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Jennifer Tarn Reid

An investigation into the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

(MA) Masters by Research (Art and Design)

University of Huddersfield

2017/2018

## An investigation into the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

### Abstract.

The purpose of this investigation is to combine academic theory and practise-based research to explore aspects of dyslexia in the context of creative practice. This includes: Social, Medical and Art and Design perspectives on dyslexia, used to understand the correlations between dyslexia and creative outlets such as art and illustration.

This project uses these categories to explore the dispositions of myself as a dyslexic creative practitioner through a research portfolio featuring my own illustrative work and an exhibition under the name *Am I Stupid?* The narrative that accompanies this practice situates my work within the broader contexts of dyslexia.

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## **Introduction.**

Research is the desire to address a problem and discover new insights. As a contemporary creative practitioner in higher education in the UK, with a learning difficulty, I have honed my practice on the research of dyslexia, using the tactics of 'practice as research' (Nelson, 2013).

In the last decade or so, dyslexia has become increasingly more accredited and recognised. With reports on its positive traits, individuals with the learning difficulty are becoming more and more prevalent. This project thus seeks to investigate the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner and dyslexic individuals alike. In order to adequately investigate this topic and to point towards a new set of conclusions, this body of work will analyse relatively unexplored areas of Dyslexia. Secondly, the detrimental link between dyslexia and low self esteem which could harm the chances and situations available for the individual. Thirdly, further examination is made of the coherent relationship between dyslexia and art, drawing upon the general consensus that dyslexic students have been found to be especially high achievers in the arts.

A series of visual aids have been created which includes the documentation of an exhibition and reflections on my work. By considering the topic of dyslexia in relation to different contexts (societal, mental health, education and creative practice), I will show how and why a potential relationship between dyslexia and art/illustration can be further understood using practice based research and the Art and Design Intersection perspective. Similarly this will be understood with the use of artwork alongside the academic study, I will further unpack a wide range of relatively unexplored areas that cannot be understood through written word alone.

To depict the different creative dispositions of a dyslexic practitioner allows for the public to become more knowledgeable and informed on the positives and

amazing qualities of having this specific learning difficulty. Subsequently, there are plenty of struggles and stresses, which are not hugely publicized and acknowledged, as will be discussed throughout both within the academia and practice based research and in the sections on the Medical Model and the Social Model. However, specifically educating the public about the positives will shift the preconceptions and stigmas dyslexic individuals face on a day-to-day basis thus leading to negative dispositions (Goodley, 2012 & Miles and Varma, 1994). Broadcasting throughout this thesis that dyslexia isn't linear or black and white, and that in fact there is a vast spectrum of dyslexia, allows for a better general understanding.

The objective of this study is to not only challenge the preconceptions that still exist around dyslexia, but also highlight the positives associated with this specific learning difficulty. I will do this throughout all chapters specifically the section on Positive Dispositions.

The project begins with a literature review that discusses the introduction of the term dyslexia and different perspectives. What will follow is the investigation into the dispositions of dyslexia. Shortly followed by artist studies and my creative practice under the name 'Am I Stupid'.

## **Literature Review**

### **What is Dyslexia?**

*"The signs and symptoms of dyslexia differ from person to person. Each individual with the condition will have a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses."* NHS, 2015.

The public notice of individuals with learning difficulties was first acknowledged in 1878 when a German neurologist, Adolph Kussmaul, became very concerned with adults who struggled to read properly. Kussmaul noticed that these individuals regularly used words in the wrong order and would repeatedly miss words in a text completely and thus referred to such

difficulties as, 'word blindness' (Lawrence, 1995). From 1878 onwards, 'word blindness' became regularly used in medical journals and medical research, which was based around the difficulties associated with this terminology. However, it wasn't until nearly a decade later in 1887 that a theorist by the name of Shaywitz introduced the term 'Dyslexia' (Shaywitz. S. 2010.). This was used to describe the condition, which includes word blindness', and other symptoms. Nevertheless, it wasn't until the 1900's that the term became popular (Lawrence, 1995). Subsequently, extensive medical and education centred research about the learning difficulty now widely recognizes that dyslexia is a common learning difficulty along with ADHD, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia. In a statement by the NHS about dyslexia, the most commonly known problems are the ability to read, write and spell and are the most publicized dyslexia symptoms (NHS, 2015; Hope, 2010).

People with dyslexia can also suffer from short or long term memory loss, this disadvantages the person when learning a sequence of information (Hope, 2010). Disadvantages like these are the reasons individuals with dyslexia either don't retain the information, require a hand-out so they can refer back to what has been said, and why extra time is also offered. Students with dyslexia in the classroom can often be perceived as lazy or uninterested. When in reality, that person might just struggle drawing attention to themselves to ask a question. Some dyslexic people are told that they look like they are daydreaming, which is often not the case. They might find that only listening to the information is a lot simpler and concrete for them. Similarly, the individual may find the class difficult and are trying to cope with the situation internally. The dyslexic student could have already solved the problem, with lateral thinking and an overview of the bigger picture; they might already be onto thinking of new solutions or more aspects of the problem (Hope, 2010). There is a lot of misunderstanding surrounding dyslexia, which can lead to some unfortunate circumstances in education, which is one of the main objectives of this study, to investigate the broad spectrum that is dyslexia.

Kate Hope (N/D), has a dyslexic son, and suggests that dyslexics use humour as a defence mechanism to deflect tension away from their learning difficulty.

This is the case when many dyslexic individuals become class clowns in school or the workplace (Hope, 2010). As we can see here, dyslexia is sometimes misunderstood and confused with other character traits, for example; 'Lazy, Stupid, Class Clown' (Davies, 1995 & Hope, N/D) which are all too often misconceptions about that individual. However, no two dyslexics will deal with that lesson in the same way

The NHS (2015) states that dyslexia is a “common learning difficulty that can cause problems with reading, writing and spelling”. This is called Primary Dyslexia (Hope, N/D). This is an accurate and truthful statement but one that is a generalisation about what dyslexic individuals have difficulty with as well as a summary that arguably suggests that they are the solitary implications of the learning difference. As a consequence of three simple learning methods used throughout every key stage of development at any age, reading, writing and spelling have a very succinct impact for dyslexia sufferers successes in education and the workplace. Particularly during higher education, as a result of the stress factors suffered by any individual at that time (Thompson et al., 1994). In schools there tends to be a misunderstanding of what it takes to manage dyslexia and what the behaviours associated with the learning difference are. In a survey conducted with educational professionals 70% of responses said they would like more information and training on dyslexia (Reid, 2016). Therefore, instead of being correctly supported throughout education the individual enters a spiral of bad or disruptive behaviour. In *'Dyslexia and Stress'* a book co-authored by T.R. Miles and V.P Varma (1995) refer to this concept as “The Attitude”. This is an act of reflection which happens when dyslexic sufferers ask questions when they struggle to understand an idea to peers, teachers or parents. Miles and Varma state that when the correct support is not offered during school, the dyslexic pupil often experiences high levels of frustration from their inability to perform on the same level as their peers. This in turn could cause pupils to become aggressive and/or disruptive and withdrawn from school, as well as the most obvious and admitted conclusion, which is to become a 'class clown' (Thompson et al., 1994; Miles and Varma 1995). Eventually this leads stigmas like 'Lazy', 'Thick' and 'Stupid' to arise (Davies, 1995). A lack of understanding

that surrounds dyslexia in a school environment affects the growth of a dyslexic individual.

R.D Davies & E. Braun (1995) believe that if we erase terms like “dumb, stupid and challenged” when talking about dyslexia, it would prevent children and more specifically dyslexic children from losing their self-esteem. They suggest that we shouldn’t criticize their mistakes or imply that something is wrong when merely it’s just a difference. Davies and Braun believe there is a vicious cycle of behaviour here, whereby the child first suspects something is wrong, the teacher then confirms this, eventually the other kids in class and their parents all start to notice, the child then becomes more upset which is where behavioural problems start to arise (Davies & Braun, 1995). It is quite a simple cycle but nonetheless one we can relate to and sympathise with. Issues raised by Davies & Braun, amongst others, are reasons I wanted to research this topic and challenge pre-existing academia and stigmas surrounding dyslexia.

Dyslexia isn’t by any stretch of the imagination a hindrance on the individual. In some cases, it can also be incredibly fulfilling, exciting and innovative, to perceive a world in a completely unique way. However highlighting preconceptions is arguably the direction my creative practice takes, as well as one my research has been drawn to. By voicing such a perspective, and by reinforcing the positives of dyslexia, hopefully we will start to see a shift in the way in which society perceives dyslexia. This leads me to briefly focus on the positive dispositions associated with dyslexia before tackling this area in more detail later on in the thesis.

There are numerous strengths noticeable in dyslexic individuals. These include: big-picture thinking, the visualisation of 3D objects, which is the ability to picture an object from all angles and understand the concept of the object, lateral thinking and problem solving. This will be reiterated and broken down in more depth later on, when discussing the connection between dyslexia and art. These skills are shown in how frequently dyslexics excel in sales, art and

design, drama, entertainment and architecture. For example, in 2008, it was reported that 50% of art students are dyslexic, this study was carried out by The Glasgow School of Art (The Glasgow School of Art, 2008; Telegraph, 2010) alongside the growing 17% of the general population. This clarifies why we need creative practice in today's curriculum and how important it is to have creative outlets for different ways of expressing experience. There are various perspectives on dyslexia which need to be addressed in conjunction with the thesis title: an investigation into the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner. These include the Social Model, which identifies that it is society who needs to change its views on dyslexia and who points the blame of misconceptions onto society. The Medical Model, which believes that the problem lies with the person with the disability, that they need to change to meet the demands of society, this is determined by using science and facts alone. Finally the Art and Design intersection perspective, which believes that neither perspective really grasp what dyslexia is. Furthermore, it can showcase through the medium of creativity over science. These perspectives will be explored in more depth in the following sections.

Considering these perspectives allows the reader to gain more knowledge and understanding of dyslexia. The first perspective I will discuss is the medical model.

### **Medical Model Perspective on Dyslexia.**

Within this section I intend to define what the Medical Model perspective is and when it was introduced. I will then explore various theorists who work within the confines of the Medical model on disability. I will consider both sides of the argument and address both the positives and negative findings, so that I can reconsider the creative dispositions of dyslexia in practice.

Founded in the 1980s by the World Health Organisation (Wikipedia, 2018), leading pioneers of this perspective in this instance are Margaret Snowling, Martin Turner & John Rack and Uta Frith. They are medical professionals who

study dyslexia. The Medical Model is a set of basic assumptions and attitudes about both physical and psychological difficulties. What the Medical Model perspective aims to identify, are the causes of such difficulties to propose solutions. Furthermore, the Medical Model treats psychological struggles as if they were a physical affliction, where there must be physical and factual causes of that affliction (Macleod, 2008). The Medical Model is made up of science professionals – psychiatrists rather than psychologists. In contrast, the Social Model perspective is made of psychologists rather than psychiatrists. This model will be explored in the next section. The Medical Model searches for outward signs of a condition, as you would a broken arm (Macleod, 2008). Subsequently, this leads to administering appropriate medical treatment. However, this isn't necessary for individuals with dyslexia. I don't believe there is anything medicinal that can treat or cure dyslexia, and both myself and the Social and Art and Design perspectives consider other support for people with dyslexia, which will be explored in the following sections. The medical model aims to stay objective to scientific studies rather than look at the unique and individualistic view of a person's dyslexia.

Margaret Snowling (Snowling, 2014) epitomises the growth and development of the medical model, and talks about what issues we can change for the future of dyslexia within the education system. The first of these key points is about identifying dyslexia earlier. More specifically, how early identification and diagnosis decreases the likelihood of individuals developing low self-esteem and poor motivation (Snowling, 2014). Snowling, alongside the works of Wolffe & Lundberg and Miles & Varma, also support and are passionate about dyslexics getting the earliest possible diagnosis. Furthermore, this critical idea features in my creative practice/ practice-based research and portfolio.

The medical model focuses on the signs and symptoms of dyslexia and gives guidance to teaching professionals and parents on how to spot them. This broadens our existing understanding of the diagnosis of dyslexia. The different styles and ages makes dyslexia unique to each individual. By tackling this, training teachers and parents about dyslexia and making

diagnoses more accessible dramatically enhances the chances for a dyslexic individual to be supported. This can help to reduce the likelihood of low self-esteem and poor motivation. The downward spiral of low self-confidence, low self-belief and under achievement reinforces false stereotypes about dyslexia, i.e. being lazy and stupid (Thompson et al, 1994; Davies, 1995). Changing these attitudes can alter societal preconceptions and an individual's approach to their learning difficulty. Having difficulties along these lines could lead onto further problematic experiences with mental health, anxiety and depression (Miles & Varma, 1994). According to Snowling (2014):

Without the ability to read fluently with comprehension there is a downward spiral of poor educational achievement and career prospects. Dyslexia is therefore a major problem for society and a key question is whether it is possible to intervene early to ameliorate its impact.

Although Snowling explains how dyslexia can lead to 'poor educational achievement' without early intervention, there are also pitfalls with the medical model. For example, this perspective uses phrases and trigger words like "cure" and "problem". I can only speak for myself here but the use of these words makes me feel like I am the problem and that I am the one that needs to change. Using medical words like "cure" alongside a learning difficulty does not sit right with me. There is no cure for dyslexia. Vocabulary associated with a certain mind-set strengthens the argument that there is a stigma about dyslexia. Individuals with this learning difficulty will internalise low self-worth as a result.

Martin Turner & John Rack also work within the confines of the Medical Model. They focus on discrepancy theories in the diagnosis of dyslexia. For example, children of a certain age 1-5 years can sometimes fail to meet the criteria of the diagnosis, meaning they are not showing signs of a literacy deficit beyond what is the norm for their age range. This could be as a result of age and development, or it could be educational, in terms of what they are learning in pre-school and how quickly they grasp each key stage of

development (Turner & Rack, 2006). This is an interesting point for me: how can we determine if a child is dyslexic before they start to understand literacy and/or mathematics? When should a child receive help and support? It is important to emphasise that dyslexic individuals can have extremely high IQ results and this can make it hard to observe signs of a learning difficulty in children of a certain age (NHS, 2014). By offering more training to teachers and parents on spotting dyslexia, in line with Snowling's study (Snowling, 2014), along with more studies on early age dyslexia could help to introduce certain steps to getting a diagnosis suitable for different age categories. Turner & Rack suggest that some of the struggles dyslexics face include: naming days, weeks and months, and an inability to grasp sequences at times, as well as the difficulty in grasping a second language. This could also stem from poor speech perception and production at a young age. For example, poor education, inaccessible literature and a lack of teaching could have an impact on early child development (Turner & Rack, 2006; Klein & Farmer, 1995). This might contribute to the likelihood that a person can develop dyslexia, but also can be sometimes just be a lack of education rather than a diagnosable learning difficulty. Outside factors can affect an individual's learning experience. Therefore, steps need to be put in place at an early age to deplete the chances of a person struggling with poor education by offering earlier support mechanisms and interventions for children with dyslexia.

Uta Frith (Frith, 1986) uses the analogy of a growing tree as a metaphor for dyslexia. Picture a small budding tree, which has obstructions, barriers and malfunctions happening to it at each key stage of development, causing a "breakdown to occur" (Frith, 1986). Frith builds upon the idea that the trunk of this tree symbolises reading (input processes) and writing skills (output processes) as children. There is a difference between the two skills. At each stage of development, reading and writing step up, we get better and more comfortable with reading and writing, however, in moving onto the next stage a breakdown can occur. This can lead to an individual showing signs of a learning difficulty. Subsequently, the tree branches out in another direction to cope with that malfunction. A dyslexic child can develop compensatory skills

to cope with these obstructions. Frith argues that this is what dyslexic individuals do when problems arise either from societal pressures or individual struggles. In my own case, the compensatory skill was art. And for many dyslexics, creativity can be the saving grace needed and a subject they can excel in.

Barbara Riddick's book '*Dyslexia and Inclusion*' (Riddick. B, 2001) categorises dyslexia into three subsections. These are:

1. The genetic origin - biological, other people in your family could have or have been diagnosed with dyslexia.
2. Cognitive level - showing signs of specific processing deficits.
3. Behavioural level - the consequences and effects of having poor reading and writing skills. (Riddick; Frith, 2001).

These subcategories take away the uncertain stigmas dyslexia is associated with, clearly pinpointing the medical background and origin of the learning difficulty in line with the Medical Model. Whilst acknowledging these origins, Frith also considers the educational model of dyslexia (Riddick, 2001). Points include: the inadequacy of certain teaching methods and poor exposure to literature. This can aggravate a person's dyslexia, whilst exacerbating the lack of opportunities for the individual.

However interesting and vital such studies are into dyslexia and the medical model, it is worthwhile noting the opposing views of this perspective. To my understanding, the medical model seems impersonal. As practical, factual, scientific and justified, it makes it difficult to see dyslexia as flexible, personal and unique to each individual. Equally, dyslexia can have a very emotional undertone, it can hold painful and pleasurable experiences. The medical model does not address this due to its objectivity. Alternatively, the Social Model highlights the work of psychologists studying dyslexia, bringing together a well-rounded idea of how the medical model, social model and other perspectives help and support the different dispositions of dyslexia.

## **Social Model Perspective on Dyslexia.**

The Medical Model perspective bases its assumptions and theories around scientific diagnosis; However, the Social Model is a set of perspectives that tackles dyslexia from different angles. Studies by Dan Goodley, Tom Shakespeare and Barbara Riddick are some of the most prevalent in my research on this perspective. Identifying both the positives and negatives of the Social Model will support my understanding of the dispositions of myself as a dyslexic creative practitioner.

The Social Model perspective was introduced in the 1980s By Mike Oliver (Mental Health Foundation, 2018). It is a perspective made by psychologists researching into dyslexia from the inside out. This is different from the Medical Model, which looks into dyslexia from the outside in. The Social Model argues that no two cases of dyslexia are the same, and each person's experience can be vastly different. The Social Model also investigates the barriers that are put into place by society (Scope, 2018). These can be either physical barriers or emotional barriers, like stigmas and so on. Professionals working in line with the views of the Social Model, suggest that people with variations of physical or a learning impairment, gain more independence, freedom and more control, by approaching the subject from this perspective. The Social Model perspective wants to reduce some of the negative connotations and prejudices linked to the term 'dyslexia', in society, schools and in the workplace (Thompson et al, 1994).

Author of *The Disability Studies Reader*, Tom Shakespeare writes: "The social model distinguishes between disabled people as an oppressed group and non-disabled people that are the causes of that oppression" (Shakespeare, 2016). Shakespeare is referring to the barriers put in place by society; stigmas and preconceptions by non-disabled people that are actually what causes a person to feel disabled. These preconceptions do not come from the individual themselves, but rather through world views about 'normality'. This creates an 'oppressed group'. Shakespeare emphasises that the blame should be on society rather than the individual with dyslexia (Shakespeare,

2016). I agree with this. On the whole, society has progressed in the area of dyslexia, whereby diagnosed students can now get the correct support, extra time and equipment. Certainly the Social Model has been implemented and acknowledged in terms of education. The pressure on society to change its views rather than the individual is an important feature of the Social Model. Shakespeare also explains that most literature on dyslexia, is written by non-dyslexic individuals. Subsequently, the only discussion being heard is from the perspective of a 'non-oppressed group' about the 'oppressed' (Shakespeare, 2016). The personal experience of someone having dyslexia is different from someone writing about a condition they don't have. Dan Goodley (Goodley, 2012) in his book; *'Learning difficulties', the social model of disability and impairment: Challenge Epistemology* includes the voices of people with dyslexia. This creates a well-rounded study on dyslexia for non-dyslexics, whilst communicating an insider's knowledge.

However, I consider that by categorising and making statements that dyslexics are an 'oppressed group', we are actually heightening and expanding existing preconceptions. By constantly highlighting the differences between the 'oppressed group' and the 'oppressors', we are magnifying these differences. This suggests that people need to be treated separately. Subsequently, it becomes a battle between 'the dyslexics' and 'the non-dyslexics'. This should not be the case. There should not be the need for such a categorisation, which can make an individual feel exposed to their difference. Although each case and individual is remarkably different, by categorising them as 'different', individuals are grouped together, making it harder for them to celebrate their difference. More autobiographical studies and academic journals about dyslexia by dyslexic authors and practitioners, can create more awareness and understanding of dyslexia as a creative set of dispositions. Both the negative and positive attributes associated with experiences of dyslexia can create more points of view. According to Goodley, in his 'Dishuman' manifesto 'disabilism' and 'non-normative' are terms used to consider social, political, cultural and emotional exclusions of people with impairments of any kind (Goodley, 2012). Disabilism is a term introduced by Goodley in his work as the disability version of racism and

sexism. Meaning, society give a certain group negative stigmas and preconceptions, in this instance it would be towards their disability. When it comes to 'Disabilism', Goodley states that society can be 'disabilist' towards people with dyslexia and other learning impairments. This could be in the form of preconceptions, and giving people with dyslexia un-equal rights i.e. putting them in the bottom sets for subjects and not given the support they need. The terms I have used in my study including 'stigmas, preconceptions', fall under the category 'disabilism', and need to be addressed appropriately.

The term 'non-normative' makes us internally reevaluate what we perceive to be 'normal'. Used in the context of education for example, it brings to our attention how much emphasis we have on students passing subjects, so we can then label that student as 'normal'. In reality, every student perceives their subject differently, they may not pass that subject inline with the criteria, but that doesn't mean that they are 'stupid' or 'not normal', especially when they have a learning difficulty. Making the reader reevaluate their own perception of what is 'normal' is Goodley's way of highlighting the positives of being 'not normal'. If we have to categorise people, I would say this is one of the nicest ones I have come across in terms of individuals with learning difficulties, and it doesn't necessarily have negative connotations like being called 'stupid' or 'lazy' (Miles & Varma, 1994). What is normal nowadays? There are so many different paths out of normality, and society is shifting at the minute, whereby being 'non-normative' is a really positive and exciting label, and one that could create a sense of pride and belonging.

In his study 'Learning Difficulties, The Social Model of Disability and impairment: Challenging Epistemologies', Goodley, states that the term 'learning difficulty' has contradictory meanings. The first is that being labelled as someone with a learning difficulty has allowed people to organise themselves and act appropriately in line with the self-advocacy movement, where the individual can stand up for themselves and understand the differences as strengths and to ask for support when necessary. For example, the term 'learning difficulty' can become a negative label in situational and societal settings, and lead to false preconceptions. Being labelled dyslexic

could cause a person to instinctively be perceived as 'thick', 'stupid' or 'lazy' (Goodley, 2012 & Thompson et al, 1994 & Davies, 1995). What Goodley proposes and urges in his study is a mass reconsideration of the label 'learning difficulty'. He suggests we change the way in which we use it and limit the ways in which it can be used (Goodley, 2012). He constructs 4 epistemological approaches within his study that will challenge the the term 'learning difficulty' and the pervasive assumptions attached to it. These epistemological foundations are:

- First: Deconstruct the literature on dyslexia and then the diagnosis criteria, so that the reader can build on their knowledge of dyslexia from the ground up.
- Second: continuously recall stories and anecdotes from people with dyslexia, to give an insight into what the assumptions and pervasive responses are about their learning difficulty and the impact it has on a person.
- Third: reconstruct and reevaluate the term 'learning difficulty' and 'dyslexia', and introduce positives that change the way society perceives these labels.
- Fourth: allow dyslexic voices to be heard throughout to reconstruct and draw attention to the way these assumptions can change society. (Goodley, 2012)

These suggestions draw upon a history of assumptions and experiences from society, educators, dyslexic individuals and Goodley himself, to make a change. His reconstruction of societal failing argues that over time the preconceptions about what a learning difficulty is has become far-fetched but nevertheless disadvantageous to the dyslexic individual (Goodley, 2012).

Barbara Riddick, offers a slightly different perspective. In her text 'Dyslexia and Inclusion: Time for a Social Model of Disability Perspective', she explains that the term disability began when society started to notice that some students weren't conforming to criteria in schools (Riddick, 2001). The idea

that the term disability only came up when someone did not meet certain standards is slightly ludicrous. Riddick suggests that in the future schools may comply and conform to suggestions made by her and other members of the Social Model Perspective. Subsequently, this could help create a curriculum to suit each child and each specific need, rather than the incessant misuse of the word 'failing' because some people are unable to conform to certain standards and ways of learning in line with an existing curriculum (Riddick, 2011).

After examining the Social Model and the various attitudes its theorists have towards dyslexia, I believe that this is far more personal and sensitive towards a persons learning difficulty than the previously discussed Medical Model. Furthermore, we can now move forward into analysing the third and final perspective: the Art and Design intersection Perspective, which takes on Dyslexia from a different angle.

### **Art and Design Intersection Perspective on Dyslexia.**

The Art and Design Intersection Perspective will negotiate the crossovers between the Medical Model and the Social Model. It offers a creative perspective on dyslexia. This section will address various artist studies including Vince Low, Madalyne Marie-Hymas and Daniel Britton, amongst others. I will focus on the correlations between dyslexia and art and the positive attributes associated with this learning difference.

The Art and Design Intersection Perspective is a viewpoint on dyslexia from a creative mind-set, rather than through medical reasons and/or social justifications. This perspective examines the way dyslexic creative practitioners see their own learning difference. It offers an angle on dyslexia that cannot be measured by psychologists or psychiatrists. Unlike the Medical and Social models, which are very measured and assured, the Art and Design perspective is an often unspoken set of viewpoints on dyslexia. The Art and Design perspective includes the ways in which creative practitioners like

myself draw from both the medical and social models to say: 'well actually, creatively, I can explain it better than that'.

It took me a long time to realise I was within the confines of the Art and Design perspective. Creatively exploring dyslexia and using practice-based research to tackle the subject has helped me to develop knowledge and understanding of dyslexia. Drawing upon the facts and figures, which mirror the Medical Model and then the emotional and personalised approach of the Social Model, has informed my artwork.

I am actually a practitioner that explores and explains the medical and social models through my creative findings and lateral perspectives. And my practice is part of a community of other dyslexic creative practitioners who explore the positives associated with dyslexia and who challenge certain medical and social assumptions and misconceptions. For example, Shoo Rayner (Rayner, 2012) explains that "no body is normal" and that a dyslexic's brain is "wired up differently to ordinary peoples". Rayner is trying to eradicate the negative associations made about dyslexia and to highlight the blessings that come with having the learning difference. Rayner narrates his creative thought processes in a way that is not recorded medically or socially. This insight into dyslexia shifts the thought patterns the dyslexic individual has of themselves. Rayner states that "the world is run by left-brain thinkers...language people and mathematical people... and they like everything controlled and ordered" (Rayner, 2012). I believe this highlights the angle an Art and Design perspective has, compared to the Medical and Social Models. The Medical Model is completely run by left-brain thinkers, professionals whose whole life revolves around measurements and facts. Then the Social model which again tackles dyslexia in a very sympathetic way, are also made up of professionals who categorise and confine people with dyslexia. The Art and Design perspective is relative, more humorous and real. Rayner himself states that "us right-brain thinkers, the creative people just don't do that" [he says while laughing], referring to dyslexics not being people who strive for control and order. But people who have been known to make millions, who invent and creatively solve problems like Henry Ford, Thomas Eddison and Albert

Einstein (Griggs. K, 2018). “Chances are, the dyslexic person will end up being the boss and who will be employing those boring left-brain people”. (Griggs. K, 2018)

Rayner explains the incredible advantage that dyslexic people have over non-dyslexics, something that is relatively unheard of and rarely mentioned within the Social and Medical models. I am investigating the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner within my art practice because this is how I also capture the experience of being dyslexic.

**Karen** Tobias-Green in ‘The Role of the Agreement: Art Students, Dyslexia, Reading and Writing’ (Tobias-Green, 2014) expresses her concern that dyslexic students “are likely to have vestigial anxieties about reading and writing” an area I touch upon later in the thesis. She also highlights that there should be an established long line of agreements in order to aid the dyslexic individual predominantly in the education system which would help to further support the educational experiences. These agreements are categorised within Tobias-Green’s study, as follows:

‘The Institutional Agreement’ – in any institution, during the interview or induction process they should explain the nature of the course, being sensitive to the demands of the course to each individual student and the expectations required of the student. This will lead to the student either accepting or rejecting those conditions and expectations. If the agreement is accepted, the student will take full responsibility for his or her educational needs and to maintain a transparent and honest working relationship with the tutors and visa-versa (Tobias-Green, 2014). With such an agreement, it creates a healthy dialogue and commitment between both the student and institution to benefit both parties.

‘The Diagnostic Agreement’ - this includes adequate screening for dyslexia, with the provision of support in mind. Furthermore, an agreement to act on the reasonable adjustments needed for the individual at any given time, referring back to their Student’s Needs Adjustment Report (Tobias-Green, 2014).

The Educational Agreement - This is a learning contract that exists in some institutions already, where the student might need specific and holistic tutorials on the subject area outside of the general every day curriculum. This offers the student a more opportunistic, unique and personalised way of learning to suit their individual needs. This offers the student to be able to learn at a level accessible to them. In return the student will comply with the demands of the institution, prioritise their newfound development and agree to access the support offered in this section of the agreement (Tobias-Green, 2014).

Agreements put forth by Tobias-Green, are also implemented at a University where she is the Course Leader for creative writing. In this institution dyslexic students are offered a weekly one-to-one meeting with their tutor in order to comply with the Educational Agreement, but also really fulfil the needs of that individual and assess their progression and development. The students are able to read their writing, talk about difficulties and anxieties of the workload, at a pace and specificity that comes with personalised mentoring. In the conclusion of 'The Role of the Agreement' Tobias-Green argues that making a change like this is difficult and that it starts from the bottom, referring to implementation at a local level. By allowing art students the time and transparency required by these agreements benefits the student and the institution. It also radically changes the way dyslexics perceive the written word; from being something that causes them anxiety (Tobias-Green, 2014. Miles and Varma, 1994) to an expressive way of analysing their own creativity, freedom of expression and broaden their chances of accessible research aiding their studies.

Artist Mark Johansen (Johansen. M, 2016) explains in his talk on 'The Creative Process from a Dyslexics Point of View' that dyslexic people are faced with so many questions, which leads to unimaginable and outside of the box outcomes. He uses an analogy from primary school to help clarify his point:

Statements like ‘the cat is sat on the mat’ introduces more questions for example; why is the cat sat on the mat, where is this cat, how big is the mat, what does the cat look like, what does the mat look like, is the cat tired...That is what its like being dyslexic, having 300 questions thrown at you (Johansen, 2016).

This process of questioning, rationalising and analysing the world is where the creative process begins. Being given the simple task of read “the cat is sat on the mat” is for most people a matter of fact. However, for a dyslexic person the possibilities are endless. The dyslexic person knows what the task is and how to do it, but to make those decisions and have the courage to think outside the box is the difficulty “because you’ve got to sort all the stuff going on in your head to make it a reality” (Johansen, 2016). For me, this way of thinking is not registered in the medical and social models.

Kate Griggs, founder of *Made by Dyslexia* speaks about dyslexia in her TED Talk in Brighton called ‘The Creative Brilliance of Dyslexia’ (Griggs. K, 2018). She includes amazing insights into dyslexia and explains the positive dispositions of dyslexia. Griggs explains that U-gov found some hard-hitting facts about the public perceptions and misconceptions around dyslexia, which found that “only 3% of people see dyslexia as an advantage” (Griggs. 2018). With the amount of extensive research that has uncovered dyslexia to be the gift it is, still in 2018, only 3% see it as nothing but a disability and disadvantage. Griggs goes onto say that in the “real world dyslexia is an advantage, whereas in the education system, it is a disadvantage...unless those people are picked up early, given the right support and we then focus on their strengths” (Griggs, 2018). If more emphasis was made into the teaching and training of educational professionals about dyslexia, more students would be diagnosed early and there would be an intervention. This would have a knock on effect to other rather negative dispositions that are associated with dyslexia.

Similar to the Medical model, Griggs states that our education system is obsessed with “conformity and measurement” and that education on a whole

is very narrow-minded system (Griggs. K, 2018). This realisation supports the earlier work done by Riddick who states that dyslexic people do not conform to the strict and regimented criteria of subjects in school (Riddick. B, 2001). She writes:

When children start primary school 97% of them are lateral thinkers, by the time they leave primary school that goes down to just 43% so all of that creativity has been squeezed out. (Griggs, 2018).

Griggs explains that the brain is a muscle and when we don't use a muscle it deteriorates. Creativity is an activity that works the muscle. Griggs states:

Why don't we actually instead of taking these amazing dyslexic minds and squashing them into an education system that doesn't fit and calls them disabled and disadvantaged, why don't we open up the education system, why don't we teach all children the creativity and the innovation so they can actually LEARN TO THINK LIKE A DYSLEXIC. (Griggs, 2018)

By flipping the research done by most professionals within the Medical and Social Models, I believe this perspective can help to shift the stigma and start to reward individuals with dyslexia. "Learn like a dyslexic" ... is a positive testimonial to people who struggle with the difficulty. This specifically is something I want to draw attention too throughout the study and with my creative portfolio.

In the journal called 'Writing PAD' artist studies contextualise areas of learning progression using creative practice. Academic writing about creative practice focuses on different themes such as society, education and politics which will help future students to better understand the power that art has on the world.

Writing PAD, has 4 key aims and objectives (Writing Pad, 2016). These include; raise consciousness of the way we explore art, how we write about it and how we let research impact our practice. To enhance our learning, and to

provide support for those studying. Writing PAD aims to be a catalyst for innovation, invite change and encourage debates, and they enable wider levels of research for those still in education. The last objective of Writing PAD, which is similar to the last one, is to 'broker change' they connect and contact suitable groups which could broaden the research of the individual. Fantastic aims such as these, on a national scale, are such an uplifting thought (Writing PAD, 2016).

Jane Charlton (2008) in the first volume of *The Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* explains the relationship between art and conditions including dyslexia in more detail. She describes an exhibition, which included the art works of ex-offenders, someone with Obsessive Compulsive Order, artists with various multiple-personality disorders, and some artists with dyslexia. The dyslexic art student who studies at York St John's University crafted contemporary pieces out of books. During Kim's first year at university her grandfather wrote her countless letters and she was encouraged to use these letters in her artwork. The idea being that whilst she was once frightened by the written word but it was now something that brought her joy, entitlement and something she was then complimented and congratulated on. By challenging preconceptions of everyday struggles, various conditions and their relation to creative outlets, Writing PAD is a good example of an Art and Design intersection perspective, which uses research in creative practice to address dyslexia from a different viewpoint rather than categorising it medically or socially.

### **Art and Design Perspective on Dyslexia: Artist Studies.**

As mentioned in the earlier sections, it is well documented within the literature that despite struggling with reading, writing and spelling (NHS, N/D), dyslexia sufferers tend to excel in more physical and creative attributes, for example, sports, music, art and film (Fleming, 2011; Morin, 2015; National Literacy Trust, 2016). This is especially true within the arts, which is why this section will go onto to explore the correlation between dyslexia and art with the

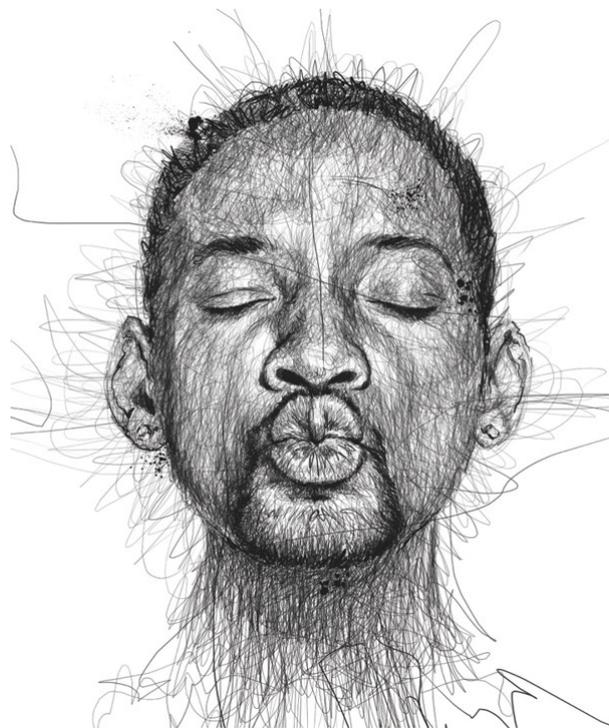
intention to further expand upon the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

Extensive studies have shown that art students have significantly weaker phonological skills such as listening skills, syllable structure and the sound structures of languages (Stanovich. K, 1994) compared to students on non-artistic courses (Wolffe & Lundberg, 2002. Chakravarty, 2009). Overall, struggles with phonological skills and the more commonly known reading, writing and spelling, were contrasted with a heightened sense of spatial awareness and creative activity. This can be shown through the success of celebrated artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, August Rodin and Pablo Picasso, all recognised as dyslexia sufferers (Middlesex University London, 2010; Telegraph 2010). Due to their unique ability to visualise 3D objects, rather than learning academically, dyslexics tend to be visual learners (The University of Melbourne, 2015). This hypothesis alone could show us why dyslexics are overrepresented on art courses and prove their success in the creative field. As a result, this suggests why art can be an understandable and accessible way to communicate and educate others about dyslexia.

People with dyslexia tend to learn in a more visual way. It makes sense to translate their emotions and stories along with information, with the process of making art. Dyslexics tend to be very good narrative thinkers, they can imagine a story, excel in creative writing and remember things that made them visualise something. Having such narrative reasoning allows them to improve their memory, recognition and integrate contexts better than when they can't depict information or decode it somehow.

After reviewing the correlation between dyslexia and art, I will now go onto to discuss a handful of artists who also use dyslexia as a catalyst to raise awareness of the disorder with their own creative practices. This includes a variety of platforms and techniques. These artistic creations raise awareness, teach, and portray dyslexia as a gift, not a hindrance (Headstrong Nation, 2013; Kulich, 2015).

The first is Vince Low who found himself being diagnosed throughout his project about dyslexia, by spending 24 hours doing one piece, he made a spelling mistake during his drawing of Metallica's front man, James Hetfield, leading him to start all over again. Additionally, Low's work supported his viewers to also go and get diagnosed (Low, 2015). The project as a whole was a commission to produce three portraits for the Dyslexia Association of Malaysia, with the intent to raise awareness of the cause. Once the project got underway, because of the magnitude of responses and functionality of the three portraits, he was then further commissioned to produce another 25 pieces. Using a distinctive style, he created portraits of celebrities who suffer with dyslexia, these personalities include: Michael Jackson, the late Heath Ledger, Will Smith, Lionel Messi and Morgan Freeman, a surprising list of superstars from legendary actors to professional football players. Low states that he chose such high profile figures to calculate that dyslexia is not a curse but a gift, relating to quotes from publishers in the Telegraph (2015; Low, 2015). All portraits created by Low, were drawn in a 'scribbly' technique using fine black pens, which occasionally features text, i.e., a name or slogan (Ganesan, N/D), Low claims that by using this chaotic 'scribbly' style, his pieces express "artistic order from the chaos of pen lines" (Low, 2015). This quote shows how dyslexic individuals attempt to make order from the chaos from the written word. Low has an ever-growing social reach, with 95 thousand followers over all of his social media accounts: Facebook, (Low, 2016a), Twitter, (Low, 2016b) Instagram, (Low, 2016c). Articles written about him include, interviews and publications from *The Daily Mail* (McCann, 2013) and *The Star* (Ganesan, 2014). As an artist he bases his creative practice and portfolio around dyslexia, proving that art is an accessible, relatable and an enjoyable way to inform the public about learning difficulties such as dyslexia.



'Will Smith' by Vince Low, 2015.

A filmmaker who calls himself the 'Dyslexic Dada', is a community based artist/ filmmaker/ painter (Juggins, 2015) who, because his kids and him suffer with dyslexia, he tends to devote his time to creative practice like Low, to raise awareness of dyslexia. His website states he has 'devoted 16 years tirelessly raising greater awareness and appreciation of dyslexia' (Dyslexic Dada, 2015). Whilst highlighting through the use of video and motion graphics the different dispositions of dyslexia. His most recognised and appreciated work was a short video called 'We are Dyslexic' (YouTube, 2013). 'We are Dyslexic' features dyslexia sufferers speaking openly about having dyslexia whilst at school and in the workplace. Using white and black imagery and visual and audio affects, filled with diary like abstracts involving dyslexia sufferers talking candidly about their experiences in such situations. What this video does is give an insight into how it feels to have dyslexia and give the onlooker's a perspective into what it would be like, and what situations some dyslexic individuals feel disheartened or useless in, i.e. the workplace and in the classroom. Despite the concept and the powerful message the video portraying dyslexia is from a local artist and it has 211 views (YouTube, 2013). Regardless of his low view count, it miraculously portrays his intentions as an artist and supports my on going investigation.

A dyslexic artist/designer from Southsea England, Sam Barclay, states that

when he was at school he always wondered why a lot of time was spent trying to help him read better, whilst little time was spent helping those around him understand what it was like to be dyslexic. And he wondered how to approach that using his artwork (Reedeng, 2016). Therefore, in order to challenge this, Barclay launched a Kickstarter campaign in 2013 (Barclay, 2016a) (See Appendix, Figure 8 & 9) to raise money to develop a book that aims to help non-dyslexic individuals understand the struggles people with the learning difficulty face every day. To date over 1500 people have donated to the project and Barclay has raised over fifty-five thousand pounds, this is nearly four times more than his initial fourteen thousand five hundred pound target (Barclay, 2016a).

Named, 'I Wonder What it's Like to be Dyslexic', Barclay's book "aims to provide the reader with a beautiful, design led experience of what it feels like to struggle with reading and is packed full with typographic experiments along with facts about language and dyslexia" (Reedeeng, 2016). Some of these experiments include the use of a distorted, quartered and misspelt font created by Barclay that aims to slow down the reading pace of non-dyslexics to that of a dyslexic person. Additionally Barclay also uses various brainteasers, including writing the names of colours (e.g. red) in alternative coloured font (e.g. yellow). He then encourages individuals to read the name of the coloured font out loud in an attempt to confuse them, this again is meant to simulate the confusion felt by dyslexic individuals. Throughout the book Barclay has also included pages dedicated to presenting interesting and informative facts about the learning difference.

Overall, this interactive and informative book is a fun and educational way to communicate messages about dyslexia that is accessible to dyslexics and non-dyslexic individuals alike. Not only does it present the reader with facts about dyslexia, but also the experiments and brainteasers allow the reader to experience what it is like to be dyslexic first hand. Overall the success of Barclay's Kickstarter campaign shows the need for projects that not only raise awareness of dyslexia, but also educate individuals on what it is like to be dyslexic. However, despite the success of this campaign, Sam Barclay

remains a relatively unheard of artist, with under 500 followers across sites such as Twitter (Barclay, 2016b) and Instagram (Barclay, 2016c).

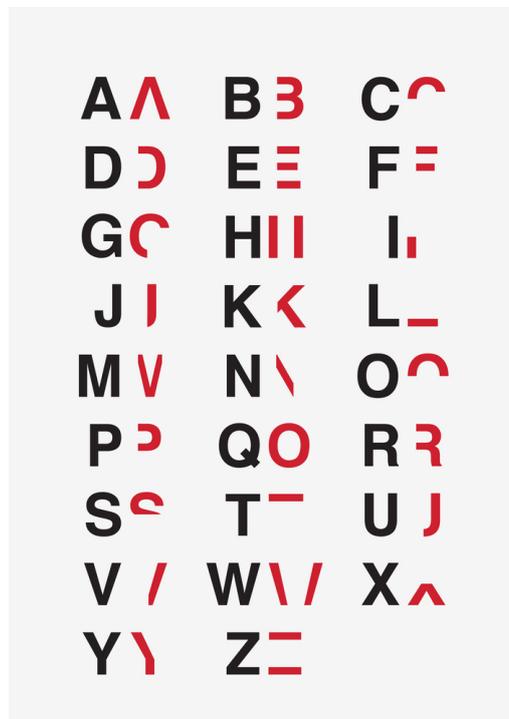


'I wonder what it's like to be dyslexic' by Sam Barclay, 2015.



'I wonder what it's like to be dyslexic' by Sam Barclay, 2015.

Another artist that has explored the use of font in raising awareness of dyslexia is Daniel Britton (Howard, 2015). Britton describes that dyslexia is still "scrutinised as a condition" (Bullen, 2015). Similar to Barclay, Britton has created a typeface that aims to slow down the reading time of a person without the learning difficulty. Using plain black Helvetica font, Britton takes forty per cent of each letter/number and either takes it away or colours it in red. Work by Barclay and Britton suggested to me that working with typography was highly successful and lead me to create work using some of my own creativity, which is featured in the appendix. This technique makes the text incredibly difficult to read and achieves his intention of slowing the reader down. In addition Britton also plays with the size of letters and presents them in unorganized compositions on the page. An example of this is in one of his pieces that reads, "Reading slower than normal?" (Davies, 2015). Overall as well as slowing the reader down, these formations can be interpreted as symbolizing confusion, messiness and how overwhelming it can be for dyslexic individuals to read. Britton attempts to recreate what it is like to read as a dyslexic, to show the frustration and the embarrassment that comes with having to struggle to read every day. Like Barclay, Britton is currently trying to raise money through Crowd funder (Barclay, 2016a) to create a dyslexia awareness pack for children based around his typography work. However, this has been less successful than Barkley's campaign and similarly despite being featured in the *Daily Mail* (Symcox, 2015), he is still very much below the radar.



'No name' by Daniel Britton, 2015.



'No name' by Daniel Britton, 2015.

The penultimate artist who raises awareness of dyslexia goes by the name of Madelyne Marie-Hymas (2013) During her studies Marie- Hymas was featured in the National Exhibition for Emerging Artists with Disabilities with a project named 'The Dyslexic Advantage'. This body of work contained installations, wall pieces and structures to allow the viewer/s to interact whilst

becoming more educated on the true meaning of having the learning difference. One piece from the exhibition contained six wooden letters, which with no instruction or restrictions could make forty-eight varieties of words. In conjunction alongside the letters, other sub-pieces formed a general idea for the exhibition, which is to debunk the myth surrounding the capabilities of dyslexia as a learning difficulty, whilst highlighting the advantages of carrying that label.

To sum up, 'The Dyslexic Advantage' is a prime instance of a selection of artwork to serve one purpose, which is to highlight and focus on multiple different issues surrounding dyslexia and all the new issues discussed in the research. From debunking myths and presenting facts, to presenting sufferers personal experiences of dyslexia.



'The Dyslexic Advantage' by Madaline Marie Hymas, 2013.

Angelina Mazzanti is an artist who in a report for DM news, called herself the "Double D" (DM News, 2014). Angelina Mazzanti who suffers with both dyslexia and diabetes was diagnosed at a very early age, 6 years old and still at primary school, when she was having reading difficulties. A quote in the

report claims, “art gave her the space to breathe in what was an otherwise stressful educational environment”. This came after Mazzanti stating that learning was a “constant struggle” (DM News, 2014). This idea considers that education is a stressful system and that art creates a sense of freedom and comfort for all pupils not only with dyslexia. It wasn’t until later on in high school that Mazzanti was diagnosed with the second of the “D’s” Diabetes. Struggling with the health problems diabetes face, one of which was blurry vision, it left Mazzanti with no other choice but to sharpen her other senses and she found herself to be very artistic.

During 2014 and onwards, Mazzanti exhibited her work about dyslexia in a show called All Jumped Up (DM News, 2014). The display was purely to explain dyslexia and her dealings with it, and to also inform members of the public about the learning difference. The installation artist declares that “Through the years the order of letters and words have always appeared rearranged in my brain”, some dyslexics will understand this process, some will see that their stories vary somewhat, as every case of dyslexia is different but you can see here the challenges individuals who are diagnosed with dyslexia face. “Today I still have trouble organising words and emphasizing syllables in sentences and paragraphs” (DM News, 2014). Art in this case like the other examples described above, have been used a crutch for people to create a platform on which they can achieve and excel.

Finally, what we can conclude from this section is how by using creative outputs such as art and artistic prevalence we can argue that various artistic strategies can most certainly be useful and pertinent tools. Reasons being that:

1. Art can raise awareness of certain issues, in the case of Low, Hymas, Mazzanti and others, their work raises awareness of dyslexia.
2. That creative practice is an area which many dyslexic individuals excel in, for reasons that have unfolded throughout the research. It is also an accessible and understandable source and way of articulating some of

the experiences associated with dyslexia, in a way that we could not express through academia alone.

To conclude this section on the various different perspectives on dyslexia, I have explored the Medical, Social and Art & Design viewpoints on how dyslexia should be perceived. Addressing the different perspectives on dyslexia allows the reader and myself as a creative practitioner to consider all aspects and experiences before coming to a conclusion. I have also highlighted various artists who express and showcase dyslexia in line with the Art and Design intersection perspective, drawing upon their practice-based research to investigate the learning difference. Using the Medical, Social and Art & Design perspectives, I will now explore both the negative and positive attributes associated with dyslexia to further investigate the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

### **Negative Dispositions.**

In this section I will explore the relatively unexplored negative dispositions of the dyslexic individual. This consists of identifying characteristics. This section will refer to theorists such as Pauc, Camber and refer back to the work of Miles and Varma. It must be at the forefront of this discussion that no two cases of dyslexia are the same (Pauc, 2017). Pauc claims that each example of dyslexia will have a “unique presentation for that individual” (Pauc, 2017), how they perceive it, handle it and deter it. As previously mentioned, the NHS state that the main difficulties dyslexic individuals face are simply spelling, reading and writing (NHS). But it can also appear in social situations and emotional development (Camber, 2007).

Simply, an individual with dyslexia can be interpreted as stupid (Thompson et al., 1994). Subsequently, this could have a detrimental effect on that individuals confidence issues and self esteem. Miles and Varma approach the idea of other physical symptoms surfacing themselves as a result of this

reoccurring pattern leading to increased stress levels. These can take the form of; migraines, nail biting and abdominal pain (Miles and Varma, 1994). Someone struggling with low self esteem would suggest why some students are prone to academic failings with 35% of dyslexic individuals dropping out of school at the age of 16 in 2012 (Al Lamki, 2012). It also suggests how a shortage of understanding of the learning difficulty, specifically dyslexia in this case can cause detrimental effects later in life (Moody, 2000). And lead to further misunderstandings and preconceptions.

The term 'Phonological Dyslexia' is a name used for individuals who have difficulty with sounds of 'letters or groups of letters' (Brown, N/A). These sounds can be misheard or jumbled up, making instructions, directions, and rules very difficult to follow. Important information like this, which is missed, can unfortunately have a knock on effect on how an individual is perceived by others, including teachers, parents and peers (Davies. C, 1995). This occurs when the student/individual becomes increasingly stressed in situations usually in school or the workplace where their phonological dyslexia becomes more of an issue.

Another aspect of life that a dyslexic sufferer could struggle with is their career and employment successes. Currently, there is a higher demand for more knowledge and professionalism. Consequently, for someone who battles with "reading", "writing" and "spelling", simple things like getting the best out of their CV's when applying for jobs, interview processes if successful and training once the job is secure and keeping up with general tasks that need to be accomplished when in the job role (NHS, 2015). Recently, an article written in the BBC News called "I was told dyslexia was the long word for stupid" (BBC, 2016) was initially written after a dyslexic woman won a disability discrimination case against Starbucks. The article later went on to interview other people with dyslexia; a dyslexic technician explains that there are "different degrees of dyslexia, like there is of autism" (Henderson, BBC News, 2016). The technician goes onto explain that when reading something, he speed reads it, then has to go back and read the same body of text 3 to 4

times to understand it. This perfectly explains what some dyslexic individuals, including myself, experience. Another interviewee claims that teachers used to humiliate him in front of the entire class, because they believed he was stupid and ridiculed his 'sub-standard work' (Henderson, BBC News, 2016). Storey, explains that he actually moved schools, to go to one that understood and cared for him better. He believes the biggest problem lies with the lack of knowledge most teachers have about dyslexia (Henderson, BBC News, 2016). Cases like these heighten why research needs to be done and steps need to be put into place to better understand dyslexia and how this can dramatically change people's perceptions of it. These are some of the reasons why I have chosen to undergo the topic of raising awareness of dyslexia and challenge the stigmas associated with it, by considering some of the creative dispositions I myself hold as a dyslexic practitioner. Clearly studies have been done but never ones that include a creative investigation, which could express ideas differently or target a different audience in order for it to change outcomes.

However, Dyslexia isn't all struggles and gloom, it can also give that person a huge advantage of seeing the world from a completely innovative and unique view. Preconceptions and stigmas surrounding dyslexia are all too often misplaced and negative, however in the following section I will highlight the positives and assess key literature to support this.

### **Positive Dispositions.**

Learning difficulties such as dyslexia, as a whole, are split into subcategories, those specific to one or more skill sets. These tags, which are becoming increasingly accepted, include: Dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, phonological (auditory) dyslexia and visual dyslexia (Brown, N/A). In 'Understanding Learning Difficulties' Brown (Brown, N/A), highlights that some dyslexic individuals have a compromised process that occurs when eyes retain information to pass onto the brain, calling it a 'processing disorder'. Information that is passed incorrectly into the brain allows for mistakes and malfunctions to happen, developing poor comprehension of the information. A

complex process like this can result in number and letter reversals and an inability to write symbols and sentences that we now know are formulas of dyslexia (Brown, N/A). Individuals with these characteristics generally find solace in other aspects of their life, through positive attributes such as; humour, physicality, creative expression, and also often truancy like we have previously discussed (Miles and Varma, 1994).

There have been copious amounts of research done on the correlation between dyslexia and art. Theorists such as Wolff & Lundberg describe that their findings highlight that art students show significantly more signs of dyslexia and poorer phonological skills than non-art students (Wolff & Lundberg, 2002). To reinforce this study, reports by *The Telegraph* go onto highlight and inform the public of dyslexic artists. This generates a new dialogue of understanding that there is a very real possibility and in some cases proof that being dyslexic has a direct link with your phonological brain, causing significant improvement with creativity and innovation (Telegraph 2010). This section will focus on dyslexia and positive attributes.

I would like to demonstrate and display one of the strategies I use to trick my brain into performing the best and most effective way it can through the use of lists: “You can’t overcome dyslexia; you can work around it and make it work for you” (Benacerraf, 2017). These can include, lists/bullet points, drawings, mind maps, some of which I have put into practice throughout this project. Ironically, a substantial amount of writing can be daunting for most people who have dyslexia, in this case, writing lists stops the sporadic thought process and contains information in a very clean and precise way. Below is a list of amazing dispositions dyslexics excel in, which will be highlighted and brought to your attention, from small skills to professional artists who have mastered creative perfection by embracing their learning difference, for example; Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol and Auguste Rodin (Boddy Evans, 2017):

- Imagination- Abstract thinkers, dyslexics usually are very imaginative. Dyslexic individuals more often than not have a keen sense of curiosity

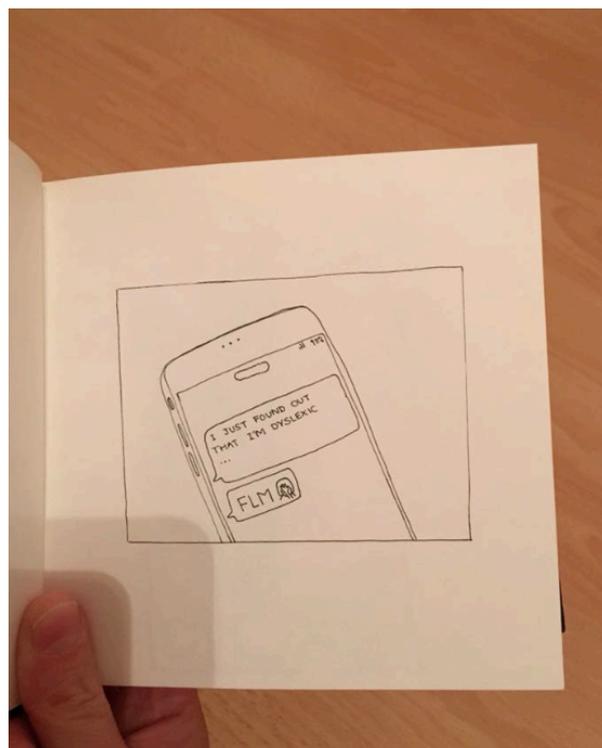
and are very questionable about certain things; they can see the world from a different perspective. Having the ability to fantasize and create something unknown. This could explain the amount of actors, artists, actors and musicians that are diagnosed with dyslexia (The University of Michigan, 2018).

- Empathizers- Facing challenges with your reading and writing, as well as possible emotional challenges too can be the catalyst for a dyslexic individual being very empathetic. Experiencing difficulties like this allows for that person to come across very sincere and genuine with other people. Thus making a dyslexic individual very likable and someone people open up too, as they can be very honest and open about their struggles (The University of Michigan, 2018).
- Spatial awareness- Many dyslexics excel in fields such as construction, architecture and engineering; the University of East London founded this when they did a study on memory of a virtual environment. The results of which suggested that young dyslexics have incredible capabilities in this area, showing impressive signs of recognition and memory of a virtual reality (The University of Michigan, 2018).

A study led by Catya von Károlyi of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (Schneps, N/A) focused on a famous etching by M.C. Escher (Schneps, N/A) called 'Waterfall'. 'Waterfall' is an architectural sketch of a waterwheel. As we all know, water runs down onto a water wheel into a body of water, it's not a cycle, i.e., the same water does not run back onto the wheel, fresh water does. However, the 'Waterfall' displays a detailed drawing of the water running into the waterwheel, rotating the wheel, running down from the wheel, continuing uphill, defying gravity and then restarting the cycling again down to the wheel. This is physically impossible. It violates everything we know to be true therefore it is called a 'logical oddity'; we find humour in it (Schneps, N/A). Participants were asked to pick out the drawing that did not violate causality, a

plausibleness that we can comprehend, like the laws of gravity (Schneps, N/A). Interestingly, those participants with dyslexia were very quick to be able to depict the odd one out. There is a level of spatial awareness that dyslexics have that makes them different to those without dyslexia. This visual harmony when you have the ability to spot a visual problem, must come as such a relief when surrounded by subjects dyslexics usually struggle with, for example; reading, writing and spelling (NHS).

Interestingly Christopher Tonkin, a dyslexic scientist describes his own sensitivity to things that are out of place or not in order (Schneps, N/A). He claims he is easily bothered by 'weeds growing amongst the flowers in his garden' (Schneps, N/A), and other visual anomalies, which cause visual and emotional discomfort. This is something I can relate too. I have to use the same types of sketchbooks, of which I only ever use a fresh page on the right hand side and not the page behind a used page, which you can see below, have an immaculate desk, with nothing on the walls, all meaning that I need physical space and calmness to be able to think and process my thoughts every day. This can also manifest in how I like to have a tidy living space, a tidy car. This is an incredibly positive and optimistic skill to possess.



(Reid, 2017)

One of the main positive dispositions connected with dyslexia is the link between dyslexia and creativity. This being the central focus of my investigation into the dispositions of being a dyslexic creative practitioner. I will now explore the correlation between the two elements within the confines of my creative practice.

### **Methodology in Practice.**

This methodology section is centered on the curation of an exhibition 'Am I Stupid?' held at Heritage Quay, University of Huddersfield in 2018. The following section outlines the range of methods applied throughout the research and considers how the practice-based investigation has been undertaken.

Theorists Candy, Nelson and Davies suggest art is an important tool for a dyslexic individual and one that can be very relatable and accessible. Robin Nelson explains that 'practice-based research acts as a toolkit for creative practitioners to be able to generate pieces of artwork' (Nelson, 2013). Throughout this project and my previous studies, practice-based research has become increasingly useful. As I have previously explained creative theorists Griggs and Tobias-Green open up more doors of understanding to allow for ways to subcategorise findings within my own creative practice. Using illustration to highlight my experiences of dyslexia and to re-tell stories from other dyslexic individuals feeds the creative practice. Furthermore, my literature review has informed my creative processes. This is why I believe my study falls in line with my Art and Design perspective.

This is part of making steps to understand the world around us. Practice-based research also lends itself to visual thinkers such as artists and other creative intellectuals. According to The Glasgow School of Art (2008) 50% of their students have the learning difficulty, dyslexia. The main source of

information for this study has involved interactions with others and the making of work in order to depict and understand the findings of my research. Using stories from other people, through the use of interviews for example, has broadened my knowledge and understanding of dyslexia, thus informing the background research for this project. I have done this by making artwork that directly correlates to stories I have been told about dyslexia, including illustration 'Durex paint' (Appendix 4), whereby someone always got confused between the brands 'durex' and 'dulux'. That person was me.

Throughout this project, I have discovered more qualities in my artwork, more styles and techniques that have emerged for me to explore dyslexia in the most effective way possible. I have explored dyslexia through the use of humour, information, narrative and optical illusions (See appendix 21). This will be explored in more detail later in the section on my creative practice called Am I Stupid? Candy (Candy, N/A) suggests that whilst a written investigation is valid and substantial, the investigation can only reach its full 'significance and context' (Candy, N/A) when partnered with the practice-based research. My written work has a substantial argument about the importance of early diagnosis and the correlation between dyslexia and art, but reaches its full potential when paired up with my creative portfolio 'Am I Stupid' which showcases and strengthens those arguments. The main strength of the investigation is the in-depth enquiry into my creative processes into dyslexia and how this feeds into the written research. For example, the Am I Stupid exhibition was the biggest collection of tangible qualitative and quantitative data that I have gathered to support this investigation. This has fed my creative practice. Practice-based research was the most efficient way of investigating the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

Furthermore, dyslexia can be a sensitive issue for many, and one that comes along with a variety of ethical issues, which need to be established before using research methods, practical and otherwise. These include: questionnaires, interviews, social media and responses and reactions.

## **Questionnaires and Interview Process**

Questionnaires have been useful for this research, for gaining responses from a range of people. The questionnaire can be open or closed. I have used both strategies. Questionnaires can also be done using different variations of sampling, including random sampling, and this targets a certain audience. From gaining responses from a wide range of people, you will more than likely get varied answers and opinions that will benefit the research or project. Another advantage of including questionnaires in my research was that individuals are more likely to feel comfortable and give a full and real response to the questions when given an opportunity for anonymity.

Interviews were also part of this research. Along with a reoccurring theme in the questionnaires, anonymity was offered even when participating in the interview process. The interviews took place in a comfortable environment and involved open questions that could be answered both freely and honestly. What is significant to note is that only volunteers were selected for the interviews. These volunteers were of an age where they could give consent. They received a disclosure form in which they could opt whether they were comfortable and understood whether they would or would not like their responses used for the research. The method of an interview for this study allowed me, the interviewer, to see the responses and engage with the participant and make it more of an informal liaison. This for artists allows another element to come to light, which benefitted the research; this was the personal aspect of it, the feelings, emotions and connections in the responses to aid and support the creative process of making. This is especially significant when dealing with a personal and individual issue such as dyslexia for either the dyslexic individual or the family and friends of that person.

### **Utilising Feedback**

The ever-growing prevalence and use of social media is widespread and international. For artists in various strands such as art, film and music even sports personalities, it is somewhere to advertise yourself and become known

to the many. It is also a stage and a platform from which you can gain responses and comments. Through taking the initiative and trying reaching a wider audience, I took to Facebook early in 2016 and created a Facebook page for my artwork from where I could ask questions, gauge reactions, and engage with the audiences who have chosen to follow it (Am I Stupid?, 2015). Whilst also posting pictures, surveys and questionnaires to an already engaged audience. Doing this opened up a conversation and broke the silence on a fairly stigmatized issue. In April 2018 the Am I Stupid Facebook page has 295 likes, with both international and national connections. This kind of stage allows me to reach people across the world, other artists, dyslexic individuals and associations. This allows for more responses and to showcase my artwork outside of exhibitions and university.

### **Curated Exhibition Rationale**

Am I Stupid? (See Appendix, Figure 2) was a way to understand my own dyslexia, but also teach other people about it whilst ironically struggling throughout my studies. Raising awareness challenges and eradicates existing preconceptions of dyslexia, of being branded “lazy” and or “stupid” (Davies, c. 1995). The work produced for the Am I Stupid exhibition not only reflects my own experiences of dyslexia but also evaluates and explores various types of dyslexia, to give a deeper enquiry into the investigation as we can see. I have allowed secondary research, interviews, questionnaires and surveys to inform the artwork for this exhibition, which gives an audience an understanding of what it means to be dyslexic. Without the exhibition, I believe the outcome of the investigation would have been different and I as a dyslexic practitioner wouldn't have been able to express myself in the same way, it would have been very two dimensional and one-way. Having a platform to receive feedback and responses at the exhibition meant that I could see whether the investigation was valid. I used methods of a qualitative nature upon both arriving and departing the exhibition, which I could then collect and read to inform my argument. I found out that 70% of the people who viewed my exhibition left having felt they had learnt something about this specific learning difficulty. A lot of people who came to see the exhibition were dyslexic

students. This meant that some people left the exhibition feeling noticed and hopeful. Holding an exhibition under these circumstances helps to educate the public about the certain dispositions and characteristics of a dyslexic individual to allow for a wider level of understanding and a more comprehensive overview of the differences.

### **Presentation Rationale**

This project consists of illustrations and installations that not only are intricate and powerful in their own right, but also create an illusion and experience that immerses the audience when viewing the artwork as a whole. The experience is that the second the audience steps into the artwork, they instantly feel what it would be like to have the learning difficulty and become familiar with the certain dispositions of a dyslexic individual.

Am I Stupid? is a series based project fuelled by practice based research, feedback, anecdotes and humour most importantly which is explored throughout the study (See appendix, Figure 1). What this art project does is create an approachable and understandable way for such a vast audience to get to grips with the subject dyslexia. To illustrate this, during a survey in 2017, it was highlighted that 92% of the people who were reached by the survey thought that the public were not informed enough about dyslexia (Reid, 2017). As a contemporary practitioner, I decided it was extremely important and prevalent that I hold an exhibition for my 'Am I Stupid?' project. This was to increase outreach, create a brand, get feedback, showcase my artwork and most importantly showcase my artwork. During the exhibition, a presentation was made spanning one wall of the exhibition space. On this wall featured a slideshow on a continuous reel. Each slide was dedicated to one of my anxieties, the following slide allowed me to showcase one specific illustration that I could identify with that anxiety (See Appendix 5). This allowed me to visualise the link between my own negative dispositions and low self esteem with my learning difficulty. Highlighting such a link was not done to prove that every person who has a learning difficulty suffers mental health. In fact it showed that it can in some cases be associated with other

dispositions like ADHD, Anxiety and possibly some forms of mental health (Al Lamki, 2012).

The exhibition Am I Stupid? was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, in Heritage Quay, which is based at the University of Huddersfield. Described as a one woman show by the Huddersfield Examiner (Stelfox, 2018), the curation of the exhibition was installed with the intention of educating the public about dyslexia, to raise awareness of issues linked with dyslexia and showcase the artwork in a clean and professional way. This allowed more leeway for freedom of expression, personal interpretation of the artwork, whilst also highlighting a certain aspect of my own learning difficulty. That particular way of working is very concise, tidy and minimalist, something that I put into practice in my personal life, which we have addressed when discussing the positive dispositions. What this does is allow me more space to think and arrange my thoughts in a way that is necessary for me to work and act in the best way possible.

During the exhibition, a large group of PGCE students visited and I gave them a talk about my artwork and my ideas. This was specifically important because it was to educate future teachers about dyslexia and the correlation with low self-esteem. They were extremely interested and I gained some amazing feedback. Based on a qualitative strategy I used at my exhibition, it was found that two thirds of the visitors to the exhibition left feeling like they knew more about dyslexia. This was proof for myself as a creative practitioner that I was making something worthwhile and successful. It was an amazing feeling to close the exhibition and recall all the feedback people had given me throughout the day. After the exhibition, I also posted on social media to gain further responses.

Online representation and coverage was extremely beneficial for the exhibition, with members of the public attending, not only students and staff members from the university. Through the use of social media, my scope grew instantly, and so did the amount of people that could reach my online surveys and questionnaires, so the answers I got were more varied.

Anonymous surveys and Questionnaires were integral to my practice-based research and informed my creative outcomes (Nelson. R, 2012). It gave me insider knowledge on different types of dyslexia and the different forms it may take. This gave me a broader understanding of the topic in discussion, and eventually supported me in my investigation into the dispositions of a dyslexic artist.

The appendix and online portfolio provides documentation of the work I have produced for this project. Furthermore, I have highlighted the work of other artists such as Vince Low and Madalyne Marie-Hymas amongst others alongside the running commentary from my academic research into dyslexia and anxiety. I have also addressed how different aspects of the methodology have aided the creative process.

### **Life Writing.**

In this section I will explain my journey to how I have decided to research dyslexia and also my journey as a creative practitioner. Exploring these will give you an insight into my own learning difficulty whilst highlighting the routes I have taken and why in my project Am I Stupid. Professionals at Wolfson College, part of the University of Oxford suggest “Life-writing involves, and goes beyond, biography” (Wolsford College, 2018). Life writing is now seen as a valid interdisciplinary approach to research. With this being said, opening myself up and talking candidly about my experiences also validate and give reason to my creative outputs. This also breaks down barriers of not feeling able to talk about dyslexia and its struggles (Lisle, K. 2011). Firstly, I will discuss the personal conflict I experienced in schools between my art or sport. Ironically, these are two subjects that need the right side of the brain. Despite my undiagnosed dyslexia, I can hand on heart say I never did well in school other than these two subjects and extra curricular activities.

### **Art or sport?**

As a teenager in secondary school I excelled in both sport and art, and unexpectedly nothing else within the confines of the education system. I was mainly in the bottom sets for other subjects but luckily was always treated fairly and respectfully down to my outstanding rapport as a sports personality, and constant need for time off for sports matches. The teachers all knew me as a class clown, popular and able to fit in with all friendship groups, which I was very thankful for. They also knew me because of my extra curricular activities including life drawing and generally hanging round in the art department making a mess and staying all hours with my fellow art students. I couldn't ever pick between either subject and naturally I was snowballing and doing quite well at both. It wasn't until I got injured in a football match and needed two operations on my leg that I honed my passions and dedication to the arts. Maybe it was also down to my inability to walk, so sitting at a desk drawing all day felt quite natural!

However I was also drawn to image making, expressing myself and being the centre of attention. I loved making art for family members, being in family related exhibitions and was always carrying a colouring book and always asking my parents for new felt tips. This falls in line with the Art and Design perspective because I always felt like I could portray my emotions through creativity, and felt comfortable and settled doing so in a way like no other. It began with my love of colouring, then drawing cartoons and eventually I developed my style into a more sophisticated genre. Doing life drawings with charcoal, realism paintings using watercolour and acrylics and a relatively long fine liner phase. My portfolio consisted of pages upon pages of different styles and techniques, and I never quite settled. I imagine it was quite unsettling and disjointed to see. Ironically to get into art colleges and universities to study art, it was mainly down to your interview skills and your impressive portfolio. This lent itself quite well for me. Other than the art and sport I didn't secure many UCAS points. From my background of having good working relationships with teachers, so I could get the afternoon off to slide tackle to my hearts content on Frenchfields football pitches, or my ability to adapt to each friendship group whether that be the girls with Jane Normal bags and impulse spray or the ones sitting quietly with a book discussing

Animal Planet, I was a people person, confident and secure in what I could bring to the table, so I interviewed quite well. I secured my place at a prestigious college to develop my art interests and learn more techniques to further confuse future portfolio readers.

It wasn't until my final year of university that I actually settled on a style that suited me, which I could use to develop my other interests. This was Illustration for me, I could use it as a tool to raise awareness, make people laugh and inform others. Which is exactly what I did. However it wasn't all plain sailing, I became disjointed with my art work, it had gone from a hobby to something that I was being measured and refined by. Alongside my practice as a student, we had to maintain a blog and complete essays to a deadline, this added a huge pressure and I was really struggling. I wasn't enjoying art anymore, it felt like a chore and not even something I could use to escape anymore. This is where I made one of the biggest discoveries I could have done at that time, I decided to use my artwork to explain, narrate and express my struggles with academia. I decided to use Illustration to raise awareness, challenge preconceptions and explore dyslexia. I had no idea then of the correlation between the dyslexia and art, or how extensive and how incomprehensively large the topic was. I was finally attached to my art work again, excited to learn and not only that, learn more about my experience of dyslexia. Without this breakthrough I don't think I would have received a first class honours or continue my studies into a Masters by Research. I have recently discovered that I sit within the confines of the Art and Design perspective and can use my practise based research to not only challenge stigmas that I couldn't portray correctly with academia alone, making my illustrations about dyslexia accessible and relatable to many other dyslexics. This adds a whole new dimension to what was once an insignificant childhood hobby of mine.

I will now discuss my diagnosis. This section is important as it is the epitome of why I chose to study dyslexia, including; self-esteem, anxiety and the importance of early diagnosis.

## **My learning Difficulty.**

At the age of 18 I went to study for a foundation diploma in art and design at Leeds College of Art. Coming from a small village in the Lake District this was both intimidating and exhilarating. As I have previously discussed, a lot of dyslexics have creative tendencies and Leeds College of Art have now made it a compulsory element to their courses, to be screened for the learning difficulty at the very beginning similar to Glasgow School of Arts, they have realised the correlation between art and dyslexia. Luckily they did, because it came back that I was highly likely to have dyslexia. After receiving these results I was given the option to have a diagnostic test, which I took of course and that came back that I was in fact extremely dyslexic. At the time, I blamed myself, however I took matters into my own hands. I had been to five different primary schools and I thought maybe I had constantly missed the opportunity for my dyslexia to be picked up at a young age. I didn't think I created a close enough relationship with my teachers for them to see that on the outside I was class clown, but deep down I was struggling and becoming increasingly stressed. The results also came as a relief because I didn't do tremendously well in my GCSE's and A 'levels, but by the skin of my teeth, artistic flare and ability to talk my way out of a paper bag, I was thankful enough to gain a place at an art college and then eventually University.

Despite my diagnosis, I was still seeing the effects of my dyslexia and late diagnosis and was struggling my way through my degree. I was scraping by with 2:2's on smaller briefs that involved written work. This was starting to creep into my creativity; it began to feel stagnant and monotonous. The way in which you have to structure your creativity in the education system didn't suit me. The regular structure in art courses is to start by having a small idea and then take steps to build on that to end up with a final piece far from your starting position. However, I excel in forward thinking, imagination and striving for a goal, so I always envision the final outcome and know what steps to take accordingly. This is something dyslexic people are incredible at, which is why I found it so difficult to dismiss my intuition and try to do it the 'regular, normal' way. Furthermore, I also found it extremely difficult at times to read into a

brief. If the project brief was to say; 'do a project on transport', that is so vague and unspecified that I would tire myself out asking myself 'what do they want? What do they mean?' This took my passion and impulsive creativity out of my hobby and made it analytical. Throughout my final year, I took on extra curricular activity and began to be a student representative, so that I could channel my people skills into my degree to add some flavour to what had become a bland soup. This helped me to make a huge personal breakthrough in my education. I began making artwork about my thoughts and feelings of struggling with education. I started making illustrations that showcased my struggles, stresses and some hilarious situations I found myself in as a result. Similar to theorists Rayner (2012) & Griggs (2018) within the Art and Design Perspective who use their creativity in order to explain thoughts and feelings about their own dyslexia, some of the illustrations I made also highlighted what I was good at, the positive attributes I believed I possessed. Slowly but surely I began to feel like I had a voice again. Suddenly, my strengths were being shown and they started to outweigh the negatives. This process was critical in changing the way I perceived my studies and my learning difficulty. I was now making art and writing about dyslexia, my dyslexia.

This was an incredibly uplifting position for me to be in for many reasons:

1. I was learning more about my dyslexia.
2. I was now fully attached and interested in my studies.
3. This finding opened many doors for me, being able to learn and work in different fields.
4. If done well I could potentially make a real difference.
5. My grades were improving substantially.
6. And so was my art work!

The negatives of these positions are useful to establish:

1. The workload suddenly got bigger.
2. The words I was reading became a lot longer and less understandable.

3. I had to not only use BUT spell words like 'dyslexia' rather a lot, which annoyingly is very difficult.

From these pivotal points onwards I was to discover more about dyslexia, and use my creativity as a practice based tool to do so. Art was also a naturally achievable and accessible way in which I could raise awareness of dyslexia in a way I couldn't do with words alone. This has led me to showcasing my practice-based research under the name Am I Stupid? First I would like to clarify why I chose that name. Simply, people with dyslexia as I have discussed are either labelled stupid or internalise a feeling of stupidity. I am not immune to having felt like that at some point in my life and I am still prone to doing so. I have questioned myself, as to whether I think I am stupid if I can't do something, but this is not the intention behind the name. The purpose is for the viewer of my practice or the reader of my investigative studies, to ask: Am I, Jen Reid, a dyslexic artist, stupid? Socially, educationally, emotionally, I have been told, along with many other dyslexics that I am stupid, so do you think I am? However, If the viewer and reader are dyslexic, having pointed out all of your positive attributes and all of your amazing undiscovered power and abilities, do you still think of yourself at stupid? Environment, condition and situation are the reasons I am tackling this subject: 'Low self esteem is only ever a seed planted from the outside in' Hannah Gatsby (Gatsby. H, 2017). This leads me onto exploring my creative practice in more detail.

### **Am I Stupid?**

As part of my practice-based research, which is an integral part of the backbone to this thesis, it is important to put my own creative practice under the microscope and scrutinise decisions I have made and the work I have created as a creative practitioner investigating the dispositions of a dyslexic. 'Am I Stupid?' is also informed by the three perspectives outlined earlier on in this thesis. If we refer back to the Art and Design perspective on dyslexia it suggests that people can explore and support dyslexia from their own creative perspective and through creative outlets. Although 'Am I Stupid?' was clearly

introduced by a dyslexic – myself – and to focus my artistic skills on raising awareness of dyslexia and challenging stigmas similar to the ideas presented by Griggs, Rayner and Johansen. I also draw on social surroundings and experiences, linked closely to the Social Model perspective. This includes, interviews, questionnaires that rely solely on another dyslexic persons' social experiences. Furthermore, I do not believe that I can relate my practice to the Medical Model perspective. I don't believe there is a cure, or a physical cause of dyslexia other than genetics and a chemical imbalance (NHS, 2016). Overall, I believe that I sit firmly within the Art and Design perspective, with undertones approaching from the Social Model perspective.

Before delving into the deep water of my practice, firstly I need to acknowledge what Illustration is? What makes a piece of art be classed as an illustration? According to Zeegan:

Classifying the role of the illustrator is as problematic as defining the discipline of illustration. Practitioners rarely operate solely as illustrators; their practice will often merge with territory chiefly inhabited by artists, designers, craftspeople, and even writers. Illustrators blur boundaries and rely in defying categorisation; illustrators often work across a range of disciplines, utilize varied media” Laurence Zeegan, 2009. (Zeegan, 2009).

Zeegan perfectly captures how I see my own practice; illustration is often related to storytelling and advertisement. It was only in my last year of university that my work started to feel like I could categorise it as illustration. As I have outlined here, illustration can be used for storytelling, I believe it is important to explain the definition of illustration for myself as a creative practitioner. To consider my artwork as illustration, allows me to categorise and find relevance to the narrative I am telling. I believe that through my practice, I can showcase my own experiences of dyslexia, as well as illustrate and narrate stories I have been told through interviews and conversations with other dyslexic individuals. Zeegan appreciates that illustration as a technique

can include many other creative practices, an idea that I have utilised in my own work by making art ranging from installations, model making, drawings and photography. To categorise myself as an illustrator whilst investigating the dispositions of a dyslexic artist, by no means restricts and inhibits me to a certain style of making. With each story and narrative, I have used the most effective way I see fit to get the most out of it and justify it in the best way possible.

Throughout my creative process, I used numerous sketchbooks to pull together, ideas, imagery, thoughts and patterns that will ultimately puzzle together to form my final pieces. One form my dyslexia takes, is my heightened sense of organisation and tidiness. In terms of my practice, this is shown with my consistent choice of sketchbooks, consistent choice of pen, and the fact only use the fresh page in the sketchbook and never the underside of a drawing (See Appendix 16). These factors are really important to me; they allow me the space and freedom to express myself and not be surrounded in chaos and anarchy. Secondly, this juxtaposes the final outcome of my work, with the bases of my final pieces being very chaotic, fragmented and confusing (See Appendix 9) thus highlighted the certain fears and anxieties when facing a difficult task, as well as the comfort it brings along with the disorder, with a visitor at the exhibition calling it “like home” and that I perfect captures the thoughts and feelings he has inside his head which was by his own admission was therapeutic and satisfying to visualise.

Firstly, I would like to explain why I have chosen the medium and techniques used for my practice based research. Primarily, instead of using, paper or canvas, I thought it would be effective to tie it back to its educational roots. Conjuring up this idea, I attempted to use white board and marker pen. The results were very restrictive, purely because of the material, and thickness of the pen, so other areas needed to be explored. The next solution was to use black chalk paint, which represents blackboards, and the use of chalk pens to do the illustrations, as basic chalk couldn't capture the ambiance and sensation I was going for. I have capitalised upon ideas distinguished by the Art and Design Intersection perspective, where you can use art to help people

understand the viewpoint of someone dyslexia. Now I will go into the exploration and explanation of the techniques identified with the creative practice which fuels the research undertaken for the investigation of the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.



'Reid (2018)'

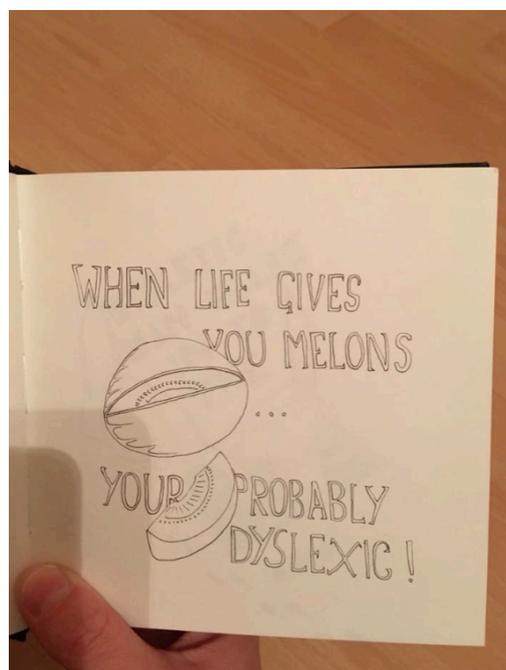
My practice-based portfolio has been created around four main techniques; humour and puns, informative, narrative and optical illusions. From this I can subcategorise my final pieces into one of these filters to reach a specific objective of raising awareness of the various dispositions of dyslexia. I have a collection of 21 final pieces to date, below I will explore how each board fits into one of the above categories that are; humour, narrative, informative and optical illusions.

### **Optical Illusions.**



## Humour.

Equally there are 6 boards that launch humour into the work and use puns as a way to raise awareness of dyslexia. As we all know humour is one of the easiest ways to diffuse tension and create a warmer atmosphere. Beginning the conversation of using humour and honesty to talk about your own learning difficulty, will ease other people and allow them to feel like there is less of a stigma about talking about it. Furthermore, it will let the individual feel less embarrassed and ashamed of opening up about their struggles, which can only have a remarkable effect. In these boards a careful selection of word plays (See Appendix, Figure 1), misread words (See Appendix, Figure 4), and funny stories people have about their learning difficulty (See Appendix, Figure 8) are used to lighten up the objective of the project. An idea I explored in my life experience chapter was on the use of humour as a way to cope with my dyslexia. This could also be seen as a defence mechanism but I also use humour as an understandable and accessible way that lots of people can relate to something generally quite confusing, they will also feel a connection with something out of their level of experience and comprehension. Word plays such as 'coco poops' (See appendix 19), 'when life gives you melons...' and 'the dyslexic walks into a bra' are amongst my favourite. Owing up to my confusion between the makes 'Dulux' and 'Durex' and always getting the two mixed up (See appendix 20) is one of the funny anecdotes of my own dyslexia, which could clearly cause quite a lot of controversy.



**Narrative.**

One of the most renowned qualities of illustration is its flair for storytelling and exploring narratives. Investigating the dispositions of dyslexia requires me to obtain stories from many dyslexic individuals so I can get a comprehensive overview of some of the forms it can take. Likewise, using techniques like graphic design and typography in my creative practice, I could quite easily create works of art that capture the narrative behind these stories. Stories that are anything from; funny, worrying, distressing and informative. Other dyslexic individuals have also drawn pieces. As explained in my methodology, I allowed participants in their interviews and conversations to draw answers to questions like: what does dyslexia mean to you? And, what is dyslexia? This allowed for remarkable and astonishing insights that I couldn't possibly comprehend through just spoken word, or typed responses. Allowing people the opportunity to vibe off each other, and draw off their own free will allows for creativity, imagination and originality to become part of the individual's answers. This gave the artwork depth and brought a whole new approach to interviews and my methodology. The situation became the art itself.

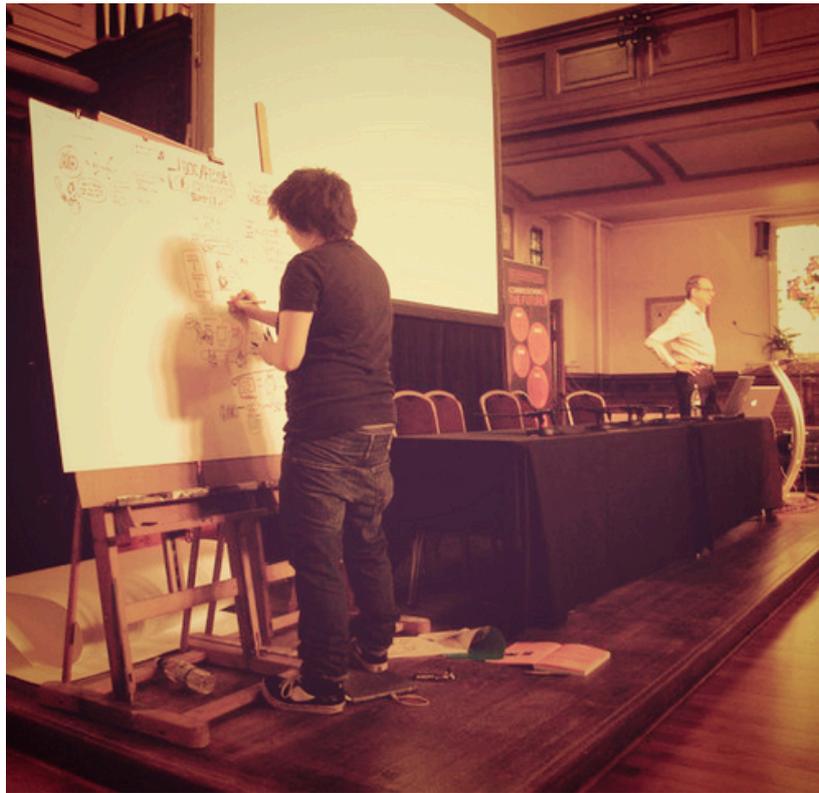
The narratives I have illustrated include funny anecdotes, specific areas of struggle, and drawings from other people when asked various questions on dyslexia. These illustrations include phrases such as "get your hat together" and "not today Saturn", these have been chosen because they could not remember the correct saying e.g. "get your act together" and "not today Satan". This level of confusion and bewilderment I think is underrepresented when researching dyslexia. It is also something that is very humorous and amusing, but what needs to be recognised is how it could also be very embarrassing, so using narrative in my illustrations can 'hit two birds with one stone'.



Reid, (2017)

### **Informative.**

Illustration can be used to advertise something, or bring information to light. An example of this can be found in the work of the student radiotherapist Sarah Smizz who creates social art practices and illustrations on methodologies that will enhance research into healthcare. Smizz also has a passion for improving the patient experience and service improvements. She tackles this in her artwork. Artist Smizz, calls herself an “artist of consequence” (LinkedIn, 2015). Throughout her training as a registered therapeutic radiographer she has found certain solutions to problems she is solving or striving towards, by introducing the first ever patient information smartphone app named: RARCARE, as well as a comic style radiotherapy handbook amongst many others (LinkedIn, 2015). Smizz also illustrates live, during talks and key speakers as well as her own ideas to an audience, which I find completely refreshing, developing ideas and explaining key information to people who can use it with always-varied outcomes depending on circumstance.



Live-drawn events by Sarah Smizz (N/D)

With this in mind, I can see a clear use of a creative practice as a tool to inform and teach the public, it is accessible, understandable and unthreatening. I reached out to Smizz, late in 2017, regarding her intentions and objectives, with the idea that I could strike up a conversation about my practice and gain her feedback. To which I received a warm, wonderful and positive response, with Smizz claiming my work “has got the potential to make a difference both artistically and for the greater good”. Furthermore, illustration can be used as a really effective tool to teach and inform on a grand scale. Which is one of the main objectives in my creative practice, investigating the various dispositions of a dyslexic practitioner, alongside the use of humour, narrative and optical illusions.

The informative illustrations I am referring to consist of either exploring a fact or asking a question and gaining drawn feedback. When the participants were asked to draw what dyslexia is, the sort of things that were drawn varied from a man with lots of shapes and puzzles coming out of his brain, to a light bulb,

upside down question mark and rivers running through lines in text. This refers to Irlen syndrome (Accola, 2017), a difficulty affecting the eyes, and the space between letters, that space causing a problem and becoming its own matter rather than the words and letters themselves. Irlen syndrome also occurs when the reader, concentrates better when reading through a certain coloured overlay. I have Irlen syndrome and I have a significantly quicker reading speed when reading through a green overlay. As you can see here, the results varied when asked that simple question about dyslexia, highlighting the different narratives each person's dyslexia has, as well as the obvious range of artistic skills of the people doing the study. However, this displayed a narrative none the less, as well as the showing the narrative of the art making itself, the artwork constantly changed. When people added more artwork next to others, they began to connect and interfere with each other.

Alongside these techniques addressed in my artwork, I also kept a creative journal to document this process. In fact, I had 3 journals: one for my thoughts and feelings about my studies, a diary if you will. The second was to visually document meetings and presentations I had with supervisors and lecturers. Finally the third was a sketchbook, to document my image making informed by my research into dyslexia. What happened was I ended up with images in all three books, as I naturally drifted back to my illustrative self when stressed, or whether I needed to remember information, I diverted away from writing. Interestingly, I therefore incorporated images from the three books into my final pieces, and exhibition, as they were all a true representation of my experiences as a dyslexic student. This is where the different kind of illustrations arose, which I will clarify next.

By calling myself a creative practitioner who focuses on illustration, I have found that it would be detrimental to the research to categorise myself as just that and limit myself to that style of making unless referring to the type of illustration Zeegan defends (Zeegan, 2009). What will be laid out now is the different methods used throughout this project: Illustration, Graphic Design, Installation and Typography. It has become apparent through the feedback I

have received from my exhibition, that having a varied way of portraying ideas, is approachable to different audience, which enriches the way I use my creative practice.

### **Graphic Design.**

Graphic Design was needed to hold a steady clarity and legibility to the artwork; this type of design is specifically used to visually communicate ideas in a very concise and clean way using bold colours and lines, which makes the artwork appealing. These characteristics also explain why graphic design is used for advertisement some of which include posters and album covers.

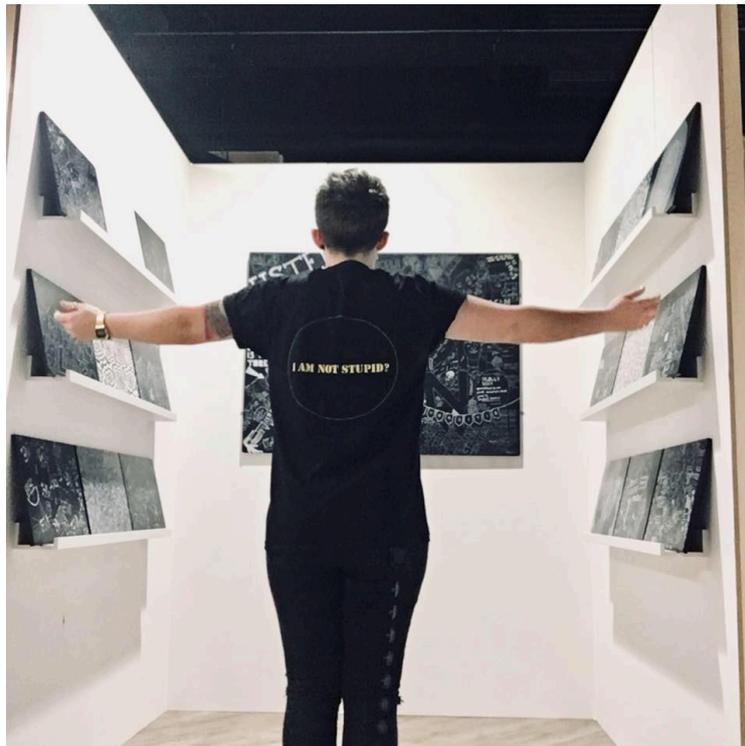
### **Illustration.**

Illustration was used as the key element of my creative practice, something I am very confident to apply. The areas of Illustration that are most fascinating and the more well known qualities used to visualise ideas and or a story. Illustration is used in books and story telling for visual thinkers and children. In that way it is very understandable and available for the many. This is of importance in this project to raise awareness of dyslexia and even more to a predominantly unaware audience of the learning difficulty or children and young adults. Having it spelled out in a very understandable and achievable way is easier to appreciate. Having recognised that Illustration is my key area of practice, I believe the confidence and understanding that comes hand in hand with what is reflected in my ideas and projects.

### **Installation.**

A central focus for artists is how their artwork will be exhibited; one factor of exhibitions and an element some artists focus on is installation. The artist I am referring too is Abelardo Morell, his 'Camera Obscura: View outside Florence with Bookcase' (2009). A bookcase was installed in a makeshift room and a projector projects an image of Florence over the bookcase, which makes it very difficult to separate the two pieces of imagery for the viewer. The idea of

installation for both Morell and myself is one; how can we exhibit the work in the most effective way to showcase a certain set of ideas? The power of installations is to create an experience for the viewer, they can be involved in the art and become a piece of the work, something that could be a core element of the work. This project on dyslexia is one that needs that element of an immersive audience. Once you are within the artwork you then feel and experience what it is like to have the learning difficulty: Dyslexia.

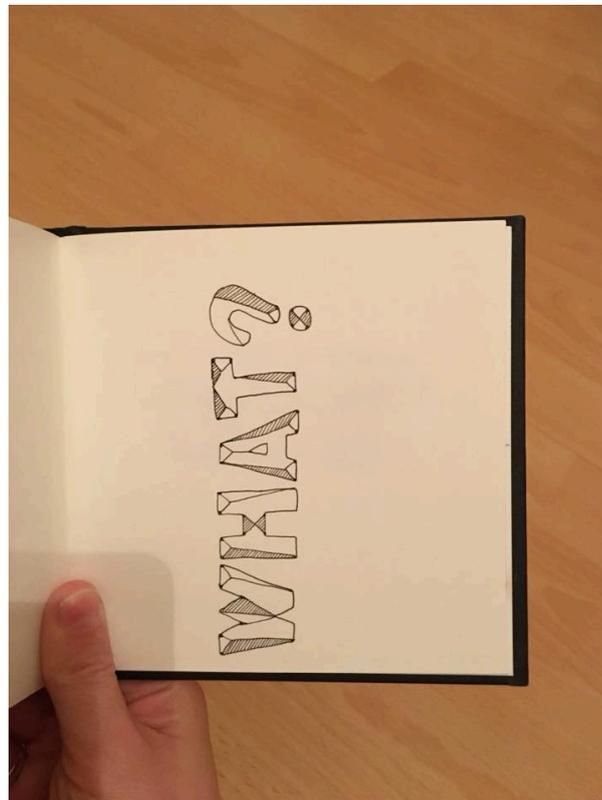


Reid, (2018)

### **Typography.**

What is most commonly known about dyslexia, and rightly so, is the difficulty with text; this has been explored in more depth in the previous section. The link with text has to be shown throughout the artwork, typography seems the most applicable and effective way to do this. Typography is used in advertisement and by the media as a way to heighten and push their branding. Signatures and styles of those companies and other institutions can be shown using visual communication such as typography. Components of

typography are that you can manipulate and transform text so that it can appear clear and precise; colourful and different; or that it can be made illiterate and unsolvable like the likes of work by Sam Barclay and Daniel Britton, who I investigated in the chapter about artist Studies. Typography as an artistic technique is very widespread and open to all artists and creative practitioners. Within a project about solving a problem, typography opens the door to becoming more informative, educational and instructive. Using typography enabled my ability to use practice-based research as part of my methodology into the dispositions of dyslexia, with dyslexia and font/text going hand in hand. By combining Graphic Design, Illustration, Installation and Typography, it becomes a piece of artwork that can achieve many objectives.



Reid, (2017)

### **Anxiety in Practice.**

Next, I will explore something mentioned earlier in the literature review. I have used my creative practice to explain and inform the public of the link between my anxiety and my dyslexia by highlighting the correlations and connections

between the two difficulties. The correlation could arise from children being diagnosed late and due to the lack of support or understanding. Showcasing private thoughts and feelings such as these in the exhibition means that it becomes a platform for communication. Platforms like these allows for people to speak, open up and relate, whilst challenging stigmas about mental health and the fact it is still perceived as weak or an 'elephant in the room'. Why not paste it all over a wide screen television and allow people to talk within the space and interact with the thoughts and feelings it represents? Doing this in the exhibition worked really well and I received a lot of positive feedback about it. Showcasing my anxieties behind a seating area I arranged, allowed for people to sit down and chat with me and other visitors regarding mental health, dyslexia and various other topics. These discussions were made possible by the mechanics and caution of the exhibition. The more people sat down and engaged others, the more other people came to participate. It made for a very comfortable and relaxing atmosphere, which is exactly what the work was trying to encourage. To allow for people with low self esteem or dyslexia to be able to talk about it more comfortably in the school, workplace and at home, rather than talking about it being an uncomfortable and daunting experience which it all too often is. During the exhibition I illustrated and stated what I worry about on a day-to-day basis. This was showcased in the same space as the artwork.

The illustration of anxieties on display that day included many things: finances, body image, personal perception and feelings of isolation. Next to one of the titles, was an illustration surrounding the word 'me'. This highlights how that is personal to myself, but something the audience needs to be aware of in connection to another experiences. The word 'me' however, also acted as a very simplistic symbol I could repeat over and over again which made the presentation pleasing to the eye and easy to comprehend rather than making the audience work to understand the idea behind it, which would lose its authenticity and significance (See Appendix, Figure 20). These were showcased on a continuous presentation reel as part of my practice based research. This allowed the audience to converse and elaborate on their own struggles with dyslexia and the possible impacts it has on the emotional

wellbeing of some dyslexic individuals. Sometimes it is easier to explain yourself through a medium you are comfortable with such as art in this instance, rather than through written or spoken word.



Reid, (2017)

### **Dyslexia.**

I believe it is important to now write about how my dyslexia has navigated its way through my creative practice. Put simply I am going to list areas I struggle with which I can categorically say is my dyslexia at its finest:

1. Concentration.
2. My spelling.
3. I cannot retain sequences and series i.e. what order the months are in.

4. Telling the time on a 24-hour clock.
5. Forms, and applications.
6. Reading, I have only ever read 2 books in my life.
7. However I am incredibly organised, perhaps too much so.

With this list in mind, I started illustrating either experiences I have had which include pitfalls and embarrassments I have felt from struggling with one of the above. This started an amazing journey for me, I was using humour and satire to juxtapose the shame I felt at the situation. Secondly, I could then speak to others, share experiences and also illustrate more and more. My creative practice was therefore growing and expanding. I was drawing my jokes, and funny dyslexia based situations I was finding myself in, I was drawing silly things I had said in front of someone purely because I didn't have the correct phrase or saying. I was also drawing a lot. Overlapping. Disjointed. Mirrored and backwards. To mimic how I feel when faced with reading, spelling, an overpowering workload and my internalised ridicule. Understanding my strengths and weaknesses led me to draw out a strict guideline of how I was going to study and learn at this level. From the list above, I knew I had to be time conscious to tackle my inability to concentrate. I had to be incredibly organised and managed so that my mind could settle into the academic context and I wouldn't feel chaos and overpowered. I had to really focus my mind on reading articles that I found interesting and that were straight to the point or my concentration would fail me and I wouldn't be able to expand not only my awareness of dyslexia but also my vocabulary, and writing skills. Making these steps was the first thing I did when I started studying, without these I know my weaknesses would have outweighed the positives and my dyslexia would have got the better of me.

Having dyslexia for me, means you need to forward think and plan for every eventuality. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses so that you can target and hone your strengths and bypass your weaknesses. Then, naturally you can start to train, support and conquer what you believe your weaknesses to be. This will not 'cure' your dyslexia or learning difficulty, but it will be

managed and your experiences will be much more positive and that will have an impact in how you view your situation.

## **Conclusion.**

### **Research outcomes: theory and practitioners**

This research has discussed and highlighted theoretical analysis by studying the perspectives of academics Miles and Varma (1994) and Nelson (2013), amongst others. Furthermore, the research has clarified that by using a practice-based research methodology coined by theorists Nelson (Nelson, 2013) and Candy (Candy, N/A) can in fact allow for greater understanding of dyslexia. This has taken the form of my own creative practice, *Am I Stupid?* (2015). This allowed for a broader insight into my own learning difficulty as well as being influenced in the making process by other examples of individuals with a specific learning difficulty and highlighting their dyslexic driven experiences. Practice-based research has also been implemented in this investigation by exploring other artist studies who have showcased their perspectives on dyslexia, for example: Marie-Hymas, and Low.

Throughout the investigation on the different dispositions of a creative practitioner, I have also discussed dyslexia from different standpoints. Including the Medical model, Social model and the Art and Design intersection perspective. To conclude, I disagree with various elements from the medical model that believe in restricting people with learning difficulties with facts and rehabilitation. The Medical model more often than not believes that every case of dyslexia is the same, which as we have seen isn't the case. I do however agree with aspects of the Social model perspective that supports and nurtures individuals with dyslexia and believe that the negative preconceptions and stigmas come from society and it is society that needs to change in order to adapt to different variations of dyslexia This is explored and nurtured within my practice-based research and portfolio under the name '*Am I Stupid?*'. However, the Social model also could victimise people with

dyslexia when in reality many people with dyslexia do incredibly well. This is something I have wanted to argue and portray within my work by showcasing the positives and strengths associated with dyslexia rather than tirelessly venting the negatives. Using my artwork as a tool to raise awareness of the different perspectives, I have challenged stigmas placed on dyslexics by society and more importantly in education. For example, Mark Johansen, Tobias-Green and Griggs have all made learning about the different dispositions of dyslexic people more accessible to the public. Similarly, creativity is also one of the positive dispositions associated with dyslexia, which I have discussed in the chapters on artist studies and positive dispositions. In addition, I believe that my practice based research under the name *Am I Stupid?* and my academic studies, fall inline with the Art and Design perspective.

Through this research I particularly wanted to discover more about dyslexia and to raise awareness of the stigmas and preconceptions associated with dyslexia such as being labelled 'Lazy' and 'stupid' (Camber, 2007). As a result of social situations highlighted in the social model and medical model, all as a result of a lack of understanding of the positives of having dyslexia, I have tackled the issue of early diagnosis to highlight the struggles of low self esteem in undiagnosed individual experiences. Furthermore, the research has highlighted the connection between dyslexia and creative practice by emphasising and broadcasting the work of The Glasgow School of Art (2008) and Gobbo (2010) who have researched the direct links between dyslexia and the phonological brain, which equates to a heightened spatial awareness and creative reasoning, both relative to the growing number of those with specific learning difficulties and particularly dyslexia, excelling in the arts.

Parallel to the written sources, the research examined examples of the work of visual artists and graphic designers Sam Barclay, Marie Hymas, and Vince Low (2015), amongst other examples. This analysis examined how and why the visual arts can be used as a tool to raise awareness of different dispositions of a dyslexic individual. This particular area of research has

nurtured a variety of perspectives on the research in relation to my own dyslexic traits.

### **Research outcomes: methodology and practice**

Through the use of satirical, informative artwork and optical illusion, the research examined curatorial and interview strategies around a variety of dyslexic experiences and emotions, to raise awareness of dyslexic traits and dispositions. Showcasing characteristics of dyslexia, both positive and negative through this research, included the processes of imagination, spatial awareness and empathy.

Alongside examining theory, the practical processes included a variety of methods, including questionnaires and interviews. Through these evaluative processes I gained first-hand knowledge and direct experience, specifically about the ways dyslexia can affect an individual. By having direct dialogue with others, triggered various scenarios that were analysed accordingly. This research is a collaborative and communicative project, enabling dialogue and encouraging debate. Furthermore, this research has led me to discover and open up to the potential of the project.

Through the research I used a variety of artistic processes and techniques including typography, graphic design and installation. Within these specific artistic mechanisms, I explored narrative, humour, informative and optical illusions. Accordingly, my intention was to use such styles to leave the audience feeling confused and disjointed akin to experiences of dyslexia, an immersive and consuming experience for the viewer through an analysis of the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner.

### **Future areas of research**

By highlighting the importance of this research my intention was to stress the importance of early dyslexia diagnosis, and to put pressure on parents and teachers to become more knowledgeable and to see the symptoms early. The

study has also brought to light the possible link dyslexia could have with the individual's low self esteem. Equally, by teachers and schools learning more about dyslexia, it has the potential to have an impact on how pupils are supported throughout the education system and in the workplace. Correspondingly, what this would do is have an effect on the pupil's self-confidence, and fewer students would feel victimised and 'stupid' (Camber, 2007) and possible anxieties about various situations.

This research has examined that dyslexia, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed, can influence behavioural development, and that this can occur either physically or mentally. The investigation into the dispositions of a dyslexic creative practitioner, has examined areas of study with the use of practice-based research and specifically around the project 'Am I stupid?'. The methodological processes have been utilised to raise awareness and challenge stigmas and preconceptions around this complex area of study.

In the future I will continue to produce work for my 'Am I Stupid?' portfolio of practice, whilst continuing to gain a broader outreach from the Facebook page and other online platforms. What would benefit this project further, is exploring the context in schools. The next stage is to gain connections specifically with primary schools and developing a mentor role through workshops with both pupils and teachers, utilising the knowledge and experience gained in this project, to help support pupils who might be struggling with dyslexia and supporting teachers around this critical and often misunderstood learning difficulty.

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### **Appendix.**

Below, you will see the hard copy of my appendix, which features key photos of my practice that are relative to the body of work. Each figure in my appendix is spoken about or referred too within the text. However, if you would like to see a more extensive overview of my practice then here, I have attached a link to my online portfolio and Facebook page dedicated to my creative practice:

Online Portfolio: [www.issuu.com/jenreid1424](http://www.issuu.com/jenreid1424)

Am I Stupid Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/amistupid1](http://www.facebook.com/amistupid1)

- Fig 1. 'Coco Poops' (2017)
- Fig 2. 'Installation' (2016)
- Fig 3. 'Guess What?' white pen on board (2017)
- Fig 4. 'Durex Paint' white pen on board (2017)
- Fig 5. 'Am I Stupid' Installation (2018)
- Fig 6. 'Collaborations' (2018)
- Fig 7. 'Immersive Art', Installation (2018)
- Fig 8 'Immersive Art Part Two', Installation (2018)
- Fig 9. 'Am I Stupid?' Exhibition (2018)
- Fig 10. 'A day in the life of a dyslexic' (2016)
- Fig 11. 'A day in the life of a dyslexic Part Two' (2016)
- Fig 12. 'Squares', chalk on black board (2017)
- Fig 13. 'Am I Stupid? Exhibition celebration' Installation (2018)
- Fig 14. 'Repetition' (2018)
- Fig 15. 'All the Lines' white wood and black marker (2017)
- Fig 16. 'Confusing World' wood and chalk pen (2017)
- Fig 17. 'Class clown (detail) wood and chalk pen (2017)
- Fig 18. 'Dulux' wood and chalk pen (2018)
- Fig 19. 'Foursome' wood and chalk pens (2017)
- Fig 20. 'Me' wood and chalk pens (2018)



Fig 1. 'Coco Poops' (2017)

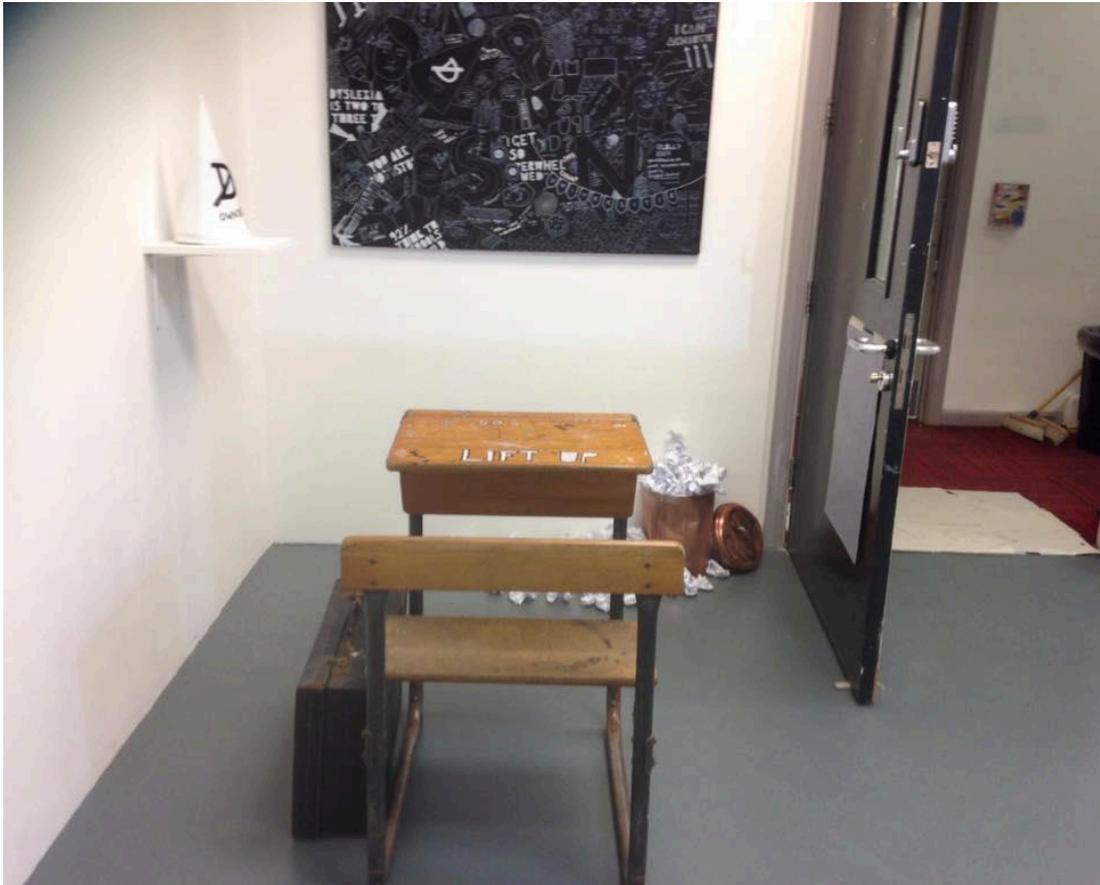


Fig 2. 'Installation' (2016)

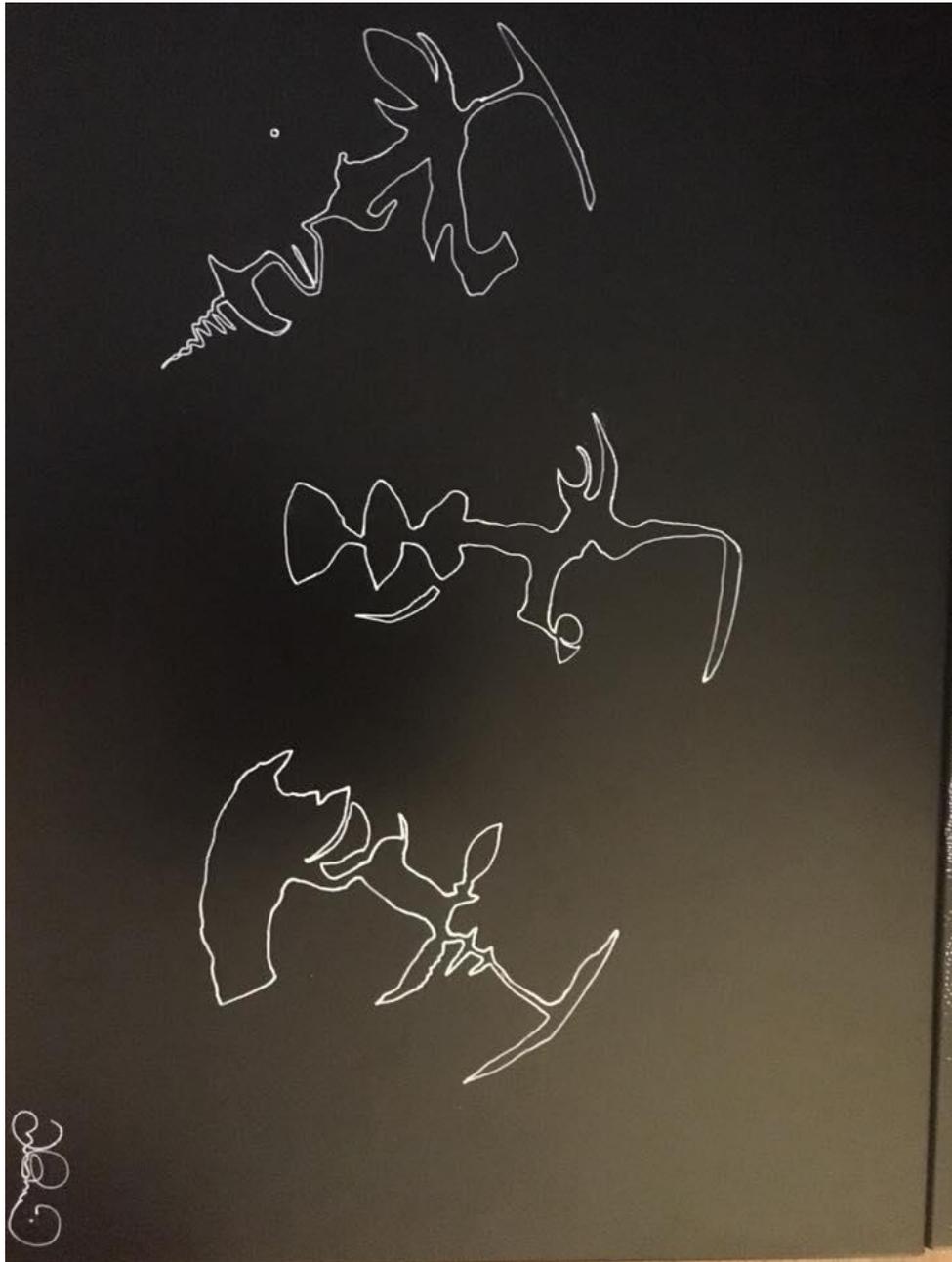


Fig 3. 'Guess What?' white pen on board (2017)





Fig 5. 'Am I Stupid' Installation (2018)



Fig 6. 'Collaborations' (2018)



Fig 7. 'Immersive Art', Installation (2018)



Fig 8 'Immersive Art Part Two', Installation (2018)



Fig 9. 'Am I Stupid?' Exhibition (2018)



Fig 10. 'A day in the life of a dyslexic' (2016)



Fig 11. 'A day in the life of a dyslexic Part Two' (2016)



Fig 12. 'Squares', chalk on black board (2017)



Fig 13. 'Am I Stupid? Exhibition celebration' Installation (2018)



Fig 14. 'Repetition' (2018)



Fig 15. 'All the Lines' white wood and black marker (2017)

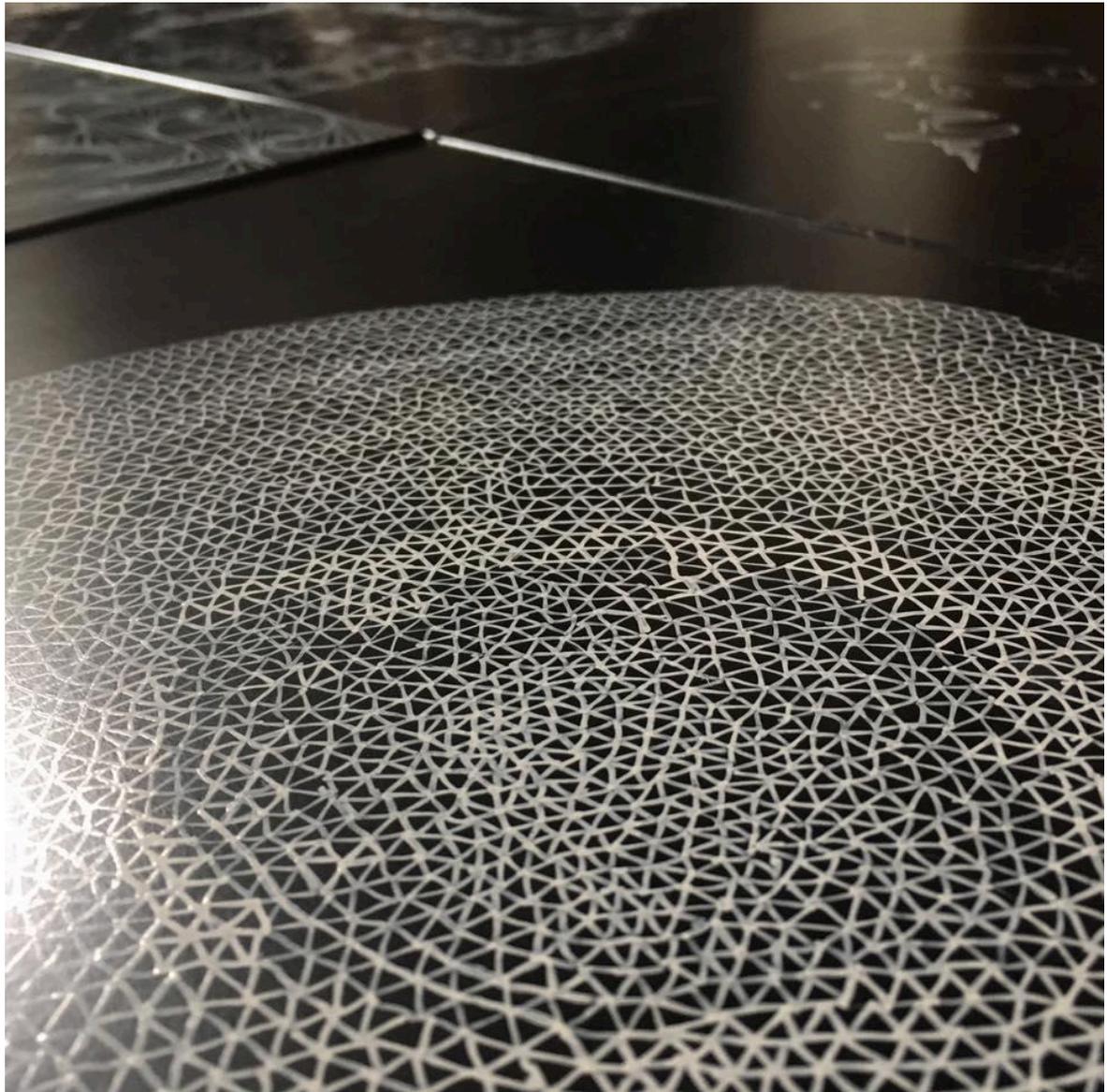


Fig 16. 'Confusing World' wood and chalk pen (2017)



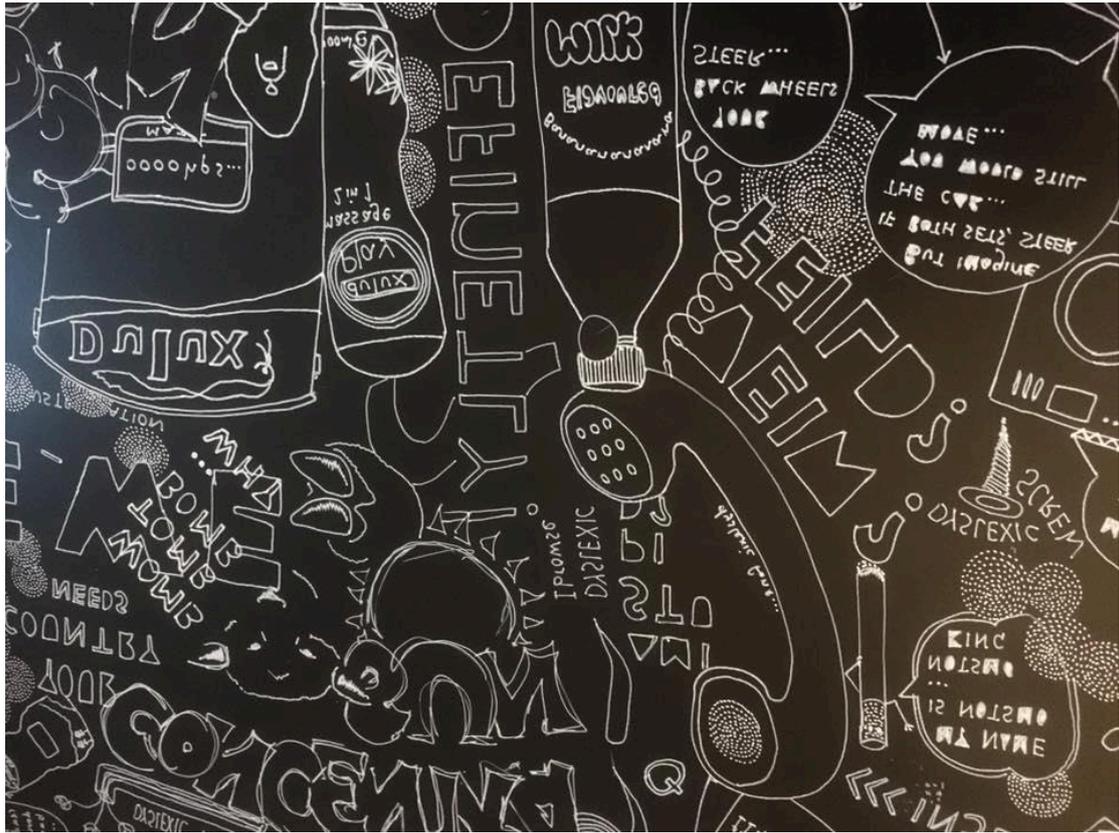


Fig 18. 'Dulux' wood and chalk pen (2018)



Fig 19. 'Foursome' wood and chalk pens (2017)



Fig 20. 'Me' wood and chalk pens (2018)