

Supporting dyslexic trainees and teachers

This resource is the result of collaboration between the School of Education and Enabling Services (Dyslexia Support) at the University of Southampton. It is aimed at helping dyslexic trainee and qualified teachers. While there are many resources to help teachers of dyslexic students, there are fewer to support the teacher who is dyslexic!

It explores some of the challenges facing this group and includes a range of strategies for dyslexic teachers to draw upon in and outside the classroom.

Most of the strategies are ones tried and tested by teachers in schools or colleges and were collected through an on-line survey and from a small focus group. It also considers aspects such as disclosure and what the dyslexic teacher might ask for in the way of support from their employer.

We are grateful to those teachers in the primary, secondary and further education sectors who took the time to respond to a questionnaire, attend a focus group or speak to us personally to share their experiences.

“Some of the very best trainees that I have seen through the PGCE at Southampton have dyslexia. It is not a barrier to teaching! However, some dyslexic teachers have asked for advice about how to make the most of their attributes within the classroom – and I hope that this does just that!”

Kate Green, PGCE Secondary
Programme Director

“It (dyslexia) forces me to think outside the box; to find ways of using new technology to teach. To include everyone in a way that didn’t happen to me.”

Edward Vickerman, Winner of the SSAT Award for
Outstanding New Teacher of the Year, 2009

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Dyslexia and the dyslexic teacher

While dyslexia in a teacher may present challenges, as the responses showed fostering a proactive approach can go a long way to help to overcome difficulties. The individuals who shared their concerns and achievements were a mix of PGCE trainees, newly qualified teachers, and qualified teachers with several years of experience, all with one thing in common – dyslexia.

The views expressed are taken from teachers and tutors from all sectors of education to further education level; the majority teaching the 11-18 age range. They represent a wide range of subjects areas including English, catering, drama, geography, ICT, physical education, PHSE, maths and the sciences.

The response from this group showed the use of a great variety of strategies and resources.

Self-awareness is key for any teacher assessed as being dyslexic. Indeed, dyslexia can be viewed as a strength, providing the teacher has an awareness of their own profile and an understanding of how to turn around a 'difficulty'. As the responses show, the development of effective compensatory strategies can make those with dyslexia every bit as and sometimes more effective than their non-dyslexic colleagues.

How dyslexia might affect the trainee teacher

Dyslexia is a wide term and can vary from mild to severe in its effects. Not all trainee teachers assessed as dyslexic will face difficulties. Many trainees develop sound strategies at university which can be transferred to the teaching workplace. As is the case for anyone, being aware of strengths and weaknesses and thinking ahead will help when facing the challenges of a placement or new teaching post.

A definition of dyslexia

Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties; the difficulties affect the learning process in aspects of literacy and sometimes numeracy. Coping with required reading is generally seen as the biggest challenge at higher education level due in part to difficulty in skimming and scanning written material. A student may also have an inability to express his/her ideas clearly in written format and in a style appropriate to the level of study. Marked and persistent weaknesses may be identified in working memory, speed of processing, sequencing skills, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. Visuo-spatial skills, creative thinking and intuitive understanding are less likely to be impaired and indeed may be outstanding. Enabling or assistive technology is often found to be very beneficial

The DfES Working Group on SpLD in Higher Education (2005)

Possible difficulties for the dyslexic teacher

- Spelling
- Writing on a whiteboard
- Report writing
- Remembering names of pupils/staff/parents
- Remembering dates
- Organisation and time management
- Lesson planning
- Checking written work
- Reading documents



Wider challenges

- Colleagues who do not understand the nature of dyslexia
- Questioning of competence from other teachers, pupils or parents
- Low self confidence in writing, reading or maths
- A lack of support from mentors or senior staff

Dyslexic people may have these strengths

- Particular empathy with dyslexic pupils
- Skills in visual and spatial awareness
- Creative and imaginative skills
- Problem solving abilities
- Awareness of multi-sensory teaching techniques
- Determination

Dyslexia and the law

The law recognises dyslexia as a disability if it has “a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities”. The Equality Act 2010, the most recent legislation, emphasises the need for organisations to be proactive in meeting the needs of both disabled pupils and staff. Public bodies such as local authorities, hospitals, universities and schools are now required to publish an action plan to show how they will proactively address disability, including dyslexia, to create equal opportunities among staff.

The extent to which employers are dyslexia sensitive varies. Although dyslexia is increasingly talked about and recognised, not everyone, even in an educational institution, will have a clear understanding of what dyslexia means. Also, the level of support is likely to be less than at university.

Trainees with dyslexia would be wise to consider how this might impact on their work and what steps they can take to avoid running into problems.

Disclosure

Trainees should also think about disclosing to any future employer and what adjustments they can reasonably ask to be made. Disclosure is not compulsory by law, but it is probably wise to consider the possible consequences of not disclosing, and to bear in mind that the employer would be unable to offer any support unless aware of a teacher's dyslexia. When disclosing dyslexia, an honest approach is suggested but trainees should also focus on the positives by outlining any compensatory and supportive strategies they have developed. They might also consider how a future employer could support them through reasonable adjustments. This also applies to the job application and interview stage.

The teachers' responses

The following outlines the survey questions and responses from trainee and qualified teachers. Comments from the participants, have been reproduced with as little editing as possible so that their voice is heard. Additional information draws upon a range of resources including the Dyslexic Teachers Association <http://thedta.tripod.com>

Did you consider whether dyslexia would have an impact on your teaching?

Over two thirds of respondents had considered or were considering how dyslexia might have an impact on their teaching. The type of response varied from those who felt confident in their ability to overcome dyslexia to others who felt quite challenged.

My dyslexia was not picked up on until my degree, but I remember the difficulties I had in school. From the experience I had, I hope to be able to spot specific learning difficulties and special educational needs in pupils.

I was worried that I would make a fool of myself in front of students.

I went into teaching age 30, fully aware that

I worry about spelling on the board, but would make sure I was well prepared.

my dyslexia would be challenging for me, but confident enough in my abilities that it would not prevent me from doing the job well.

I felt it would take me longer to prepare lessons, especially when schemes of work/lessons aren't in place. When creating a lesson there are so many different ideas and ways in which to present them, that it can be hard to choose which to pick.

I was initially concerned, until I had a new assessment for my dyslexia, during this it came apparent that I had lots of strategies that would help me overcome any barriers in school.

It would give me an understanding of children with disabilities

Yes, the amount of paperwork also reading aloud and spelling.

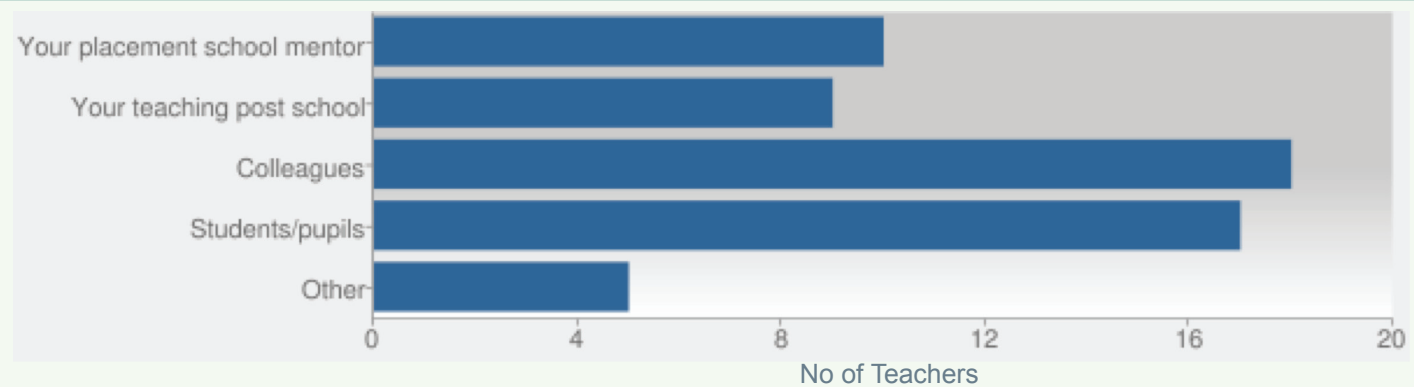
I worry about spelling on the board, but would make sure I was well prepared.

I knew you'd have to be very organised and that's my weak point. It's important that we are very aware of possible strategies.

I was probably more worried at the start, but now I don't see it as a problem. I approach it from the angle of I can use my awareness and strategies to help my students rather than it's going to hold me back.

Did you disclose your dyslexia?

When it came to disclosure, the majority who were open about their dyslexia spoke mainly to colleagues and their students. The picture looks like this in response to the question.



Some teachers disclosed to all of the above; others did not disclose at all. One teacher reported disclosing to a parent. Many mentioned they disclosed to their students, especially in areas such as poor spelling but had turned this into a positive experience for themselves and their class.

Personally I disclose when it comes up. Some people don't need to know. I don't make a big deal of it. I'll even disclose to the children and they can see that it's not a big deal. There's learning in that. For example, I struggle with pronouncing some names and tell the children this. The same thing with spelling. That's how I approach it and they seem to respect it and find it easier to talk to the teacher.

I disclose to the children because in my school so many are dyslexic that it's important for them to see that they can achieve.

At the start of a new class I say "I'm not perfect. Like many of you, I often spell

words in different ways. I'm dyslexic." The kids often say "Oh I am too, I forget how to spell words". I work in a tough school and they have been brilliant.

(One trainee was shocked at how many teachers themselves don't understand dyslexia). Discussing a child with the other teachers, they said "He's in the top set so he couldn't possibly be dyslexic". When I turned round and said I was dyslexic they said 'really?' I said because of this I will take longer doing some things. They just couldn't see it. It was slightly frustrating that they couldn't understand when we're in a place (a school) where dyslexia is a big issue.

I don't disclose because I wouldn't want them (other teachers) to misunderstand.

I even sat in the SEN lecture at the university and they said "Imagine that you have a learning difficulty such as dyslexia". I turned to another girl with dyslexia thinking they don't even know that some here have dyslexia.

Has dyslexia caused you any difficulty?

Spelling, writing on a white board and marking were the areas which caused the most difficulties. The length of time taken to do tasks was also mentioned. Many respondents showed that they were not only aware of the challenges but had developed a host of ways to cope.

Having always been dyslexic, it's hard to say how easy or hard some things are compared to other people. I am confident that I can do everything, it is just that some things take longer than other people. Checking students' coursework is particularly tricky.

Marking is very hard, reading black on white print and having to read things over to make sense of them.

I struggled with student reports as I was unsure what was expected of me, but having gained help and looked at examples, I became more confident with writing them. I am lucky in that everything is done electronically here and therefore I rarely have to take notes during meetings.

It takes a long time to complete tasks and I am finding time management a bigger problem. It is an on-going problem because it takes so long to complete things.

At my previous university I gained a lot of support with my written work. Since I have been teaching,

I am confident that I can do everything, it is just that some things take longer than other people.

my dyslexia has become more evident, especially with spelling. I am anxious when writing straight onto the board with no preparation time

It is hard to learn pupils' names, especially with so many classes.

If a child comes up to me I don't recognise them out of context.

I didn't realise how much paperwork was involved.

Marking work takes longer. I need to ensure that I don't overwork.

The most difficult aspect of being a teacher with dyspraxia is the organisation of paperwork. I get around this to an extent

You need to do two to three times more preparation. Once you have the resources then it's done for future lessons.

by using my laptop where possible, but I cannot always do this.

I didn't realise how much planning and organisation there would be. My placement school had structures such as lesson plans which really helped. I was able to take forward this idea onto my next school.

You need to do two to three times more preparation. Once you have the resources then it's done for future lessons.



Marking is very hard, reading black on white print and having to read things over to make sense of them.

Writing students' names on the board for implementing the behaviour policies, as students get very annoyed when you can't spell their name. Another problem is not being able to remember students' names when chastising them!

I have to spend longer writing up reports, grammar, spelling. It takes me two to three days to complete a set of reports for one year group.

Writing and proof reading takes for ever.

Only when processing a lot of new information or when I am asked to remember a number such as the photocopying number.

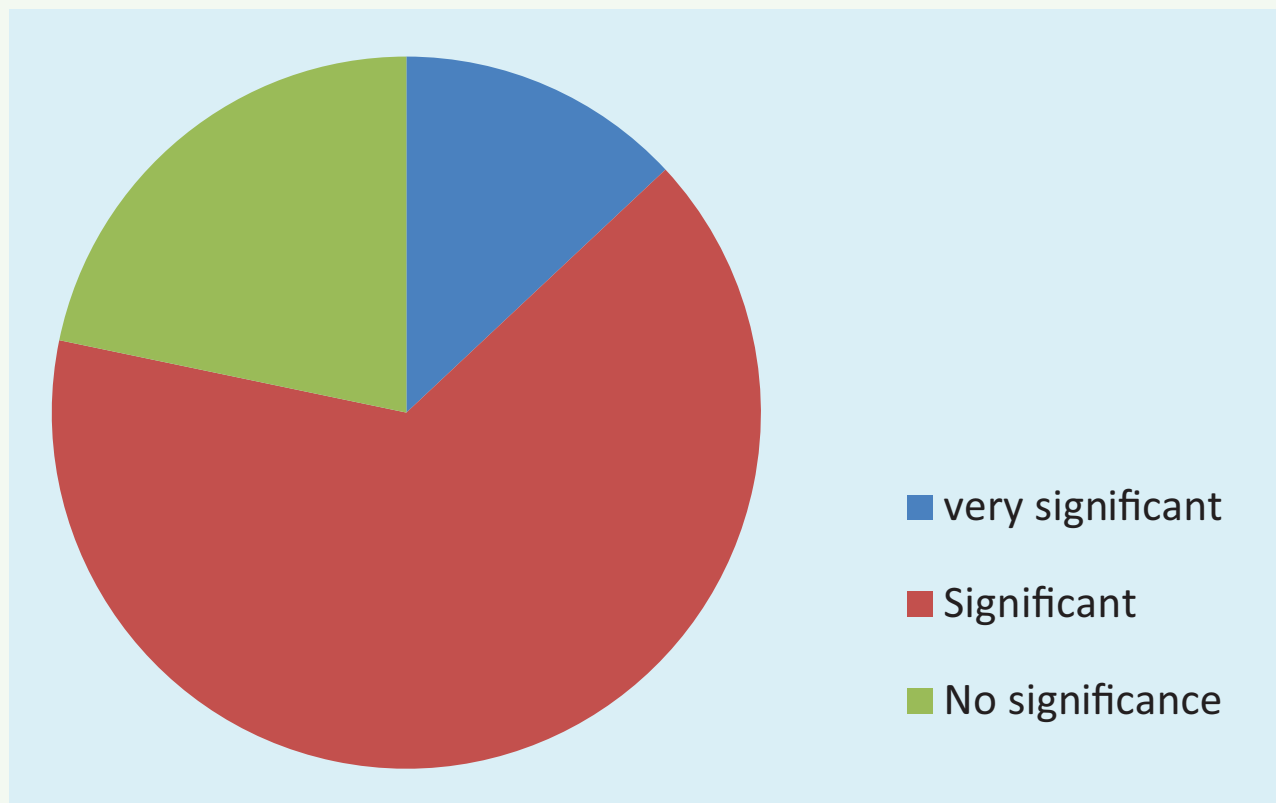
(I am) dyspraxic and the level of (hand) written work required as a teacher (i.e. marking work, reports etc) was a concern of mine. I purchased a laptop for myself to reduce the handwritten workload.

No, I'm very organised, but I did see how another individual with dyslexia might be affected especially in the areas of

timekeeping and organisation

You need to do two to three times more preparation. Once you have the resources then it's done for future lessons.

How significant have the effects of dyslexia been on your teaching?



The majority of respondents (63 per cent) considered that dyslexia had a significant affect on their teaching, around a quarter thought that it had a very significant effect while a smaller proportion (13 per cent) though that dyslexia had no significance.

Strategies for dyslexic teachers

What strategies and resources have you developed or found useful to support your teaching?

Dyslexic teachers showed that they draw upon a range of inner and external resources to find strategies. Many have been able to turn a perceived weakness into a teaching strength, the strategies given here are not meant to be an exhaustive list, but show how real teachers with dyslexia or dyspraxia cope when teaching.

I have always been aware of my areas of weakness: spelling, processing speed, short-term memory. I have therefore put strategies in place to help. I made sure to put key words onto lesson plans so I quickly refer to them.

Strategies for spelling and writing

This was understandably an area of concern, but teachers showed a range of options are available. Many enlist the support and help of their students to make spelling a shared learning experience.

Get the pupils to help you to spell. It improves their spelling and they think you are testing them.

I suggest that if I misspell a word the class has three options: they can let me know; they can come up and change the spelling or they can tell me later. There is no negativity about this as I am upfront about my spelling difficulties.

Get a non dyslexic colleague to check (spelling). Tell children you are dyslexic and therefore asking for spellings will not work - encourage them to use dictionaries or ask each other.

1) Having a word list of words I generally use and spell wrong when marking and commenting in books has helped me and the students 2) using PowerPoint as much as possible as spellings should therefore be correct 3) Getting pupils to be scribes to write on the board.

Let the pupils know you are dyslexic. Most are sympathetic and enjoy helping you out with spelling on the whiteboard. They will make adjustments when you spell things wrong.

Create everything in PowerPoint so it's spell checked and you're not trying to write the information on the board.

I get the students to correct my spelling. They gain reward stickers in their books for this: 10 of these and they get a prize, this helps you and encourages them to actually

read what you've written on the board and on worksheets. They also like to be 'better' than the teacher.

Share with the classes you're dyslexic as if often brings an instant bond with dyslexic students. Re-read anything you type or write for grammar and spelling mistakes.

Tell children you are dyslexic and therefore asking for spellings will not work - encourage them to use dictionaries or ask each other.

I use my Blackberry to check spelling. I am quite open with using this when writing on the board so the kids don't think I'm sending a text! I switch off the phone signal.

Tell children you are dyslexic and therefore asking for spellings will not work - encourage them to use dictionaries or ask each other.

Keep dictionaries to hand for use of everyone in class/group. Play dictionary games weekly to ensure students are aware of how to use dictionaries which in turn helps them use this as an option when unable to spell a word.

Have a word wall up on display with the most commonly misspelt words or words students have had to look up in the dictionary.

Don't worry about spelling (when marking student's work), the content is more important.

Getting students to check my spelling on the whiteboard.



I write all the difficult words down in the corner of the board.

1) Make sure key words/ instructions are highlighted or underlined on PowerPoint presentations to focus students on key instructions/ command words 2) make sure that my spelling is correct 3) admitting to pupils if I was unsure about how to spell something and taking time to check.

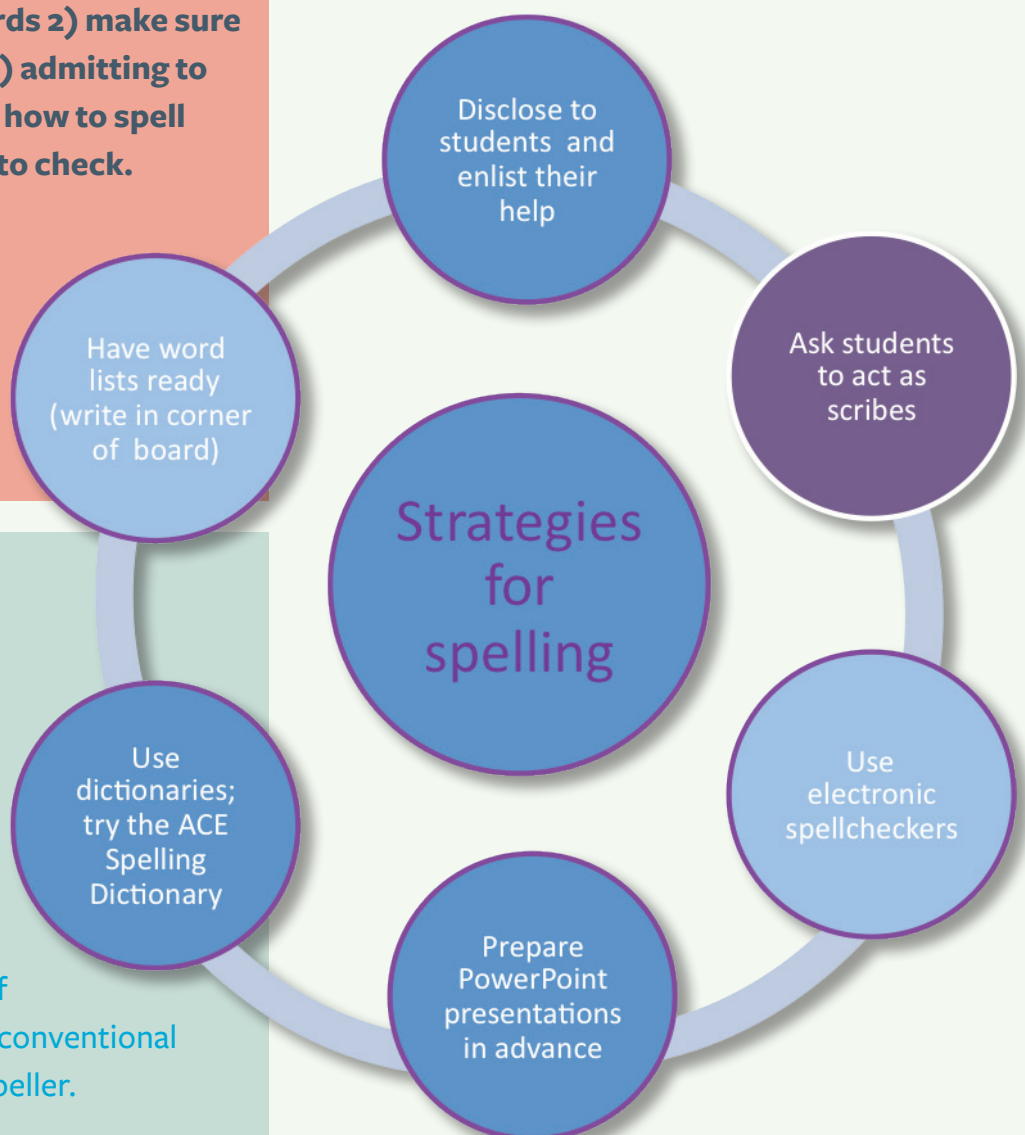
Have a dictionary on the desk.

Revising how to spell words.

Having reusable resources for the whiteboard.

The *Ace Spelling Dictionary* can be useful for dyslexic teachers and their students. This unusual dictionary requires some vowel and syllable awareness (full guidance is at the beginning) but does not handicap the user for not knowing the first few letters of word, which can make using a conventional dictionary hard for the poor speller.

Electronic spellcheckers: some of these pocket-sized devices let the user create their own personal list which could be useful for subject-specific words.



Strategies for marking and writing reports

Several teachers mentioned using an on-line comments bank such as Report Assistant (see the resources section at the end).

I quickly spot and underline all the silly mistakes I used to make with words like their and there. Some words I correct. If quite a few have made the same mistake I go through this in class.

When marking I think “what do I say, how do I say it?” If I’m criticising them for their spelling, I can’t then spell something wrong.

I’ve developed a comment bank for reports; some comments were taken from the internet and others I devised myself. I worked at this and got my dad to proofread it.

Asking colleagues to proof read reports.

Using a Frixion pen (erasable roller ball pen) when marking in order to correct spelling/ grammar mistakes.

I use Report Assistant (computer programme) to write reports, and get a non dyslexic colleague to check.

Writing reports early and looking for common mistakes, re-reading them carefully.

Making and using a comments bank.

I spend longer proof reading. Asking department head to proof read reports; she is more than happy to do this.

I keep all marks electronically.

I use Report Assistant to write reports, and get a non dyslexic colleague to check.

Develop own or use an on-line comments bank



If I’m criticising them for their spelling, I can’t then spell something wrong.

Strategies for reading

The need for teachers to prepare any reading beforehand and introducing colour were the main strategies mentioned.

If you need to read something out prepare the reading in advance so that you feel confident.

I break up text with bullet points and have gaps so there's not a huge block of text.

Taking pauses when reading aloud from a long piece of text (for dramatic effect) to allow me to read ahead and get my bearings

I prepare coloured slides on PowerPoints with a coloured font; I use a coloured see-through sheet (overlay) over work when reading

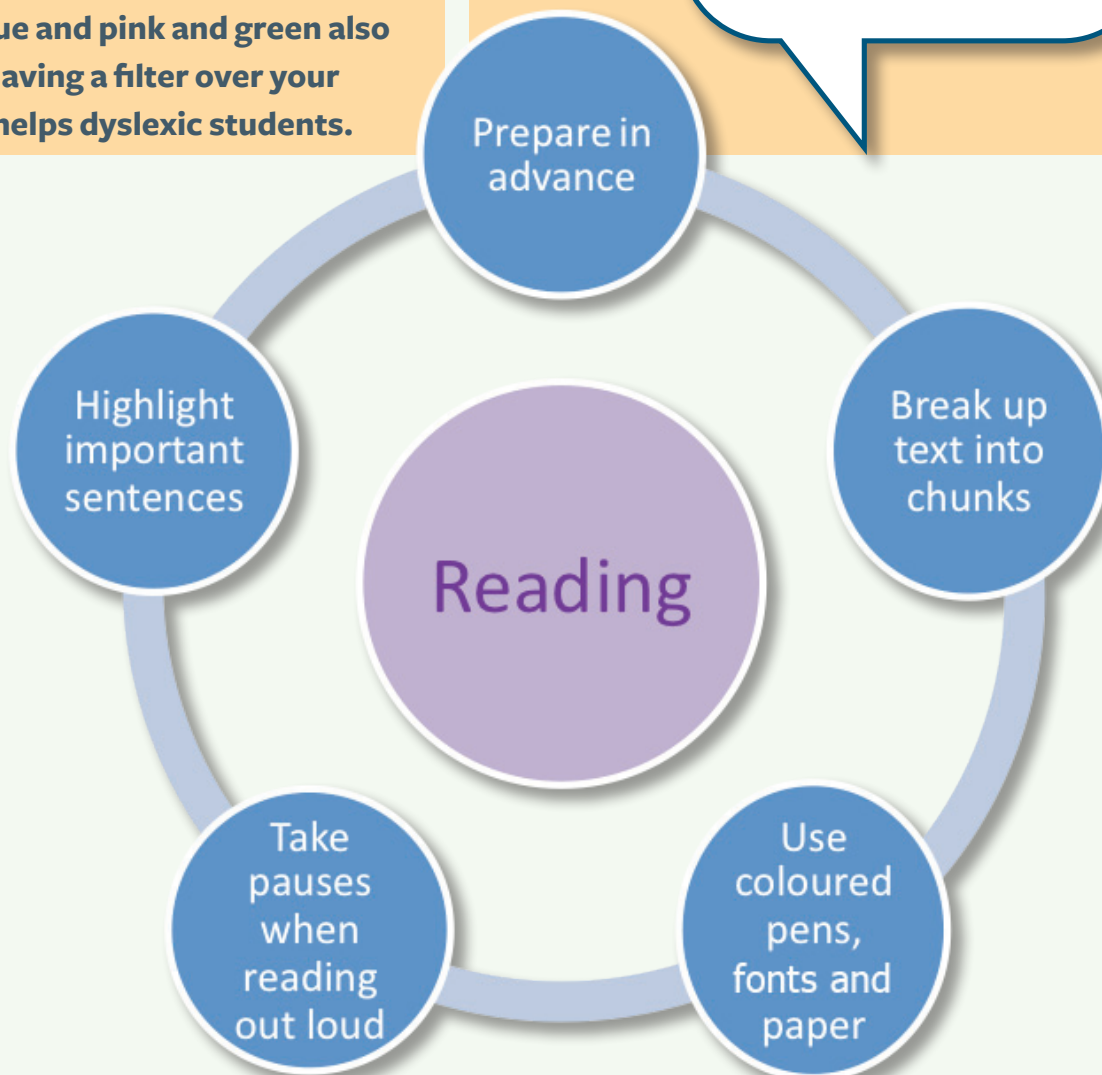
When you use PowerPoint use a plain coloured background. I find yellow works best but light blue and pink and green also help as it's like having a filter over your work. This also helps dyslexic students.

If you need to read something out prepare the reading in advance so that you feel confident.

I always use blue or green board pens on the white board which helps both myself and my students. I have coloured overlay sheets and rulers at hand when reading.

Highlight sentences that are important, go back over the sentences after reading.

I break up text with bullet points and have gaps so there's not a huge block of text.



Strategies for lesson planning and delivery

Preparing lessons on PowerPoint means that teachers can check the spelling first and this is an invaluable resource for many.

Tweaking lesson plans found online as opposed to writing them from scratch.

The PGCE lesson plan templates come in handy.

It's PowerPoint all the way as it's all pre-prepared and spell checked. I don't have to worry about spelling words wrong.

Having PowerPoints for my lessons with keywords spelt on them.

Taking the time at weekends to plan lessons properly and check through them.

Use IWB with pre-typed learning objectives etc. (spell checked). This also helps with the structure of lessons.

Always having structure to lessons meant I was less likely to forget things. Having detailed lesson plans with key questions and timings. Using IWB – with carefully pre-prepared slides-means everything is there and saves time and stress; you don't need to write as much on board, just add to it.

Always having structure to lessons meant I was less likely to forget things.

I have reduced my lesson plans to one page. I keep the lessons in order so I can see where they're going and where they've been. I always have these to hand as some classes are shared and I can show my planning if asked.

Use of PowerPoints to structure lessons and typing up lesson objectives to check spelling.

Having reusable resources for the whiteboard.

I use practical lessons to teach theory classes.

Making my lessons as practical as possible.

I use mind mapping software (Inspiration) to plan my lessons; I also show students how to make mind maps.

Sticking to an idea/ plan for a lesson strictly and planning around that to keep focused and not waste time considering different resources/ ways of teaching the material.



Try to develop your own lesson plans, as this way you will understand why you are doing things.

Be very specific with aims.

Strategies for record keeping and organisation

Good organisation is key in teaching; while some teachers preferred an electronic approach, others adopt a more paper-based strategy.

Try to write everything down in one big book: every conversation, every phone call, every meeting.

Writing 'to do' lists.

Try to write everything down in one big book: every conversation, every phone call, every meeting. This has been the simplest thing, but has made the biggest difference. I can always go back and check what I said and when.

I lose paper so I do everything on my laptop. IT is my way of organising. I even keep an electronic record of all conversations.

Being very organised.

The need in teaching is to deliver things on time and in the right order.

I use different coloured files for different subject areas.

Writing everything on Post-It notes!

(Having a) "getting things done" strategy for organisational skills...makes a huge difference!

Be very organised to reduce pressure on unexpected writing tasks, read all papers and reports before hand.

I make plans for homework distribution and collection - otherwise I forget. I put Post-its on my laptop to help me remember to do things.

Having a diary to plan; talking to my mentor at school to see if she can help.

I use a laptop and work with virtual files as I find it much easier to type than write and my organisation on a computer is quite good.

Preparing Excel spread sheets as a way of keeping records.

Create a weekly timetable that includes the aims of lessons and the resources that you will need.

Keep a small note book and a pen with you at all times to write down things as you think of them – read through each evening.

Try to have a place for everything in your classroom.





Taking a register

Putting a photo or a phonetic spelling by the name can help with recognition and pronunciation. My school has an on-line registration which means that it can't be personalised because it's a fixed screen.

Remembering names

Parents evening: The school has started giving them (parents) stickers with their names. If I can't recall a name I ask the parent/s what time they have been booked in so I can check their names.

Having a seating plan file so that names can be learnt.

Play name games with students; ask them to link their names with something that they like or with an action. This helps link their name with something you can remember.

Ask pupils to create name stickers / place names.

Use a seating plan – have a copy on your desk.

Write distinguishing features (e.g. hair colour) next to the names on the register.

What reasonable adjustments do you consider a school could provide to support a dyslexic teacher?

The dyslexic teacher should not feel that he or she is alone or unsupported. It will probably help to talk to a mentor or other supportive members of staff, explaining the main difficulties and what help might be needed. As mentioned, it is probably wise not to over focus on your difficulties, rather, provide information which could be useful to others.

Reasonable adjustments are steps an employer could make to enable an employee with a disability to work more effectively. Everyone is different and any adjustment will need to be individual and focused on a dyslexic teacher's particular needs, balanced against those of the educational institution. Often small, low-cost modifications are all that will be needed.

The duty to make adjustments also covers job applicants and the interview and could include:

- Allowing alternative job application formats e.g. email/coloured paper
- Extending interview time
- Allowing reference to notes during interview
- Changing aspects of psychometric tests

The responses to the question on reasonable adjustments again showed a great range: templates, mentors and being allowed more time were some of the suggestions. The first two comments illustrate different takes on the issue.

Firstly, by having awareness that it has an impact on overall teaching and to give praise and support where necessary. Allowing for extra time to write reports and not expecting things to be finely tuned immediately. Giving templates for any sort of report writing. Giving printed copies of the school timetable to aid in organisation.

None, if I can't do the job I should be doing something else.

More time for marking as it takes longer.

Allow for more verbal assessment and less written (do they mean of the teacher trainee?)

Templates for records and report writing would be great.

Comment banks for reports.

Allowing extra time to read large documents.

An understanding of the condition.

It does help if the school has structures in place such as decent lesson plans to follow and a supportive environment.

It does help if the school has structures in place such as decent lesson plans to follow and a supportive environment.

I don't think it is the responsibility of the school.

The dyslexic (teacher) should not go into the job looking for support, but should devise their own strategies and make people aware that a quick turnaround on written work is not acceptable. This is the same for any teacher.

There are considerations schools can make, but I see it as the individual's responsibility to inform school/relevant parties of issues and plan ahead to resolve them rather than just blaming dyslexia.

It would also be useful to have key information about behaviour management etc broken down.

A person who can sit down and help to make

sure that all the information that the dyslexic teacher is provided with is correct.

Linking with a non-dyslexic teacher/head of department to monitor marking and lesson planning.

As I am in my training year, a mentor to read through assignments was needed, I was lucky that I had support elsewhere. Sharing resources or advice with other dyslexics, for added reassurance would help. Easy access to a computer.

None, you should make your own adjustments, know it may take you longer and it should not be a 'get out' for poor spelling in class or in reports, as these are crucial to being a teacher and therefore you need to work to double check these.

There are considerations schools can make, but I see it as the individual's responsibility to inform school/ relevant parties of issues and plan ahead to resolve them, rather than just blaming dyslexia.

Give us more time to complete things. Use other assessment methods rather than writing things down.

Asking for more time is not really appropriate. Overwork is the nature of the beast.

It's tough as it greatly varies depending on how 'severe' an individual's dyslexia/dyspraxia/dyscalculia is. In my case, being provided with a laptop is almost a necessity. Our school uses a computer-based report system (with templates), so I feel that caters to us well. I do not think that I would have benefitted from a mentor.

The British Dyslexia Association would like to emphasise that independent schools can be supportive. The association is aware that some trainees mistakenly think that they can only do their NQT in a state school, which is not the case.

Remember, employers only have a duty to accommodate a teacher with a disability if they are aware of it.

Do you consider that being dyslexic gives you advantages as a teacher?

The majority of responses were positive with dyslexic teachers showing how they have turned what could be seen as weaknesses into areas of strength. Respondents showed the usefulness of having an awareness of different teaching approaches, such as multi-sensory teaching, when teaching children with SEN.

The kids love knowing you are dyslexic it makes you more human to them.

It potentially has allowed me to see the importance of non-academic subjects and the significance on promoting these.

Yes. I struggle with writing on a board so as a result I have to find other ways to teach that are more kinaesthetic or oral. These methods are usually more engaging. I am also more experienced in showing children with SLD's various techniques to help them. I have more patience with SEN pupils as I have been in the same situation.

I struggle with writing on a board so as a result I have to find other ways to teach that are more kinaesthetic or oral. These methods are usually more engaging.

I'm quite practised in explaining something in different ways. I've learnt that if I can't do something one way, I'll do it another way so if a young person doesn't understand in one way, I can come at it another way.

I'm pretty good at working maths out even if I can't recall a formula. I always like to know why. I can explain the different steps involved. I also use mnemonics and visual methods.

Yes, I see things differently. I see how systems can be improved and see solutions.

Students aren't afraid to have a go in the classroom as they know I struggle with spelling!

It helps to be able to understand and support dyslexic pupils.

...I understand what difficulties pupils face when they have SEN....Because I was taught well. I do not

use my dyslexia as an excuse not to do something, but to prove I can do it.

Yes, being creative, innovative, providing multi-sensory learning techniques.

Sadly, not.

It is neither an advantage nor disadvantage. I am who I am and I make my own place in this world. My dyslexia is a part of me and I wear it with pride. While I struggle with writing and organisation, I find I am very good at problem solving and thinking of alternative solutions.

I am actively involved in promoting diversity. I run SEN workshops for all of the new year sevens on raising awareness, supporting others and celebrating diversity.

...I understand what difficulties pupils face when they have SEN....because I was taught well, I do not use my dyslexia as an excuse not to do something, but to prove I can do it.

Special arrangements for the Skills Tests

Trainees with a recognised specific learning difficulty can apply for special arrangement tests through the Skills Tests candidate helpline (details below). Candidates are not required to submit an application form or evidence, although the Teachers Agency reserves the right to request proof that candidates require special arrangements.

Generally, additional time of 25 per cent extra time will be allowed for the Skills Tests in English, maths and IT. When registering online for the skills tests, you must state that you require special arrangements when prompted.

Teachers can apply for further special arrangements beyond the 25 per cent extra time, for example:

- 25 and 50 per cent extra time versions

- on-screen spelling questions in literacy tests
- on-screen mental arithmetic questions in numeracy tests
- paper-based tests (including larger print format).

For special arrangements beyond 25 per cent extra time an application form and evidence, in the form of a medical report, SENCO or educational psychologist's report, is required.

For information and advice about evidence required for different provisions, contact the special arrangements team as below:

Skills test helpline: Special arrangements team

The helpline is open on weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

Telephone: 0845 450 8867

Email: tasa@pearson.com

From September 1 2012, pre-entry skills tests will be introduced. Anyone applying for an initial teacher training (ITT) course that starts after July 1 2013 will have to pass the skills tests before starting the course. The first pre-entry test appointments will be available from September 1 2012. The registration and the booking system will be available from 1 August 2012.)

Further information and resources

Assistive technology

Electronic Spellcheckers www.dyslexic.com/franklin

Coloured overlays and reading rulers

- The Institute of Optometry www.ioo.org.uk
- Crossbow Education www.crossboweducation.com

QTS Skills Tests: special arrangements

www.tda.gov.uk/trainee-teacher/qts-skills-tests/faqs/special-arrangements.aspx

Video on passing the numeracy test

<http://teachfind.com/teachers-tv/part-1-introduction-qts-numeracy-test>

Report assistants

Free software and downloads with pre-written comments banks

Report writer for primary schools www.reportbox.com

Teachers Report Assistant – free time saving software for writing reports

www.rayslearning.com/report.htm

Comments bank for use with Report Assistant www.rayslearning.com/comment.htm

Teachers Report Assistant

http://download.cnet.com/Teachers-Report-Assistant/3000-2051_4-10022829.html

Article on Edward Vickerman, Teacher of the Year 2009

www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/oct/27/teaching-awards-dyslexia-special-needs

Listen to Edward at:

www.guardian.co.uk/education/audio/2009/oct/27/dyslexia-teacher-edward-vickerman

Organisations

AbilityNet

www.abilitynet.org.uk IT advice and training for people with disabilities

Access to Work

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347

This scheme gives advice, information and funding for people with a recognised disability, including dyslexia, which hinders them in their work. It is run by the Employment Service. Contact is made through three regional centres.

British Dyslexia Association

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

The BDA has produced a document on good practice guidelines: the Code of Practice for Employers.

EmployAbility

www.employ-ability.org.uk

EmployAbility is an organisation dedicated to assisting people with all disabilities into employment. Working with anyone with a disability seeking employment and employers, they have strong links with universities, other disability charities and many other key stakeholders.

Hampshire Dyslexia Association

www.hantsda.org.uk

Locally-based support group; provides contacts of dyslexia assessors and trainers.

Books/reproduced resources

Bartlett, B. M. (2010). *Dyslexia in the Workplace: An Introductory Guide*. Wiley.

Goodwin, V. A. (2004). *Making Dyslexia Work for You*. Fulton.

Moody, D. S. (2004). *Dyslexia How to Survive and Succeed at Work*. Vermillion.

Moseley, D. (2009). *The Ace Spelling Dictionary*. LDA.

The Web

Teachers TV **www.tes.co.uk/TeachersTV**

This includes useful video clips of practical tips, lesson ideas and classroom resources.

The Guardian Newspaper Teachers Network. **teachers.guardian.co.uk**

The Equality Act

Equality Act 2010 What do I need to know? Disability quick start guide

www.equalities.gov.uk

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