



This NEPS Handout has been developed by educational psychologists and is based on current knowledge in this area. It is intended as a guide only. Not all the advice here may apply to any one student or situation. Teachers and parents may wish to identify the strategies that will work best for them.

Supporting Students with Dyslexia in the Mainstream Classroom- Strategies for Teachers, Primary and Post-Primary

This advice is adapted from: The Report of the Task Force on Dyslexia, 2001, Department of Education and Science, Ref pages, 93-94.

What to Do

Class and subject teachers will need to provide a range of accommodations for students with learning difficulties arising from dyslexia, including those with severe difficulties. The particular accommodations that should be provided will depend on the needs of the individuals and groups of students, taking into account the nature and severity of their learning difficulties. The teacher may need to:

- Provide individual and small-group teaching as needed.
- Provide opportunities for the student for re-learn and over-learn rules and strategies.
- Provide instruction in reading/spelling that is structured, sequential and cumulative.
- Provide regular constructive feedback to maintain motivational levels and enhance self-esteem.
- Identify how best the student learns, and adapt teaching methods to suit the student's learning style.
- Where possible, use a multi-sensory approach to teaching word reading and spelling that involves listening, saying, looking at, and writing words in various combinations.
- Ensure that learning materials are at the student's reading level, and that they also encourage discovery learning.
- Evaluate the student's understanding of test using oral rather than written questions.
- Provide a learning environment that is quiet and non-distracting.
- Introduce cursive handwriting from as early a stage as possible to aid spelling, speed, neatness and continuity.
- Focus on the nature of a student's writing errors (quality) rather than the number of errors (quantity).
- Expect the student's work to be erratic and inconsistent at times.
- Encourage the student to repeat the directions for completing a task.

- Provide assistance with elements of the writing process, such as the use of planning sheets and editing checklists.
- Introduce and reinforce the use of meta-cognitive strategies (for example, cue cards) that enable the student to exercise control over their learning processes.
- Provide support through the appropriate use of Information and Communication Technologies.

And What Not to Do...

The following practices should be avoided:

- Asking student to read aloud in class, unless they wish to do so and have practised in advance
- Asking student to copy large amounts of material from the board
- Penalising student for not completing tasks within strict time limits
- Marking or signalling too many obvious spelling errors in student's written work
- Asking student to rewrite work because of spelling errors
- Comparing student's written work unfavourably with that of other students
- Asking a student to copy out corrections several times rather than discussing the nature of errors with them, and providing an opportunity for memorising the correct words

Post-Primary Schools and Severe Dyslexia

In classes in post-primary schools, in particular, accommodations such as the following may be needed for students with severe learning difficulties arising from dyslexia:

- Use of non-printed learning materials, including taped books
- Compensatory strategies and/or assistance with note taking (for example, providing another student's notes)
- Use of new media, including multi-media, to learn and review content
- Use of assistive technology, including use of word processor with spellchecker and/or voice activated dictation systems
- Teaching of self-regulated learning skills, including study skills, to enable students to learn content independently

It is important that the in-career development of class and subject teachers address the effective implementation of these accommodations.