Reading and writing difficulties

This side up.

1.1 I am diagnosed with dyslexia. Once I asked for more time to complete a test; however, it was very difficult to arrange as the teacher would not be able to stay longer after the test. I would have needed to complete the test two weeks later. I ended up taking the test with my group, without any additional time.

Reading and writing difficulties

This side up.

1.3 I am dyslexic. I was diagnosed during lower secondary school. I feel I am disadvantaged in comparison with other students. I spend a lot more time reading textual material and completing written assignments. I always contact the teacher at the beginning of a course and ask about special arrangements. I am usually only allowed some extra time for the assignments, but that does not translate into more hours in a day.

Reading and writing difficulties

This side up.

1.2 This course includes an assign- ment of writing an argumentative essay, using at least two sources. I don't understand anything when I read the articles, neither can I relate to any of their ideas so that I could start writing. I have no problems in reading several novels a week, though.

Attention problems

This side up.

2.1 The teacher is very enthusiastic about their subject, and they uploaded a lot of material (such as links, PowerPoint slides and other files) in the Moodle workspace. It was challenging to navigate the workspace and to understand how the contents are related to each other, and what things are must-know, and what just nice-to-know.

Student's view

1.3 I find it unfair that I need to spend so much more time studying than others. For example, a 4-credit course may require the same number of hours as an 8-credit course requires with another student. For this reason, I would like to be exempted from some part of a course or its assignments. I wish there was a decision made at the beginning of my studies that would state what kind of arrangements I can require of teachers. Then I would not need to begin the process from the beginning with every new course.

Student's view

1.1 I wish the test was arranged in a more student-friendly way, so that one would not feel that the extra arrangements are extremely difficult for the teacher. Could there be a system where e-exam rooms were used so that a student could book the time already at the beginning of the course? All the instructions should be available at the beginning of the course, so that there would be enough time to take care of the test and to prepare oneself for the test, when and where it will be, and how much time will be allowed.

Student's view

2.1 Extra materials could be collected in a clearly separate place. When creating online materials, there must be a clear logic and very good instructions on what students need to do first and how they should proceed. Instructions should be too precise rather than too concise. Teachers cannot assume that students will figure things out intuitively.

Student's view

1.2 I wish a teacher would give me some tips on how to read an academic text without using a dictionary all the time. How can one understand complex sentences? I would also want to be able to use just one source to begin with and learn how to do it properly instead of using two sources simultaneously.

Attention problems

This side up.

2.2 Once I completed an assignment according to instructions, and I submitted it in Moodle. After the submission a new message popped up, "Here is a new assignment for you, and you have 30 minutes to complete it before the first assignment is reset." I was very disappointed and frustrated because I didn't understand how I had not noticed that this assignment would have multiple phases.

Attention problems

This side up.

2.4 I have an attention disorder, and therefore I find it extremely difficult to complete written assignments on my own. I cannot accomplish anything: I switch on the computer and remain staring at the screen. If I should manage to begin the assignment, I am unable to remember all the instructions to carry on.

Attention problems

This side up.

2.3 During an English class, we played a virtual escape room game in which we walked around London. In the game, we needed to use our smartphones to navigate and solve tasks that were unrelated to the English language. We did this in groups, and my group mates took care of all the work as I did not understand anything at all. I was very anxious for the whole duration of the game because it took me a long time to even understand what an escape room is.

Anxiety, mental health problems, autism spectrum

This side up.

3.1 I am suffering from severe social anxiety. The kind of lessons in which I will have to enter a room with many new faces and work during every lesson in new groups or with new partners are very difficult for me. I easily become very nervous when I see new people with whom I am supposed to work.

Student's view

2.4 Long instructions are very difficult for me; so is producing lengthy texts. If an assignment was split into smaller units and each unit had 2-3 things to work on, with deadlines, that would make my work easier.

Student's view

2.2 Surprise tasks, especially when they have a time limit, are frustrating and difficult. I always need time to adjust myself, to understand the instructions, and to complete the assignment. If I was asked, I would never use tasks with multiple phases.

Student's view

3.1 My escape is my laptop. I really enjoy working on my own. Remote studies have been a blessing for me. I still panic during Zoom lessons, but it is easier as I can switch off my camera. In classroom, and also in Zoom, working always with the same group would make things easier for me.

Student's view

2.3 Fancy technology does not always feel nice. I don't see the point of doing something just because technology makes it possible. I would always like to have a good motivation for what we are doing and for what reason. In this case, at the beginning of the lesson the teacher could have explained clearly what a virtual escape room game is, what the purpose of this game is, and what we are going to do in there.

Anxiety, mental health problems, autism spectrum

This side up.

3.2 I am suffering from stage fright. I have always been a nervous type. During the classes, I don't have the courage to answer questions or speak in a foreign language while everyone is listening, unless I am completely certain that what I am saying is correct.

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Anxiety, mental health problems, autism spectrum

This side up.

3.4 In Zoom classes, our teacher was constantly asking us to switch on the camera. I have always been anxious about talking and meeting people in groups. Situations in which I don't know the other participants cause me anxiety. I can listen to Zoom classes and I can barely talk, but I cannot talk if I have the camera on.

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Anxiety, mental health problems, autism spectrum

This side up.

3.3 The final assignment of the course was to video a short speech on the topics of the course. The assignment was very difficult for me, and it was a cause of anxiety. I must have made over 20 versions of the video, and it took me several hours. In the end I was so exhausted and encumbered that I submitted the last version which, of course, was not good. I did not dare to view it, but I know that I must have looked very tired and anxious in it. The assignment was completed, but I felt very bad about it. I don't think I learned anything in doing it.

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Anxiety, mental health problems, autism spectrum

This side up.

3.5 I am depressed, and a person dear to me died this spring. After that, it was very difficult to accomplish anything, and many of my courses were left unfinished as I was unable to keep up with them, to attend them, or to find the motivation to do anything at all. I was able to complete one communication course, though.

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Student's view

3.4 I don't see any added value in keeping student cameras on during Zoom classes. The teacher emphasized that it is important for interaction; the same was repeated by some of the students in break-out rooms. That only increased my anxiety. I don't understand why the common belief is that cameras-on method suits everyone. Would it be possible to divide students into groups according to their wish to keep cameras on or off? Is it always compulsory to participate in group activities? Could students decide whether they want to enter break-out rooms or remain working on their own?

Student's view

3.2 The teacher had probably noticed my insecurity. They surprised me with very encouraging feedback themed around "You can do it!" It was a pleasant experience, and I gained more self-confidence. I dared to talk and answer more often as mistakes were allowed in class, and nobody was forced to do something they experienced as unpleasant.

Student's view

3.5 The teacher of the communication course gave me permission to skip classes. I submitted the assignments through email, according to our agreed schedule. The schedule had been adjusted for my needs: several smaller submissions throughout the spring semester. The teacher always provided feedback on the assignments, and they were also interested in my well-being. I felt I could trust them and therefore I often told them about how I felt. It was a relief to have someone to talk to about my situation and feelings.

Student's view

3.3 I would like to see alternative ways of completing assignments. I don't see the point of making that video exactly. Why couldn't I submit an audio file or a text? I think the main thing is that I learn the concept, and therefore the format in which I show my learning is irrelevant.

Physical limitations

This side up.

4.1 As a deaf student I always have an interpreter with me during lessons. People are not very used to working with deaf people, so they often talked to the interpreter and did not look at me during the conversation at all.

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Physical limitations

This side up.

4.3 I suffer from muscular dystrophy which means that it is difficult for me to be in a classroom as I cannot move nor change my position at will. One obligatory course was offered to me in contact teaching format only, so I had to take myself to class over several weeks and I suffered due to immobile sitting. During one of the lessons another student asked whether they could participate through Zoom during the next meeting. This was fine by the teacher. I was very annoyed as the online alternative had not been offered to me, and I had suffered in class in vain.

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Physical limitations

This side up.

4.2 I am visually impaired. I need all the course material in a format that can be read with a screen reader. Fairly often the materials are provided in such a format that it is impossible for a screen reader to read them. E.g., if a title is written in upper case letters my screen reader inter-prets it to imply shouting. Or, if the material includes screen captures or exercises made with H5P Interactive Book tool, I cannot read them nor complete the exercises.

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Student's view

4.3 If online participation is possible on a course, I wish it was communicated clearly already in the study guide, so that I would not need to beg for it. In this way I would not need to emphasize my disability and I would feel more equal with the others.

Student's view

4.1 I wish people remembered to look me in the eye while speaking to me, even though the interpreter is pronouncing my words. This is actually easier in online environments, as the interpreter's role is not as visible as in a face-to-face situation.

Student's view

4.2 I wish all the materials would be provided in accessible formats. In the best scenario they would have been tested on a screen reader. This is very labour-intensive during the course; therefore it would be wise if all the course materials were made accessible for visually impaired students.