

## Some general tell-tale signs

- Appears bright and able, but can't get their thoughts down on paper.
- Have areas in which they excel, perhaps in drama, art and debating.
- Read inaccurately.
- Frequent, repeated errors with spelling
- Confuse places, times and dates.
- Difficulty remembering maths tables and formulae.
- Need to have instructions repeated
- Get 'tied-up' using long words e.g. 'preliminary' or 'philosophical'.
- Have difficulty planning and writing essays.
- Forgetting which books/resources to bring to class.
- Misunderstanding complex instructions.
- Misreading which leads to problems with comprehension.
- Disjointed written work.
- Problems writing down notes at speed.
- Often failing to complete work on time.
- 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- Become withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating.
- Able to do one thing at a time very well, but can't remember an entire list.
- Difficulty marshalling learned facts effectively in an exam.
- Look glazed when language is spoken too quickly.
- Go home exhausted at the end of the day because they have had to put so much effort into concentrating and learning.
- Being bullied.

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Dr Gary Lavan, Chartered Educational Psychologist

## Dyslexia – A Specific Learning Difference

- It is a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affects the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy.
- Celebrate **strengths** rather than focusing just on weaknesses.
- Dyslexia Friendly schools are those in which the focus has changed from establishing what is 'wrong' with children in order to make them 'better', to identifying what is right in the classroom in order to enhance effectiveness of learning.
- The class teacher has the power to make dyslexia a learning **difficulty** or a learning **difference**.
- It is a difference in the way in which **information is processed** in the brain, not a problem with vision.
- In the mainstream classroom, problems occur in the areas of; **speed of processing**, short-term/**working memory**, and **sequencing**.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Don't wait for a label or a diagnosis.
- In identifying the support which is needed, recognise those learners who 'think' a subject –
  - learners who find it difficult to produce ability appropriate evidence of learning,
  - learners who perhaps demonstrate good verbal understanding of concepts but who experience unexpected difficulties when it comes to getting it down on paper.
- Teaching 'harder' cannot change the reality that a learner who is dyslexic is dyslexic. Teaching differently does.
  - **"If they don't learn the way we teach them, we must teach them the way they learn"**.
- Pay attention to empowerment, emotional intelligence and self-esteem.
- **Some don'ts:** overload the learner with too many oral instructions; demand too much written work; unintentionally ridicule errors (not you again!); ignore signs that the learner is losing concentration; make the learner work too long without a break; ask the learner to copy from the board; always expect an immediate answer.

## ? Some questions ?

- Is your teaching always as multi-sensory as it could be?
- Are you interspersing 'listening time' with 'seeing and doing' activities?
- Is the learner using a variety of learning methods, ie. speaking out loud, writing on cards, talking a topic through with a friend?
- Are you making the most of the fact that the ridiculous and humour is retained in the brain better than anything else?
- Are you encouraging the use of pocket notebooks and personal checklists?
- Is registration time used to make sure the learner has pens/pencils or anything else they need that day?
- Do you label equipment to help with spelling?
- **Are your worksheets written simply, in large print with clear spacing?**
- When handing out worksheets/revision sheets do you include a timeline for the learner to follow?
- Do you ask yourself whether they are sitting next to the right person for maximum concentration?
- Do you have an agreed signal so that the learner can prepare a spoken answer in advance?
- Has the learner been taught skills for 'active revision'?
- Do you ask the learner to produce a summary at the end of each topic throughout the year?
- Are you encouraging them to word-process their work?
- Do you begin every lesson by outlining its content?
- Do you end every lesson with a summary of what has been covered?
- Do you encourage the use of planning strategies?

