

# Dyslexia Education and Human Rights Research Submission Bid

A bid for a study on highlighting the lack of knowledge and  
guidance on addressing human rights issues in relation to  
children and students with dyslexia and a call for training  
across the Australian Education System

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Teachers play an acute role in shaping and influencing the lives and thoughts of children and students, having direct contact with them every day and informing them on various subjects ranging from mathematics to history. This is a great responsibility and extensive support and training is provided by the government. This research will improve the current framework the Australian education workforce adheres to and aims to train and develop teachers' and education professionals' knowledge on the importance of ensuring every student's, specifically those with dyslexia, educational rights are upheld.

There are a number of *rightsED* resources on the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) (2012) website for teachers to follow and utilise in their everyday dealings with human rights issues, from how to make a complaint to ensuring specific laws are upheld, including those in the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The resources give comprehensive advice and guidelines on how to deal with human rights issues, but this study will question how effectively these guidelines are implemented in schools across Australia and whether individual student's specific dyslexic needs are addressed sufficiently, so that their right to education is not affected. An example of how their right could be affected could be that their dyslexic needs are not considered in the teacher's planning of a lesson. Thus, then the child or student could potentially not be given enough time to complete a task as a symptom of dyslexia is needing more time to process information (Australian Dyslexia Association, 2007).

To show some initial support that there is a possible general lack of knowledge and guidance relating to addressing the needs and human rights issues of children and students with dyslexia, the resources on the AHRC website do not specifically relate to how to treat children and students with dyslexia with no separate document related to this and no usage of the word 'dyslexia'. The resource most related to dyslexia - disability rights document - comes across as vague and nonspecific when relating to different disabilities as it seems to put all under one umbrella, not recognising the complex differences between each disability, again with no reference to dyslexia and its possible affects on a child's human rights.

This research would focus on this gap to show how a person with dyslexia has various specific needs which should be addressed as a separate learning disability, thus ensuring their right to education is not affected through lack of support or guidance, for example. Additionally, the resources for teachers are explained on the website as being aimed at developing student's understanding of human rights and responsibilities, as well as developing the attitudes, behaviours and skills to apply them in everyday life, not specifically the teacher's behaviour which directly affects how a child or student learns in the classroom.

### *Aims and objectives of the research*

- To study extensively the information and publications on the Australian Human Rights Commission website and the current human rights and dyslexia policies and protocol in schools across the country to highlight how there is a general lack of focus on ensuring the elimination of human rights issues with children

with dyslexia. This could be used in the national curriculum

- To examine and highlight the specific needs of children and students with dyslexia and how the learning disability, if not addressed properly, can have serious consequences on their ability to learn
- To use phone interviews with a sample of parents of children and students with dyslexia and teachers to highlight the current issues in schools
- To ultimately give feedback for how they can be addressed using a human rights framework which would then be used for extensive training for teachers and teaching professionals
- The Australian Human Rights Commission is currently participating in consultations on the draft of the national curriculum and recommending ways in which the human rights content in the curriculum can be strengthened. This research could be utilised by the commission as well as the Education and Training Workforce department.

*Provisional Timetable of the Phases of the Project April – October 2012*

<u>Month</u>	<u>Phase</u>
April 2012-May 2012	<u><i>Initial Research and Fieldwork</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Extensive research of all required information</li><li>○ Organising and running of phone consultations on asking five questions on analysing people's thoughts on how human rights</li></ul>

	<p>and dyslexia issues are addressed in the education system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The questions to be asked are the following (please note, they are subject to change and more may be added) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What sort of problems has/have your child/children faced in an education setting because of their dyslexia?</li> <li>○ Do you think their rights have been affected? If so, how?</li> <li>○ Do you feel their rights have not been adhered to?</li> <li>○ What changes would they like to see?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
June 2012-July 2012	<p><u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extensive analysis of the fieldwork data</li> </ul>
August 2012-October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Detailed write up of the report for submission</li> </ul>

References:

Australian Dyslexia Association (2007) <http://dyslexiaassociation.org.au/index.php?page=identifying-dyslexia>, accessed on 8/2/2012

Australian Human Rights Commission (2012) Education and Community Engagement <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/index.html> accessed on 10/2/2012

Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) 'Disability Rights – What about Doug's Rights?' *rightsED*, Human Rights Education Resources for Teachers