

Dyslexia

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Definition of Dyslexia

‘Dyslexia is a processing difference experienced by people of all ages, often characterised by difficulties in literacy, it can affect other cognitive areas such as memory, speed of processing, time management, co-ordination and directional aspects. There may be visual and phonological difficulties and there is usually some discrepancy in performances in different areas of learning. It is important that the individual differences and learning styles are acknowledged since these will effect outcomes of learning and assessment. It is also important to consider the learning and work context as the nature of the difficulties associated with dyslexia may well be more pronounced in some learning situations’ (Reid 2008).

Web References

www.drgavinreid.com

www.SNAPassessment.com

Some early indicators of dyslexia

Concern may be raised if the child shows some of these:

- Forgetfulness,
- speech difficulty,
- reversal of letters,
- difficulty remembering letters of the alphabet,
- difficulty remembering the sequence of letters of the alphabet,
- if there is a history of dyslexia in the family,
- co-ordination difficulties e.g. bumping into tables and chairs,
- tasks which require fine motor skills such as tying shoelaces,
- slow at reacting to some tasks,
- reluctance to concentrate on a task for a reasonable period of time,
- confusing words which sound similar,
- reluctance to go to school,
- signs of not enjoying school,
- reluctance to read,
- difficulty learning words and letters,
- difficulty with phonics (sounds),
- poor memory,
- co-ordination difficulties,
- losing items,
- difficulty forming letters,
- difficulty copying,
- difficulty colouring,
- poor organisation of materials.

Definitions- Key aspects

• processing style

This highlights the differences between individuals including those with a dyslexic profile. It is important to recognise these processing differences in the development of teaching and curricular approaches

• problem solving skills –

Dyslexia should not limit the learning potential of the individual, indeed there is evidence that in some areas of the curriculum, such as those which require visual, creative and problem solving activities, students with dyslexia may be at an advantage.

• difficulties in phonological processing

This is usually the core difficulty and highlights the difficulties with sounds and sound/symbol relationships in words

• discrepancies in performances

This can be noted in different areas of the curriculum. They may show abilities in some areas such as comprehension and discussion but have difficulty in reading accurately and in written expression.

• implications for specific contexts

Dyslexia is contextual and the degree of difficulties can vary depending on the context. This means that information needs to be gathered about the student in different learning contexts. These can include the classroom, different subjects, home, and in any other settings.

Environmental / contextual factors

- learning environment, learning styles
- education policy
- staff training social and cultural factors

- **Secondary**
- takes a long time over homework,
- misreads words,
- relies on others to tell him/her information,
- poor general knowledge,
- takes longer than others in written tasks,
- may not write a lot in comparison to his/her knowledge on the subject,
- difficulty copying from books,
- may spend a great deal of time studying with little obvious benefit,
- may not finish class work or examinations because runs out of time,
- may be unhappy because of difficulties in school that may manifest itself in other areas.

Computer programmes can be very beneficial for students with dyslexia:

Factors associated with dyslexia: Neurological/ Biological Factors

- genetic factors
- cortical abnormalities
- magnocellular deficit hypothesis
- the role of the cerebellum
- dietary factors
- inhibition of primitive reflexes
- left hemisphere under stimulation
- convergence difficulties and binocular instability
- visual sensitivity and coloured filters and eye movement co-ordination
- hemispheric symmetry

Cognitive factors

- phonological processing
- naming speed
- working memory
- metacognitive factors
- automaticity

Behavioural/ Educational factors

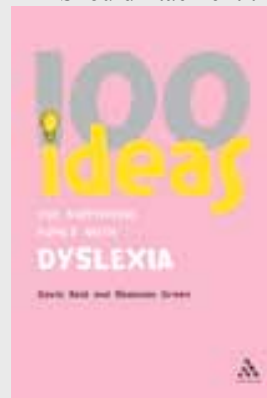
- specific pattern of errors in reading and spelling
- writing difficulties
- time management difficulties
- more time to complete work
- inaccuracies in copying
- avoidance of writing
- discrepancies in performances in curricular activities

Teaching points

- **Structure**- the progression should be logical and in small steps.
- **multisensory** - this should be active and interactive as well as incorporating elements of all the modalities- visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile.
- **reinforcing and overlearning**– skills which are learnt need to be practiced, learned and preserved in long term memory. This can be achieved through re-inforcement
- **skills**– teaching is not only about providing information, but about accessing useful and transferable skills - for example phonological awareness skills can be later transferred and utilised in writing skills.
- **metacognitive aspects** - this should be seen as an integral component of all programmes –this helps with bridging and transferring knowledge, understanding and skills. Essentially it involves thinking about thinking and the learners self-questioning of how a particular response was arrived at.
- **Learning styles** – it is important to attempt to identify the child's learning preferences and to try to match teaching to these preferences

Encourage Self-Questioning

- Have I done this before?
- How did I tackle it?
- What did I find easy?
- What was difficult?
- Why did I find it easy or difficult?
- What did I learn?
- What do I have to do to accomplish this task?
- How should I tackle it?
- Should I tackle it the same way as before?



100 Ideas for supporting pupils with dyslexia
Gavin Reid and Shannon Green
www.continuumbooks.com

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