



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS 2020

HOW TO: DYSLEXIA

Program for educators

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Our unique guide features strategies and interactive activities to ensure the best learning experience for the dyslexic child.



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INTRODUCTION

"I AM DYSLEXIC. THAT MEANS MY BRAIN WORKS FASTER THAN I CAN WRITE" (MORTIMORE, 2008, P. 83)

Dyslexia International estimates that 5-10% of the world experiences dyslexia, which means roughly 700 million dyslexic people (Cache, no date). However, other evidence expects the numbers are higher, up to 17% of the world (1.34 billion people) (Sprenger-Charolles et al, 2011). Therefore, it is likely to experience dyslexic students in the classroom. This booklet aims to provide practical and useful information for teachers to implement in the classroom when working with dyslexic students.



STRENGTHS

"Rapid grasp of concepts; awareness of patterns; energy; curiosity; concentration; empathy; vulnerability; heightened perception; divergent thinking; talent in art and design; multi-dimensional thinking; originality and problem-solving" (Vail cited in Mortimore 2008).

However, it is important to understand that not all dyslexic children will present these traits, nor we should share them with them since it could create a feeling of exclusion.

EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

"Accumulations of small failures and humiliations both at home and at school can damage self-esteem almost beyond repair" (Mortimore, 2008).

A dyslexic child can experience emotional, social and personal difficulties, such as:

Lack of self-confidence

Poor motivation

Poor self-esteem

Difficulty in socialising due to lack of confidence.

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

(DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2005)

5-11 YEARS OLD

TALKING & LISTENING

- Letter-sound connection.
- Separation of words into sounds.
- Blending of sounds to form words.

READING

- Single words.
- Confusion with small or 'easy' words.
- Letter reversals (eg b/d), inversions (eg m/w) and transpositions (eg felt and left).
- Word reversals (eg tip for pit) and substitutions (eg house for home).
- Little expression or fluency.

SPELLING

- Inappropriate for age and general ability (eg spelling the same word differently on the same page).
- Confusion of similar letters (eg b/d, p/q).
- Phonetic 'alternative' spellings (ate for eight).

WRITING

- Difficulty in copying accurately.
- Poor handwriting.
- Interspersion of upper and lower case letters.

MEMORY

- Apparent lack of concentration or attention.
- Difficulty remembering oral instructions
- Difficulty remembering anything in a sequential order (days of the week, months...).

STRATEGIES

(DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2005)

5-11 YEARS OLD

TALKING & LISTENING

- Provide structured, multi-sensory tuition.
- Use practical activities/games to make phonemes more concrete.
- Provide training in listening skills.
- Encourage the child to seek clarification..

READING

- Use visual and kinaesthetic senses.
- Personalised readings that match the child's interests.
- Teach for automaticity.
- Peer programme to develop confidence.
- Use ICT aids such as text-reading software.

SPELLING

- Choose a structured multi-sensory spelling support.
- Support independent writing with word walls.
- Encourage the child to use spelling personalised resources to check some words.
- Accept oral responses.

WRITING

- Introduce joined writing at early stage.
- Give time to copy.
- Use notes as reminders.
- Reduce writing demands by the use of mind maps, flow diagrams etc.

MEMORY

- Ask pupil to repeat back any instructions.
- Visually back up instructions.
- Present information in graphical forms.
- Use rhythm and music to facilitate retention of information.

BEHAVIOUR

- Praise whenever possible.
- Acknowledge the pupil's strengths and achievements.
- Set realistic targets and expect success.
- Discuss difficulties with the child.
- Include self-esteem exercises.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

A DYLSEXIA-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM

In order to create an inclusive environment, in which dyslexic children feel welcome and supported, it is important to establish a dyslexia-friendly classroom environment. The following designs and materials will support children but are also beneficial to students with other learning disabilities (Department of Education, 2005).

Layout/designs: (Nasen, 2015)

A well-organized and resourced classroom layout cultivates a decrease in the children's pressure on the working memory (Nasen, 2015).

- Make sure the classroom is tidy and organised.
- Organise students with dyslexia in the front of the classroom (Department of education, 2011).
- Assign dyslexic students to a study buddy.
- Provide visual aids (Department of education, 2011).
- Use displays that are; uncluttered, contain key words, colourful.

Materials: (Nasen,2015)

- List with sentence starters
- Writing frames
- Post it notes
- Highlighters
- Grass mats
- Sand
- Magnets
- Reading Rulers (Department of education, 2011)

The image shows a 'My Tricky Letters and Sounds Word Mat' from Twinkl. It is a grid with 3 rows and 9 columns. The first two rows contain letters and example words. The third row contains digraphs and example words. At the bottom, there is a row of letters from Aa to Zz.

My Tricky Letters and Sounds Word Mat								
Aa all are asked any	Bb be because	Cc come called could	Dd do different	Ee eyes	Ff for friends	Gg go	Hh he her have	Ii I into
Ll like little looked laughed	Mm me my Mr Mrs many mouse	Nn no	Oo one out oh once	Pp people please	Ss she said so some	Tt the to they their thought through	Ww we was were when what water where who work	Yy you
ar or ur	oi ear air	ch sh th	qu er ng	ure ow oo	cc ff ll	ai ee igh	oa zz	
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz								

Figure 1. Tricky Letters and Sounds Word Mat Dyslexia. Available at: <https://www.twinkl.com.pe/resource/t-s-171-tricky-letters-and-sounds-word-mat-dyslexia-editable> [Accessed 25/11/2020]

ACTIVITIES FOR DYSLEXIA

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

The following are the included activities created for dyslexic students:

1. Magic spoon - phonological awareness
2. Music - aural and motor skills
3. Multisensory learning approach
4. Recognising shapes - working memory

Disclaimer

These activities are designed to enhance student's autonomy, self-awareness and awareness of peers. However, these activities might need adaptation to attend to the individual learning needs of the dyslexic student. No dyslexic student learns the same way and thus not all dyslexic students respond the same to these activities.

ACTIVITY 1 - MAGIC SPOON

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Magic spoon is an activity intended to increase phonological awareness. The activity consists of a spoon with one letter written on it. This letter can be put in front of other letters to form a word (see figure 2). The child must read and pronounce all the different words.

Phonological awareness is recognised as one of the most prominent difficulties in dyslexic students. Therefore, also one of the most important aspects to work on with these students (Department of Education, 2005). Research has proven that teaching phonics to dyslexic students immensely improves their reading. Especially when the focus is on sight words (McArthur et al, 2015).

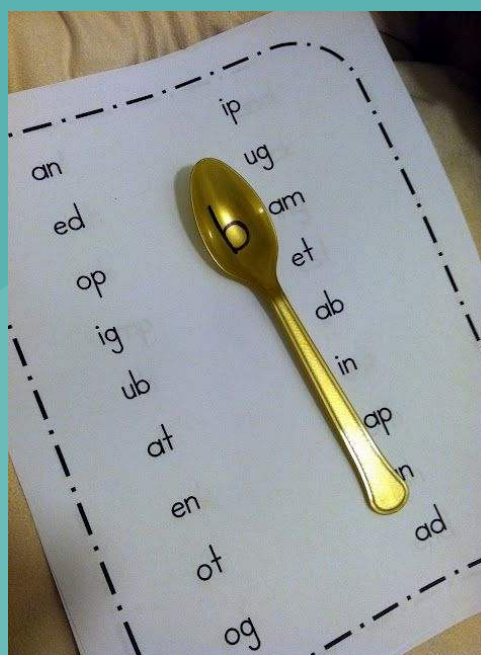


Figure 2. Magic Spoons. Available at: <https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/53550683039449297/> [Accessed 15/11/2020]

ACTIVITY 2 - MUSIC

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO MUSIC

An activity related to music could include listening to music, singing songs, reading sheet music, playing an instrument and dancing to music. This multisensory and interactive approach to learning can be very beneficial for dyslexic students.

When dyslexic students get involved with/in music, they most likely experience difficulties with listening and their motor skills. However, the more the students get involved with/in music, the more these skills improve. This is partly because music lessons are multisensory and interactive (Overy, 2003).

Research proved that singing music attends to the phonological awareness, reading music sheets attends to the reading skills and writing music attends to spelling and literacy skills (Overy, 2003).



ACTIVITY 3 - MULTISENSORY LEARNING

MULTISENSORY APPROACH TO LEARNING

One activity within multisensory learning is air writing. In this activity, students have to say a letter out loud and simultaneously write it in the air. This could be extended by creating words. Instead of air writing, try writing in sand, on someone's back, with clay, etc.



This is a multisensory learning activity with an emphasis on the kinesthetic learning process in which students are encouraged to use their fine and gross motor skills (the Reading Well, no date). Research suggests that students with dyslexia benefit from multi-sensory activities (Mortimore, 2008). However, these activities are not only beneficial to dyslexic students but also to all other students. Children are challenged to use their senses, but it also allows children to experience many different learning styles.



Figure 3. Preschool Literacy. Available at: <https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/466896686342346204/> [Accessed 25/11/20]



Figure 4. Learning Letters with Pipe Cleaners. Available at: <https://www.makeandtakes.com/learning-letters-with-pipe-cleaners> [Accessed 25/11/20]



Figure 5. An Everyday Story. Available at: <https://www.pinterest.ch/pin/346073552608504710/> [Accessed 25/11/20]



Figure 6. Sand Tray Writing. Available at: <http://playfullylearning.blogspot.com/2012/02/sand-tray-writing.html> [Accessed 25/11/20]

ACTIVITY 4 - SHAPES

RECOGNISING SHAPES

In this activity, students will learn to recognise mathematical shapes in the classroom. The teacher will display a shape on the board and students have to walk around in the classroom and find something that represents that shape. For example, a window represents a square.

Many people associate dyslexia with reading, writing and spelling difficulties, however, dyslexic student can also experience difficulties with working memory which can translate into any other subject. For example, within the subject mathematics, difficulties with the working memory could result in problems remembering basic and key mathematical facts (Mortimore, 2008). Therefore, this activity can support and stimulate students working memory by connecting and identifying basic mathematical shapes to objects in the classroom. Additionally, by applying basic shapes to daily practices, students are encouraged to develop skills that they could use in other curriculum subjects as well for example in science (twinkl, no date).

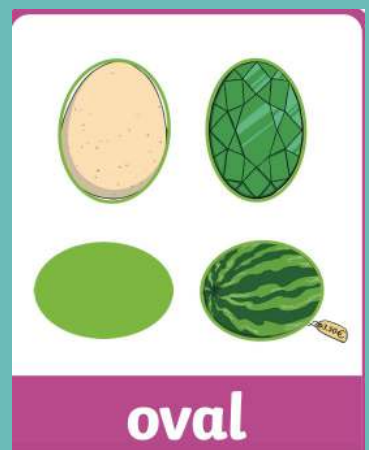
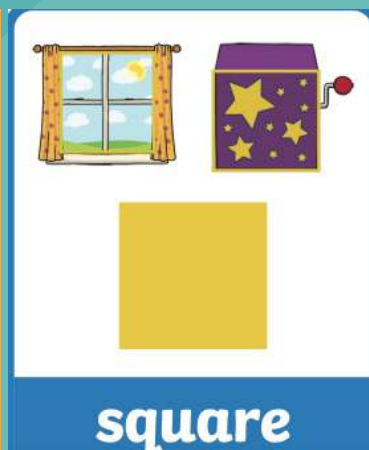
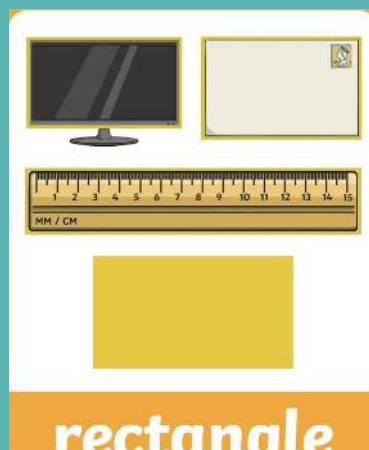


Figure 7. 2D Shape Posters with Everyday Examples. Available at: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-n-007-2d-shape-posters-with-everyday-examples> [Accessed 25/11/20]

DYSLEXIA GAMES

GAMES FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

Below are several appropriate and fun games for dyslexic students.

1. Zingo! - Bingo with a zing

Phonological awareness and word building

Zingo is similar to bingo. Instead of collecting numbers, the child needs to collect words. By itself, the game is great for early years. To up-level the game, let the students read the word and spell the word.

2. Scrabble Junior

Word building

Scrabble Junior is a great game for upper primary years. The game consists of forming words of a set of letters. The game can be made easier to give pre-chosen letters to the child to form easier and shorter words.

3. Spelligator

Phonological awareness and word building

Spelligator is a game for middle to upper primary years. The goal of the game is to build words on top of the alligator. Only correct letter combinations fit on top of the alligator.



Figure 8. Zingo! Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Zingo-Bingo-With-a-Zing/dp/1223027562> [Accessed 25/11/2020]



Figure 9. Scrabble Junior. Available at: <https://www.bol.com/nl/p/scrabble-junior-bordspel/1004004006501721/> [Accessed 25/11/20]



Figure 10. Spelligator. Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Junior-Learning-Spelligator-Board-Game/dp/B00B10OJL0> [Accessed 25/11/2020]

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