



Pupils with Learning Difficulties

Dyslexia



Dyslexia



Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods)

1. **Keep the pace of instruction slow and deliberate**, so as to allow time for the pupils to absorb the meaning of the lesson and language being used. Ask pupils to explain learning points back to you to make sure that they have understood the lesson well.
2. **Take advantage of dyslexic pupils' talents and strengths.** For example, if a pupil is talented in theatre, introduce more role-playing activities into the lesson.
3. **Give guidance about how to deal with everyday tasks in a systematic way.** Dyslexic children often need adult support with tasks, such as how to tidy a drawer or put their toys away; how to get dressed; how to look for something they have lost; how to pack their school bag; how to tie a tie or tie shoelaces.
4. **Use two different colours when marking pupil work**, in the case you need to mark a piece of work while the child is away, for example: one for content and another one for spelling and presentation). Correct only those spellings you have taught in that lesson.
5. **Use different colours to divide the board into sections**; this will make it easier for the child to find words and copy them.
6. **Read each word or sentence twice**; explain the meaning of the words or use pictures of the text in which there are full stops and commas. This helps dyslexic children understand the text they are reading. Dyslexic children may experience difficulties in comprehension tasks so it is important to explain the meaning of a given text or passage to them.
7. **Give dyslexic children the books or the text they need to use in shared reading in advance**, giving them more time to practice it. This will help them to keep themselves on track and not to sit passively during the lesson.
8. **Use the board or whiteboard for reminders**, but not for large pieces of work.
9. **Allow plenty of time for pupils to read from the board.**
10. **Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial or Comic Sans**; use cream or soft pastel colored paper instead of white for printouts and worksheets for dyslexic pupils.
11. **Provide single worksheets**, which get progressively more difficult so as to respond to the various learning needs of your dyslexic pupils.

[Reference: Dyslexia Friendly Pack (BDA, no date)]



School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods)

Announcement / Sign at School

Equip school spaces with visual signs identifying the different areas of the school, such as dining area, toilets, canteen, principal's office, school yard, teachers' office, emergency exit doors, and gym.

Class Divisions / Arrangements

Pair dyslexic pupils with other pupils in the class during reading and writing activities. Accommodate the class so as the dyslexic learner is seated close to the teacher for regular eye contact.

Curricular Adaptations

Inform teachers to make necessary adaptations to the curriculum tasks. For example, based on one learning objective, provide a single worksheet, which gets progressively more difficult (BBC active, 2010).

Discipline

Be aware of the underpinning factors of the behaviour of dyslexic pupils when you are following the behavioural code in your school. Make sure that before you make a decision about their behaviour, you gain more information about their history from the responsible person in the school. For example, some pupils with dyslexia, experience frustration at school and they have low self-esteem. This may influence their behavior such as acting as the clown of the class in order to mask their difficulties.

Educational Visits / Field Trips / Camps / School Exchanges / Trips Abroad

Assign responsible persons for dyslexic pupils and make sure they are available to direct pupils when extra help is needed such as crossing the road safely during a school trip. Pupils with dyslexia tend to have difficulties in directionality and orientation and this may cause confusion between the left and right side of the street.

Homework

Reduce the amount of writing activities such as spelling. For example, instead of three sentences of spelling, you might assign a dyslexic pupil one or two. Allow dyslexic pupils to

practice their reading skills aloud only if they feel comfortable doing so. Alternatively, ask them to read quietly at their own pace.

Parents / Parents' Associations

Arrange regular meetings between parents and staff to discuss pupils' progress and to enhance the home-school collaboration. This will help to monitor progress and to discuss issues that might be related to the social life of the pupil, such as marginalisation, social interactions with peers, behaviour at home, and self-esteem.

Safety

Assign responsible persons for dyslexic pupils and make sure they are available to direct pupils when extra help is needed such as crossing the road safely during a school trip. Pupils with dyslexia tend to have difficulties in directionality and orientation and this may cause confusion between the left and right side of the street.

School Celebrations / Events / Activities

Include dyslexic pupils in events by differentiating their role and contribution. For example, instead of memorising a poem, take advantage of pupils' talents in acting, theatre and role-playing.

School Purchases

Equip the classrooms in which there are dyslexic learners with different materials and advanced technology, such as tablets and projectors, so as to attain a single learning outcome (BDA, no date).

Pupil Support

Provide additional support in the classroom, such as teaching assistants to support dyslexic pupils' learning. (BDA, 2012).

Teacher Professional Development

1. Provide training for teachers, such as with educational psychologist services, or dyslexia organisations. This will help teachers be more familiar with the main difficulties faced by dyslexic pupils, the signs for early identification and assessment, and practical tips to better support dyslexic pupils in the class. (Armstrong and Squires, 2014).
2. **Arrange co-teaching sessions for your teachers to get feedback**, which can include suggestions on support strategies for dyslexic pupils, and allow teachers time to reflect. (Villa, Thousand and Nevin, 2008)

Technology

Equip the classrooms in which there are dyslexic learners with different materials and advanced technology, such as tablets and projectors, so as to attain a single learning outcome (BDA, no date).

Supportive Literature

Definition: “Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well founded intervention” (Rose review, 2009, p.30).

[Reference: General signs: Dyslexia Friendly Pack, BDA (2012, pp.4-5)]

Throughout their school careers a dyslexic child may:

- Appear bright, highly intelligent and articulate but be unable to read, write or spell at grade level and get their thoughts down on paper;
- Be labeled lazy, dumb, careless, immature, “not trying hard enough” or having a “behaviour problem;”
- Have areas in which they excel, particularly in drama, art, music, sports business, designing, engineering and debating;
- Be clumsy;
- Act as the ‘class clown’ to mask what they see as their academic failure;
- Become withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating;
- Be able to do one thing at a time very well but have difficulty remembering an entire list;
- Have a ‘glazed over’ look when language is spoken too quickly;
- Go home exhausted at the end of a normal day because they have had to put so much effort into learning;
- Be bullied;
- Have difficulty sustaining attention; seem to be “hyper” or a “daydreamer”
- Learn best through hands-on experience, demonstrations, experimentation, observation and visual aids (multi-sensory teaching).

Signs in Written Work

- Poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- Produces messy work, often crossing out words
- Persistently confused by letters/numbers which look similar e.g. (θ/9, ε/3)
- Spells a word several different ways in one piece of writing
- Has difficulty with punctuation and/or grammar
- Produces phonetic and bizarre spelling: not age/ability appropriate

Signs in Reading

- Makes poor reading progress

- Finds it difficult to blend letters together
- Fails to recognise familiar words
- Is hesitant in reading, especially when reading aloud
- Misses out words/lines when reading, or adds extra words
- Has difficulty picking out the most important points from a passage (comprehension difficulties)

Signs in Organisation and Behaviour

- Difficulty in learning to tell the time
- Shows poor time-keeping
- Disorganised and forgetful e.g. over sport equipment and homework
- Confuses direction, has trouble between left and right
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty following instructions
- Class clown or disruptive to avoid or mask difficulties

Strengths of Dyslexia

- Innovative thinking
- Big picture thinking
- Strong visual skills
- Creative talent

The pupil that faces reading difficulties may exhibit the following characteristics:

- Makes poor reading progress
- Finds it difficult to blend letters together into words
- Is hesitant in reading, especially when reading aloud
- Misses out words/lines when reading, or adds extra words
- Has difficulty picking out the most important points from a passage (comprehension difficulties)

Websites and EU Reports

Dyslexia Action: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

BeatingDyslexia.com: <http://www.beatingdyslexia.com/>

International Dyslexia Association: <http://www.interdys.org/>

British Dyslexia Association: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Multisensory instruction: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/instructional-strategies/multisensory-instruction-what-you-need-to-know>

Dyslexia friendly pack (DFA), British Dyslexia Association (2012): <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/common/ckeditor/filemanager/userfiles/Educator/Resources/dfs-gpg-abridged.pdf>

Methods of Differentiation in classrooms: <http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeasandResources/MethodsofDifferentiationintheClassroom.aspx>

School leadership: collaboration, communication, shared vision and commitment (learning log available to be downloaded):

<http://www.advanced-training.org.uk/module4/M04U01C.html#>

Useful Journals

Annals of Dyslexia. Available at:
(<http://www.springer.com/linguistics/languages+&+literature/journal/11881>) London Library.

British Journal of Educational Psychology and *British Psychology Journal, Cognition*. Available at:
British Psychological Society (<http://www.bps.org.uk>).

Dyslexia Journal. Available at: <http://eu.wiley.com/>

References

Armstrong, D. and Squires, G., (2014). *Key Perspectives on Dyslexia: An essential text for educators*. Routledge.

Hoppey, D., & McLeskey, J. (2013). A case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school. *The Journal of Special Education*, 46(4), 245-256

Reid, G., (2012). *Dyslexia and inclusion: classroom approaches for assessment, teaching and learning*. Routledge.

Rose, J., (2009). Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties: An independent report.

Siegel, L.S., (2006). Perspectives on dyslexia. *Paediatrics & child health*, 11(9), p.581.

Squires, G. and McKeown, S., 2006. *Supporting Children with Dyslexia 2nd Edition*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Villa, R. Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2008). *A Guide to Co-Teaching: Practical Tips for Facilitating Student Learning* (2nd. Ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Pres. (800) 818- 7243