

This information has been reproduced by



Differentiation in mainstream settings

- creating an effective learning environment.

By Llinso Rowlands

Ysgol Hiraddug

From a report on the Dyslexia Friendly Initiative Training

May - June 2002

Compiled by Neil Mackay

Published by Welsh Dyslexia Project

For the Professional Development Network Project which is

Supported by General Teaching Council for Wales

This information has been reproduced by

 NWEDA

Rationale

Dyslexic pupils often have very fragile self-esteem and need to be "set up to succeed". Thus, it is important that ability levels as well as special needs are taken into account when planning work. A number of strategies are recommended.

In the classroom

- Pupils should sit facing the board, at the front of the class.
- Board work to be left as long as possible - try using a different colour for each line/underlining lines in different colours.
- Break tasks into easily remembered chunks.
- Provide a copy of board work on paper for the pupil to work with - perhaps to stick into the exercise book and highlight key points.

Listening

- Instructions should be concise, logical and repeated on demand.
- Do not re-phrase when repeating - use exactly the same word again.
- Keep them simple
- Use eye contact to hold attention.

Intentionally left blank.

This information has been reproduced by



Reading

- Paired/group reading is effective.
- Label objects in the classroom - particularly effective for learning additional languages.
- Warm up by reading familiar stories before moving on to harder text.
- Experiment with coloured overlays and text in different colours and/or on different coloured paper.
- Use story tapes so pupils can read along.

Concrete suggestions were also made for teaching science, Technology, Humanities and Maths.

Conclusion

With thorough planning and preparation, it is possible to create a learning environment in which dyslexic children can achieve their potential.

Memory

- Provide opportunities to “talk through” visual activities and “draw through” auditory activities.

Speaking

- Encourage clear speech.
- Use a mirror for children to see lip/tongue positions.

Targets

- Lesson objectives written on the board.
- Start with the big picture and end with a plenary.
- Involve pupils in setting their own targets.

Marking

- Ignore reversals of letter/numbers.
- Mark for content rather than spelling - tick correct answers rather than cross wrong.
- Mark target words only - highlight or underline rather than “cross”.
- Only mark spelling on the first few lines of a piece of work - mark the rest for content only.
- Only mark an agreed spelling pattern.
- Make positive comments, which “feed forward” to the next piece of work.

Homework

- Make sure all messages, homework tasks etc. are written down in a "home-schoolbook" and never rely on verbal messages.
- Make daily checklists for pupils to refer to each evening.
- Homework tasks should be differentiated or a time limit set - agreed with and understood by parents and pupil.
- Write phone numbers of other children in the Homework book so that tasks can be double checked/confirmed etc.

Handwriting

- A cursive style seems to be the most effective - preferably joined up, but not at the expense of clarity.
- Encourage pupils to set their own improvement targets.
- Keep a constant eye on things like quality of pen, angle of paper, lighting, and height of desk.

IT

- Try modifying colour/contrast according to individual preference.
- Best fonts seem to be Sans serif, Comic Sans or Ariel - try double spacing.
- The "zoom" facility can be helpful.
- "Auto correct" can be helpful.

Writing

- Use writing frames.
- Storyboards allow pupils to “cartoon” their ideas.
- “Pair/Share” writing activities work well - try pairs writing alternate lines.
- Use emotions to stimulate writing - e.g. a famine in Africa.
- Teach and consolidate concepts like sentences, nouns and adjectives.
- Encourage alternate means of recording - Dictaphone, mind map, storyboard, bullet points, etc. Mark these for content.

Spelling

- Check, teach and consolidate alphabet skills - do not assume they are OK.
- Set appropriate target scores for spelling tests.
- Develop culture of mistakes being part of learning - feed forward to the next piece.
- Use multi-sensory approaches and syllabification for jargon words.
- Encourage proof reading.
- Use mnemonics - especially if pupils can develop their own.