



Dyslexia

The word dyslexia comes from the Greek 'dys' meaning difficulty and 'lexia' meaning words.

It is a specific learning difficulty primarily affecting the skills required for accurate and fluent reading and spelling.

Dyslexic individuals are on a continuum of difficulty from mild to severe. Dyslexia is one of a family of specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) and can co-occur with dyspraxia, dyscalculia and attention deficit disorder.

Dyslexia is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, working memory and auditory processing speed. It is usually due to inherited differences in the parts of the brain which process vision and language.

Phonological processing is matching sounds to letters and if a student finds this hard, it affects both reading and spelling.

Working memory is our active filing system, which we use to manipulate information like when doing a maths equation in our head. Problems with working memory can adversely affect many areas of learning and is linked to our ability to pay attention and concentrate.

If the auditory processing system is working at a slower pace than normal, the brain finds it hard to sort through its library of sounds to match the letters it is reading.

No two people with dyslexia show exactly the same profile, but they do often have mental functions in common.



Typical strengths *may* include:

- * Extraordinary creative abilities and the ability to think and perceive in a multi-dimensional way
- * Thinking mainly in pictures instead of words, thus allowing them to be big-picture thinkers
- * Having vivid imaginations and being highly insightful and intuitive

In an education system focussing on the basics of reading and writing and rote learning, a dyslexic's strengths and abilities can often be suppressed and self-esteem lowered. But if a dyslexic child can be recognised and supported in a multi-sensory and sympathetic teaching environment, basic literacy skills can flourish and creativity and confidence can soar.

Often dyslexics have exceptional talent in areas including the arts, engineering, business, computing and sport. Furthermore some of the world's most talented individuals are (or were) dyslexic, including: Richard Branson, Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Quentin Tarantino, Winston Churchill and Walt Disney to name a few.

Typical difficulties *may* include:

- Organisational skills
- Sequencing skills
- Visual stress and processing difficulties
- Mental maths
- Concentration
- Motor skills

Dyslexics flourish in a multi-sensory learning environment

Tips for supporting Dyslexic learners:

Help students process and remember key information

Teaching in a multi-sensory way is good for all pupils. Dyslexic students often respond well to visual teaching aids, in the form of pictures, colour and creating mind maps, for example.

Other students may benefit from a 'hands-on' approach, so incorporating movement and action into a lesson may be helpful to the learning process. [Understand how we learn and the importance of a multi-sensory teaching approach.](#)

Aid memory for revision

Be as creative as possible. Use a variety of study skills techniques to see which ones work best. Help the student extrapolate key information by making clear, concise notes. Use coloured cards, underline or highlight keywords in colour, draw pictures in the margin and so on.

Be aware of slower processing speeds

Wait at least 3 seconds for an answer! On average teachers ask 3 to 4 questions a minute and wait less than a second for an answer.

Be organised

Have a practical approach to helping students with organisation skills. Make sure a student's study space is clear of clutter and help them to organise their worksheets into folders with dividers. A tidy desk is a tidy mind, as they say!

Maintain focus

Divide work into manageable chunks and allow for short breaks to aid focus and attention. Encourage students to stand up and move around for a couple of moments during a break and encourage them to drink water.

Be encouraging and patient in your approach

Often dyslexic students can find themselves lacking confidence and self-esteem due to focusing on all the things that they feel they don't do as well as other people.



OSBORNE CAWKWELL
PRIVATE TUITION

Confidence can be built through a mastery of skills, a sense of achievement and patient support. Allow students freedom of choice and autonomy where possible and encourage them to take ownership of a task.

Developing intrinsic motivation by defining clear, achievable, short-term goals will be the key to helping them to learn independently. Give comments in a feedback sandwich (+ / - / +).

“

I have mostly worked with dyslexic students at later stages in their education, and particularly with A level and University level students.

While there is a wide range of challenges faced by dyslexic students, and it is very important to pay close attention to each student's learning style, I have found many of them face particular difficulties with organising information, which is often a product of their marked abilities in lateral, associative, and visual processing. This can lead to challenges with disentangling their thoughts in order to get them onto paper in a linear way, and also often impacts the way they organise their study materials and processes.

I have found one of the most effective ways of supporting dyslexic students at more advanced stages is by coming to understand the particular features of their learning processes and working out where they need help developing more structure.

Sometimes this can be in organizing materials and note-taking or improving their research strategies. Sometimes it involves looking at the nuts and bolts of structuring a piece of writing, or working out how to help them turn their thoughts into a form necessary to write an essay or an exam, using mind-mapping, or color-coding, or note-cards, or any combination of these methods.

Often the students I have worked with are very bright, curious, and imaginative, and have been finding their educational experience frustrating.

Finally it is extremely rewarding to be able to help them find strategies which allow them to unlock their potential.

”
Jane, RS, Politics and English tutor



OSBORNE CAWKWELL
PRIVATE TUITION

Confidence can be built through a mastery of skills and patient support

“

I can't believe Lydia's only been helping us for 6 months. Without her, it would have been a very different story.

The current, rigid education system isn't adapted for dyslexics, and I'm so very grateful for Lydia's truly invaluable support navigating my daughter through it all.

Lydia not only boosts my daughter's struggling maths, but also her self-esteem. After Lydia's lessons I have a different, happier child. Lydia is unfailingly professional, fun and kind. Gold dust!

”
Parent, 2019

Useful websites:

Through our website you are able to link to other websites which are not under the control of Osborne Cawkwell Tuition. We have no control over the nature, content and availability of those sites. The inclusion of any links does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them.

[British Dyslexia Association](#)
[Made By Dyslexia](#)

Osborne Cawkwell Limited, 10 Bloomsbury Way, Holborn, London WC1A 2SL
Registered in England and Wales Registration Number 8512353

020 7584 5355 enquiries@octuition.co.uk



Dys Talk
Wales.gov
Crested
Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity

Further reading for parents:

- * *The Parents' Guide to Specific Learning Difficulties: Information, Advice and Practical Tips*, by Veronica Bidwell
- * *How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia*, by Philomena Ott
- * *Dyslexia and Learning Style: A Practitioner's Handbook*, By Tilly Mortimer
- * *The Dyslexic Advantage, Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain*, by Brock Eide and Fernette Eide
- * *The Gift of Dyslexia*, by Ronald D. Davis

Further reading for Dyslexic students:

- * *Tom's Special Talent*, by Kate Gaynor
- * *My Name is Brain Brian*, by Jeanne Betancourt
- * *200 Tricky Spellings in Cartoons; Visual Mnemonics for Everyone*, by Lidia Stanton

Please contact Sarah Cox directly for guidance on specific teaching aids, books and materials.