

Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyspraxia)

A ready reference for Parents & Teachers

For further information:

The British Dyslexia Association Tel: 0118 966 8271

www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

Dyslexia Institute

Tel: 01784 222 300

www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

The term 'specific learning difficulties' covers dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Dyspraxia

The term 'dyspraxia' is used to describe an immaturity with the way in which the brain processes information, resulting in messages not being properly transmitted.

Main Characteristics

Students may experience difficulties with the following:

- Organising and coordinating fine and gross motor skills.
- Controlling writing, drawing materials and tools.
- Body awareness, moving about without bumping into things or invading other people's space.
- Organising equipment and managing time.
- Dealing with a sequence of events or instructions and following the timetable.

Potential Impact upon Learning

- Does not work well in an unstructured environment.
- Finds organising equipment and managing time and finishing tasks hard.
- Finds it difficult to sit still and is easily distracted.
- Finds it difficult to transfer information from the board or to complete a complex sequence of instructions.
- Becomes confused with locations and directions e.g. left and right, up and down, east and west etc.
- Can become easily distressed and frustrated.

Suggested Support Strategies

- Provide structure e.g. use pictures or bullet point lists to represent what to do where and when.
- Use of writing frames may be helpful.
- Seating position in class should enable student to view teacher directly, square to the board, close enough to hear and see instructions easily and avoid highly stimulating areas, e.g. next to window or door.
- Consult physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist for appropriate sitting/writing positions or additional resource requirements. It often helps to have both feet resting on the floor, desk at elbow height and, ideally, with a sloping surface to work on.
- Tasks and instructions need to be broken down into small steps.

- Provide handouts, graphs, tape recorder etc. to support lesson content.
- Help student to develop strategies to support organisational skills, e.g. checklists for resources required for specific tasks.
- The use of coloured papers such as buff can create reduce glare for those students whose specific learning difficulty is visually-based.
- Organise buddies for oral work, who will also benefit from working with students and in turn be able to support them with oral work and be sensitive to their needs.
- Check understanding verbally.
- Use alternative methods to reduce handwriting requirements.
- Supplement maps with pictures/photographs and oral interpretation.

NOTE:

While it is a discreet condition in itself, Dyspraxia often occurs to some degree as a 'component condition' in students with other SENs; such as Dyslexia and Asperger's Syndrome.

SEN Staffing

Deputy Head Student Progress & Inclusion: Mrs M Sims

Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo): Mrs J Hale

Specialist Teacher: Mrs J Wheeler