

PRACTICAL USE OF EDUCATION AND DYSLEXIC LENSES WITHIN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK

VICTORIA BECKWITH

<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205004>

Resilience in tertiary education



Practical Use of Education and Dyslexic Lenses within Tertiary Education: The Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark by Victoria Beckwith is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

This publication may be cited as:

Beckwith, V. (2021). Practical Use of Education and Dyslexic Lenses within Tertiary Education: The Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark. In E. Papoutsaki and M. Shannon (Eds.), *Proceedings: 2021 ITP Research Symposium, 25 and 26 November* (pp. 37–50). Auckland: ePress, Unitec, Te Pūkenga. <https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205004>

Contact:

epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/
Unitec, Te Pūkenga
Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
Aotearoa New Zealand

ISBN 978-0-473-59389-6



ABSTRACT

This paper offers a lens to the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark experience, from the perspective of a dyslexic person, how their perceptions shaped their perspectives, and the manifestation of these while journeying towards achieving the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark.

Normalising dyslexia and providing safe environments where dyslexia awareness is seen to be commonplace is important, and will support those who have prior experiences of struggling with education. Positive awareness of dyslexia supports diversity, performance, motivation and retention. It also benefits the learning of all learners and staff, not just those with dyslexic tendencies, by equipping them with awareness of advantageous strategies for themselves, their communities and organisations, both now and in the future. It is important for tertiary organisations to remember that a dyslexic person is likely to have dyslexic family members. Dyslexic people and whānau (family) may not know they are dyslexic (or may not identify as such), dyslexic people remain in education despite prior experiences or frustrations, and our dyslexic people are resilient and determined, having manoeuvred their way around obstacles to be in our organisations.

The discussion surrounding dyslexia continues globally; significantly, there are things afoot in Aotearoa New Zealand that have gained attention overseas, and will have a resounding impact on tertiary staff and learners. It is an exciting time for dyslexia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

KEYWORDS

Dyslexia, Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark, DFQM, vocational education, tertiary education

INTRODUCTION

The true depth of dyslexia remains an unknown in most countries, but even more so in Aotearoa New Zealand as it was only recognised by the Ministry of Education in 2007 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a). Aotearoa New Zealand's dyslexia discussion is in its infancy, but rapidly gaining maturity, particularly within the tertiary sector; certain key people and organisations are driving change and raising awareness through research, discussion and training. These catalysts are establishing connections, joining people together in spaces such as the Neurodiversity Community of Practice's private Facebook group, which grew to over 140 members in its first year. In 2020, the Tertiary Education Commission set up their Dyslexia Work Programme Advisory Group, followed by the release of the Commission's report, *International Practice in Support of Dyslexic Learners in Tertiary Education: Potential Applications in the New Zealand Context* (2021a). During 2021, the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) trial was undertaken by three organisations in preparation for its national release in Quarter 3 (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a).

For one of these three organisations, the intention from the outset was to provide solution-focused, robust and sustainable processes, supporting staff, learners, whānau, business and community. The holistic approach encouraged by the DFQM meant a period of review and reflection for the organisation, leading to identification during the trial of practical, efficient, cost effective and flexible practices. Dyslexia is valued and recognised by the organisation as a learning difference and that success for dyslexic people requires a whole-of-institution approach,

including research-based practices, management and leadership, the quality of teaching and learning, the teaching and learning environment, and the organisation's engagement with external stakeholders.

The starting point was to acknowledge that dyslexia is a different way of thinking and learning (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b; Made by Dyslexia, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2018). It is a neurological and genetic difference influencing learning and everyday life, both at work and at home (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Made by Dyslexia, 2021). Ten percent of the global population is believed to be dyslexic (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.) although this could be as high as 20% (Australian Dyslexia Association, 2018; Made by Dyslexia, 2021).

AUMANGEA AND DYSLEXIA

The 2021 National ITP Research Symposium's theme was Resilience/Aumangea (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Ltd, 2022).

Resilience is only one of the translations for the reo Māori word 'aumangea.' The depth of meaning and spirituality that are retained within te reo Māori give words a greater intensity. Aumangea means strength, bravery, persistence, determination, tenacity and advocacy, as well as resilience (Sinclair & Calman, 2012). These attributes align themselves naturally to dyslexia and the journey in progressing the DFQM within the emerging, and relatively youthful, dyslexic landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Aumangea and dyslexia are both invisible qualities. They are both specific, and unique, to the individual. Depending on prior experiences, they can manifest in positive, proactive, creative and supportive actions. Alternatively, they can act as a defence mechanism, generating protection for the individual within social situations, education, employment and at home.

Challenges requiring resilience could be as small as filling in a form for a child's activity at school, finding a car park (and, at the end of the day, remembering where the car was parked), writing a shopping list, interacting positively with others in the supermarket or attending a meeting at work (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018a). Small is subjective, as is large. For other people, resilience is needed when working on large-scale projects, managing complex data sets, identifying and interpreting patterns, or facing a classroom filled with 30 teenagers.

Subjectivity, assumptions, and perceptions can often hinder progress, understanding, and strategy development. Aumangea and resilience are quite subjective areas, as the resilience one person requires can be quite different to another's. It can change task by task, day by day, hour by hour. Aumangea encompasses more of a holistic embodiment of resilience. It has a depth, containing a challenge within to drive a person forward, in a value-based and reflective way, to recognise their current limitations and move beyond. Experiences will develop perspectives, but these perspectives are still engineered by perceptions and therefore, subjectivity.

Dyslexia is not, in itself, a subjective area. Dyslexia is a learning difference (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Made by Dyslexia, 2021; Nalavany et al., 2018) that uses the brain in an alternative way (Caskey, 2020; Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b). However, how people respond in daily life and how their dyslexia manifests itself, are subjective, and based upon prior experiences, perceptions and perspectives (Benchetrit & Katz, 2019). There can be dichotomies in their abilities, achievements, career pathways and educational history (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017). Frustration with the inability to communicate effectively, the belief in deficit statements, and the lack of awareness from those around them, may generate barriers and limit choices in all facets of life (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017). A dyslexic individual develops their aumangea from this space. The daily challenges could be small to others but huge to the dyslexic individual. The more complex and holistic challenges perceived as too difficult for others, could be the most joyous and exciting to the creative and empathetic dyslexic person.

SPELD NZ (n.d.) and the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (n.d.) both suggest that dyslexia is found in about 10% of the population of Aotearoa New Zealand. The United Kingdom uses the same figure (Government Digital Service, 2017) but the Australian Dyslexia Association (2018) estimates this could be higher, if people were identified as being dyslexic, with dyslexia estimated to affect up to one in five (20%) of the population, a figure that Made

by Dyslexia (2021) agrees with. Within vocational contexts, 29% of learners at London's Royal College of Art (2015) identified as dyslexic, concurring with Wolff & Lundberg's (2002) findings. Caskey et al. (2018) suggest a figure of one in five adults within tertiary education is dyslexic, and Logan (2009) discusses how entrepreneurs had a higher incidence of dyslexia than the general population.

For every one of our dyslexic learners and staff, there is a strong chance that other family members are dyslexic too (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017; Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b; Ministry of Education, 2018), as it is "a hereditary, life-long, neurodevelopmental condition" (Education Scotland, 2020, p. 5). Once learners are identified as dyslexic, other family members may see similar behaviours in their own lives and find themselves self-identifying as dyslexic. This could be an emotional period, as they may be coming to terms with prior life experiences and adjusting to what that means to them, as well as deciphering how dyslexia impacts their current life, relationships, skills and employment. If learners have journeyed through school without being identified as dyslexic, there may have been difficult experiences that affected them and their whānau, compounded by generational dyslexia (Ministry of Education, 2018). Negative experiences and interactions, issues with communication, and degraded self-confidence and self-esteem could have existed within families for several generations. An identification of dyslexia could assist the family with understanding their experiences, but it could equally open the door to more questions, wellbeing issues and negative emotions. Support pathways and holistic awareness need to be put in place to ensure the learners' whānau have the ability to access appropriate advice and direction when required, in a respectful, kind and objective way (Wissell et al., 2021)

Learners, staff and their whānau can be supported in developing strategies to combat the difficulties associated with dyslexia. Strategies can be developed to support literacy and numeracy skills, to assist with organisation and time management, and to encourage positive communication (Dyslexia Scotland, 2017). Providing a supportive, safe and collaborative learning environment will support dyslexic strengths to flourish – creativity, practical ability, visual thinking, verbal skills, problem solving and holistic thinking (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b). Dyslexic characteristics are often aligned with relationship-based occupations, such as nursing (Crouch, 2019) and teaching, and these are discussed by Wray et al. (2013) in their paper on the nursing curriculum. The University of Oxford (2021) notes that 80% of learners who are dyslexic leave school unidentified as being so. The implications for tertiary education are considerable, but the more prepared our tertiary education organisations are, the better the prospects for our learners, our communities and our workplaces (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021c).

Vocational education is attractive to dyslexic learners as it is a kinaesthetic, creative space where people learn practical skills in areas they want to live and work in. Learners can access education with minimal prior achievements, work their way towards higher-level qualifications and gain skills in their vocation. Vocational education is not the same as school, it is an adult learning environment, encouraging ideas and seeking solutions through a range of options in a flexible and often more inclusive way (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.).

The challenge to tertiary education is how to support and inspire people who bring a multitude of subjective experiences, possibly repair educational damage caused by non-inclusive compulsory environments, and encourage strategies for our people to recognise their potential. The DFQM is a key development in this area (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021c). It provides a systematic framework to raise awareness, review organisational structure and provide action points for future development (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a; Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand, 2021).

THE DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK FOR AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The DFQM came to the attention of one organisation in 2019 during a presentation at a Language, Literacy and Numeracy Professionals Community of Practice meeting. Over the next two years, the DFQM evolved until it was ready to be trialled. Three organisations took up the challenge of a six-week trial to see how it worked in practice within their individual areas of the tertiary space. One organisation was Capital Training, a private training establishment, with just under 1000 learners across six campuses in the lower North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand; one was Kāpiti Youth Support, a registered charitable trust providing a free confidential health and support

service for all youth living in Kāpiti, and one was an Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) (Ako Aotearoa, 2021b). This article focuses on the ITP, a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga at the time of the trial.

Te Pae Mātauranga ki te Ao, Universal College of Learning (UCOL), is a modern ITP built on a history of over 120 years in education (UCOL, 2022b). It has a network of learning environments and campuses across Aotearoa New Zealand's Central North Island, extending from Taumaranui in the King Country to the north, meandering through Tongariro, Ruapehu, Rangitikei, Whanganui, Manawatū and Horowhenua, and journeying south to Masterton in the Wairarapa.

The ITP's vision, to inspire learners, businesses and communities to succeed, generates a holistic culture focused on success (UCOL, 2022c). This success is not solely directed at employability. The vision for success encompasses creativity, flexibility and the agility to strategise in a shifting environment. The importance of connecting with each other and establishing meaningful relationships built on trust and integrity enhances the learning environment for all learners.

This holistic outlook reflects the DFQM ideal, with the DFQM being seen as important to the organisation because of how it aligns with their vision and how dyslexia-friendly practices align with their existing values. In addition to the organisation's values of excellence, relationships, transformation and agility, the values promoted within the classroom, team and across the organisation include manaakitanga, mana motuhake, whakapiringatanga and kōtahitanga. Although these relate to the cultural responsiveness of Te Atakura's approach (UCOL, 2022a), they are also important to the development of dyslexic learners and staff. Providing an environment where an individual is welcomed as an individual, where explicit values, clear routines and high expectations are the norm, will encourage a dyslexic learner to engage and thrive. Relationality is a key component of dyslexic thinking, and extending a family-like whānau environment within an organisation can promote belonging and self-esteem (Carawan et al., 2016). Te Pūkenga's values uphold this by stating:

Manawa nui / We reach out and welcome in.
Manawa roa / We learn and achieve together.
Manawa ora / We strengthen and grow the whole person.
(Te Pūkenga, 2022)

The DFQM was an important standard to achieve, making the organisation's intentions to support dyslexic people explicit, aligning with their vision for inspiration and success. The benefits for the organisation in achieving the DFQM included raising awareness of dyslexia across the organisation, connecting people and resources, providing a supportive environment for learners, staff and whānau, and encouraging engagement with education. From a business perspective, it would potentially attract more learners, and improve retention and graduate outcomes. The benefits for the organisation's dyslexic people – both staff and learners – strengthened inclusion and developed awareness and support to ensure dyslexia became part of the culture. It also developed and enhanced networks, guidance and understanding.

As with most organisations, good teaching practices and inclusive policies existed but were not explicitly linked to dyslexia-friendly practices. The self-assessment checklist, action plan and portfolio of evidence that were part of the DFQM process (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a) enabled discussions to take place that activated connections, linking current practices explicitly with dyslexia-friendly practices. The effects rippled outwards as the DFQM processes encompassed more parts of the organisation than the original trial area. Staff in other campuses accessed the free online training (Microsoft, 2022) to raise their awareness of dyslexia and a network evolved, linking staff with a shared interest in dyslexia. The main organisational changes for completion of the DFQM included reviewing signage for the trial site and reviewing access to social media, including the use of assistive technology.

Future growth in the organisation's region places a demand on education from the business and community sectors (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). Being proactive by identifying and supporting dyslexic learners and staff in the tertiary sector will benefit local, national and international communities in business, education and research (NZIER, 2021; Nalavany et al., 2018; Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a). The DFQM will

benefit the organisation by ensuring that procedures and awareness within it remain current, and adhere to DFQM standards. This in turn will not only reassure learners and whānau, but it also has the potential to encourage further diversity through the retention and recruitment of dyslexic staff.

The educational space that the DFQM inhabits is an interesting one. It is a transition space where secondary intertwines with tertiary, it is a vocational space where people can utilise their creativity and discover their vocations, it is a challenging space where prior learning and experiences need to be overcome, and it is a transforming space where people can change direction or career pathway, refocus to reflect life's changing pattern, or re-engage with education (Ministry of Education, 2022; The Education Hub, 2022). It is also a diverse educational space with underserved learners who bring their own perspectives, culture and skills to the tertiary landscape. The diversity throughout the transition spaces means these learners can be demanding to work with; high levels of guidance, support and services may be required in order to respond to the demands, with staff who are equipped and empowered to actively engage with the transition of learners, and all that entails. This holistic environment is required for learners to flourish. However, if there are deficit mindsets, a lack of awareness or ineffective professional development, the underserved learner will not function successfully and is at risk of leaving the organisation or quitting education entirely (NZIER, 2021; UP Education, 2022). To reduce this risk, tertiary education needs to become an environment where it is a safe space for sharing experiences and receiving support (UP Education, 2022). As more people talk about dyslexia and discuss it objectively with positive mindsets (James & Walters, 2020), wider connections will be made and a greater understanding will lead to proactive, appropriate support for dyslexic people. Development and creativity will be enhanced as the availability of safe, engaging environments and spaces increases, both virtual and face to face, for interaction and the exchange of ideas.

Currently, however, there is a deficit in the local, national and international peer-reviewed research in the tertiary space surrounding learner support (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a), and particularly for dyslexia in vocational education (Caskey, 2020). Internationally, there is an increasing interest in the creativity of dyslexia and the role dyslexic people could play in a world that requires greater agility, flexibility and new ideas (Caskey, 2020; Nalavany et al., 2018). Aotearoa New Zealand is moving forward, especially in the tertiary sector, with the introduction of the DFQM and the awareness it is raising, which has not gone unnoticed by the international community (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand, 2021). Beyond this, the report from the Tertiary Education Commission (2021a) makes recommendations for future projects and ideas to research, support and normalise the dyslexic context; its voice, strategies and differences.

DYSLEXIA – LEARNERS AND STAFF

As previously mentioned, dyslexia brings with it subjectivity built upon a foundation of potentially challenging prior experiences. These prior experiences may have disconnected an individual from education, whānau, employment, or their own self-confidence and self-esteem (Carawan et al., 2016). This can make people vulnerable, provoking self-preservation behaviours (Nalavany et al., 2018). Developing and demonstrating effective strategies to support people in overcoming these behaviours is part of the DFQM's holistic framework, and built into the DFQM process (Ako Aotearoa, 2021a). In addition to strategies, organisational procedures should provide direction for learners and staff when requesting support or seeking referral information (Waterfield, 2002).

When considering the DFQM process, staff may assume that dyslexia awareness and organisational strategies relate solely to learners. However, and possibly more importantly, staff themselves need to be considered. For a member of staff, the DFQM may bring to the surface additional challenges surrounding their own hidden learning differences, protection of professional standing, and wellbeing (Wissell et al., 2021). Protection and safety for learners are part of the organisational structure, but providing protection and safety for dyslexic staff is challenging on several levels. Dyslexia generates vulnerability in how people react to different situations, how they may respond to different stimuli and how prior experiences may manifest. Staff may feel vulnerable, exposed, anxious about how other staff interpret dyslexia or how their dyslexia is perceived (Wissell et al., 2021). They may be concerned that

people will think they are less professional, or comment on their ability as an educator or member of staff (Hiscock & Leigh, 2020). There is the perception that the potential to be misunderstood is great.

The DFQM is an opportunity for organisations to reflect on their current processes, procedures and policies to ensure vulnerable people, including their own staff, are recognised with respect and appropriately supported.

THE DYSLLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK – A PERSONAL PATHWAY

This section discusses the personal pathway of one person involved in the DFQM process. There are several lenses in place – one from the perspective of a member of staff, one as a dyslexic person, one as an educator, and one as a member of a dyslexic whānau (current and historical). As a member of staff and as an educator, the organisational benefits and educational importance for learners have been discussed earlier in the document. Being dyslexic, and part of a dyslexic family, brings in a highly personal aspect to the DFQM, which may not have been considered by its developers, or the organisation undergoing the DFQM process.

The challenges surrounding vulnerability, exposure and anxiety for dyslexic staff (Hiscock & Leigh, 2020; Wissell et al., 2021) could be heightened, affecting the wellbeing of the staff member as they work through the DFQM standards, and collaborate with other staff, raising awareness and discussing dyslexia in depth. Reflections during the DFQM process could accentuate prior experiences, and have an impact on their professional identity (Benchetrit & Katz, 2019), potentially generating a perception of an unsafe work environment with regards to health and wellbeing (Wissell et al., 2021). It is possible that the organisation and DFQM external facilitator may need risk-assessment-management statements to mitigate for any issues that could arise from this type of personal investment in the project.

Using the interwoven lenses, the DFQM pathway started from a base centred on the perceptions and perspectives of the person leading the process. Visual and auditory perceptions gave a sense that the buildings, interactions, signage, noise and distractions were going to be difficult to overcome, over-stimulating, and possibly offering a negative experience for a dyslexic person coming into the organisation. The language about dyslexia was not normalised or commonplace, it was misunderstood by some and it appeared to lack context. The initial situation was interpreted through these perceptions as lacking a cohesive, inclusive and positive environment in which to develop the DFQM smoothly. Looking through the lens of a dyslexic person re-engaging with education, the initial perceptions were that the organisation could be overstimulating, and signage and entrances were confusing and ambiguous. There appeared to be a lack of awareness, resources and organisational tools – for example clocks. These factors could lead to an interpretation that the organisation was a difficult entity to engage with; it could remind the person of prior experiences and lead to an emotional or behavioural reaction, for example leaving both the building specifically, and education in general.

Perceptions alone could have meant that the DFQM did not progress further than the idea stage. However, these initial perceptions were not the only ones influencing the perspective of the staff member moving the DFQM forward. Their perspective was an amalgamation of experiences gained personally and professionally within the dyslexia sphere. Elements came from seeing individuals who had been excluded or isolated within education, supporting people who had been misunderstood, working on strategies with people to overcome barriers and listening to personal narratives. A confident holistic view could envisage the transformational nature of the DFQM. This outlook incorporates an understanding of how dyslexia awareness would encourage further discussion, benefiting staff and learners, and how significant the DFQM is for vocational education, both nationally and internationally. Importantly, the determination and perseverance that dyslexic people develop experientially was combined with the confidence to adhere to DFQM standards, follow through with the process, and have the ability to work independently to focus and achieve the goal.

During preparation, and throughout the DFQM process, challenges for the staff member included anxiety over balancing the personal with the professional, and acknowledging the weight of responsibility for the process, for the organisations involved, and the learners. Dyslexic behaviours were reflected upon regularly to ensure

the approach was tempered with calmness and professionalism. This provided strong parameters, meaning the overstimulation and excitement of a new project was restrained, and the intense, complex picture of the whole *raison d'être* became gentler and more digestible to others. Post-DFQM, these challenges remain, but deeper reflection will need to consider how a dyslexic person transitions through different roles, from personal experience to advocate for wider exposure after involvement with the DFQM, and how that impacts on them, their *whānau* and their workplace.

The DFQM process has also altered the initial perspectives, from a space where it appeared to be quite a solitary experience, to one where dyslexia discussions have given a collective and inclusive atmosphere to the organisation. In some ways, after years of experiencing barriers, it was reassuring to see how enthusiastic staff were; how they have built and developed new awareness and relationships, to hear about learners who have come forward with stories of their experiences, and watch how people have collaborated and connected. The experience has taken resilience to reach an initial conclusion. It has pushed boundaries, shone light on issues and good practices equally, and encouraged people to look beyond and see what is possible.

Linking with the community was part of the process. Collaboration and sharing knowledge encourage the relationships necessary for supporting learners across the transitions from primary to secondary and secondary to tertiary (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Communication with Learning Support Coordinators was invaluable, and developed mutually supportive connections. Their learners will become the tertiary organisation's future learners (Ministry of Education, 2020), who will bring with them the expectation of awareness and appropriate learning environments, therefore the DFQM is a valuable component of this process.

An afternoon of filming closed the trial, creating an additional challenge. Face-to-face interviews, focusing on remembering questions and providing appropriate answers, generate difficulties for a dyslexic person but the film company, and the DFQM external facilitator, provided a supportive environment. It is important to be aware of how dyslexia can generate barriers to achievement, including interviews for film or employment (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018c). Support, reassurance, respect and *manaakitanga* reduce these barriers by creating positive relationships and partnerships (Ako Aotearoa, 2022), allowing the dyslexic person to step forward, whether that is over or around the issue.

The DFQM is a valuable process to follow, but it is not a tick box that magically grants the organisation an understanding of dyslexia-friendly practices. It is challenging, and transformational, with the expectation that the organisation recognises the seriousness of the task ahead and acknowledges the responsibility of supporting their people effectively and appropriately.

SUPPORT

The DFQM, developed by Ako Aotearoa (n.d.a), is one measure that can highlight an organisation's commitment to being dyslexia friendly. Ako Aotearoa continually develop tools to support organisations (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.b) and are active in providing flexible access to the neurodiverse landscape through their website, Facebook pages, and the Neurodiversity Community of Practice. The Tertiary Education Commission (2021b) continues to research, discuss, report and generate accessible resources to aid understanding, raise awareness and develop inclusive practices for underserved learners. Ako Aotearoa and the Tertiary Education Commission are two of many organisations, groups and individuals providing information, resources and support in this area in Aotearoa New Zealand. As more discussions are held, more people will come together to increase the local and national network connectivity.

Internationally, support is available online and through different social media networks (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a; British Dyslexia Association, 2021; Dyslexia Canada, n.d.; Dyslexia Scotland, 2017). Dyslexia toolkits (Royal College of Nursing, 2010) are available to support tertiary organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, with information on raising awareness and developing strategies. Although these may be based in international settings, the strategies for supporting dyslexic learners can be utilised in Aotearoa New Zealand, as learning differences do not recognise

state boundaries (Dyslexia Canada, n.d.). The DFQM itself has been inspired by the British Dyslexia Association's (2021) DFQM and developed to sit comfortably within the Aotearoa New Zealand context (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, 2021). Further information on international practices are contained in the Tertiary Education Commission's report (2021a), which explores aspects of the current dyslexia landscape.

LIMITATIONS

The overarching limitation of this piece is that it draws on one person's perceptions and perspectives. It is a unique lens, both in terms of its seemingly isolated and single viewpoint and because aumangea and dyslexia are individual experiences within that landscape. However, the very natures of dyslexia and aumangea encompass broader spectrums and depth of meaning. Personal experiences weave through professional experiences; educational and academic material has been referenced to provide a foundation of evidence-based practice; this piece has been written to provide that individual lens to share and highlight experiences rather than impose them on others.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could consider how practical the framework is for the diverse range of organisations it has been designed for, and its impact on staff and learners in those contexts. As more organisations undertake the DFQM there will be multiple experiences to explore. Understanding how to interpret the framework for their learners would offer an opportunity to review and evolve the DFQM. The practicalities of implementing the framework may be different for smaller organisations, private training establishments, or tertiary-adjacent organisations, when compared with the ITP in this article. Interpreting and implementing the framework may also impact staff differently. There may be differences in professional development requirements, expectations, workloads, available time and support. Learners may also require additional support and pastoral care from exposure to an elevated level of dyslexia awareness. Research into learner outcomes could be conducted to explore the impact of the DFQM, and whether its implementation has generated any practical and measurable achievements.

Another area for future research could investigate the transferability of strategies and skill sets developed through the DFQM and how these could support a better understanding of learners' journeys. Exploring how these transferable skills are used or adapted for progression in either academic or workplace contexts could enhance these pathways. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore how these strategies and skills could be utilised within transitional spaces, supporting school leavers into tertiary education or supporting their pathways from education to the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The DFQM is more than a quality mark. It is a practical framework for organisations to work with to ensure inclusive practices for their staff and learners. It provides explicit awareness and support for strategies to recognise abilities, realise potential and develop more holistic and relationship-based interactions. However, the foundation needs to be grounded securely, with respect for the responsibility of what the DFQM entails.

Professionally, the standards drive a review of processes to enhance the organisation's impact on tertiary education. The DFQM offers an opportunity to focus on staff development for the whole organisation, without the segregation of academic and non-academic, in an inclusive and flexible way. Networks and relationships are enhanced, developing efficient pathways for support and the development of strategies. Collaboration, positive mindsets, and relationality are encouraged. The resulting learning environment should feel safer, more inclusive and creative, with the strength to be agile and flexible as circumstances change.

The DFQM has the ability to link organisations within the tertiary sector, allowing it to reach out across the transitional space to the secondary and primary sectors. It promotes a shared space where dyslexic learners can participate in lifelong learning with support and awareness throughout their educational journey.

Finally, a reminder that dyslexia is unaware of international boundaries and social issues. Dyslexia is complex and individual. The personal intertwines with the professional, and barriers can be constructed from prior experiences, preventing people from aspiring to understand their potential or work towards it. The DFQM framework is a step towards achieving parity in our organisations for all learners and staff. It is timely, especially considering the currently evolving tertiary educational environment, and there is a greater need for the creativity, flexibility and agility gained from dyslexic strengths.

It requires resilience to persevere through the DFQM standards, and aumangea to accept the challenge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mike Styles, Annette van Lamoen and the rest of the DFQM team at Ako Aotearoa, for their perseverance, encouragement and support; everyone across the UCOL campuses involved in the different processes; the DFQM trial organisations; and, most importantly, the team at UCOL Horowhenua, Levin, for their action, participation and enthusiasm.

GLOSSARY

aumangea	strength, bravery, persistence, determination, tenacity, advocacy and resilience
DFQM	Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark
dyslexia	a different way of thinking and learning
ITP	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics
kotahitanga	promote, monitor, and reflect on outcomes in a collaborative manner that will lead to improvements in educational achievement for all learners (UCOL, 2022)
mana motuhake	care for and having high expectations for the performance of learners to enable the development of personal or group identity and independence (UCOL, 2022)
manaakitanga	care for learners as culturally located human beings above all else within a supportive environment (UCOL, 2022)
raison d'être	purpose or reason for being (living)
UCOL	Universal College of Learning
whakapiringatanga	creating a secure, well-managed learning environment by incorporating routine pedagogical knowledge with pedagogical imagination (UCOL, 2022)
whānau	family

REFERENCES

- Addressing Dyslexia. (2017). *What is dyslexia?* <http://addressingdyslexia.org/what-dyslexia>
- Ako Aotearoa. (2021a). *'What a good one looks like' – the features of a dyslexic-friendly organisation*. <https://ako.ac.nz/assets/DFQM/DFQM-WAGOLL.pdf>
- Ako Aotearoa. (2021b). *Trailblazing education organisations awarded the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark*. <https://ako.ac.nz/our-community/ako-aotearoa-news/trailblazing-education-organisations-awarded-the-dyslexia-friendly-quality-mark/>
- Ako Aotearoa. (2022). *Applying manaakitanga in building positive relationships in your practice*. <https://ako.ac.nz/professional-learning/in-house-workshop/success-for-maori-learners/maori-cultural-capability-pathways/applying-maori-cultural-capability/applying-manaakitanga-in-your-practice/>
- Ako Aotearoa. (n.d.a). *The Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark*. <https://www.dfqm.nz>
- Ako Aotearoa. (n.d.b). *An introduction to dyslexia: Supporting learners to achieve their potential*. <https://ako.ac.nz/professional-learning/in-house-workshop/literacy-and-numeracy/an-introduction-to-dyslexia-and-related-learning-differences/>
- Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training. (2021). *ADCET webinar: Improving outcomes for dyslexic learners in tertiary education*. <https://www.adcet.edu.au/resource/10735/adcet-webinar-improving-outcomes-for-dyslexic-learners-in-tertiary-education>
- Australian Dyslexia Association. (2018). *Dyslexia in Australia*. <https://dyslexiaassociation.org.au/dyslexia-in-australia/>

- Benchetrit, R., & Katz, I. (2019). "This is my way...I am an ambassador": Identity voices of teachers with learning disorders. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102923>
- British Dyslexia Association. (2021). *Dyslexia-friendly awards*. <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/dyslexia-friendly-awards/dyslexia-friendly-quality-mark-awards>
- British Dyslexia Association. (n.d.). *About dyslexia*. <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia>
- Carawan, L. W., Nalavany, B. A., & Jenkins, C. (2016). Emotional experience with dyslexia and self-esteem: The protective role of perceived family support in late adulthood. *Aging & Mental Health*, 20(3), 284–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2015.1008984>
- Caskey, J. (2020). A case study of the educational experience of adult students with dyslexia across five TAFE Institutes in Queensland. In G. Crimmins (Ed.), *Strategies for supporting inclusion and diversity in the academy: Higher education, aspiration and inequality* (1st ed., 353–375). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43593-6_18
- Crouch, A. T. (2019). Perceptions of the possible impact of dyslexia on nursing and midwifery students and of the coping strategies to develop and/or use to help them cope in clinical practice. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 35, 90–97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2018.12.008>
- Dyslexia Canada. (n.d.). *Dyslexia basics*. <https://www.dyslexiacanada.org/en/dyslexia-basics>
- Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand. (n.d.). *Action*. https://www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/dfnz_action.html
- Dyslexia Scotland. (2017). *Dyslexia unwrapped*. <https://unwrapped.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/>
- Dyslexia Scotland. (2018a). *Dyslexia checklist and indicators*. https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/page_content/Dyslexia_Checklist_and_Indicators%20.pdf
- Dyslexia Scotland. (2018b). *What is dyslexia?* <https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/library/WhatIsDyslexia.pdf>
- Dyslexia Scotland. (2018c). *Job interviews: Information for people with dyslexia*. <https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/library/JobInterviews.pdf>
- Education Scotland. (2020). *Making sense programme: Final report*. <https://education.gov.scot/media/xecfplnc/makingsenseprogrammefinalreport.pdf>
- Government Digital Service. (2017). *Research and analysis: Simone: dyslexic user*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-disabilities-and-impairments-user-profiles/simone-dyslexic-user>
- Hiscock, J., & Leigh, J. (2020). Exploring perceptions of and supporting dyslexia in teachers in higher education in STEM. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 587(6), 714–723. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2020.1764377>
- Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand. (2021). *Presentations & workshop sessions*. <https://www.itenz.co.nz/home-2/conferencesplash/presentation-sessions/>
- James, T., & Walters, V. (2020). How positive is positive psychology in an enabling program? Investigating the transformative power of positive psychology for enabling students. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 60(2), 170–189. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1267909>
- Logan, J. (2009). Dyslexic entrepreneurs: The incidence; their coping strategies and their business skills. *Dyslexia*, 15(4), 328–346. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.388>
- Made by Dyslexia. (2021). *We're here to redefine dyslexia*. <https://www.madebydyslexia.org/>
- Microsoft. (2022). *Dyslexia training, in partnership with Made by Dyslexia*. <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/paths/dyslexia-training/>
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. (n.d.). *What's happening in the regions: Manawātū-Whanganui*. <https://www.growregions.govt.nz/regions/in-your-region/manawatu-whanganui/>
- Ministry of Education. (2018). *Guide to dyslexia and learning*. <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/dyslexia-and-learning/>
- Ministry of Education. (2020). *Learning Support Coordinators: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)*. <https://conversation-live-storageeta-assetstorages3bucket-jsvm6zoesodc.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/public/LSC/Learning-Support-Coordinator-FAQs-1-July-20202.pdf>
- Ministry of Education. (2022). *National transition guidelines*. <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/national-transition-guidelines-for-students-with->

additional-learning-needs/national-transition-guidelines/#sh-natioanl%20transition%20guidelines

- Ministry of Education. (n.d.). *Transitions – managing times of change*. <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/transitions-managing-times-of-change/>
- NZIER. (2021). *Under-served learners: The economic and wellbeing benefits of improving education outcomes. A report to UP Education*. <https://www.nzier.org.nz/publications/under-served-learners-the-economic-and-wellbeing-benefits-of-improving-education-outcomes>
- Nalavany, B. A., Logan, J. M., & Carawan, L. W. (2018). The relationship between emotional experience with dyslexia and work self-efficacy among adults with dyslexia. *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Research and Practice*, 24(1), 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.1575>
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority. (n.d.). *Tertiary education*. <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/understanding-nzqf/tertiary-education>
- Royal College of Art. (2015). *Rebalancing dyslexia and creativity*. <https://www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/rebalancing-dyslexia-and-creativity-rca/>
- Royal College of Nursing. (2010). *Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia: A toolkit for nursing staff*. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/rcn---dyslexiadyspraxiadyscalculia---toolkit-for-nursing-staff.pdf>
- Sinclair, M., & Calman, R. (2012). *The Raupō essential Māori dictionary* (3rd ed.). Raupō.
- SPELD NZ. (n.d.). *Dyslexia*. <https://www.speld.org.nz/specific-learning-disability-definitions/dyslexia>
- Te Pūkenga. (2022). *A new kind of organisation*. <https://www.tepukenga.ac.nz/about-us/>
- Tertiary Education Commission. (2021a). *International practice in support of dyslexic learners in tertiary education: Potential applications in the New Zealand context*. Tertiary Education Commission. <https://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Reports/International-Practice-in-Support-of-Dyslexic-Learners-in-Tertiary-Education.pdf>
- Tertiary Education Commission. (2021b). *Neurodiversity resources*. <https://www.tec.govt.nz/focus/our-focus/oritetanga-tertiary-success-for-everyone/neurodiversity-resources/>
- Tertiary Education Commission. (2021c). *Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark to help remove barriers to learning*. <https://www.tec.govt.nz/news-and-consultations/dyslexia-friendly-quality-mark-to-help-remove-barriers-to-learning/>
- The Education Hub. (2022). *Transitions*. <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/category/ece-resources/transitions-ece-resources/>
- The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Ltd. (2022). *The 2021 National ITP Research Symposium 25 & 26 November*. <https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/2021-ityp-symposium>
- UCOL. (2022a). *Te Atakura*. <https://www.ucol.ac.nz/study-at-ucol/maori-pasifika/te-atakura>
- UCOL. (2022b). *About UCOL*. <https://www.ucol.ac.nz/about-ucol>
- UCOL. (2022c). *Partnership benefits*. <https://www.ucol.ac.nz/about-ucol/our-partnerships/partnership-benefits>
- University of Oxford. (2021). *Dyslexia at Oxford*. <https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/dyslexia-at-oxford>
- UP Education. (2022). *Shifting the dial: The economic and societal impact of removing barriers for underserved learners in Aotearoa*. <https://www.up.education/content/uploads/2022/02/Final-UP-Education-Shifting-the-Dial-The-Economic-Societal-Impact-of-Removing-Barriers-for-Underserved-Learners-in-Aotearoa.pdf>
- Waterfield, J. (2002). Dyslexia: Implications for learning, teaching and support. *Planet*, 6(1), 22–24. <https://doi.org/10.11120/plan.2002.00060022>
- Wissell, S., Karimi, L., & Serry, T. (2021). Adults with dyslexia: A snapshot of the demands on adulthood in Australia. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 26(2), 153–166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2021.1991965>
- Wolff, U., & Lundberg, I. (2002). The prevalence of dyslexia among art students. *Dyslexia*, 8(1), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.211>
- Wray, J., Aspland, J., Taghzouit, K., & Pace, K. (2013). Making the nursing curriculum more inclusive for students with specific learning difficulties: Embedding specialist study skills into a core module. *Nurse Education Today*, 33(6), 602–907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2012.07.009>

AUTHOR

Victoria Beckwith is currently the Literacy and Numeracy Leader at the Universal College of Learning (UCOL), Aotearoa New Zealand, and a PhD student in Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education at the University of Waikato, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her doctoral research project focuses on the phenomenon of children's lived experiences of global citizenship in Aotearoa New Zealand. She earned her BSc (Hons) from the Open University in the United Kingdom and her MEd from the University of Waikato, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research interests include global citizenship, global citizenship education, literacy and numeracy, and dyslexia.