Dyslexia and maths

The boundaries between dyslexia and dyscalculia are blurred. The characteristics of dyslexia can lead to difficulty with maths, but at the same time do not preclude maths ability. On the other hand it is highly unlikely that someone with dyscalculia would find themselves on a maths orientated course. (See Overview: other specific learning difficulties)

Some dyslexic students choose maths and maths orientated courses in order to avoid reading and writing. They may show high maths ability and be able to draw on their strengths in seeing the big picture patterns and connections. However, dyslexic difficulties can affect maths in a number of ways:

- Sequencing difficulties may mean that students understand the concepts and know the end point, but may have difficulty in laying out a step by step procedure.
- Their work may contain what look like careless errors (+ instead of -, number reversals or transcription errors, arithmetical errors).
- They may need longer to read and comprehend verbal content and new technical vocabulary.
- Motor difficulties or visual problems can mean that lay-out is disorganised, making errors more likely.

For more on what to look out for and suggestions for facilitating mathematical learning see:
http://ddig.lboro.ac.uk/pages/tutors.html

For report on recent research with dyslexic students in numerate disciplines see: Perkin, G. & Croft, T. (2007) The Dyslexic Student and Mathematics in Higher Education. *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Research and Practice* 13 (3) pp 193-210. http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/6124