

Laidlaw LiA Reflection

For my LiA project, I decided to explore more in-depth the research topic I did last summer about raising public awareness of dyslexia. I contacted dyslexiaCanada and Professor Dr. Cummine from the University of Alberta, who are experts in this field, as hosts to assist with my project. I spent four weeks with Dr.Cummine, and the rest of the program worked with Dyslexia Canada. By getting involved in one of the research projects by Dr.Cummine, I had access to interviews and quantitative data collected from participants of this project. Furthermore, there were literature papers for me to read and learn about the project. Weekly, I would have to read two articles and discuss them with Dr Cummine to understand the project background better and reflect on my creative idea for the final product of the showcase.

Eventually, I designed two posters in English and Mandarin versions as the final product and surveyed collecting feedback from people who viewed the posters, as shown in the link below.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfW_7pJUqAxdDrJyFKAjzasKJnGlXu2EFxULIB3Zwrm2zc8Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvlczMfO6fFg3k-xghffeChcQzoGkteujh3uLdmp5BNpMCLg/viewform?usp=sf_link

The first poster is a photo collage based on the photovoice, photos chosen by participants that best describe their experience of dyslexia individually, with interviews collected from them in the research project. The choices of words and phrases quoted from interviews of each participant are intertwined with their photos to demonstrate to viewers the sensation of living with dyslexia. The second poster is made to educate viewers about dyslexia. From the perspective of impact on the community, to get more volunteers for the project, I explored many social groups in social media related to people with dyslexia during the program and actively attempted to be involved. After the posters were done, I sent them to the groups; hopefully, people who saw them by chance could learn that having dyslexia is not shameful and it is a diversity in learning. This can be a gift to view the world differently from others.

From this program, I learned the most is adaptability and flexibility. Since the start of the program, my idea about what I wanted to get for the final product kept changing. Sometimes, it was because there was better inspiration I thought I could do, but sometimes, it was compromised by the reality that it could not be achieved due to the lack of participants and ethical concerns. In the beginning, I wanted to write a report reflecting on the current barrier faced while attempting to arouse public awareness about dyslexia, which required interviewing participants who have rich experience working in this field. Unfortunately, it wasn't easy to get responses from many volunteers within a short time, so I could not get anything done before the end of the summer. Considering getting more visualisation into the final product can attract users' interest, I determined to make a series of posters introducing to viewers the experience of having dyslexia: the feeling from first finding out about it, the challenges faced in work or

study till the current state in a narrative perspective. However, not enough participants signed up for it either because most people with dyslexia connected to dyslexiaCanada are under 18. Due to ethical concerns, I could not invite them to get involved in the project. These factors led to my decision to apply the collected data from the research project with Dr Cummine to make posters as the final product.

As a team leader, I learned to be a decision-maker and a communicator. During the program, I was fully responsible for outlining the project and scheduling the meetings with the professor and organisation. I needed to constantly keep track of what I needed support from them about networks to collect interviews or suggestions for my current ideas. If anything did not work out as planned, I needed to determine possible solutions and adjust as soon as possible to catch up with the progression as designed. During the process, I also developed my problem-solving skills as a leader.

I genuinely appreciate the Laidlaw Foundation offering me this opportunity to practice my leadership and social skills. Also, through this opportunity, I can pursue my interest field further for my future career and challenge myself to break my comfort zone and reflect on what I still need to improve.