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| Thumbnail  | Advice taken from Supporting students with dyslexia in the secondary classroomMoira ThomsonISBN 978-0-415-47811-3 Bryden, Clare  |

**English**

Remember, not all literacy difficulties are the same, so grouping students together may increase workload

Self-esteem issues are particularly strong in English as this is where difficulties are most apparent

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Oral communication
* Imagination
* Originality & creativity in writing

**Barriers:**

* Tire quickly
* Give up when faced with lots of text
* Confusion over names of characters
* Using correct vocabulary to comment on texts

**Specific support**

* Staple prompt cards for talk in order
* Provide essay structures
* Provide models of different types of writing
* Give summaries of texts
* Audio books

**Maths**

Reading difficulties may mask mathematical ability

The language of maths rarely gives contextual clues e.g. isosceles, vertices

Flow of reading may not be from left to right

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Spatial awareness
* Intuitive ability to manipulate data
* Understanding of complex relationships

**Barriers:**

* Misunderstanding the nature of the question because of misreading
* Reading from L to R means tables could be missed out
* Difficulty with directional vocabulary – above, beside
* Abbreviations

**Specific Support:**

* Teach mathematical language like a ‘foreign’ language
* Highlight tables / charts that are part of the question
* Give a list of what abbreviations stand for

**Memory in Maths:**

Multiplication tables

Copying numbers from one place to another

Remembering the numbers needed

Inability to show workings

**Support:**

Use gimmicks for recall – finger tables, rhythms, rhymes

Develop a checklist for calculation procedures

Show exemplars of the correct layout

Teach formulae using colours, jungles, mnemonics

**ICT / computing / business studies**

This can be central to boosting self-esteem

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Multi-sensory learning styles
* Multi-dimensional thinking
* Intuitive ability to manipulate data
* High levels of curiosity, originality, creativity

**Barriers:**

* Searching for information because of misspelled words
* Difficulty of recognising correct spelling in spellchecker
* Inability to operate keyboard and listen at same time
* Confusion of ICT vocabulary with the same word in different contexts

**Specific support:**

* Explain / illustrate specialist spellings of ICT terminology
* Encourage text to voice technology to help identify wrongly spelled words
* One task at a time – listen or work on keyboard

**Science**

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Lateral thinking
* Ability to design interesting experiments
* Asking insightful questions

**Theory and Preparation**

**Barriers:**

* Inability to process information in tables, charts, graphs
* Inability to label diagrams accurately
* Problems writing formulae
* Confusion of scientific vocabulary with the word in another context e.g. conductor
* Difficulty understanding / remembering scientific symbols

**Specific support:**

* Provide blank tables already labelled
* Use pictures to help recall
* Explain vocabulary in context
* Enlarge formulae
* Us e a formula prompt sheet

**Practical science**

**Barriers:**

* Confusion of similarly names equipment / substances
* Difficulty recording data

**Specific Support:**

* Label cupboards with pictures
* Show and name equipment when giving instructions
* Encourage students to check each other’s equipment/ experiments for safety points
* Allow dictation of results during an experiment



**Home Economics**

Many students with literacy difficulties experience success on a regular basis in this subject

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Multi-sensory learning styles
* Awareness of environment
* Original and creative approaches to problem solving

**Barriers:**

* Inability to carry out an activity while listening
* Confusion of subject vocabulary with same words in different contexts
* Failure to collect all ingredients / utensils before starting to prepare food
* Forgetting whether ingredients have been added

**Specific support:**

* Create personal flipcharts for recipes with one instruction per page
* Use visual clues to illustrate technical instructions e.g. ‘beat.’
* Issue checklists of ingredients for pupils to tick

**Art, Craft and Design**

Many students with literacy difficulties have visual strengths and can excel in these areas

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Strongly developed spatial awareness
* Multi-dimensional thinking and perception

**Barriers:**

* May sacrifice originality and creativity to complete a task
* Weaknesses in some graphic skills

**Specific support:**

* Design flow charts showing sequences of steps
* Keep tasks open-ended
* Encourage students to try different approaches
* Break down graphic tasks into small steps
* Encourage ICT use for graphic design and writing



**Music**

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Ability to hear notes in their heads
* Ability to predict complex sounds from notation
* High levels of creativity and originality

**Barriers:**

* Interpreting musical notation
* Visual processing of written music
* Terminology associated with tempo and style
* Ability to notate accurately across 5 lines
* Confusion over time signatures looking like fractions

**Specific support:**

* Link colours to letter-names and use mnemonics
* Link musical language to language pupils might know – diminuendo to dimming lights
* Colour-code key signatures, repeat marks and so on
* Arrange peer support in groups to keep the same place



**Drama**

Can be a real area of strength

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Excellent oral skills, mimicry and timing
* Awareness of the environment
* Ability to relate movement to speech
* Very observant, intuitive and perceptive
* Vivid and original imaginations

**Barriers:**

* Losing the place / reading the wrong lines
* Confusion over stage directions e.g. left/right
* Performance suffers because of focus on printed page

**Specific support:**

* Large-print versions of scripts
* Colour code parts
* Use large prompt cards for instructions, stage directions
* Encourage visual representation when developing storylines

**PE**

**Strengths to look out for:**

* Awareness of the environment
* Ability to practice the same skill over and over
* Endurance and determination to succeed



**Barriers:**

* Unable to listen and perform at the same time
* Applying the rules of one game to another

**Support strategies:**

* Combine verbal instructions with demonstrations
* Create wall displays in colour to show sports ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’
* Use visual representations of tactics and strategies
* Issue pocket-size references that can be discreetly consulted

**Social Subjects**

Since the need to plan, record and evaluate classroom activities is essential, they should be offered a range of alternatives to writing, including ICT

**Strengths to look out for:**



* Multi-dimensional thinking and perception
* Curiosity, high awareness of the environment
* High levels of empathy – intuitive and perceptive
* Original and creative approaches to problem solving

**Barriers:**

* Using an index / alphabetical features
* Extracting information from pictorial sources, maps, charts
* Difficulty interpreting data presented in tables/ charts
* Inability to locate coordinates

**Support strategies:**

* Illustrate terminology with visual examples
* Arrange access to electronic sources
* Issue only sections of maps
* Teach students to construct charts/timelines to sequence events
* Arrange picture sources to show sequence of events
* Issue pre prepared blank charts, tables and so on for completing
* Allow voice recorders for fieldwork and interviewing

**Modern languages**

Teachers may find it helpful to apply what they know about how students learn a new language to help them understand the difficulties some students experience with English.

**French** – students find this the most difficult as words are not written as they sound

**German** – easier initially as shares roots with English but increasingly difficult as students encounter compound words and formal grammar

**Italian** – difficult at first as sound system is different and many irregular verbs but it has a regular spelling system and gets easier over time

The best languages are ones with good sound-spelling relationships and a regular verb system with few irregularities – **Spanish** and **Japanese.**

