothing that you can say that dyslexic learners cannot.

I: do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Yeah, but this is because of the experience and my personal effort to learn some practical ways of helping them. I don't think there is enough training to teachers of mainstream education but after all these years of teaching, and after my personal interest in learning difficulties I think that I am at the level where I don't offer special education, but I can still help them to get through.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a mainstream class with dyslexic learners?

T: Absolutely. Absolutely. I usually simplify or differentiate my handouts for these students. It takes time but it's something that you definitely have to do, so I adapt my handouts and I adapt my notes, my exams, my tests, everything.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson?

T: I am very independent, and I can prove why I have to change something. So even if the management objects, I can clearly explain why I should do it. But normally the management is encouraging you to be honest.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I don't think... oh that's a good question. I don't know. Sometimes they lack confidence so this might cause a few problems with their colleagues, their peers, but sometimes they do admire these people for some other talents they have. They might be very good at drawing or music or whatever and they're very clever kids, so in an actual class discussion nobody realizes if they're dyslexic or not and they're usually admired for their thoughts and ideas. But the problem starts when their learning difficulty has an effect on their psychology and their confidence. I think that this is when the problem starts, because when they lack confidence, they don't socialize easily, they don't express themselves adequately so yeah.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: I have no idea; I don't know but I depends on the quality of the.... I don't know how they feel because... your question is how they feel right?

I: Do you think they feel more included?

T: Well, I think that everybody benefits from face-to-face physical classroom education, including dyslexic students.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: I use a lot of technology, a lot of online games, a lot of materials even in a physical classroom so I bring technology in a physical classroom as well.

I: So, is it feasible for students to have let's say Wi-Fi, in order to play the online games?

T: It's definitely feasible. I have just asked the school management to provide me with tablets so as from next year because that was my first year and I was, you know, just new. But, as for next year, everybody's going to have their own tablet and the school is providing us with a Wi-Fi so we're going to include more technology changes which is definitely beneficial for dyslexic as everybody else.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Me or the kids?

I: You.

T: I don't know, I'm not sure. Look, I have just finished the course, which was compulsory for newcomers in the state school, so I intentionally took a course on how to use technology in education and I can say that I've learned a lot of things like different applications that I can use how I can make the lesson more attractive using technology. Well, this is stuff that I have always been interested in so I'm trying to improve myself in this sector.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university or any professional training courses were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Let me think. No, not really. My studies are in English language and literature and teaching English as a foreign language. I remember myself when I graduated the university of Cyprus, my first degree I decided to volunteer working in a summer school with dyslexic kids, so I remember at that time I was completely inexperienced, and I had to teach dyslexic kids English and at the same time I was attending a seminar on dyslexia. Since then, I have attended a lot of seminars, workshops and presentations and I have tried to apply some of the theory into my class. So, it's a combination of your personal effort to get informed about what dyslexia is and how to deal with it. I don't think general university like tertiary education is helping you with the kids no with dyslexic kids.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: No. This doesn't mean that they don't offer opportunities for professional development, it just happened in my case that I have never attended a seminar in dyslexia organized by the Ministry of Education. I have attended other seminars, by other organizations but not by the Ministry of Education.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education or hybrid teaching?

T: Look, I tend to perceive a new experience as something beneficial. I wouldn't like to go back to be honest, but I think that whatever you experience might be of some benefit in the future, so yes.

I: And do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge?

T: Can you repeat?

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and then gain more knowledge on your teaching and dyslexic learners?

T: What events?

I: Online seminars.

T: I have online seminars, I don't think that having it online or in a physical room makes a difference for me a seminar is a seminar, it doesn't mean what the means of communication is.

I: So, you don't find it easier to attend online seminars I mean that happen let's say outside Cyprus?

T: Yeah, if this is the question, yes.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of personality, confidence, classroom management in terms of dyslexic learners.

T: Yeah. I have more experience of course, I know the practical needs, the ways of helping them but I have also learned to appreciate their learning difficulty because it is accompanied with a lot of talents. I tend to admire their gift in certain things, their way of thinking, and not just dyslexic, I'm talking about autistic, I'm talking about ADHD. Well, these symptoms come with some special abilities that I tend to love and appreciate. So, I feel myself more prepared now to deal with them.

I: And lastly, do you find the Ministry of Education's curriculum for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: Look, they have these supportive lessons, they they're called “στήριξη”, so they spend a few periods a week in a separate room having lessons on a one-to-one basis. I think this is a good thing, I wouldn't object to that. My question is whether the people who are teaching them are qualified enough to offer them exactly the help they need because they are not special educators, they're not special education teachers. They're just, you know, English teachers let's say and I'm not sure if everybody's qualified enough or capable enough of helping these kids. So, I think we need more specialized staff.

I: What about the curriculum they follow inside the classroom?

T: Well, you definitely have to differentiate it. No, the curriculum is not for dyslexic kids. It's a lot of material, the passages are too long for them, so you have to simplify, differentiate, highlight and do all the things we have to do to make it clearer to dyslexic. Sometimes the books are not for them, so you still have to change the books; add more visuals, have more acoustic material. So yeah, I don't feel that they have been designed with dyslexic kids in mind.

I: OK thank you.

### PUBLIC SECTOR 3

Date 26/6/23, Duration 11:43, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x, I'm teaching English for almost 15 years now. I teach in a secondary school now in Nicosia area and this is my third year in a state school.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I've got a master's degree.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated in 2010 from Middlesex University.

I: What were your experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I didn't have anything; I mean particular experiences in mainstream classrooms mainly because we don't have any information about these children in advance.

I: But have you encountered dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: I think I did. I think I did mainly when I correct their writings.

I: And how do you feel about having dyslexic students in mainstream classrooms?

T: I feel that they need to be supported more. They need to be helped although I'm not sure how do they encounter themselves if they are aware of their issues.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and can participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: I think that they can fully participate in mainstream classrooms, and I don't think they have any problems learning in a normal classroom.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No, I don't. I don't think that I have the educational background to do that.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a mainstream classroom with a dyslexic learner in it?

T: Yes, definitely. They might need more support, they might need more simplified material, yes.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson when there's..?

T: Of course, we are. We are allowed, I think the problem is that if we know how to do it and it takes some time to identify those children in a class but yes, we are allowed and to be honest we are encouraged to identify material for those children.

I: How do you adapt the lesson?

T: Basically, you can simplify the material you can give them for example if there's an exercise with no options you can give them some possible answers.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I think sometimes it depends on the classroom you have. Sometimes they might be kind of rude to their fellow students because they do not realize the problems they might have or sometimes some children show great understanding. They support them, they can sit next to each other and help them, maybe copy from the board or help them read and complete exercises.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners are affected by the classmates' attitudes?

T: Yes, like if their classmates are making fun of them, I think they will try to hide their difficulties and by trying to hide their difficulties it means that they won't make any questions, they won't understand and they won't talk, they will just remain silent which is not beneficial for them.

I: And have you taught online?

T: Only a few times during COVID.

I: Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they have in an online or in the face-to-face environment?

T: I think that's a difficult question... Possibly in a face-to-face environment they might feel more included than online. I think they might feel more lost.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example Kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Personally no, because I can do more things in a classroom, and I do have access to those materials anyway in a class so teaching online doesn't offer me anything more than being in normal class.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Definitely that's 100% true for me.

I: In which way?

T: I have learned to use lots of different platforms, not only zoom and teams, but sharing material online like sending material, marking material online, even creating games like Kahoot or using a toga player, padlet using them online.

I: Again, do you think that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners in any way?

T: Personally, I don't think it has benefited them because that if it's online it means that they can hide themselves, they can remain silent, you cannot in a way push them or encourage them to participate so I don't think it has helped them.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to a more digital education?

T: I don't think it has to do with the pandemic as such. It might be easier because we are more experienced as teachers and I don't think that the pandemic has in a way influenced dyslexic children as such.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: No, not really. I don't have any specialization in dyslexia.

I: Would you say you are trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: It does offer some seminars maybe on teaching students with difficulties but not specifically for dyslexia or any specific difficulties they have. There are some things in general.

I: are they mandatory?

T: The seminars? Yes, they are.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, that's what we do. It comes with experience, it comes with more practice, it comes with the more schools you go to the more students you meet so it gets easier to identify that kind of child and so yes.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching?

T: Personally, I think it's not the pandemic, personally for me it has helped me a lot attending the pedagogical institute that we do as teachers in state schools, the pre-service program that need to do at the University of Cyprus. That has helped me more in gaining more experience, gaining more knowledge concerning adapting materials, using technology in class etc.

I: Can you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality, confidence, classroom management, time management when it comes to dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: Yes, I think now it is easier to identify these children and it's easier to help them in a way like with the experience you get more patient it gets easier for your eyes to identify children who have these difficulties and I think you get more understanding towards these children.

I: And I know it's been only three years that you've been in the public sector?

T: Yes.



I: OK, it's not a long time but have you seen any changes at the beginning of your career in the public sector and now in terms of dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I cannot answer that because I never had the same students for two years.

I: I mean the curriculum they give you, the instructions they give you.

T: In terms of that I think that's it's just getting better; it has been improved. The books that we use are quite modern, they are inclusive, they do have different subjects for different interests, different students with different interests. I think the material can be adapted; we do have quite a good material in our hands.

I: And lastly, do you find the Ministry of Education's curriculum for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: I don't think they are helpful and efficient because the books that we use are mainstream publishers' books which are addressed to the public, they address to the majority of children who have no difficulties. But you have the chance to either adapt or to give them extra material, there's a lot of extra material that you can use and you can give to students with difficulties, especially material online from our books.

I: And this is provided by the syllabus of the ministry, or you have to find them your own?

T: No everything is provided electronically.

I: That was it, thank you.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR 4

Date 26/6/23, Duration 20:17, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: Hello my name is x, my last name is x. I'm an English teacher, I teach here at the X gymnasium, this is my second year here. I've been under the ministry of education for 5 years now. Before I was an employee until I was called for the preservice program and then I had a position here under the ministry of education.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: Right now, I'm teaching... you mean me personally? University degree.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: 1994.

I: From which university?

T: Wartburg College in the US.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Well, I didn't have any severe cases of dyslexic students so far in the classroom, very few of them. It's mainly people with... what do you call it on my God... "ΔΕΙΠΥ" in English?

I: ADHD?

T: Yes, and maybe some students with ADHD. Dyslexia, very few students actually but I think it's more, there is a greater need to tackle the needs of the dyslexic students that's more intense and more necessary to be able to understand the students with dyslexia and how to deal with them compared to a student with ADHD.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Well, it's always a challenge, I mean it's not as if we are 100% aware of how we need to deal with these students. It's basically experimenting, trial and error I would say.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: They can definitely learn and participate. If you have the right time and the right number of students in the class, I think you're able to help them so that they can participate and they have the same resources in order to get educated. However, there is not enough time, and I don't think there's enough guidance when it comes to teachers. And you need to be able to explain to the rest of the classroom as well how you're helping people with dyslexia. It shouldn't be just a concern for the students who have dyslexia, it should be a concern of the whole community, in this case the classroom. So the same way we are dealing with a person who has a hearing disability and we explain to the rest of the classroom why these students need to be sited where and why we need to be positioned in a certain way, the same way we need to educate the rest of the students about dyslexic people and people with other learning difficulties as well.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Not the extent I would like no. I don't feel confident, and I don't have the experience to be honest.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a mainstream classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Definitely yes. We need to make adjustments.

I: Are you allowed to adopt the lesson?

T: Yes.

I: How do you do it?

T: Using different teaching methods. For example, I might differentiate handouts, or I might use a different approach.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I don't think they are familiar with dyslexia is and they don't care, they are indifferent.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: Definitely yes. It's a matter of how people... it's how dyslexic students. I don't know how to better express this...

I: Their classmates, do they perceive dyslexic learners in a different way?

T: I don't think they perceive them in a different way but if they hear the word dyslexia, then there is a somewhat of a label without really knowing what this is or how it affects the dyslexic person. And once the label is used for a person, then of course that person, the labelled one, will not feel very comfortable.

I: Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they're presented?

T: Yes, I think there is a lot of... a lot of progress has been made compared to 10 years back or 15 years back but there's still a lot of work to be done.

i: Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: I think they might be more benefited in in an online environment.

I: Why?

T: Because it's totally visual there and I think the visual part helps them a lot.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face-to-face?

T: No, I integrate both in my class, in my teaching. For example, last year... The thing is that not all students are... for example last year I used a lot of the quizzes that I had prepared during the covid on teams, and I used them as assignments, OK? So, the reason was twofold: one was to give them a different way of evaluation, homework evaluation- not test related, and the other way was to keep in touch with technology. But only from, let's say I have 150 students, only like 30% of all the students responded to these quizzes, the rest did not show any interest. So, I had like 30 students who signed in and they did their quizzes, the rest were indifferent. So, when comes to dyslexic students I have no numbers to give you and I cannot remember whether I had any dyslexic students last year that participated to be honest. This year I used more kahoot games than online quizzes and they were more enthusiastic about it. We did it in the classroom and everyone was involved.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Of course, yes.

I: In wich ways?

T: Well, first of all, I had to find ways of presenting my material in a better way, I had to adjust my material so that it would be easy for the students to understand my examples let's say. I had to prepare online lessons, so I had to use the... What I used to write on the board and my oral presentation had to be converted in an online presentation. I had to have PowerPoints, or my handouts had to be differently designed, bigger letters, more space, less words, more vivid

examples. For me it was different, there had to be adjustments yes. I couldn't use all the activities of the book in an online lesson, some of them had to be let down, audio was a bit more difficult because the sound was not easily shared with the same quality for all students you know. My sound was shared OK but on the other end of the line that people who would be the receivers of the listening activity, I could not guarantee the quality of that, so we were affected by that. The listening activities were not very successful.

I: You have said that you think that online teaching benefited dyslexic learners?

T: Yes.

I: In what way?

T: I think I think it's more beneficial in the sense that it's more visual and yeah... it's the visual part I think that helps them a lot.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: Can you repeat the question?

I: Do you find it easier now that we have shifted to more digital education to adapt the materials for dyslexic learners?

T: It does not have to do with adapting material for a specific group of people, it has to do with adapting material. I think this has helped us to be more flexible using material and at the same time more.... we have to think twice before we decide which activity to do in class or how to teach something because the logical environment has taught us different things and I think it has made us more... we have more knowledge now when it comes to different methods of teaching. And we have experience as well because this has given us experience. So, yeah, we are more knowledgeable now and I think we're more willing and more prepared for just changes and she flexible and be able to coming to class and improvise when there is need.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Oh my God no.

I: Would you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No, not to the point that I would like to.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: There must be things on an online on the online platform of the ministry, but I haven't had time to look into it to be honest.

I: So you don't have any seminars that are mandatory or anything?

T: mandatory? No, I wouldn't say that. Mandatory seminars no but usually they are included.... there might be education offered on the day of “εκπαιδευτικός” depending on the agenda of each

school because that's a pre-agenda to decide so some schools to include a seminar for dyslexic students.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Just for dyslexic no. There is a greater need nowadays to be able to manage students with disruptive behavior more than dyslexic students or students with any other learning difficulties, low memory for example. There is a greater need nowadays to manage students or to help students whose behavior is not the expected one.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development terms of...

T: Yes, yes. I have stretched myself.

I: And again, do you think the pandemic online seminars and courses give you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge?

T: Yes, definitely.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of how prepared you are on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: I'm more prepared now because I have read things myself not because I have been taught on how to teach or how to handle...

I: I mean through your experience for example your confidence your decision making...

T: Yes.

I: Please compare the system of the ministry at the beginning of the career and now. Have they changed in terms of dyslexic learners?

T: I don't know, I don't have I don't have evidence to say yes or no. I'm not well informed on that. It's not evident whether they have done so or.

I: In terms of the curriculum or the instructions they give you... have they changed at the beginning of your career now?

T: No because I started teaching like six years ago, I think the same way things were six years ago they're more or less the same.

I: And lastly, do you find the ministry of education curriculum for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: No, it's a bit anachronistic.

I: Why would you say that?

T: Because it's anachronistic for the students of 2023, the curriculum hasn't changed. They are trying to change some ways, but those ways are not helpful either. For example, extra time; it doesn't make a difference whether they have extra time, that's not the issue. The issue should be

changing the way these children are taught and the way they get information the way they are asked to deliver things, so evaluation process as well. So, we do change, and we do make some changes but they're not 100% tailored for the dyslexic people, they're tailored for the people with learning difficulties not just dyslexic people.

I: OK that was it, thank you.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 5

Date 26/6/23, Duration 34:52, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x.

I: Where do you work?

T: I work in x area, in the public and private sector.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have in each sector?

T: 29 working as an institute owner and it's my third year in the public schools.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I've got a master's degree in education of course.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated from Kapodistriako Athens university in 1995 and I got my postgraduate here in Cyprus from the Open University of Cyprus, I don't remember when, I think 5 years ago.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: There's a huge difference between the public sector and the private sector. When I worked and still now that I am working in the institute, we usually allocate these students to private one to one tutoring when we realize that there are learning difficulties, we prefer that they have a private lesson so that they don't feel embarrassed, and they can't reach their full potential. It's something which is impossible in the public school where we have 24 students in a class, eight of whom have some learning difficulties which we are unable to cope with because usually they are not allocated extra hours, they are not allocated the so-called support system that other lessons have. The only support lessons that I have done in the public sector are for students with hearing difficulties, this is the only case that an English teacher is allocated support group or tutoring or tutorials, we call it "στήριξη" in the Greek school.

I: What are the learning difficulties other students have?

T: We have autism, because our school in Kokkinochoria is a unit for autistic students. So, we have got about 6 in the school so you can imagine that we've got four in the second year of schooling, and we have two in the third year. I don't do first year classes, I only do second and

third years so that's what I know, and they are in the class alongside the other students we've got students with ADHD, we've got dyslexic students and they are all supposed to be in a mixed ability group. But when you have a group with this many difficulties it's impossible to give them special care or to pay attention to their needs or follow differentiated teaching values and principles in a class with 24 students. Especially during the times that we have now because now we don't teach in groups as desks have been separated and each student sits at an individual desk and they have to work on their own so you cannot do group teaching, you cannot do play roles, you can't do project work, you can't do anything in the public school at the moment due to COVID restrictions. Things are getting more difficult than easier although we are supposed to know more things about these things, these difficulties, we are not allowed to do much.

I: And now let's talk about the public sector; how do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I would like to have them in the mixed ability classrooms that's OK, but they need an hour or two on their own as well because some of them are very good while speaking because they are good at absorbing language from videos that they watch online or from the games that they keep playing; they tend to absorb and taking lots of vocabulary and they are good at these things but they are not good at writing. That's where the problem appears in its full potential and power and you can see it right in front of you, but you cannot devote time to them in a group of 24. So, we need to have differentiated material to work on with them and we know that, but we don't have the time, we're not allowed we don't have this in the public sector.

I: So, to what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can actually learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: They reach below their average potential in the public sector. They can never reach their full potential in the class because we cannot give them the time that they need or the special material that they need or the differentiation that they need or the supporting system that they need. We cannot do any of those. When you have 45 minutes in the class, and you need to do a revision of what you thought in the previous lesson and based on this material move on to the next and then have them discover things... usually they're very good when we watch the video and then ask them questions about the video that we watched- that's when they participate the most. But when we have a writing lesson and we when we have a listening lesson a listening lesson and they have to listen to things and fill in the gaps because they usually have problems with their spelling as well, they don't even take the time to do it or they refuse to do it because they feel that they will fail. So, you see that they are negative, and you get negative reactions in the classroom, they don't want to do it it's as simple as it gets. The only time that they will participate is after watching the video.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: No. I am not a special needs teacher, and my postgraduate was not concentrating on special needs and learning difficulties so I don't feel that I have the background knowledge to help them as much as I should. And that's why I usually suggest, in every school that I have been to, that there should be a special teacher in each school that could guide us, help us, support us and give us knowledge that we don't have access to because it's not very easy to do 1,2,3 masters degrees when you have to work and you have a family to raise. So obviously I did my psychology

and educational psychology, but I have not done what I should have done actually in order to find the way, to form the principles to assess these kids and form the material suitable to their needs. I'm really confident that I would like to if somebody came from the ministry and told me to educate me on this stuff I would love to, but for the time being no I'm not I'm not as confident as I should be.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Of course, I should but I'm not allowed to. Not I'm not allowed, there are times when I have taken game like puzzles and giving them different exercises to do when the rest of the class work on different material on the same thing- let's say character adjectives; instead of writing them down I have created puzzles with the words and the words are given so that they don't feel frustrated by their spelling mistakes, the words are written somewhere so they can see them, they can spot them. But some of them were feeling very angry because I gave them different things to do as if I separated from the rest of the class. So, I have also seen that this doesn't help because if I had done one-to-one period, then I could give them whatever differentiated material I would choose to do so and this would help because there would be no comparison. But now think it exercise and they can see that “mine has got pictures theirs don't, I get a crossword they don't, why do I get something different? Am I a dummy? What's the difference?” and some of them get angry. Now what am doing is I spend the first month getting to know them really well and usually I ask when I walk around the school to watch out the student and if I say one of them I ask them nicely whether they would find it helpful to have different exercises while the rest of the class does something different and see whether they feel embarrassed to be handed in something different and that's how it usually goes. I can't do many things unfortunately.

I: This leads us to the next topic about the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners.

T: There is another thing with the support system; when a student gets out of the class to go to “στήριξη” classes for modern Greek and math or whatever, the rest of the class, especially the first year I think, start laughing at them, mocking them and whatever and by the time they get used to this system they are hurt because they think “why should I get separated from the class and this means that we are those who cannot learn” and there is a label which is heavy to carry, it's not easy. I can see that there are students... last year I had students who were once a week out of the three lessons one they had to go and attend Greek because the schedule could not work out in another way and they refused to go because they wanted to do English, they didn't want to do Greek because they wanted to stay with their class, they needed to feel that they belonged and not be left out. So, there should be extracurricular hours outside school, maybe when school finishes. These students could have lunch or something or a snack or whatever and then do the “στήριξη” the supporting classes that the Ministry of Education suggests and works out so that they are kept in their class, and they don't feel that they are separated from the rest of the class, and they don't feel inferior to the others. The way it works now I think it's useless, it doesn't help anyone and usually these students are the ones who are sitting now exams in the summertime because they failed, although they were in the “στήριξη” lessons. So, I don't think we help them, we are not



helping them in any way. We are hurting them and harming them psychologically speaking, but we are not actually helping, I think.

I: Do you think this inferiority they feel affects their performance?

T: Excuse me can you repeat that because a motorbike passed by?

I: Do you think this inferiority they feel affects their performance?

T: Of course, who wouldn't? When they refuse to speak in class in their next class, in the next period because they are angry and this anger builds up, they have steam in them and it explodes and they will start kicking a door or a desk, a chair or even a classmate and then we say that they are violent or aggressive and they have other issues, behavioral issues, but they don't- we are the one who are breeding it. It's not dyslexia that creates the problem, it's our attitude towards it.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms learning and the opportunities they have in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: During the COVID period I saw that... because in the institute we used to have online lessons with a huge screen in front of us, open screens, I could see the faces of all the students but each student was at their own desk, in their own bedroom, feeling comfortable and not having somebody talk to them or kicking them or calling them names or throwing small pieces of papers at them or all this stuff that you can see in the class happening. I saw that they could cover more material than I do in the natural class, the live class let's say and I could finish more work in less time because I didn't have to stop every 5 minutes and say "Billy behave yourself! Thalia, you can do better than this. Please Tom wake up" and these things, you don't have to interrupt the lesson and this helps students especially with the students with concentration issues were much better online. Dyslexic students didn't get any better because they could not send me so much writing and their spelling could not be improved with different games or other things but they liked the fact that it was peaceful, quiet, there were no comments because I had turned off the comments and I had them send me private messages so I could read everyone's messages but they were not allowed to send to each other, harass each other or to whatever. Of course, we don't know what happens when we turn off zoom or when we turn off teams and whether they... because they have Viber groups, and all of the students are in and they write comments to each other and we don't know how hurtful these things are or what comments do you read behind our back. We don't know because cyber bullying is everywhere now, and we don't know what they really face. It was easier for me because I didn't have to interrupt the lesson because of noise or whatever.

I: When it comes to your online teaching do you believe you have more options on materials just quizzes or online games....?

T: I have exactly the same because I always use the projector and the Internet and Ted talks and TedEd during my lessons. So, the same stuff that I use online I can use in my class as well. The only problem is the noise that 24 students make and the fact that in 24 students when there are eight with different difficulties, you can imagine that the noises are more often, the interruptions are more often, and the 45 minutes lesson can be cut down to 30. Whereas when you teach online you can actually enjoy reaching the target of the lesson and telling yourself "Yes I did it, I covered all of the material that I had planned to", this is the difference. The interaction is not the same.

What the online lesson lacks is the minutes that one student doesn't get something and you can see that their classmate explains... in the way that the stronger student explains to the poorer student something in simple Cypriot that will not be done online when everybody is in their own room and this interaction is very helpful when the class is united and it's a good classroom and we have some of those. Usually, the ones that have three to four students with learning disabilities, the rest of the class is helpful towards them because they feel that they have the time to help them but when in the class there are more than eight students with problem some average students feel that we have to deal with them all the time why should we? And you never know the energy that will be built in the classroom in the public school. In the private sector you have up to 10 students so you might have one dyslexic in one class or one with concentration or hyperactivity problems in another, but you will never have four students at the same time with similar problems or different types of problems. There are many difficulties in schools.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes, of course. I am 52 years old, and I was not computer literate until I turned 35 when I bought my first laptop. You are almost 24 and you were born with technology like my sons - my eldest is 29 and he owned his first mobile phone when he was in gymnasium, I owned my first mobile phone when I was 33. So, obviously, we can never become native in technology as your generation is native. It's like an English speaker who comes from England and somebody who learns English in India, it's not the same, it can never be the same. And because of this, I had to work harder because I like keeping up to date and finding things that will draw the attention of my students in class that's why I started watching TED talks and using kahoot and playing games with them and creating games for them because I like it, because I like keeping up to date but this is me, this doesn't happen in every classroom with every teacher who's my age and cannot even turn on the computer or turn off the computer and ask students to do it for them. I did the postgraduate when I was 45 years old, and I had to use technology as well and present things and do all of these things and I sat exams ECDL in order to become licensed because all these skills have to be learned. They are new to us, to our generation, so there are even difficulties for the teachers.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the more digital literacy you gained?

T: It was the same for me. Once I learned how to use technology, I adapted it in the classroom and in the online classroom. It isn't something that has huge differences for me because what I create and what I prepare I always have it in electronic form so I can upload it when I use zoom or teams or I can present it when I use the projector in class, it's exactly the same I don't see a big difference. The only difference is how quiet the online classroom is but then again, the online classroom in the public school, when the students had to have their cameras turned off so you never knew whether they were sleeping or whether they were playing other games and they had you muted or whether they were actually attending the lesson or not so there were many different kinds of problems. It was not the same as in the institute where everybody had to be at a particular time in front of their screen and I could see their faces, I could share the book, I could share the videos and everything that I needed, and I could see their faces at the same time because I had a huge screen in front of me. This didn't apply in the public school where we were told that they had to have the cameras turned off and we had to call somebody's name five times for them to answer

and you never knew whether they were watching, sleeping, eating, being somewhere else or attending the lesson. So, I don't think it's easier for the public school, it's even worse. But for the institute it was easier yes.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: I remember that when I was in the 4th year my final project was getting acquainted with dyslexia. Back then, 30 years ago, it was something that we had started talking about. It was the first year that students in Greece started university entrance exams orally with no written record and they had interviews to enter university and they were the first generation that would enter university and then all of the exams university were done orally and it was the first time for Greece because I grew up in Athens, I'm Athenian and that was the first year and it was a huge thing back then. So everybody in the university started talking about this, started talking about learning difficulties openly. It was the first time that mothers tried to get and the proper certificates for the children to be recognized as a dyslexic whereas before that they thought that they thought that were stigmatized. If somebody told them that "your child might be dyslexic" they got angry. So, there was a huge shift towards a new era of acceptance but as the first year that something gets recognized, I cannot say that we learned as much as we should have.

I: Do you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No, I believe that the only ones who are actually trained are special needs' teachers.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: What they do is give us on the day of the educationalist that they hold twice a year. They usually give us seminars, but they are so theoretical that they only teach us- not teach us because we all already know these things, even when you get appointed to high school you have to sit exams on these things -how to recognize special difficulties in case somebody comes to high school and they have not yet been recognized or whatever. They give us things that we must pay attention to, how to recognize the so-called symptoms let's say of dyslexia. But they don't give us guidelines as what do to deal with it, it's so theoretical, it's more of a wide exists, the different approaches, what you see in each child, the different kinds of signs, how many symptoms a child must have before we consider them as dyslexic. So, it's not hands-on experience.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: They do that every year but it's only one day, it's once...

I: What about personally? Do you follow any seminars or online courses?

T: I have done... actually no because this year because my master's degree is on equality in learning and intercultural education and how we get to accept students from other countries and students who are refugees or whatever and different kinds of acceptance in the classroom and that's what I was trained to do and our school was allocated to belong to the PAVIS team which means observatory against violence in schools and bullying and cyber bullying and these things. So, all my education this year was around this because I was in the team regarding violence so I could

not attend everything. But I would love to during the years to come to do something that is more orientated to these problems and these difficulties. I would love to.

I: And lastly; do you find the Ministry of Education's curriculum, strategies, and instructions they give you for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: No, there are many things that could have been done so far and there's lots of money spent on useless stuff. Even the material that we use and the books that are chosen by the ministry for us do not take into account the opinions of the actual educators and we are not allowed let's say as in even Greece let's say and it's the team of teachers that decides which book is the best to teach for each level whereas here it has to do with who knows who and who's going to get more money from the publisher in order to adopt a book. And usually, the books that are adopted are the worst that you can find. At the moment we are doing the worst book ever and we always have to find material outside the book the curriculum and we could be doing other stuff, more creative. We could do lots of other things, but we are obliged to follow the guidelines of the ministry and this is a disaster actually.

I: Do they give you materials for dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: No. We are not supposed to do anything and only the lessons that are judged, if you know about Greece you know that we sit all of the lessons at the end of the year- all of the subjects, which means that you have to do a PE exam, you have to do religious education exam and so on. So, all of all of the subjects are given equal validity and equal value and all of the students know that English is as important as modern Greek and it's as important as French and as math and so on. Whereas here in Cyprus, everybody knows that there are subjects that are thought superior and that's why they are examined in the summer time and in the midterms and the others which are thought as inferior and we are supposed to pass every student in the class whether they deserve it or not because it's enough that these students are so weak that they will have to sit the exams in the four subjects that they will fail so we have to pass them it goes without a question. It's it comes from the administration, from the ministry that you know what if you teach French, English, art, whatever your subject is not as important, so everybody has to pass and that's it and end of story. So, everybody gets a ten in the first semester and if you want to punish them because they misbehaved or because they were disobedient or whatever you're going to give them a 9 but you are sure that they will pass the class. It has nothing to do with giving value to your subject. So, we cannot do much because support is given only for the four subjects that are important in Cyprus.

I: OK that was it, thank you very much.

T: You're more than welcome.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 6

Date 27/6/23, Duration 16:13, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: Hello I'm x I come from x. I have studied at the university of Cyprus and then at the University of Reading. I'm an English graduate and I've been a teacher for the last eight years.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have in the public sector?

T: 2.

I: And you said you had a master's degree as well?

T: Yes, that's right.

I: When did you graduate?

T: In 2013 and then my master's in 2014.

I: What were your past experiences if any with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I have had quite a few dyslexic students during my first years of teaching at the private sector. After that I had also some dyslexic students again at the private sector but in a private school not in a private institute and again in the public sector, I also have some students. But to be honest I didn't have any specialized training on students with learning difficulties.

I: Let's focus on the public sector. How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Let's say I wish I had the chance to pay more attention to them, focus more on the problems they face and help them like differentiate but because of the fact that there are 25 students in each class I don't really have the chance to help each one of them. So, I would wish to have more time with them and to actually address their difficulty but that's not really the case in public schools. You just have 25 students, and you always try to cover the syllabus and yeah it's not really satisfying.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and they can participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: I think it depends on the extra help they have in the afternoon to be honest. So, if they have extra help like a private tutor in the afternoon or if they attend lessons in small groups in the afternoon, they are more willing to actually participate in the morning lesson. If they don't, they really struggle, and I think this is also a result of their low self-esteem because they understand that they struggle, and this discourages them.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Not at all.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes definitely. And I think that was more the case when I was working in the private sector because I had much less students. But now adapting material, I sometimes do it but it's not enough, it's not enough I need much more time with them.

I: In the public sector, are you allowed to adapt materials when there is a dyslexic learner in the classroom?

T: You are allowed to give them differentiated material so in in that in that sense yes but adapting the whole nation according to their needs not as far as I know.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: In gymnasium, like lower secondary school students I think sometimes they notice the difference and they are not so patient, I would say sometimes they don't have the patience to wait for the others, for the dyslexic student to give the answer or to think of the answer and then respond. But in the upper secondary school, lyceum, I think it's OK they don't really bother they don't really focus on that.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners affect the performance?

T: Can you repeat?

I: The attitudes of their classmates could affect the performance...

T: Of course, because if they feel that they are being bullied or that someone is going to make fun of them of course this will make them unwilling to respond or this might discourage them from responding.

I: Do you think that dyslexic students feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Probably in an online I would say because you don't really have this face-to-face interaction which sometimes can make a person be more introverted or more shy so I would say the online setting helps. I've noticed in the class that when we had online lessons some dyslexic students were more willing to participate, they had their camera off so I wouldn't see them, but I would listen to them much more, they would participate much more than in the classroom.

I: Do you believe you have more options and materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face?

T: Probably yes, maybe because we connected those tools with the online teaching. I mean that was the way we were introduced to them. Before online before the COVID pandemic and online teaching we didn't really... we weren't encouraged to use them but nowadays after the covid pandemic we're actually encouraged to use these tools.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Definitely yes, because we have to. I use more online tools nowadays, so before the covid pandemic I wouldn't use let's say kahoot but nowadays I use it really often. I got acquainted with platforms like zoom and teams and some other platforms which again was a result of the pandemic and the fact that we had to find friendly ways to communicate with our students so yeah, I think that we were obliged in a sense, but it was a good thing in the end.

I: So, you have already said that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners, right?

T: Yeah definitely.

I: In which ways?

T: Let's say that they felt less exposed, and this helped them be willing to participate more, at least this is how I think they perceived it. They didn't feel the exposure because they had their cameras off, they wouldn't see the others staring or looking at them and maybe that helped. Also, they didn't have to write a lot of things so in many cases we have oral discussions so that helped cause most of the times they have difficulties writing and they need more time probably more help. But as regards their oral participation they can excel.

I: Do you find it easier will you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: If I find it easier?

I: Yes.

T: So, and so cause to be honest I would really like to have like a specialized training on that. Whatever I did up to now was just the result of me trying to find resources or adapting in a way that I feel that I help. I don't really have proper training on that.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Not really, they were more on typical language learners rather than.

I: Would you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: No, I wouldn't say so I don't know if there was like 1 seminar or something but even if there was one that's not enough.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: I'm trying. So, in the and the first years when I realized that some students were dyslexic I tried to go online and study what their difficulties would be, how I could help them, I watched videos on YouTube and then I had a friend who was doing her masters on dyslexia I asked her to give me some advice and I also talked with the parents. That helped me as well because to be honest I find the parents much more important than educators.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education due to the shift to online or hybrid teaching? In which way?

T: Yes, and the reason for that is that we had to use different tools. We were forced to do that so in little time we had to become familiarized with new technologies.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your overall teaching and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: Probably yes.

I: in which ways?

T: Can you repeat the question?

I: During the pandemic and after the pandemic I think it goes on, there is a shift to online seminars rather than face to face seminars and courses you can attend. So do you think you have more opportunities...

T: Yes, cause nowadays there are much more seminars online so I can attend them at the comfort of my house, sometimes in the past it was difficult for me to travel to another city to attend the seminar. Nowadays I just click a button and I can just attend it.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in the public sector in terms of your confidence, lesson planning, time management, material adaptation when it comes to dyslexic learners in your classroom?

T: If I can compare it is that the question?

I: Yourself now and then.

T: how would I compare it? is that the question?

I: How have you changed?

T: OK. It's only been two years to be honest so it was last year and this year in the public sector so I wouldn't say I've changed a lot. What I try to do is differentiate a bit more, that's something I try to improve, and I will be trying the following years.

I: And the last question; do you find the Ministry of education curriculum, the syllabus, or the instructions they give you for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: To be honest it's been two years I didn't receive any instructions. Apart from grading, assessing students with dyslexia I didn't have any specific instruction like on how teach them, on how to adapt my material, on how to help so yeah, I wouldn't say they are helpful in that sense.

I: OK thank you.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 7

Date 27/6/23, Duration 12:12, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.



T: Hi, my name is X, I'm an English language teacher and I currently teach students from the age of 12 to 15 years old.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have in the public sector?

T: In the public sector it's been three years.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: PhD.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated my second master's degree in 2016- 2015 I think from the university of Nicosia and now I am a PhD student at the university of Nicosia.

I: What about the undergraduate degree?

T: I graduated the Aristotle university of Thessaloniki in 2004.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I haven't had any experience with teaching students with dyslexia in public schools in the public-school sector because we are not notified. I mean we are notified but we don't do anything else in particular. But I've got experience outside the public sector.

I: So, in the public sector, from what I understood, you may have dyslexic students in the classroom, but you don't do anything about it?

T: No, we scalloped them in any way we can but when it comes to English classes we don't have like specific guidelines as to what we are expected to do in order to accommodate these students' need it's up to the teacher and the teacher's experience and teacher's professional knowledge to deal with dyslexic students.

I: So how do you feel when you have a classroom with a dyslexic learner in the public sector?

T: I feel alright OK with it. It doesn't stress me out because I did attend a course many many years ago, it was part of my professional development because of course specialization and teaching learner with specific educational needs and I'm also experienced in knowing different ways of how you can accommodate these learners' needs. So, personally myself, I don't mind because I can do things differentiate the class.

I: To what extent do you believe that dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: When you say to what extent?

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can actually learn and they can participate in a mainstream classroom?

T: They can learn, and they can participate.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I am, due to my professional development courses and because I did the training so I know how to deal with it.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a mainstream classroom with a dyslexic learner in it?

T: Absolutely yes. The expectations are different as well.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson?

T: I am allowed to adapt the lesson, yes. I am allowed, I have we have no guidelines from the school as to what we're expected to do.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: From what I reckon, they consider them low achievers. They consider them less capable students, but they don't know that they are dyslexic students, they don't know. Apparently, dyslexia is still considered a disability, so even parents do not admit that the kids have got a kind of form of dyslexia.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: It depends, yes it depends. If you have for example a dyslexic student who is on a project with other students, and they have to write things up and this dyslexic student may be making a lot of spelling errors and the other students might be mocking him for making so many spelling errors yes. But this student will feel intimidated, so he won't participate.

I: Have you taught online in the public sector?

T: Yes.

I: Do you believe we have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: When it comes to public schools yes because for example, although these facilities are there are such, I mean the mobile phones they are they are such we are not supposed to be using them in the mainstream classroom. For example, we cannot use kahoot because students don't have access to the Internet, and they are not allowed to use mobile phones. So, when we did the online lessons, yes, we did have the option to do that, but again there were limitations.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Absolutely yes.

I: In which way?

T: I I'm more competent now, I can use many more educational applications, I can adapt them to the lesson. I'm more competent in using educational application and more creative I would say.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners?

T: I don't know. I really don't know.

I: Do you find it easier to adapt materials for dyslexic learners something different anymore digital education?

T: I don't think it's the pandemic because I haven't got any kind of experience before the pandemic because I started teaching in the public sector when the pandemic happened. But, because of the pandemic, we had to become more digital more. So yes, now I'm more capable of using technology.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners? And I'd like you to tell me about your undergraduate degree and then your postgraduate.

T: No, from what I remember my undergraduate degree we didn't have any kind of knowledge about it. My postgraduate degree, yes, we did have some guidance through special education needs but not dyslexia.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: No.

I: I think you've answered that before, but do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: I might say yes but it's only through after reading an article for example I might read an article relevant article online about inclusiveness and the flexibilities but it's not my main aim when it comes to my professional development.

I: Do you think after the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: Could you please repeat I didn't quite get the second part of the question.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events, to view seminars?

T: Because the course I attended it was way before the pandemic, I was familiar with online courses and books before the pandemic occurred.

I: But do you have access now on these events let's say?

T: Yes of course of course there are more opportunities now.

I: Could you compare yourself now at the beginning of your career in the public sector when it comes to teaching dyslexic learners and lesson planning, decision making under pressure and I

T: There's nothing to compare because, I don't know how to express that, there's nothing, like what I did three years ago I do the same thing. I'm aware of them and I'm trying to help the students out. There's no improvement when it comes to the public sector to the guidance I had from the public sector and there's not again.... I have to repeat, and you need to say that there's no guidelines as to how we need to accommodate the dyslexic student in the English language classroom in the public

sector. Mind you the minor is not the major course and most students do attend language institutes. So, what they do in school does not really affect anybody. I mean they consider English in school as a minor subject.

I: And this brings us to the last question that you actually answered. Do you find the Ministry of Education's curriculum, instructions they give you, the strategy they follow for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: To my knowledge I haven't come across any strategies as to the inclusiveness of dyslexic learners. I haven't seen anything like this or policy documents or guidelines when it comes to English classes and reflects inflamed, I'm not familiar with it unfortunately.

I: OK that was it, thank you very much.

T: Thank you very much, good luck.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 8

Date 25/7/23, Duration 16:01, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x. I'm an English teacher I've been working in the public sector for 12 years now.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: Secondary school students between 15 to 17.

I: Do you have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree?

T: A master's degree.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: My first degree was from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 1993 and I got my masters in 1996 UCL Institute of Education in London.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I had dyslexic students I mean over the years... almost every year we've had couple of students that faced dyslexia.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I'm OK, I think I've got quite an experience because while I was in the private sector, I also had dyslexic students and I had some training about how to I deal with situations like this. OK, not every student is the same but if there's cooperation with parents, if the problem is quite serious, things are not bad. I mean at 15, students are quite conscious about what this is and how to deal with it most of the times, so it's not that hard.

I: You said you had some training? That training was part of your professional development in the private sector.

T: Yes.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Most of the times yes, if they if they are cooperative because sometimes, they are not, sometimes they have given up. And that's when the problem begins; I mean if a student is not willing to cooperate, if the student has given up the student thinks I cannot do it then this problem.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a classroom with a dyslexic learner in it?

T: Sometimes yes. Sometimes you need not change completely but alter some things, spend some more time with the student, maybe spend a couple of minutes after class sometimes. Some things need to be different.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson?

T: Yes.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I don't think there's a difference in our institute. Maybe with younger kids but with older kids I don't think it's a problem because they're quite aware that there are differences in class, because they're not only dyslexic kids, it's also hyperactive kids...I mean there's all types of kids... I'm not sure if the term is correct but there are so many differences in the class, so students are quite comfortable with them.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: At this age no, when they're younger yes. But by the age of 15-16 they know how to deal with it I think most of them. I don't think there's a reaction, I haven't noticed anyone reacting to a kid who has dyslexia, teasing them or being particularly...

I: From what I understood you teach in a lyceum?

T: Yes.

I: Have you taught in a gymnasium?

T: When I was in the private sector only.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they have in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Face to face. I think online is more difficult for students with learning difficulties in general.

I: Why?

T: I think in terms of approach. I mean students were not comfortable with online teaching in the first place so it's more difficult to approach the teacher. I think the teacher has to be really alert

and you need to have it in the back of your head all the time because it's easier for students to hide in an online environment. It's easier to I mean you know; teenagers prefer to avoid working so it's easier to hide in an online environment especially because we could not see students as well when we were teaching online so I think it was more difficult.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you teach online?

T: You can do that in class as well.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes.

I: In which ways?

T: I mean I can adapt easier I mean me, it's easier for me. I've become quicker, I've learned about new apps, new things so yes.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited in any way dyslexic learners?

T: Personally, I'm not a fan of online teaching. I mean as something that could be used at all times for anyone and for everyone. I think classroom (face-to-face) is more inclusive, in a class you can do more things, you can use online material and you can see students face to face. And it was very difficult when we had to teach online, it was very difficult to keep students' attention because as I said earlier we could not see them, we were sure that many of them did all sorts of other things, family was in the background sometimes we could hear parents, children crying, friends- although it was not allowed- sometimes they were with friends. So, I think that for teenagers an online environment is not appropriate, it's very easy to get distracted.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: Yes, as I said earlier, we have more tools, we learn about other things, we learn about new things so we have more tools in general so we can use them with dyslexic students, with everybody so yes we have learned things that can be useful.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: No.

I: Are you trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: I had some training when I was in the private sector, and we had some training during the pre-service training for the public schools so I had some training after university.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: There are some seminars by the pedagogical institute for teachers. I mean there are courses for dyslexic students sometimes but it's not compulsory for everyone. You have to be willing to do it, it's not something that every teacher has to attend.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: I try to keep up you, it's not always easy though.

I: How do you do it?

T: By looking at material online or by trying to attend seminars or lectures on the topic, not just for dyslexic students but for all students with educational difficulties.

I: And again, do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: In what sense? Not really.

I: After the pandemic there was a shift to more online seminars rather than face to face.

T: OK yes, most of the seminars we've done after the pandemic have been online seminars. I think I've only done one face to face seminar after the pandemic.

I: So, do you find it easier attending seminars now that they're online?

T: It's easier it's easier because you can do it from home however it's not the same. I mean...I don't know... maybe because I don't enjoy it as much but yes, it's easier.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in the public sector when it comes to your personality, your confidence, lesson planning, classroom management in general when it comes to classes with dyslexic learners?

T: I feel more confident because the public sector is more difficult than the private sector, more challenges. At the beginning you had to figure out how to manage your class; I mean you didn't have much time for many things. Now you have because I became more confident and I feel that I can do more, it's much easier.

I: Could you compare the system of public school at the beginning of your career and now when it comes to dyslexic learners?

T: OK I haven't been to public sector for... as I said it's been only 12 years; however I mean you can see that things are changing especially in terms of the teachers' attitudes and what I mean is that at the beginning there were fewer teachers willing to accept and adapt than now. Now I can see that the colleagues are more willing to learn as well, and they ask our training opportunities. Now, as far as the system is concerned, I don't know whether the ministry has changed a lot but there are things that need to be done, it's not like nobody's doing anything. Of course, there's so many things to be done.

I: This brings us to the last question, if you find the ministry of education's curriculum, the instructions they give you, the strategies they follow helpful and efficient for dyslexic learners?

T: I think that they are willing to do that some people. I don't know, as far as English is concerned, especially for the Lyceum in the last couple of years, it's not always easy. I mean the syllabus is quite... we have quite a lot of things to do and there's not always time and this is a problem. Time is a problem because- not only for dyslexic kids- for all kids with educational difficulties, for slower students that need more attention, so time is a problem. I think this is where we have most difficulties because there isn't always time, and some students need more time including some dyslexic kids.

I: So, would you say the curriculum of the ministry is helpful?

T: I mean... what do you mean?

I: Do they give you actually specific instructions on how to...?

T: No just for testing. And there's one more thing I'd like to note here about foreign languages. Students are not supported in the Lyceum in the second and third grade in English. Even if they have a chosen English as one of their main courses, they don't get extra support, and this is a problem. They only get helped, they only have extra classes for Math and Greek and not for foreign languages and I think this is a problem for students with educational needs.

I: OK that was it. Thank you very much.

T: Thank you.

## PUBLIC SECTOR 9

Date 26/7/23, Duration 18:28, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x. I'm an English teacher, I work in the public sector and during the last 20 years I work in the lyceum so, I teach students from 16 to 18. It's challenging of course, because I have to deal with Pancyprian exams, lately with IGCSE exams, and I get involved in European programs a lot.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I have a first degree and a master.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated in 1985 from Kapodistriako university in Athens and my master s about education and management from university of Limassol.

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?



T: Not much I can say. Every year I can find one or two students, every two years every three years. Not much experience I can say.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: We try to help them, and we are informed before from the councilor and we get some education about this in order to help them. We don't count the mistakes they make- the spelling mistakes when we have a test and when we have a group work, we try to get them involved in general class.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in the classroom?

T: To a great extent I think from year to year. I mean every year we have more students with this let's say if it's a "problem".

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: After so many years of teaching I can say no. I have to get some more education but as I don't have many students in my class, I mean not every year, they don't give us much education. What we learn we do it by ourselves.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a classroom with a dyslexic learner in it?

T: Yes, we adapt the material in order to be able to get them involved in the lesson.

I: How do you adapt?

T: We give them different exercises, when we have a group work - mostly the lessons have changed nowadays so we have a lot of autonomous learning- so we try if there are more than one student with dyslexia in class, we don't put them all together, we share them in different groups I mean one in each group to get some help from the other students. We adapt it, we make it simpler in order to be able to get them involved.

I: Now what are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: Everybody tries to do his/her best with all these students. But the reality is that we need more education... I mean we have to be educated from the beginning and not every one of us has to try to do on his own what he does.

I: Do you think there are any negative attitudes towards dyslexic learners from their peers?

T: No, I don't think so. The teachers try to do their best. No, they don't express themselves by saying that "oh I don't want such students in my class". Everybody tries to do his/ her best.

I: Do you think if there's any negative interaction from their classmates you think this might affect dyslexic learners in their performance?

T: Yes, I believe it. I believe that they will react maybe because it's the psychological sector as well.

I: Have you taught online?

T: During the corona period. It was difficult because we didn't know very well how to use the "teams" and we had to do things right away because we had to start teaching. Little by little by learning the teams there were so many channels and things to do in the teams in order to help anyone but as we had to do it very quickly, after one week I think we had to start, we didn't have the time to give them much during the online lessons.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: I think face to face.

I: Why?

T: As I told you before, it's the psychological part. I mean if they feel at the same time, they can see their friends, their classmates. I believe especially at this age face to face is better.

I: And I think you've already answered that before, but do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online rather than face to face teaching?

T: Yes, we do them of course.

I: In an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Face-to-face, I mean we have language rooms as you know, there are computers there and they can get in or using their mobiles. We get permission from the headmaster or headmistress because as we know the mobiles are not allowed in class, but if we get permission from the head, we can use it only for the lesson and so we can use our mobiles to do it if we are not in the language room.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: I can't say I can improve a lot because I always try to do my best. OK it has helped I can say, but as I like challenging and using new things and technology, I always do it.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: I think we would do it maybe later, but we would do it. OK it helped I can say but after all we would do it anyway.

I: Now, do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Of course.

I: In which ways?

T: They teach you the methods, but the problems are in action. I mean when you teach you start teaching then are the real problems because at the university more or less everything is mostly theoretical and how many years before I finished you understand, the things were different.

I: And would you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, of course. I will do it.

I: How have you become trained would you say?

T: How have I?

I: How have you become trained? How did you...

T: As I told you I have tried by myself by reading things by watching videos and whatever, but I didn't get any education.

I: Does the Ministry of Education offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Not exactly. Actually, there must be special persons to teach such students but because it's difficult, everybody does it at schools.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development due to the shift to online seminars and courses?

T: Yes, it helped. So now I have started attending more seminars online. I mean I go to seminars happening in other countries that I didn't have the chance to visit that country and attend the seminar, now by searching I found a lot of seminars and attend them.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality, your lesson planning, decision making, adapting materials...

T: Every year I think a teacher is being improved every year of experience. Because every year is different for a teacher; different students... Maybe it's the only job that has this experience. I mean different students every year so you get other experiences, some years we change schools so we meet new people maybe they know more about technology they can help you; you can help...

I: And you said you've been in the public sector for 20 years?

T: Yes.

I: Has it changed? Could you compare the system of the ministry about dyslexic learners? Has it changed?

T: Yes, it has improved.

I: In which ways?

T: The way of teaching. I used to do it in the past because when you get in you are given a timetable you don't know the students of course and I used to have at the beginning of my career, and I can say there are differences from then. The technology first of all, you can imagine we used to have tests by hand.

I: What about the strategies they follow for dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: They have changed. Now there is collaboration for example, the student can take and give, he can learn by himself, the teacher is like a guide.

I: OK and the last question: Do you find the Ministry of Education curriculum for dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient? So, let's say the instructions they give you, the strategies they follow.

T: It depends on which... I think there are different levels because I don't know many things about... but I think I believe that there are different levels of dyslexic students?

I: Yes.

T: I mean so if there are students with many problems they would give them a different strategy, I mean not to be in class only- to get into special classes in order to help them more.

I: Does that happen with English? The lesson of English?

T: I don't know if it is for- yes, it is for some dyslexic people what we call “στήριξη” in Greek.

I: Do they get “στήριξη” for English as well or only for...?

T: Yeah.

I: OK so that was it, thank you very much.

### PRIVATE SECTOR 1

Date: 16/6/23, Duration 18:14 minutes, Female.

I: Hello, please introduce yourself.

T: Hello, I am 22 years old and I'm working at the private sector, at the private institute in Cyprus.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: I have one year of teaching experience.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I finished my graduate degree and I'm finishing my postgraduate studies.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated in 2022 from the university of Cyprus.

I: And what about your postgraduate?

T: I'm currently a postgraduate student in the university of Cyprus.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: My only experience is that I had a friend when I was a student who was dyslexic, and we exchanged some opinions about learning.

I: Have you taught any dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I'm currently teaching one student who is in a class of seven students, and we have one dyslexic student.

I: How do you feel about having this learner in a mainstream classroom?

T: In the beginning I was actually a bit intimidated because I didn't really know how to approach him and how to adjust my teaching in order for the learning to be more accessible to him but now as the time goes on I find the very easy to be honest.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and can participate in a mainstream classroom?

T: In my opinion they can definitely learn but I think the teacher must be aware that dyslexic learners progress in their own pace and that the teacher is the one who has to be responsible to adjusting and adapting to the learner's needs. But of course, I think they can be a part of a mainstream classroom.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: I think I certainly have to take part maybe to more lectures about the topic or read about it a bit more, but I think I'm in a much better place than in the place I was when I started teaching this specific learner because I tried to inform myself and read about it.

I: And you already said that you think that you need to adapt some materials for the dyslexic learners. Do you also think that you need to follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a mainstream class with a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes, I think I have to approach a more inclusive, may I say, practice because I have to not just-let's say for example, dictation. You cannot just write the dictation down and expect from the dyslexic learner to just learn it as it is because they have some difficulty recognizing or working with some letters. You have to be more dimensional or use your hands or maybe be more informative when it comes to saying the words out loud. For example, I found that my student feels more comfortable when I say the words out loud multiple times when I repeat dictation.

I: And in this environment that you work in, are you allowed to adapt the lesson when there is a dyslexic learner in the class?

T: I am allowed to adapt it but to just a certain extent because the administrator of the private institute wants for the teachers to have a Lesson plan and what they did after the lesson. So I have to report all the changes and adaptations I have conducted.

I: How do you adapt for a dyslexic student?

T: For example, as I said, I try to read the words out loud, maybe sometimes spell the letters. For example, there are instances that the learner is a bit slower, and he needs more time to write the words, maybe I give him some time. Or with the test, maybe I give him more time to finish the test or I'm a bit more flexible with responding to some of his questions. Maybe he will ask me the difference between 2 letters and maybe for other students I wouldn't really spell a word out loud but for him I would.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I would say that in this particular classroom we are very lucky to be a good team. None of the other students has a different attitude towards these students. They are all friends, they're very cooperative and they don't mind that, for example, I to repeat myself for these specific students they are all very tolerant and acceptive.

I: So, you don't think classmates' attitudes affect the dyslexic learner's performance?

T: I think they do up to a certain extent. I think I am very lucky to be in a setting that all the students are acceptive but actually this specific learner has told me that in school sometimes he does face some criticism from his peers. They have called him slow in some instances or even a teacher sometimes has asked him "why you cannot read something". I'm not quite sure if the public sector is always ready to face dyslexic learners.

I: Have you taught online?

T: No, actually I haven't.

I: Let's imagine then. Do you think that dyslexic learners would feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they have in an online setting or in face-to-face setting?

T: I think maybe they would be more comfortable when typing actually rather than writing, because, for example, my dyslexic learner is very comfortable with computers. He actually has expressed to me that he feels more comfortable when he's typing because he's not that self-conscious about his handwriting or his choice of letters. He thinks that it's easier for him to recognize the letters in the keyboard.

I: So you think that online teaching can benefit dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I think so.

I: And do you think it's easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to a more digital education?

T: Yes, I think it's much easier because, I don't know about all the learners of course, but for my specific learner, he's very visual, he enjoys seeing the visuals or listening to words out loud. And I think with software and programs that have been developed after the pandemic it's much easier for him to grasp the meaning or the structure of some words or phrases.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I did attend some courses that were very informative about the topic actually.

I: Do you think you are trained to teach dyslexic learners and what about dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I think I have some experience, but I wouldn't say I am fully trained to educate them. I think there's still some work to be done, especially in mainstream classrooms.

I: Does the institute you work at offer you training opportunities on dyslexic learners?

T: Unfortunately, no.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I try to read about it a lot, finding articles online. The other day I was watching a lecture about the topic, I'm trying to find some small videos that are very educative about the topic. But I have to admit that I do all of this by myself.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education due to the shift or on to online or hybrid teaching?

T: Yes, I would definitely say so because I, myself became more comfortable in using online platforms such as zoom or Microsoft Teams and I think that has benefited my digital learning.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching overall and regarding dyslexic students?

T: Yes, I think the shift to a more digital learning and teaching has made it easier for the teachers to have access to valuable information from the comfort of their home and I think it's much easier for teachers to participate in online courses or lectures without having to physically go there.

I: Could you compare yourself now and a year ago when you started your career in terms of your personality, your confidence, decision making, lesson planning, adapting your materials, classroom, and time management when it comes to the class you have with the dyslexic learner?

T: I would say that now I'm much more comfortable in teaching. In the beginning I had to face some issues, for example, time management was a big issue for me especially in the classroom with the with the dyslexic learner because I had to repeat myself multiple times. I often felt that I didn't have much time to finish an exercise or to completely follow the Lesson plan or to efficiently be on point, but now I think after one year has passed, I feel that I'm much more comfortable in both managing my time and having the time and patience to adjust and adapt my teaching according to the needs of the dyslexic learners. I think I'm much more comfortable and now I have gained not only the confidence, but I also think the skills.

I: I know it's only been a year, but do you think that the system that your work institution followed at the beginning of your career, a year ago, and now has changed? and how has it? About dyslexic learners of course.

T: I think it has changed because when I found out that I have a dyslexic learner in my class I took the responsibility to talk to my administrator and express my concerns about him. For example, express my concern about the time he has in finishing the tests and thankfully my administrator was a good listener, she was very receptive and happy to hear my thoughts and concerns about the topic. I think the private institute has actually been trying to improve their attitude towards dyslexic learners.

I: Are you allowed to choose a teaching practice or adapt materials for dyslexic learners at your place of work or you have to follow instructions?

T: I have to follow some instructions. There are some pre-given instructions, but I have actually the permission to adjust them in order to be easier for the learner. For example, the administrator gave me the permission for him to reduce the words he has for dictation- let's say I assign 10 words to the other students, the administrator gave me the permission to maybe assign him only seven or six words.

I: Lastly, do you find the institute's curriculum for dyslexic learners and dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: I think it is helpful and efficient up to a certain level, but I think some changes still have to be made and there is a lot of work that has to be done in order for the mainstream classroom to be more inclusive. Because more or less, I think that classrooms still follow the quote-on-quote traditional setting of teaching- the teacher writes on the board and the students are expected to copy what there is on the board. I think maybe now with the shift towards electronic or online platforms, I think it would be much easier for dyslexic learners to keep up. But I think teachers have to incorporate online platforms more in the classroom because, as my learner expressed, he would be much more comfortable in typing or even express me that he feels much more comfortable in seeing PowerPoint presentations, for example that he would feel more included if he didn't have to copy from the board.

I: So, you think there are a lot of things that your institute needs to work on?

T: Yes.

I: Thank you very much.

T: Thank you.

## PRIVATE SECTOR 2

Date 29/6/23, Duration 18:23, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: Hi my name is x and I am an institute owner. I teach English as a second language for more than 25 years now.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: A bachelor's degree.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: University of Cyprus, it was way back in 199- you got me there, I can't remember right now. But I've been teaching for more than 25 years so there you go; I think you do the math (1998).

I: What were your past experiences if any with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?



T: You mean before I graduated?

I: No, during all these years.

T: OK. Well, to be honest I don't have that much experience in dyslexic children. I don't have a lot of dyslexic children in my classrooms. Truth is I am not qualified to teach dyslexic children therefore I've had maybe so far, I've had a dozen. In the 25 years that I've been teaching maybe I've had a dozen children.

I: When you say children what ages...?

T: they were probably... they were young 9 to 12.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I feel that there should be a combination of having them in mainstream classrooms and also having some maybe one-on-one lessons so that the lesson is customized in a way that would help them. Because I don't think that the lesson as it is, is suitable for a dyslexic child per se. I mean there should be some adjustments.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: They can, absolutely they can but you have to adjust the lesson. And I think that the problem lies here that we are not all qualified -me included- we are not all qualified to teach dyslexic children. I think we're doing them and injustice if we take things in our hands without having the education and the background to help them. But I think that they belong in a mainstream classroom as long as it's combined with either when lessons are adjusted to cater their learning disability or if they also have an extra lesson once a week let's say in order to fill in the gaps you know.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Absolutely not. I am not prepared. I try but I'm not qualified, and I like the fact that I acknowledge that because there are a lot of teachers out there who pretend to be qualified or who pretend that they can do miracles when they cannot. We can help dyslexic children. I mean throughout the years, I've been teaching for so many years now, I have had my fair share of dyslexic children in the classroom, but I think that I don't have the qualifications let's say to help them as much as I should. I'm being honest.

I: You said that there needs to be some adaptation of materials or follow a different teaching practice when we have a dyslexic learner in a mainstream classroom. How would you do it?

T: A lot of audio-visual input instead of focusing on spelling and on reading and focusing on other things that help dyslexic children. As far as I'm aware, that is, in my very limited knowledge and that audio visual aids do help children with dyslexia.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: I think that it's up to you. The way that you (the teacher) handle the classroom it's what determines what happens in the classroom. If you yourself accept and promote and boost people's confidence, then the students will follow. There are certain times where we've had the picking on

you know, commenting on spelling or “oh you didn't do well in your spelling” or whatever but I think that children with dyslexia don't lack anything. I mean they are smart kids sometimes smarter. Therefore, it's the way you handle your classroom that determines what happens with their peers.

I: Do you think the classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: Absolutely. If you allow bullying and if you allow for the dyslexic child to become a target or if you kind of tag a flag on them then yes but it's up to the teacher what happens in the classroom again, I don't know if I'm answering your question.

I: Yes. Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face classroom environment?

T: For me, I think that online education was not suited for them. They felt not included, they felt like they there was no motivation let's say. To be honest there was not a lot of motivation for all of the students and so you can imagine how it affected the dyslexic children. I don't know if other teachers agree with me or not but that's how I feel about it. It certainly made my job a lot more difficult.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as squeezes or online games for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: You can include these kinds of things, if you have a smart board and if you if you use technology in your classroom, you can include that either online or in your actual classroom. So, because I do incorporate technology in my classroom, I feel that it's equal. I think that in both cases if you include technology in your in your lesson then... could you repeat the question, maybe I didn't get it right.

I: If you have more options in an online classroom.

T: I think that the options are there, and you can use them either way yes that I guess there are more options.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills, for example technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Absolutely and I'm not a kid - I'm 47 years old. It was eye opening for me. I think that it was great, you know, it was a blessing in disguise because it did push us to use technology more and we have found so many resources and ways of... we have adjusted, adapted, discovered, experimented. I think it was a blessing in disguise.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic?

T: Yes.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: No, they were very limited. I think that if I could go back in time, I would definitely have taken a course after university to address dyslexia. I think that it's increasing, or maybe the diagnosis is

increasing. Maybe it was there all along, but kids did not get diagnosed. I think if I could go back in time, I would definitely do something about it, I mean I would take a course or something.

I: So, you said you have your own institute, so you are the boss?

T: Yes.

I: Do you offer your employees training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners or do find online seminars?

T: I do. Whenever there are courses regarding dyslexia, I pay for the workshops myself, I promote anything that could help my staff, my employees to better themselves and improve and so on and so forth. Again, I feel that our qualifications are restricted I think we do lack teachers with dyslexia background I mean with qualifications that could help kids with dyslexia... in Cyprus that's a huge issue.

I: So, you as well keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexia?

T: Not as much as I would like but my staff yes. Because I also have the administrative part; my role there is not only a teacher but also a director, a manager therefore I have a lot of administrative duties which do not allow me, I don't have the time to deal with as much. But I do promote and motivate my team to have dyslexia workshops or whatever it is that they can do and not only about dyslexia, whatever they can learn and improve themselves.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge in teaching in general and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I do. I mean zoom for starters, I think that this new introduction to this world, the online meetings and everything gave us numerous opportunities to attend seminars and workshops through these media.

I: Now could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career when it comes to dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms? How do you plan your lessons, how did you adapt materials now and then?

T: It's definitely easier to adapt material now because you have the Internet which is a huge tool. You keep making me think of my age you know. But back in the day, 25 years ago, things were really hard and it was really hard for me to identify someone as a dyslexic learner and it's still difficult for me now but it was a lot more difficult back then. But now we have a lot more information and a lot more material, we have technology to help us adjust and adapt, therefore it's a lot easier now.

I: What about your work institution? How was it 25 years ago when you started? What strategies let's say did you follow and what is happening now?

T: Could you repeat please I was distracted?

I: What about your work institution? What happened then when you started with dyslexic learners and what happens now?

T: OK. So, I can't tell you then, but I can tell you about now. The first thing that we do know when we think, because we can only assume that someone is dyslexic, we don't have the qualifications to do so we can only assume that someone is dyslexic then the strategy is that we talk to their parents and then we have meetings with the parents, then their parents definitely see a specialist and then with the help of the specialist we might adjust and adapt the lesson. But again, I'm telling you that we are not qualified so we might refer the child to a professor, to a teacher who has the qualifications and the means to help them. I'm not saying we're rejecting dyslexic child; it depends on what level of this dyslexia we're dealing with. If it's if the child cannot follow the rest of the children let's say because the students who come to my classes do not come just to be educated. They come to pass exams there is a target, so as cold as it may sound, I cannot sacrifice 10 students and their need to pass an exam I cannot sacrifice for a child who needs special education. I'm not using the term special lightly, different, adapted, adjusted education. If I worked for a public-school, things would be different, if I worked in a gymnasium if I worked in a lyceum, I would definitely have different methods and I would definitely have a different perspective on the matter. But apart from being an educational institute it's also my business it's also a place where students come to pass exams that is the target that is the aim and as cold as it may sound sometimes if a child slows everybody else down then we must either give them private lessons or refer them to teachers who have these certain specialties.

I: OK and lastly, I think you have answered that already, do you think the curriculum you use in your institute for dyslexic learners is helpful and efficient? And I'd like you to answer that for one-to-one lessons and for mainstream classroom lessons.

T: OK fair enough. One-to-one lessons are very efficient. I think it's very efficient especially when the lessons are combined. If we have a child in a mainstream classroom combined with a one-to-one lesson, then we have excellent results. But in the mainstream classroom there will be some drawbacks for the child, I mean there are certain times where yes you can adjust yes you can adapt but still if you don't have the qualifications needed you will not have the same results. But I think the best results come when we have both the combination of the two.

I: So dyslexic learners following mainstream classrooms but also having one to one...

T: That's what we do at least in our institute. Actually, I'm telling you again that we don't have a lot of cases truth is but when we do have certain cases we try to combine the two. We have extra hours on Wednesdays where we have one-on-one classes where we try to adjust and adapt, use different kinds of methods to help dyslexic children. But again, we are not specialists and that's what I'm trying to do. I don't know if I'm again sounding a bit harsh and cold, but I know where my limitations lie and I think if more people knew where their limitations are I think that this would be a better world. Not everybody needs to know everything. If you know something and you understand it then go ahead and help but sometimes if we don't, we might damage or destroy someone's self-confidence if we don't know how to approach them, especially with children.

I: OK that's it thank you very much.

### PRIVATE SECTOR 3

Date 5/7/23, Duration 10:15, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x I'm an English teacher.

I: Where do you teach?

T: I teach in x, a private institute in x.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: 10 years.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: From like four or five years old to adults.

I: Do you have a bachelor's degree or master's degree?

T: Yes, I have got a BA sorry.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: University of Cyprus.

I: When?

T: In 2014.

I: What were your past experiences if any with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I think that I had two students with dyslexia, one girl and one boy.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I don't have any problem, but I think that we need more training about it.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: They can but if you change the way you teach a lot.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Not to the extent that I would really love to. I think that I'm not so confident.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes, most of the time yes.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson?

T: Yes.

I: How do you do it?

T: Mostly with the homework, how much homework we assign. When it comes to reading, we assign only a part of the text not all of it or with dictation again less bad than the other students or the way we teach we try to highlight some chunks that we want the students to learn... mostly these.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: Most of the time it's OK but sometimes if you don't tell them or explain that they have like a problem then they start laughing at them at the beginning but when you explain to them, they are OK.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: Yes, definitely.

I: In what ways?

T: Sometimes even if students with dyslexia are willing to read out loud and they think that their classmates are going to hurt them or think that they're really slow at reading and then they think about it twice.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: I would say face-to-face environment.

I: Why?

T: Because you're near them you can see their expressions and you can pay more attention to them you can go next to them to show them if they're having trouble to find them where you are in the text or follow.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Not really because we can still play online games in the classroom too.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes.

I: In which ways?

T: I think the things that you mentioned earlier, the quizzes, more games, maybe more videos.

I: That you know include in your face-to-face teaching as well?

T: Yes.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners?

T: I don't think so.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: No, I think it's the same.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: No, not really, they have to improve the amount.

I: Are you trained to teach dyslexic learners and what about dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: At the university they only teach you some basic things you don't have the experience, the practical experience so when you start teaching you have to find ways on your own. So, not really.

I: But do you believe now that you have the experience and maybe through personal professional development do you think you are trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: No, I still have a lot to learn about it.

I: Does the institute you work at offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: They have some seminars but again it's about the symptoms, it's about some basic knowledge not practical ways of helping them.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practice for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I'm trying to.

I: How?

T: By watching some online seminars or attending the seminars that they told you about.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and dyslexic learners specifically?

T: Yes because of the online seminars.

I: How come, in which way?

T: Because before the pandemic they didn't have online seminars so, it's a little more convenient for us if they have online seminars because if you have to teach and then you have to leave earlier and you can still get the recording and watch it later, so I think it's easier and now.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality, confidence, lesson planning, adaptation of materials, classroom management when it comes to dyslexic students in your classroom?

T: I think I got better but I still have a lot to learn.

I: How many years are you in this institution?

T: In this institution I am eight years, but I've been teaching for two years before I came here but I didn't have any experience with dyslexic children before this.

I: Could you compare the system that you work that your work institution followed at the beginning of your career eight years ago and now when it comes to dyslexic learners?

T: I think it's still the same.

I: Lastly, do you find the institute's curriculum, strategies, instructions for dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms helpful and efficient?

T: No, I think they have to change the books a bit because they are too crowded, the pages are too crowded for them.

I: What about the practices that follow in the classroom?

T: The practices are OK. They try to teach us some strategies and so on, but the book doesn't help much.

I: OK that was it thank you.

#### PRIVATE SECTOR 4

Date 5/7/23, Duration 12:40, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: Hello my name is x and I am an English teacher.

I: Where do you teach?

T: I teach in x (private institute).

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: Now I have five years.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: A master's degree.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated in 2017 from the University of Leeds.

I: What were your past experiences if any were dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?



T: Can you repeat that please?

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners?

T: OK... I have this year a dyslexic girl that she was confusing some of the letters of the alphabet.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Not very confident but I think by finding some ways I try to feel confident to help them.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: They can learn I think as every student in the other classroom class can learn if we can help them learn.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: If that was one to five, I would be a 3-4. I am not very well prepared, but I think at some level I could do it.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a classroom with a dyslexic learner in it?

T: In some degree yes because if we don't do it, maybe that student has some difficulty following the lesson.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson when you have a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes of course.

I: In which ways?

T: Um... like maybe adapting the handouts that we give them or maybe teach in a different way the vocabulary or the grammar that we have.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: They are all very positive and they are all OK to adapt and help those students.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: Sometimes yes. If the difficulties they show are very obvious to them and they can see that they have a problem on a specific subject, then yes. I think income affects them.

I: Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they have in an online or face to face environment?

T: I think in a face-to-face learning is going to help them better.

I: Why?

T: Because they have more interaction with the teacher and the teacher can also see at that moment what the student has difficulty in.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes, online games for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: I wouldn't say that I have more options when I have an online lesson. Well, I think when we have face to face learning we can also use them we have access to those.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes of course.

I: In which ways?

T: I have learnt more websites that I can use and how to make for example my handout more interactive with them so they can use it at the same time that I am using it. Yes, I think that.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to more digital education?

T: Easier yes, I think yes because we have more access now to more technological advances, so it makes it easier for them.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Not all of them.

I: Have you attended any courses that were beneficial for students with dyslexia students?

T: I have, I had one course that was if I remember well, it was about dyslexic students and dyslexia in general and how to have it in our teaching and how to help them. But we only had that one, we didn't have anything else.

I: Was that in your master's degree or in your bachelor's?

T: In my bachelor's degree.

I: Which was where?

T: In University of Cyprus.

I: Are you trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Um trained? No. I know everything that I know from the Internet and from any other peer that has some experience with students like that.

I: Does the institute you work at offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, if we ask them yes, they can offer us.

I: So, they're not mandatory or you're not encouraged to?

T: No, of course we are encouraged to do it if we have a seminar like that it's mandatory, everyone has to go and because nowadays in every classroom we may have a student so if we have a similar like that we should go.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Can you repeat that?

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and your skills regarding teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I try as much as I can to improve everything that I know.

I: How do you do it?

T: Maybe if I find anything, an article about it or a book relating to that subject.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development in terms of digital education?

T: Yes, in terms of that yes because we had to be very prepared to use all those online sources so yes, I think it has been beneficial.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching overall and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, because we can see that that in every country, they have some online seminars about these courses so it's more accessible to us and if I am at home, it would be better to watch it online instead of going to a place. So, we have access to more people with more knowledge from other countries, so yes.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality as a teacher, your confidence, your adaptation of materials, lesson planning when it comes to dyslexic learners in your classroom?

T: Yes, because when I first started, I was young to face dyslexic students or any students that have any learning difficulties but through the years I try to be more confident and adapt everything that I have to make them feel better in the classroom.

I: Could you compare the system and that your work institution followed and the beginning of your career and now when it comes to dyslexic learners? Has it changed?

T: The materials that we use haven't changed but we have the possibility to change anything that we want in order to adapt anything that is needed.

I: Do you find the institute's curriculum, the instructions they give you, the strategies they follow for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: At some level yes, because some of the people from our institution know more about it so if we need more information, we can ask them and learn more.

I: But the instructions that come from the from the boss let's say, are they efficient enough or you have to learn by yourself or ask other teachers?

T: We don't have very specific things about it but if we need more information about it, we can have let's say a zoom meeting like us now and we can have a really quick access to anything that we want.

I: OK that was it thank you.

## PRIVATE SECTOR 5

Date 5/7/23, Duration 20:46, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x, I'm an EFL teacher, I've been teaching for 11 years. I own a private institute in x and I am I'm interested in professional development. I regularly attend workshops and seminars or webinars online.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I finished my master's degree in the university of Cyprus a few years ago.

I: Do you remember when?

T: 2012. Oh no, 2014.

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Well, in recent years we got a lot of students with learning difficulties. One of them is dyslexia and dysgraphia as well. We've been trying to help these students in the best way possible. I have attended an online course for teaching English as a foreign language for students with dyslexia. We give differentiated dictation for students and also we use videos for the reading and differentiated tests as well and when it comes to writing they have a model and they complete things depending on their level. As I told you, in the past years I've noticed an increase of students with dyslexia and learning difficulties in the classroom and we are doing our best. There are no specialized let's say professionals who can help the students for English so they have no choice. The other attended school where they take lessons in a group, or they do private lessons.

I: In your institute?

T: Yes. We do offer some private lessons depending on the diagnosis and we also first we recommend them to attend a regular group so they would have interaction with their peers etc. and maybe if we notice they can't cope with this, we offer private lessons.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Well for me it's no issue as I told you, we already differentiate our lessons we already follow approaches to help them, our books are not crowded with information - they have bold big fonts, not crowded with pictures as well. We follow a system where they learn dictation based on

pictures. I don't feel in a particular way, I just feel that they are frustrated at some point because as they you know progress in levels the issue becomes even worse.

I: And you said you have books and dictation that are not crowded, or they have more pictures... what happens in the mainstream classroom? Does the dyslexic learner have different books than the "regular" learners?

T: Of course not, they obtain some extra classes for help. For tests I think they get differentiated ones because they focus on oral production, and they give their answers orally. Yes, but I think that there are some students that are not diagnosed so they're not helped in the mainstream classroom as they should.

I: And you said that in recent years you have more dyslexic learners. Do you think that is the case or do you think you had dyslexic learners, but they were not diagnosed, or they were trying to hide it?

T: I mean it's not easy to hide it. I mean dyslexic learners have some specific characteristics which are not easy to hide in my opinion, so I don't think they could hide it. I know that the parents didn't accept it as easily and some of them do not accept it even now, but I think there's been a rise I don't know why. I mean I always have like 8 to 10 students in the classroom and in the last few years I have more dyslexic learners in each group let's say than the past.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Of course not. We try to do our best, as I told you I think I keep the students with learning difficulties in mind when I design my curriculum and my lesson plans. We always include activities as well, memory strengthening activities but I as I told you because there is lack of specialized professional school you can refer your students, I think that I would like to expand my knowledge on the topic. The course that I did was online, it was for six months, it gave me quite an insight. I also attended three workshops from dyslexia specialists, but I don't feel 100% confident enough that I'm doing my best let's say because it's not my area of expertise.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: Well, I have to say that I have a particular group in mind and because they experience this in their classroom as well, they don't stigmatize students, they don't marginalize them. I think that learners have become quite accepting of learning difficulties because they do have them in their mainstream classrooms in primary school, in their secondary schools. So, I don't feel that the students you know are marginalized in some respect.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities presented to them in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Well, that was quite the debate. I feel like they definitely benefited in some aspects from online learning because we switched to some more non-conventional ways of teaching. I used a lot of tools before the COVID era and during the COVID era I enhanced my program with online tools and I gave them the option to use the speech-to-text let's say options, they type the essays and they got feedback from some platforms i used to have so I believe that in that respect they were aided with technology but once you have a learner like this in your classroom you know that he or she

requires special attention. We always have these students in the front so there's easy access for the teacher for them to be supported and so I believe that in the in some respect you cannot replace the traditional classroom with the online classroom and these students I think that they faced certain issues when they had to be taught online.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Well, yes but we have continued using these tools. I used kahoot before the COVID era as I told you and I continue using them and we have tablets for this respect. Of course, they have to be at a certain age and because they were at home they were helped by their parents because all our tests were done online with these platforms. We also use Socrative as a platform for tests which requires a subscription. But we do use them in the classroom as well because you have the tablets and older ages have to do some online work as well and students of younger ages use wordwall for vocabulary which is a great tool especially for dyslexic learners I feel, and because they have a variety of types of games you can create games as well with their vocabulary with their grammar and they can practice again and again which offers the chance for them to enhance memory skills. And with the older learners they have several platforms where they submit homework like padlet, whether it's an audio format, video format or written format like a blog post.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Of course. When we had the school closures and the first quarantine, I kept watching Cambridge was one of the best supporters in that respect, they provided free webinars for teachers and National Geographic as well, who used their materials, but they also gave us tips in general. So, I kept watching webinar after webinar, I wanted to do my job well even if it was online. I knew that it wasn't going to go easily in terms of getting back to a normal classroom and it took us three years to do that, to achieve that so I think that yes the pandemic has definitely helped me improve my digital literacy skills. I have become a better teacher in that respect.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited dyslexic learners?

T: As in the questioner I have to say I'm in the middle. As I told you before they definitely benefited by the use of technology because when you're dyslexic it's more easy for you to type let's say instead of write, it's more easy for you to hear the text instead of reading, so I think in some ways yes in some ways no.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Definitely not, I have to say I'm really disappointed. Well, when I was at the university of Cyprus in the first, during my bachelor studies we did have some courses for teaching which have helped gain an insight into what happens in the classroom but for students with learning difficulties, I think it lacks in that expect. And for my masters as well it's the same thing. I didn't get as much as I would want to and they do not offer course for this type of things.

I: Would you say you are trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: In some respect yes but as I mentioned before I feel that I still have a lot to learn. One of my goals is to do another master's degree in learning difficulties for English as a second language- for teaching English as a second language to be more specific, and I don't know if it's going to be online or face to face I don't know what options there are here Cyprus I haven't searched for options yet because I'm not able to do my masters but in a few years like two or three years four I don't know, I'm going to do a second masters in that area.

I: You said your own an institute, right?

T: Yes.

I: Do you offer training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners to your teachers, to your employees?

T: Yes, I do. I always pay for their professional development I don't know if it's right or not. So when there are any workshops or things that are either free or there is an admission fee, I give them the opportunity to do this and I also have trained them based on my knowledge from the course so I have given them general guidelines they have certain documents where they can refer to, if they need any support or help they can always ask me of course. And as I told you our lesson plans are designed in respect where they can include students with dyslexia or other attention deficits in the spectrum of attention deficit, mild autism, yes. In that respect, yes but it's not adequate. They need special attention especially as they grow in levels.

I: And now can you tell me about the course you attended? The six-month course?

T: It was by "futurelearn", it's an online platform. I've done another two courses with them, I've done "train the trainer" by Cambridge which is essentially giving you the establishment of a teacher trainer and I also did early childhood education. As I told you the course was online, you had to attend four to six hours per week of courses and submit materials. It was beneficial and it gave me an inside as to what a dyslexia brain looks like, what are the characteristics of dyslexic learners. I'm not a specialist in any respect but I know I can recognize some symptoms when I see them and some of their characteristics and so I feel that I'm more knowledgeable than the average teacher but still not quite there.

I: In which other ways do you keep on improving your knowledge?

T: By reading articles, attending webinars and workshops as well.

I: Do you think the pandemic was beneficial for your professional development? I mean the shift to online seminars and?

T: Yes, we already attended webinars by Cambridge online using the zoom platform, so I was familiar with it but not in the way that pandemic has increased our knowledge not for everyone. I mean for those who have taken the chance to improve their skills as teachers because of the pandemic.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality as a teacher, your confidence, the adaptation of materials, classroom management when you have a dyslexic learner in the classroom?

T: Yes, of course. I mean experience is everything in our field we all know that that's why when I have inexperienced teachers, I always give them second chances in that respect, and I don't expect a lot from them in terms of classroom management in terms of knowledge. Knowledge comes from the person, how they want to improve their professional knowledge and status and also comes from the support you get from the place you work with and the experience you get from the classroom. So, I'm definitely not the same teacher as I was when I started teaching, I have the same passion, but I have gained valuable insight of the classroom whether it is online or not.

I: Could you compare the system or let's say, the curriculum, the instructions you had at the beginning of your career in your institute and now? How did it change in terms of dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, the teaching practices and methodologies have changed. As I told you I believe a lot in kinesthetic learning, in multisensory learning, I believe in the power of repetition in various forms, I mean not repetition like drills. So yes, they have definitely changed through the years, and we always improve. My teachers I work with know that every year, even if we have the lesson plans ready for the particular book we are teaching, we always do adaptations, we always do changes based on the classrooms, on the groups we have in that particular year, based on what worked and what didn't work the past year so our materials changing, improving, adapting and we as individuals and as professionals keep changing, improving and adapting and doing these things.

I: OK that was it, thank you very much.

T: You're welcome.

## PRIVATE SECTOR 6

Date: 20/7/23, Duration 12:25 minutes, Female.

I: Hello, please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: I've been teaching now for about 25 years, over 25 years.

I: Where do you teach?

T: I teach privately at home.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: I've got a university degree.

I: A bachelor's, masters?

T: A bachelor's and I've got a TEFOL, English as second... teaching course.



I: When did you graduate?

T: I graduated in 1983 yeah.

I: From which university?

T: I went to Sheffield Hallam University.

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Where were they?

I: What were?

T: Oh sorry, what were they... What kind of experiences I had?

I: Yes.

T: Basically, I felt that I had to give more attention to them, explain things more clearly and possibly focus more on them rather than other students in the class.

I: How do you feel about having them in the classroom?

T: about having dyslexic students in the classroom... Actually I would rather they... I mean happy to teach them, but I believe that they need extra help basically and I think that they'd be able to probably benefit from an experienced teacher rather than myself.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in mainstream classrooms?

T: I believe that they can learn in a mainstream class. I haven't had that much experience with dyslexic students, but I believe that it would be for their benefit if as well as mainstream opportunities to learn, it would be better if they actually had extracurricular activities whereby, they're learning stuff as well from other classes or qualified professionals.

I: Would you say you would teach them in mainstream classrooms but also help one to one extra lessons with them?

T: Yes, that would be a good idea. Unfortunately, it might be a little bit, you know, tiring for them to have a mainstream lesson and then have to do another lesson afterwards. So obviously depending on the student on whether he wants to do it or doesn't want to do it and so on.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Actually, I don't. I believe that it's important to have up-to-date training in order to teach them and some kind of refresher courses, you know would be important for someone who's going to be teaching them.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you encounter a classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Yeah, definitely you need to adapt. But then again because I'm not trained in the area when you say adapting then it would mean that I'd have to adapt for one person, or would I have to adapt for a number of people? So, I suppose you adapt differently to each individual.

I: That is up to each teacher and what they would like. So how have you adapted the lesson before?

T: Right...as I said I haven't had that much experience with dyslexic students, but the ones that I have taught in the past as I said before, it was important for me to sort of slow down and to be able to explain things a little bit more clearly, other things when setting tasks for them to do say for homework or and then I have to sort of tailor that individually the dyslexic student.

I: Now what are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic students?

T: Right... for someone who is a dyslexic... say let's say you're in a in a class with a number of students, it could be a bit difficult I could say for the student themselves especially you know if he feels that he's not able to keep up with his peers in the lesson and so that might be a bit difficult for them and you know things like bullying could occur depending on the age group.

I: Do you think classmates' attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance in the classroom?

T: Yes, definitely.

I: How?

T: Because they won't be able to express themselves so well, they might not want to answer questions in class, they might not want to participate in some activities especially written activities on the board.

I: Have you taught online?

T: Yes, I have. During the COVID times especially.

I: Have you taught with dyslexic learners?

T: No, I haven't had to teach dyslexic learners online.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: No, I would say in face to face there's more opportunities to be able to use... it's the same amount of opportunities and information and games and so one can apply them the same.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy?

T: Yes definitely. Basically, I've been forced to sort of become more technically aware of things.

I: Can you give me some examples?

T: Well, even simple things like downloading the application for zoom, sharing the screen, sending links basic things like that.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials or finding materials now that there's a shift to a more digital education?

T: Finding easier to adapt them? Online you mean? Technologically?

I: Yes.

T: Yes, I suppose so yeah. It has been easier yeah. I mean obviously you have to spend time and many hours so that you can become aware of different applications and so on.

I: Do you think the courses you have attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: As I said before, I haven't had that much experience with dyslexic pupils but there were basic introductions to the needs of dyslexic people. So, if I were to teach again dyslexic pupils, I definitely need to do further courses and so on.

I: So, you don't teach dyslexic learners?

T: No, I haven't got any students who are dyslexic, unless they haven't told me that they're dyslexic.

I: Have you chosen that or just it's just happened?

T: Yes, it's just happened but as I said before I wouldn't feel confident enough to teach dyslexic students now unless I was prepared, and I knew what I was doing, and I had some kind of training-retraining because it wouldn't be fair for them.

I: So, you wouldn't say you are trained to teach?

T: Yes.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Well, I try to keep up to date by just going online and reading up on matters.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these kinds of events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I would say that they have been very useful anything that I have seen or participated in online, and they have been actually useful but having said that I'd rather go to a face-to-face course or some kind of seminar rather than do it online. I know that that's not always practical.

I: Could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your professional development, your confidence, adapting materials, lesson planning when it comes to dyslexic learners?

T: Right... as I've already mentioned because I don't actually teach dyslexic pupils anymore, I haven't really had to do anything. I haven't had to adapt or sort of improve but if I were to teach them, I'd definitely make sure that I use technology and try to sort of take part in some seminars and so forth which I think are really useful. The only thing as I said before is that I prefer that they

were face-to-face and that they'd involve some kind of workshops where there's more practical experience rather than doing something online.

I: So, you are open on training yourself let's say...

T: Yes, I am open to training.

I: and on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Yes if the opportunity came, yes.

I: OK, thank you very much.

### PRIVATE SECTOR 7

Date 25/7/23, Duration 12:11, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: I am x.

I: Where do you work?

T: At a private institute.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: 6.

I: What level of education do you have?

T: Primary to elementary.

I: Do you have a bachelor's degree, master's degree?

T: Both.

I: When did you graduate and from which university?

T: I graduated in 2014, from university of Crete in Greece and then I got my master's degree at the university of Nicosia.

I: What were your past experiences, if any, with dyslexic learners?

T: None.

I: You have not taught dyslexic students at all?

T: Oh yes OK say that again please, say the previous question again.

I: What were your experiences with dyslexic learners?... Positive, negative?

T: It was OK, positive. Through teaching?

I: Yes.

T: Positive, quite positive.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: I feel comfortable about it, no problem.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can learn and participate in a mainstream classroom?

T: They can. Well, it depends on the level of their “problem” with their situation with dyslexia. But yeah, they can attend, and they can learn through mainstream classes.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Yes.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a classroom...?

T: Yes.

I: How do you do it?

T: Well, you can read a text to them instead of letting them reading it - sometimes it causes frustration to the learners. The reading process causes frustration to the dyslexic learners so you can read it for them. You can make the teaching process super straightforward for them to understand, to process the whole thing, you need to be flexible and not very strict.

I: Are you allowed to adapt the lesson?

T: Yes.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: It's OK, they don't truly mind.

I: Do you think if there is a negative attitude it may affect dyslexic learners' performance?

T: Yes, it does affect them.

I: In what ways?

T: It affects the way that I suppose the way that the dyslexic person sees him or herself, their self-esteem I suppose, their learning.

I: Have you taught online?

T: Yes.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: I don't know, depends on the person but I suppose they feel more comfortable through the online lessons.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot, when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: No, you can incorporate these online materials in both the online and the face-to-face lessons.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes, of course. Everyone has.

I: In which ways? Can you give me examples?

T: Well, you've learned how to use the computer or any technological mean as a mean to teaching. I suppose I have learned how to manage to control my class online so that the students aren't hiding behind the computer. We have managed to help them attend- actually attend the lesson- not just go online and see behind the screen, we managed to make a digital classroom, everything that you could possibly write on the white board now I can easily write it on a PowerPoint slide. It's more lively.

I: Do you believe that online teaching benefited in any way dyslexic learners?

T: Yes. From the things I've mentioned before because... from my experience the PowerPoint thing has been a great tool in my teaching. Every note that I had, I turned it into a PowerPoint presentation and the letters, the images could move, I could attach an audio file to make it more interesting for young learners and so on.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Sort of. It was just a glimpse; it was the foundation however it wasn't much.

I: Are you trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: Not really. It's something that we work on our own as a team at the institute.

I: Does the institute you work at offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: What do you mean by training? It's not something official but yes, we do have the meetings and we talk about how each of our learners learn and we try to understand them because every person, every child, every student is a unique situation let's say.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding dyslexic learners?

T: To be honest not really.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and regarding dyslexia?

T: Not really.

I: Could you compare yourself at the beginning of your career and now in terms of your personality, your confidence, adapting materials, managing the classroom when it comes to dyslexic learners?

T: Yes. I was clueless and I've learned a lot through the years.

I: So how have you become better?

T: Well, I've told you it's the experience most of it. And the motivation to understand how every child or young learner learns.

I: And now could you compare the system your work institution followed when you first started working there and now when it comes to dyslexic learners? Has it changed?

T: It hasn't changed, no.

I: OK last question. Do you find the institute's curriculum, the strategies, the instructions they give you for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: Could you say that again please.

I: Do you find the institute's curriculum, the instructions, and the strategies they follow for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?

T: Yes. Also, I believe I find that the material, the books that we use are for mixed-ability classrooms.

I: So, every student has the same book, but this book is beneficial let's say for dyslexic learners and so on?

T: Yes, it's got man it's got different kinds of tasks and approaches so that everybody gets it.

I: OK thank you very much, that was it.

T: Lovely.

## PRIVATE SECTOR 8

Date 27/7/23, Duration 15:18, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x. I'm an English language teacher and school owner, I've been teaching since 2005. I have my own private language institute; I teach people of all ages. I'm also PhD student at the University of Cyprus. Yes, that's all.

I: How many years of teaching experience do you have?

T: Let's count...since 2005 so it's more than 20 years.

I: Yes, around 20 years. What level of education did you have before the PhD? What were your degrees?

T: I have a BA and an MA too and now I'm in the third year of PhD studies.

I: When did you graduate your MA?

T: I think 2010.

I: And your bachelor's?

T: 2005.

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: Could you repeat that question because I'm outside?

I: What were your past experiences - did you have any experiences with dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: Yes, of course I have. I have dyslexic students in all my classes. Some classes have one or two because we're a private language institute, so some students are afraid of choosing to learn a foreign language, but we do have in our classes.

I: How do you feel about having dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: At first it seems like a challenge but after a course that I have attended some years ago and I learned some techniques how to approach these students I feel better. Yes, it is a challenge, but it must not be addressed like a problem in the class. The dyslexic student can learn a foreign language, but it has to be done in a different way.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can participate in the classroom?

T: They can. As far as I'm concerned, all the all the students can participate it depends on how you teach them, how you involve them, on the adjustments that you make in the classroom. You have to make sure- it's the teachers job, so if you're aware of the fact that there is a dyslexic student in your classes and you want this person to learn English because that's your purpose, you have to make some special adjustments so this student can, not included because the term of inclusion is something that means something does not match and you have to include him, so you have to behave like all the other students.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: If I remember correctly, I answered number 4 in your questionnaire not a fine (in Likert scale) because there is always room for improvement, but I feel that I'm confident.

I: Do you think you need to adapt materials or follow a different teaching practice when you have a classroom with a dyslexic learner?

T: Yes of course you have to make some adaptations, you have to choose carefully the coursebooks it's something very important, even the format of the fonts that you choose has to be taken into consideration in order to teach the student properly.

I: What are the attitudes and behaviors of the peers towards dyslexic learners?



T: OK let me think... I would say that it's again how the teacher approaches this child and how this teacher creates the lesson. I mean... I'm going to say that in an example if you just say "help Maria because she's a dyslexic student guys" they're going to feel something else- pity - let's say but if you just ignore the fact - not ignore but if you just pretend that everyone is the same but if you assign roles to their children according to their level to their difficulties, the peers respond perfectly to them.

I: Do you think if there is any negative attitude towards dyslexic learners from their peers this might affect their performance?

T: No in my classes at least no, there is not a negative approach from peers.

I: You have taught online, I guess?

T: Yes, I have.

I: Do you think that dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Again, it depends on the material and to the activities that they have to participate. The format is an issue but if the activity that you choose is not appropriate, even if it's online or face to face, it has to be appropriate for them.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Yes, there are more options online.

I: For example?

T: So, what you said, kahoot, there are so many websites that offer many games, worksheets like, I have been using a lot the British Council site "learn English teams" and "learn English kids" for materials.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: Yes of course. I feel that I'm stronger now.

I: In which ways?

T: First of all, I have I have more confidence in myself now because I felt completely illiterate in terms of using the technology properly in my classes, but it was a big step for me. I didn't have any other choice, so I had to improve, I had to learn, I had to attend- I did a course offered by Cambridge on how to teach online that helped me a lot. I learned about different resources that I can use, some techniques, tips... it was really helpful at that time.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited in any way dyslexic learners?

T: It has because sometimes the dyslexic learners are a bit shy in the classroom and the way that I have been teaching was more communicate I think... game-based let's say so the students were more encouraged to take part in their lessons yes.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: No, the courses at university in my BA no.

I: Where did you study for your BA?

T: 2001 to 2005.

I: Where? In which university?

T: University of Athens.

I: So, there were not any courses that helped you with....?

T: No. There was a course in my MA, it was taught in Greek “συμπεριληπτική εκπαίδευση”. I learned something but not much.

I: Would you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: As I said before there is always something new to learn. I think I have some skills, I'm not that expert I mean I couldn't advertise that I'm a center that teaches English for dyslexic students. Because there is one in Greece, not one I think there are some centers in Greece, I'm not sure if there are Cyprus, that specialize in teaching English to dyslexic students. I have some skills but yes there is always something new to learn.

I: You said you have your own institute, right?

T: Yes.

I: And there are other teachers there as well?

T: Yes, there are two more teachers.

I: Do you offer them training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: I do yes. I give them, I share with them some tips, especially things that I have learned from the course that I attended some years ago that are really helpful. I always try to remind them of the fact that, let's say that it's a teacher it's kind of complaining of “Maria is doing all the spelling wrong” and I remind this teacher that OK this student has dyslexia, we have to make some special adjustments for her.

I: Do you find any seminars or courses for them to attend?

T: Yes, if there are courses, I always ask from the teachers that I work with to attend because I think you have to learn.

I: Do you keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I do. If there is a seminar, course, even an article I always read in order to learn something, even an article. I think it's really important. If you want to be up to date you have to be informed and educated all the time.

I: Do you think the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching in general and regarding dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, it gave me access to places that I wouldn't have the opportunity to go before the pandemic. For example, I attended some seminars in Cambridge... it gave me access to more places, that was a benefit. But it was not specifically related to dyslexic students, it was a general knowledge let's say.

I: Now could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career when it comes to your professional identity let's say, your confidence, lesson planning, adaptation of materials, classroom management when it comes to dyslexic learners in the classroom?

T: Yes absolutely. I'm a different person because experience...it's not just being educated but experience is really important too. So, year by year I think I'm getting better.

I: What about your institution? How did you start and what's going on now with dyslexic learners?

T: What do you mean?

I: What strategies did you follow back then and what happens now when you have a dyslexic learner in the classroom?

T: When I first started, I was completely ignorant of this, I just felt "that's a weak student" I said but then after my MA - because I started my school before my MA, so the first two or three years I didn't know anything about dyslexia and how to respond to these students. But then I was more sensitive and year by year I think I'm getting better at it.

I: OK that was it thank you very much.

T: You're welcome.

## PRIVATE SECTOR 9

Date 03/8/23, Duration 15:36, Female.

I: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is x. I've been teaching for around five years in the private sector and in the past year I have taught in a private school. I have graduated from the university of Cyprus and then I got my master's in TESOL studies from the University of Leeds in 2017.

I: What were your past experiences with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms?

T: Usually they tend to be quite slower at copying from the board or maybe following instructions so mainly I've noticed that they need some extra time.

I: How do you feel about having them in the classroom?

T: Well, I feel that I have to take you know into account that I do have these students in my class and I have to plan accordingly you know to leave some time to copy from the board or if I have any group work to find the person who would be the most suitable to work with them or to be the one who will be working with them.

I: To what extent do you believe dyslexic learners can actually learn and participate in a mainstream classroom?

T: Well, I have mixed feelings about this one. Mainly it depends on the number of students in the class or maybe the class dynamics. The thing is that they do have the competition in the in the mainstream classroom, but I'm not sure if it helps them at the end of the day to have the kind of competition or to compete in terms that are not really appropriate for them. So, it's like comparing very different things.

I: Do you feel confident and prepared to teach dyslexic learners?

T: I feel that I do have the skills and the knowledge, but I do not necessarily apply these in class because I haven't been asked to do so. So, since I do have mainstream classes I do cater for the needs let's say or I need to deliver the lessons, so I try to get in the middle things. So, the lesson to be appropriate for learners with no difficulties and for learners with difficulties but I do not necessarily deliver a lesson that is only suitable for those learners even though I know that there are some tricks or methods that are more appropriate for them.

I: So, you think you do not follow the methods, or you do not adapt the materials to benefit dyslexic learners as much as you'd like?

T: Yes, not as much as I'd like it to, but yes.

I: But you do adapt the lesson somehow to facilitate them?

T: Yes or if I don't do so during the lesson, sometimes I do see them in all day school so after school we do have some time together, two school periods together, and at that time I can focus on each of the students individually so at that time I do have the chance to maybe offer some other kind of explanation or you know to respond to some of their questions.

I: You're talking about some of the private school now, right?

T: Yes, right the private school.

I: What about the institute that you work at in the afternoons?

T: Again, I have to deliver the lesson and to keep up with the other classes of the same level but for the students with dyslexia we might have some meetings with the parents or maybe suggest some ways of studying that would help the individual student. So, it was mainly suggestions that the parents could adapt or could follow in order for them to help the child.

I: So how do you adapt the lesson in the mainstream classroom when you have a dyslexic learner?

T: mmm how to adapt the lesson... Depends on the situation but you know some of them the main things let's say I try not to ask them to read in class or I usually help them when they read out loud for the rest of the class because I don't want them to feel differentiated. In terms of the material

that they have to copy I usually make everything available so if I have presentations, I make them available on teams, so they have the material there for them. I think that's it in the classroom. In terms of correcting their work, I try to use pencil or other colors apart from red and that's pretty much it.

I: Now what are the attitudes and behaviors of their peers towards dyslexic learners?

T: Well definitely they do not understand so this is the main difficulty let's say and challenge that you have to face that I would say they do not you know sympathize with them, they might joke around, or you know, make comments that are really inappropriate.

I: Do you think that these attitudes towards dyslexic learners may affect their performance?

T: Probably because if you feel ashamed or embarrassed then you don't want to participate then this technically affects your performance and your grade.

I: Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in terms of learning and the opportunities they have in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Can you repeat the question just the beginning?

I: Yes. Do you think dyslexic learners feel more included in an online or in a face-to-face environment?

T: Maybe... I'm not sure... depends on the group they are working with, but I would say maybe online.

I: Why?

T: Because they have the chance maybe to have someone next to them, maybe to help them or they do not feel that there is someone there to make fun of them, no one looks at them as well.

I: Do you believe you have more options on materials such as quizzes or online games, for example kahoot when you do online teaching rather than face to face teaching?

T: Personally, no because I do use them anyway in class. I would say maybe when I was teaching during COVID I would use them more regularly. This is the only difference- the frequency of the use but I do use these online resources anyway.

I: Do you think you have improved some skills such as technological literacy after the pandemic?

T: I have worked on different platforms definitely, but I would say these skills were there in terms of preparing the presentations and these things.

I: Do you believe that online teaching has benefited in any way with dyslexic learners?

T: I do have mixed feelings about this one. If they have someone at home to help them then some of them might have improved or it might have helped them. But if they do not have any assistance at home I don't think so.

I: Do you find it easier adapting materials for dyslexic learners after the pandemic and the shift to a more digital education?

T: For me I think it's the same. So, I would use digital material and I do use the material now as well. I always use the computer; I do not really write things on the board; I rarely do that.

I: Do you think the courses you attended in university were beneficial for your teaching with dyslexic learners?

T: Definitely we had a course that focused on those difficulties and dyslexia as well. So, for the whole semester we would research dyslexia and other difficulties but if you do not use these practices in real life or let's say If I don't teach dyslexic students on their own, then I do not use the practices that much.

I: Was the course you're talking about in your master's or your bachelor's degree?

T: Bachelor's degree.

I: Would you consider yourself trained to teach dyslexic learners?

T: I definitely need revision so I wouldn't say I know everything. I do know if I see a student's writing or if I ask them to create something for me, I'm able to recognize if they are dyslexic but in terms of the methods and the practices I certainly need to revise those, to review them.

I: Is the institute you work at yours or you are an employee there?

T: An employee.

I: So, does the institute offer you training opportunities on teaching dyslexic learners?

T: Not really.

I: Do you personally keep on improving your knowledge and skills regarding inclusive practices for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes, I try to attend seminars either online or face to face.

I: Do you think that after the pandemic and the shift to online seminars and courses gave you more opportunities to access these events and gain more knowledge on your teaching overall and regarding dyslexic students?

T: Yes, they're definitely more accessible but I prefer the face-to-face ones. I feel that I'm more focused when I am attending a seminar that is face-to-face.

I: And now could you compare yourself now and at the beginning of your career in terms of your personality, your confidence, decision making, lesson planning, adapting the materials, classroom management and so on when it comes to dyslexic learners in the classrooms?

T: Well, the more students I see, I can definitely recognize if there is a student with learning difficulties but other than that, as I've said because I do not, I give private lessons to dyslexic students let's say and I do have mainstream classrooms, I do not focus on this. So, the only difference in terms of the beginning and now is that I am able to recognize the case.

I: Have you been working in the same institute all these years?

T: No.

I: Are you allowed to choose a teaching practice or adapt the materials for dyslexic learners?

T: Yes.

I: And lastly do you find the institute's curriculum, let's say the instructions they give you, the strategies they follow for dyslexic learners helpful and efficient?


T: Yes, because we do have a lot of games, so they use other sensitive ways which I think is helpful.

I: OK that was it thank you very much.

T: Thank you.

Christina Procopiou

## Appendix H: Approvals for conducting the research:



ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ,  
ΑΘΛΗΤΙΣΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΟΛΑΙΑΣ

ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ  
ΜΕΣΗΣ ΓΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

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26 Απριλίου 2023


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Φώτη Πίττα 3  
2679 Μάμμαρι

**Θέμα: Παραχώρηση άδειας για διεξαγωγή έρευνας**


Αναφορικά με τη σχετική με το πιο πάνω θέμα αίτησή σας στο Κέντρο Εκπαιδευτικής Έρευνας και Αξιολόγησης, με ημερομηνία υποβολής 27/03/2023, πληροφορείστε ότι το αίτημά σας για διεξαγωγή έρευνας σε σχολεία Μέσης Γενικής Εκπαίδευσης, με θέμα «*Μέση Εκπαίδευση στην Κύπρο: οι απόψεις και οι ανάγκες των καθηγητών Αγγλικής γλώσσας σχετικά με τη διδασκαλία δυσλεκτικών μαθητών σε κανονικές τάξεις*», στο πλαίσιο έρευνας για την απόκτηση μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου σπουδών στο Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου, εγκρίνεται. Νοείται ότι θα λάβετε υπόψη τις εισηγήσεις του Κέντρου Εκπαιδευτικής Έρευνας και Αξιολόγησης, οι οποίες επισυνάπτονται, και ότι θα τηρήσετε τις ακόλουθες γενικές προϋποθέσεις:

1. θα εξασφαλίσετε τη συγκατάθεση των Διευθυντών/-ριών των σχολείων, τα οποία θα συμμετάσχουν στην έρευνα,
2. η συμμετοχή των εκπαιδευτικών θα είναι προαιρετική και θα εξασφαλιστεί η συγκατάθεσή τους,
3. δεν θα επηρεασθεί ο διδακτικός χρόνος και η ομαλή λειτουργία των σχολείων για τη διεξαγωγή της έρευνας,
4. θα χειριστείτε τα στοιχεία των εμπλεκόμενων με τέτοιο τρόπο, ώστε να διασφαλιστεί πλήρως η ανωνυμία τους,
5. για τη χρήση μαγνητοφώνου ή οποιασδήποτε άλλης μεθόδου για τυχόν καταγραφή ήχου ή εικόνας, θα πρέπει να πάρετε άδεια γραπτώς από τους / τις συμμετέχοντες / -ουσες και τους γονείς/κηδεμόνες τους, και τέλος
6. τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα κοινοποιηθούν στο Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας και στα σχολεία που θα σας παραχωρήσουν διευκολύνσεις για τη διεξαγωγή της.

Ευχόμαστε καλή επιτυχία στους ερευνητικούς σας σκοπούς.

  
Δρ Κυπριανός Δ. Λούκας  
Διευθυντής  
Μέσης Γενικής Εκπαίδευσης

BK



Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας 1434 Λευκωσία  
Τηλ: 22 800 600 fax: 22 428268 website: [www.moec.gov.cy](http://www.moec.gov.cy)





REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



CYPRUS NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

**Ref.:** EEBK EΠ 2023.01.130  
**Tel:** 22809038/039, 22819101/122  
**Fax:** 22353878

18<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023

Dr Sviatlana Karpava  
Lecturer in Applied Linguistics  
Department of English Studies  
University of Cyprus  
P.O. Box 20537  
1678 Nicosia

Ms Christina Procopiou  
3 Photi Pitta Str.  
2679 Mammari  
Nicosia

Dear Dr Karpava and Ms Procopiou,

**Application for bioethical review for the research entitled:**  
**“Secondary Education in Cyprus: EFL Teachers’ beliefs about**  
**Dyslexia in mainstream classrooms”**

The Cyprus National Bioethics Committee (CNBC) has reviewed your application for ethical approval for the project outlined above submitted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2023. From the review of the documents you have submitted, CNBC **issues a favorable opinion** for the conduct of the research in Cyprus.

2. Kindly note that approval is granted provided that the following conditions apply:

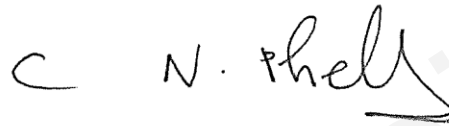
- a) inform CNBC immediately of any complaints or other issues in relating to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project,
- b) before implementing any amendments to the proposal as approved, request a new approval by CNBC,
- c) provide a follow up report on the progress of the program every 6 months from the approval date,
- d) provide a final report upon completion of the program,
- e) inform us in writing in case the project is discontinued,
- f) the conduct of the research complies with the requirements of the new European Regulation on Data Protection (General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679).

.../2

3. Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval as stated above, and the with the provisions of the Law Providing for the Establishment and Function of the National Bioethics Committee (No. 150 (I) / 2001 - 2010), may result in withdrawal of the present approval for the research.

4. We would like to wish you every success in the conduct of your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C N. Phellas', with a horizontal line under the name.

Prof. Constantinos N. Phellas  
Chairman  
Cyprus National Bioethics Committee

Christina Procopiou