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Introduction

In this book, we aim to discuss issues related to dyslexia in adults and provide a framework for understanding these issues. We also aim to consider the challenges faced by adults with dyslexia, particularly in the workplace, and the potential solutions for overcoming these challenges. The framework for understanding the challenges of adult dyslexia is that of the authors, but many of the ideas about how to deal with the challenges are provided by individuals who have experienced a lifetime of dyslexia and who may be seen as relatively successful in their chosen field of employment. The inspiration for writing this book came from working with dyslexic people in a wide range of occupations, so we have focused on the world of work rather than education. Although these ideas relate primarily to the workplace, many are also relevant to adult education contexts.

Although the occurrence of dyslexia in adults has long been recognised, the specific challenges faced in adulthood are often overlooked. The focus of this book is on how the challenges in adulthood

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can be very different from those in childhood, even if they stem from the same underlying causes. The book should be relevant to all those interested in dyslexia. This includes dyslexic adults themselves – indeed, many of the strategies we discuss are aimed at adults with dyslexia, and therefore we discuss many in the second person (i.e., 'you'). We also believe some of the ideas and strategies are of particular relevance for those dyslexic adults who are starting out on their career journeys. The transition from college or university into the world of work can be unexpectedly challenging. We also hope it is of value to those working alongside adult dyslexics – workmates, colleagues, managers, and human resources (HR) departments – by providing ideas about what dyslexia is and what impact it can have in the workplace. Likewise, those working with adult dyslexics – coaches, trainers, tutors, or assessors – or students or researchers studying dyslexia, may find it helpful. Furthermore, the family and friends of those with dyslexia, children and adults alike, may find it informative. Finally, although we have focused on dyslexia, the ideas around career success and also the strategies in Part II may be of interest to people with associated syndromes such as dyspraxia or deficits in attention (such as in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), as although the causes of these are very different, the challenges can be similar.

It may be that some aspects of this book are more relevant for some readers than for others. Part I presents the theory, while Part II explores how the theories underpin the practical strategies. While we have presented our ideas in a particular order, one that makes sense to us, we would encourage you all to find your own way through the book; for example, you may prefer to read the last chapter first to get an overview of the book or you may find the personal stories of our dyslexic contributors the most helpful (see Chapter 9). Awareness and understanding are the initial points for dealing with

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the challenges and finding solutions. We hope that the ideas in this book provide these starting points.

Part I provides the background to what we see as adult dyslexia and how we see this relating to issues of success, particularly in employment (Chapters 1–3). Part II (Chapters 4–9) focuses on strategies to deal with various aspects of work, hopefully providing the reader with possible solutions that they can tailor to their own circumstances and needs. These strategies are contained in comments/stories told us by adults with dyslexia, though we present our own interpretations of these comments/stories so as to fit with the content of the book. The final chapter (Chapter 10) summarises these ideas and gives our final concluding thoughts. Before we discuss these ideas, though, we need to present what we see as the background to dyslexia in adults.

1.1   Dyslexia over the Lifespan

Dyslexia is often seen as a childhood disorder. The focus of practitioners, policy makers, and researchers on the problems faced by dyslexic children when learning the basic skills of reading and writing has led to this perception. However, dyslexia is not something that an individual grows out of. It typically influences aspects of an individual's experiences across their whole life. Dyslexia in adulthood may not be experienced in the same way as dyslexia in primary school; the two are very different contexts. While, quite rightly, literacy is the main concern in the school years, this may not be true in adulthood as people may have developed their literacy skills to a competent level. Hence it may be necessary to deal with adult dyslexia in somewhat different ways to that proposed for dyslexia in childhood. To understand this, we need to look at what we know (and do not know) about dyslexia from childhood to adulthood.

One starting point is to consider what dyslexia is in terms of its definition. The definition provided by the International Dyslexia Association is probably the most long-serving one around today; it seems to have stood the test of time. This definition states that dyslexia is

> a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component in language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. (International Dyslexia Association, 2002, https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/)

There is a fuller version of this definition of dyslexia available on the International Dyslexia Association's website. However, this is not the only definition that has been used to discuss dyslexia. There are many alternatives that have been proposed over the 100-plus years that dyslexia has been recognised and studied (see Kirby & Snowling, 2022). A consideration of the more common types of definition suggests that most focus on four key elements (see discussions in Everatt & Denston, 2020). These focus on the difficulties associated with dyslexia and can be summarised as follows:

1. Difficulties relate to accurate and/or fluent reading and writing/spelling developing incompletely or with great difficulty.
2. Difficulties are apparent at the word level and are persistent despite access to learning opportunities that are effective with most individuals.
3. Difficulties are unexpected in relation to typical development, or relative strengths, in non-literacy areas.
4. Difficulties are due to differences in the way language is processed, particularly the phonological component of language.

We discuss each of these elements in turn later.

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1.1.1 Elements 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Issues

The first element focuses on the most obvious feature of dyslexia: reading and writing difficulties. Many perspectives on dyslexia focus on the idea that reading and writing/spelling develop incompletely or with great difficulty. This suggests that individuals with dyslexia will have problems with reading and writing, but that it is not impossible for them to learn to read and write. For most, the development of good reading and writing skills takes time and may require appropriate support, although for some people there may be aspects of reading or writing that remain a problem even after long-term learning. For example, many adults with dyslexia who are in higher education continue to show difficulties with spelling accuracy even though word reading accuracy may be good compared to many people in the general population.

The second element relates to the first but focuses on when the difficulties with reading and writing occur and how they can be long-lasting. This suggests that difficulties are apparent at the word level and are persistent despite access to learning opportunities that are effective with most individuals. The focus on word-level reading (sometimes referred to as decoding) and word-level writing (i.e., spelling) means that difficulties will be experienced early in learning – from the very start of the child's experience with letters and words. Equally, the earlier difficulties are identified, the more effective the intervention. Therefore, much of the focus in terms of developing interventions has been on early identification and support. This is again why many focus on dyslexia in childhood – it is the way to avoid many of the difficulties experienced by dyslexics. However, if identification does not occur, then learning may be less than efficient. It is also the case that the severity of difficulties can

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determine the success of interventions and the length of time that an intervention needs to be implemented. Therefore, although a focus on young children beginning to learn to read/write is understandable, procedures to support older individuals should also be useful, and they may need to take account of additional problems. This is the reason why most definitions refer to the persistence of difficulties and why there is a need to consider the impact of dyslexia in adulthood as well as in children.

Persistence, though, can also mean that the experience of difficulties can change with age. For example, the problems experienced by the dyslexic individual at the word level can then impact on other elements of literacy learning, such as reading comprehension and text writing (we discuss such consequences further in the rest of this book). Thus, as the child grows up, the range of difficulties stemming from early word-level difficulties may increase: letter and single-word reading/spelling problems at the age of five or six and may lead to reading comprehension problems and text production weaknesses through school and into adulthood. This then needs to be taken into account in support procedures (specialist lessons/coaching). Similarly, single-word decoding interventions may not work effectively with many adults who perceive comprehension as the focus of literacy skills. Interventions may need to embed decoding strategies within procedures that benefit comprehension to ensure that the adult recognises their usefulness and practises them.

1.1.2 Element 3: Specificity, Comorbidity, and Neurodiversity

The third element suggests that difficulties with reading and writing are unexpected in relation to typical development in non-literacy areas. However, literacy skills can impact on most areas of education

unless appropriate interventions or accommodations are used. This element is one of the reasons why assessments often look at factors outside of reading and writing development (we discuss this point later). Looking at other factors can help identify the impact of learning difficulties (i.e., the consequences that we discuss when covering the fourth element) but may also help explain literacy assessment findings if an individual is using compensatory strategies. For example, some adults slow reading down to allow strategy use, rather than being slow readers because they are slow at processing information. Assessments of areas outside of reading and writing may also identify co-occurring difficulties (referred to by some as comorbidities) that can impact on learning, and which may need additional attention/intervention.

Dyslexia can co-occur with dyspraxia (problems with co-ordinating movements) or deficits in attention (such as in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and effective support may also be needed here to avoid them interfering with learning during a dyslexia intervention. Issues of comorbid difficulties can make identifying support more complex. They may increase the range of difficulties that advice and support needs to take into account. In addition, such co-occurring conditions, along with the individual differences discussed in this book, can lead to a range of issues when trying to determine what is, and what is not, dyslexia (see discussions in Everatt & Denston, 2020). We do not have the space to discuss all the alternative perspectives that may have derived from this mix, but some of the perspectives set out here may be of interest to the reader; this may particularly be the case if the reader feels that what they have experienced throughout learning is very different from the framework used in this book. Note that the framework is based on our current understanding, which is derived from both research and practice. In many ways the phonological processing deficit is

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the dominant view of dyslexia, but there are alternatives. Some of these alternatives have reasonable levels of supporting evidence, though typically not as much as for the key feature (phonology) of the fourth element in this framework. However, other perspectives are very mixed in their evidence: they either contradict the experiences of most dyslexics or are inconsistent with the evidence in the literature. Indeed, some are contradictory with themselves or with related viewpoints.

As an example, the view that coloured overlays can be a way to support students with dyslexia often contradicts statements about the use of coloured lenses and the precise colour needed for such lenses to be effective (see Wilkins, 2005, and contrast with Suttle et al., 2018). If a precise colour is needed, as a colour prescription requires, then the overlays should not work as they are not precise. If overlays do work, then a precisely coloured lens is not necessary. Equally, taking out light through overlays and lenses relates to the background light in a room. If the background light changes (e.g., from sunlight to the light produced by an electric bulb), then a precise colour will need to change also. This is not to say that reducing the glare from a white piece of paper cannot help – reducing glare may help many by increasing the length of time that they can concentrate without feeling tired from having to look at mostly white paper for a long time. However, this is not dyslexia-specific enough in a framework for understanding dyslexia. Hence, although issues of visual stress and colour-based supports may be related to the experiences of some with dyslexia, they are not a fundamental feature of the majority's experience and may be better understood as an important comorbidity when considering support.

The same can be said of other areas that have been associated with dyslexia. If the reader wants to consider other dyslexia

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perspectives that have been linked to visual processing issues, the following might be helpful:

1. Irlen (1991; https://irlen.com/) for a discussion of scotopic sensitivity (sometimes referred to as Meares/Irlen syndrome) as a potential cause of dyslexia-related difficulties – this perspective has a number of key differences from some views that argue for the use of coloured overlays or lenses (again contrast with Wilkins, 2005).

Other perspectives include:

2. Stordy and Nicholl (2000; and see www.fabresearch.org/viewItem.php) for a discussion of nutritional deficits that may be related to some aspects of dyslexia, particularly the fast processing of information within the brain that has been associated with some visual processing weaknesses – though again, the evidence is mixed and some of the features of nutrient deficiencies (such as skin problems) are not the type of characteristics we see experienced by most adult dyslexics;

3. Tallal et al. (1997; www.scilearn.com/) for initial discussions of auditory temporal processing deficits that may be found in individuals with language-related processing difficulties and which have then been linked with the visual temporal processing deficits that some have argued to be the reason for visual sensitivity (see Stein, 2019); and

4. Davis (1997; and consider www.dyslexia.com/) about the presence of artistic talent as a requirement for an identification of dyslexia (which we do not agree with as we find many dyslexic adults who are not great artists).

The recent views on visual and auditory temporal (or magnocellular) processing ideas can be found in Stein (2019), which brings together many of the ideas related to visual processing deficits outlined earlier. However, the need to explain more auditory processing differences

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between those with and without dyslexia (including the phonological effects discussed later) has led to the need to assume there are problems processing information at speed (the temporal part of the term) in both the visual and auditory domain. This is an example of a visual explanation that includes explanations of language-related deficits within its overarching theory.

We could include similar discussions about interpretation problems associated with motor deficit or automaticity deficit viewpoints (see Everatt & Denston, 2020 for such a discussion), but this is not the focus of the current book. If you want to look at some of the ideas related to motor deficit theories of dyslexia, then maybe consider the ideas of Goddard, Blythe and others at www.inpp.org.uk/, and contrast these with Levinson at www.dyslexiaonline.com/treatment/treatment.html. Also see the relatively recent ideas from those proposing an automaticity, or cerebellar, deficit in Nicolson and Fawcett (2019).

Another perspective is that of the relationship between working memory, dyslexia, and reading difficulties: see discussions in McLoughlin and Leather (2013); and see Knoop-van Campen et al. (2018), Peng et al. (2018), and Shin (2020). We discuss aspects related to working memory and executive functioning in much more detail later in this book (see Chapter 2). Most of these alternative perspectives incorporate a phonological viewpoint (which we discuss as part of the next element in the current framework), either as characteristics that need to be explained by the theory or as one of a number of alternative explanations. Therefore, given that this phonological perspective is part of most viewpoints, we focus on this in the current framework. If the strategies presented take into account this more likely explanation of the difficulties associated with dyslexia, then they should be useful to most of those with dyslexia.

Before we move on to discuss phonological processing, a final term needs a little introduction as it has emerged as a framework

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in which to view dyslexia and other potentially co-occurring conditions. This is the term neurodiversity (see Dwyer, 2022, for a recent discussion of related terms and their background). The use of 'neurodiversity' (and similar terms) within education has emerged due to many practitioners, and those theorising about inclusive education, being worried about terms such as dyslexia being seen in a negative way. Put bluntly, dyslexia is associated only with difficulties meaning that an individual with dyslexia should be seen as disabled in some way – to have a problem that needs fixing. If we take more of a medical perspective, then dyslexia may be considered a neurodevelopmental disability that requires intervention so that it can be 'cured' or overcome. This can be contrasted with a more social perspective where the difficulties are purely because of the way society views the difficulties: before reading became such a vital component of education and employment, dyslexia may not have been considered a problem. The focus on difficulty or disability has meant that many have tried to use alternative terms; for example, 'difference' may be used by some instead of 'difficulty' or 'disability'. The term diversity has then been linked with the idea that conditions such as dyslexia involve a specific way of thinking about something or processing something in the brain. The link to the brain leads to the term neuro, thereby leaving us with the term neurodiversity.

'Neurodiversity' can then be used to refer to any brain-based processing difference – from dyslexia to dyspraxia, to attention deficits, to autism (indeed, the term developed from those working with autism, not dyslexia). This makes for a more inclusive, and potentially a more positive, term: it suggests differences between people, rather than one group being able and another disabled – but it still links to the biological bases of such conditions. However, one of the problems with the term is that it has been used to refer to anything that might suggest a difference, and so may become over-inclusive: we may all

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fall within the neurodiversity label, meaning that its usefulness is questionable as a way to identify support (though see de Beer et al., 2022 for a use of the term when discussing adult dyslexics in work).

Despite the attraction of such a term, we do not use 'neurodiversity' in the current book for two reasons. The first is that dyslexia is not always seen from a negative perspective. Although the elements in our framework all start with the word difficulty, two out of the four then lead us to discussing positives and strengths. Indeed, many in the field of dyslexia use these more positive features as part of helping individuals understand the difficulties. This is a focus in this book too. And many with dyslexia see it as part of their identity – the term dyslexic is used in this book because of this feature. Hence, 'dyslexia' is not necessarily a term with negative connotations, particularly for those with dyslexia themselves. Secondly, the term neurodiversity does not specify support that well. Many of the strategies outlined in this book may be effective for any individual no matter what their neurological make-up, but some are specific to literacy and language issues, and all are based on our understanding of dyslexia (this framework) and our conversations with adults with dyslexia. Hence, the book uses the terms dyslexia and dyslexic.

1.1.3   Element 4: Causes and Consequences of Dyslexia

The fourth element of most perspectives on dyslexia is that it stems from problems related to the processing of language, particularly the phonological component of language. Phonological here relates to sounds within words: the word 'dog' is made up of the sound related to 'd', the sound related to 'o', and the sound related to 'g' – combine these sounds and you get something that approximates to the spoken word 'dog'. This can be particularly useful when trying

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to read (or decode) new words with which you are unfamiliar – and for a young reader, this may be most of the written words that they encounter. Being able to efficiently recognise sounds within words may be vital to connect letters (referred to as graphemes) and sounds (referred to as phonemes), which is in turn a key component of using the English alphabet. There are other elements of sounds within a language that can also be linked with a writing system: for example, some writing systems, such as Chinese, focus more on syllables rather than the phoneme sounds that typically link with an alphabetic form. However, for an alphabet, recognising links between graphemes and phonemes seems to be key to successful decoding. Although there are varying views on the reasons why dyslexia occurs, deficits related to phonological processing, and to linking sounds with their written forms, are included in almost all models of dyslexia.

This fourth element is also important as it shows most clearly the link between language and literacy: written text is primarily a representation of spoken language. Assessments, therefore, may go beyond reading and writing to determine the level of development of underlying language skills. Additionally, there are reciprocal relationships between reading/writing and language, and so we are looking not only at the basic areas that are likely to lead to literacy difficulties, but also at those areas that may be impacted by poor learning experiences related to dyslexia. For example, reading difficulties associated with dyslexia can lead to a lack of reading practice, which can lead to less experience of certain types of vocabulary that would not be encountered in normal, day-to-day, spoken interactions. Reading can also lead to experiencing words in different sentence context. Hence, reading is associated with increases in vocabulary size and also with expanding links between words and their different meanings and uses. This lack of experience with words may then impact on language understanding and reading comprehension skills.

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Hence, research that focuses on children is important in identifying learning problems early so that interventions can be implemented as soon as possible. However, we also need to consider the impact of learning difficulties on older learners and adults. Knowing what the consequences are if support is not effective is also useful to determine how best to help older individuals with difficulties. From the elements set out earlier, and based on research evidence (again, see discussions in Everatt & Denston, 2020), problems associated with dyslexia can lead to several types of consequences. The most obvious is that word-level reading/writing problems can lead to text-level weaknesses. However, this may then lead to problems across school subjects. As a simple example, if you cannot read your science textbook, then you are likely to struggle in science subjects at school. Struggling in school subjects because of a lack of access to materials can lead to poor educational qualifications. Equally, difficulties writing essays can lead to poor marks in assignments, which again may result in a lack of qualifications, which restricts access to post-school opportunities. Those with poor qualifications following compulsory education may not be able to access tertiary education courses and may not be in a position to apply for certain types of jobs. In addition, individuals' self-esteem and confidence are likely be affected. Employment prospects, therefore, may be constrained by the level of reading/writing difficulties experienced during schooling.

As we have also mentioned, less experience of reading can impact verbal skills. A lack of reading practice may impact on the ability to decipher the meaning of text. Such skills may become more practised during reading compared to spoken conversations. In verbal interactions, if you do not know what something means, you can always ask the person you are talking to. If you are reading text, you cannot ask the writer. Therefore, those who do not enjoy reading may gain less practice at working out (or inferring) what a text means. In

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contrast, those that do see the need to put extra effort into reading may develop excellent inferencing skills. If you are struggling with decoding a word, one strategy might be to read around the word to infer the meaning of the phrase or sentence so that the meaning of the unknown word can also be inferred. This strategy, therefore, may enhance textual inferencing skills beyond those of individuals who have very good word decoding skills.

Finally, poor school experiences due to problems learning to read and write, and the subsequent feelings of failure that this might entail, can lead to poor behaviour and negative emotional consequences. Poor behaviour may manifest when trying to avoid situations where you are asked to do something that you find difficult or which makes you feel embarrassed. Being the class clown or troublemaker might be better than feeling shame when trying to read text out loud to the rest of the class. Such behaviours are likely to interfere with the individual's own learning, but can also impact on the learning of others in the class, which can then lead to problems with school authorities. Equally, the shame/embarrassment felt when struggling with what many consider the 'simple' task of reading can lead to low self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety than those felt by others. However, these negative behaviours and feelings need not afflict all those with dyslexia. Coming to terms with the difficulties and finding ways around them might lead some individuals to develop a more positive attitude towards the self and lead them to increased efforts to succeed. The type of consequences experienced can depend on numerous factors specific to the individual. Some of these are individual differences we are born with. Others are the range of positive and negative experiences we have in life. These latter experiences mean that as an individual gets older, the number of factors that impact on

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performance also has the tendency to grow, and these can influence the chances of success.

However, the relative dearth of research into dyslexia in the adult years has contributed to a lack of understanding of its impact and how to support adults in education or employment contexts (see also points made by Wissell et al., 2022). Increased understanding should lead to better provisions, but at present interventions for adults can often derive from ideas related to work with children: a focus on word-level reading or underlying phonological weaknesses, whereas the needs of adults are more likely focused on text understanding and report-writing coherence (Fidler & Everatt, 2012). Some may be recommended to try general literacy courses, such as those targeting speed reading courses and spelling programmes, despite the fact that these can have the potential to increase feelings of struggling and failure. Alternatively, dyslexic adults are recommended to try general support tools, such as assistive software that may help with reading and spelling; although some of these tools can be helpful in adult education contexts, they are often recommended with scant regard for the specific difficulties an individual may experience in the workplace (McLoughlin, 2012).

Achievement in the workplace requires a range of skill sets that have cognitive demands different from those required for success in education. Some jobs place heavy demands on literacy, others do not; some are office-based, others are operational. Although good literacy skills are increasingly essential in most workplaces, so are effective communication skills, planning, prioritisation, organisation skills, the ability to multi-task, to work under time pressure, to learn new skills, and to adapt to changes. Clearly, increasing literacy requirements has the potential to be a challenge for adults with dyslexia. However, many dyslexic adults do report struggling with some work-related skill sets that are not necessarily reading or writing

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based (Gerber, 2012). Why some dyslexics struggle in these additional work-related areas is still debateable as there is little research to substantiate them as characteristics of dyslexia – they are certainly not issues that are discussed when investigating dyslexia in primary school children. Hence, a greater understanding of the impact of dyslexia in adulthood should potentially lead to a better understanding of the challenges faced, which should then lead to more effective individualised solutions. The aim of this book is to discuss and explore these additional challenges and consider the potential solutions that dyslexic adults themselves, and the practitioners supporting them, have found to be useful in reducing the impact of, or even overcoming, these difficulties.

1.2   Book Aims, Focus, and Methods

Overall, then, this book considers dyslexia from a literacy difficulties perspective but builds on these views to consider how it may impact more broadly on performance and ultimately success in one's chosen profession. The wide variation in the success levels of dyslexic people can confuse understanding further – and can sometimes lead to individuals questioning the idea of dyslexia in adults: the slightly odd (and hopefully outdated) view that you cannot both have a disability and be successful. However, this variation in success levels is something worthy of study and consideration: what is it that enables some people to succeed while others do not? This question is not new. For example, Gerber and colleagues (e.g., Gerber et al., 1992) investigated the behaviour patterns of successful dyslexic adults and concluded that internal control and self-understanding (potentially aspects of metacognitive skill) contributed to their success. Given that we can identify those aspects that support adult dyslexics in

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being successful, we may then be able to use that knowledge to support others. Similarly, Swanson and colleagues have argued that there are a range of deficits associated with dyslexia across the lifespan (see Swanson & Zeng, 2013). They suggest that, rather than focusing on developing literacy skills alone, a broader approach should be adopted to inform best practice for interventions targeted at younger and older individuals. One of the key areas that Swanson has discussed is the development of metacognitive skill (Swanson, 2012), which is one of the key proposals included in this book too.

As stated, the book focuses on dyslexia in adults, and particularly those adults in work, though we touch on issues related to adult education. Although 'adult' often refers to someone sixteen years of age or over, the ideas presented by dyslexic adults themselves are provided primarily by individuals who are aged at least thirty. The range of stories/comments are personal perceptions from individuals with dyslexia who have been relatively successful in their chosen field of employment, and so they have had to be working for some time. However, it is hoped that these experiences will be useful to all adult dyslexics no matter their age. Furthermore, most of the stories are from individuals living and working in the United Kingdom, but we have attempted to ensure that the ideas presented are applicable to a range of contexts so that everyone finds something of relevance, no matter their place of work.

All of the direct comments presented in the book are from real individuals, but we have used pseudonyms to avoid identification – we have also changed/deleted some statements for the same reason. The comments/stories presented are a sample of those we have collected over the years of working on this book. Those chosen were those we felt best presented the points made by most adults. Again, though, there is an element of selection based on our own understanding. The comments/stories fit into the framework of the

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authors. Other authors have used similar techniques of interviewing those with dyslexia (e.g., Edwards, 1994; Gerber & Raskind, 2013; and see de Beer et al., 2022 and Wissell et al., 2022), and we feel that our interpretations of the commentaries/stories of adult dyslexics in this book do not differ substantially from the interview responses presented in these other published works. But they are our interpretations, so any errors of statements in the book are the fault of the authors. We would like to thank all of those who have spared their time to discuss some of the issues with us, including those not included in the book, as their input was as valuable to us as authors as the examples presented.

As indicated, interpretations are based on our framework for understanding dyslexia in adults. This is further discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 2), which provides more information about adult dyslexia, including the sort of assessment practices that are used with adults. Assessment is the starting point for the development of an individual's understanding of the nature of their dyslexia. Thus, we outline some of the processes that are involved in an assessment and discuss the potential reasons for it. The main rationale for assessment is to identify the specific difficulties that are likely experienced by an individual. However, it should also consider the individual's strengths as these can influence the performance of an adult in work as much as their weaknesses, particularly if the individual has chosen their profession. Equally, an assessment should help to provide explanations for the individual's experiences and make recommendations that support the individual in daily life and personal development.

Following on from this, Chapter 3 explores the theoretical concept of success. Some general, and maybe over-simple, definitions of success are covered, as well as the potential complexity of the concept: one person's view of success may be very different from another's even within the same context. This leads to a discussion

of conceptualising career success in two ways: from a personal perspective and from a societal perspective. An overview of the literature provides a background to consider the relevance of these views to dyslexic people. The chapter considers some of the factors that are said to contribute to success, discussing issues related to self-understanding, internal control, and goodness of fit.

Chapter 4 then considers some strategies that can contribute to the success of dyslexic adults in the workplace. One of the key factors covered is the role of self-understanding. Self-understanding refers to the dyslexic individual's knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their understanding of how, when, and why dyslexia affects their performance. Consistent with the theme of this book, Chapter 4 also covers the idea of individual differences; these can impact on our performance and reactions as much as dyslexia itself. Also consistent with other chapters in the book, ideas related to the development of metacognitive skills are discussed (i.e., task analysis, monitoring, reflection, and attribution). Additional ideas related to good planning, goal setting, and the importance of effective organisation are also covered.

Chapter 5 considers factors related to good communication skills, both verbal and written. The chapter explores various aspects of written and spoken language understanding, the sort of challenges that have been associated with adult dyslexia, and potential strategies for improving both written and verbal performance. Strategies for improving text reading are proposed, along with ideas for practising and supporting reading skills.

Chapter 6 focuses on literacy skills and effective communication in the workplace. It outlines a strategy (the '4 M's') that aims to help with literacy demands and the more efficient production of written work. Spoken language can also be an area where dyslexic adults

lack confidence and so participation in meetings and giving presentations are also considered in this chapter.

Chapter 7 focuses on the potential impact of dyslexia on performance at work. It again focuses on strategy development and how these can be put into practice to manage job demands. It explores the main areas that our dyslexia contributors have most commonly identified as challenges, in addition to the literacy challenges discussed in the previous chapter. Hence, a discussion of time management, memory and distractions, and stress is considered, along with issues related to dealing with new/novel circumstances in the workplace and preparing for reviews or promotion-related assessments or training.

Chapter 8 follows the themes covered in Chapter 7 by considering organisational aspects that can contribute to success in the workplace. These include the role of other people in the workplace, such as managers and colleagues, and additional resources, such as the role that technology can play. The chapter also discusses the role of the employer and explores ways in which managers/employers can provide an environment that 'mitigates' difficulties and enables individuals to demonstrate their strengths.

Chapter 9 then presents a range of stories/comments from dyslexic adults themselves to show some of the strategies and challenges they have faced. Contributors from a variety of professions tell us about their career journeys, and how they have achieved some degree of success. The aim of this chapter is to present these personal views so that the reader can see what others with dyslexia see as some of the key elements in their ability to perform the work necessary in their chosen profession.

The final chapter (Chapter10) overviews the previous chapters. It adds to the framework discussed in the rest of the book, and again argues for the importance of self-awareness – that the more we

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understand our abilities and difficulties, the more we can plan for success. We also remind the reader in this final chapter that the book contains ideas for support and the self-development of strategies. We are not expecting an individual to go through all of the strategies outlined. For example, Chapter 5 on literacy and language includes a number of activities to support the development of word-level reading skills. Someone who feels that these are not their area of difficulty may want to read these ideas and consider them in terms of interest but may be unlikely to want to practise them. The same goes for other parts of the book. If a strategy does not fit with self-awareness about difficulties, or needs, then we would not expect them to be practised. However, because of the wide variety of strengths and weaknesses that emerge from the core elements of dyslexia combined with years of experiential influences, the list of potential strategies needs to be comprehensive. The aim is that there will be something of interest for most people in the book: you do not need everything in it in order to be successful.

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