

Advice for the Post-primary Mainstream Teacher

1. Talk honestly with the pupil and the parent(s). Explain to the pupil with dyslexia that she or he has a reading difficulty which with help can be overcome. Emphasise that she or he is able to learn. Try to emphasise their strengths.
1. Work with the pupil in the development of strategies to help her/him to overcome or cope with dyslexic difficulties.
1. Support the home and family and keep parents involved
1. Foster pupil positive self-esteem. Give genuine praise whenever possible; promote activities that yield success.
1. Accept that everyone learns differently and recognise each pupil's learning difference. Be aware of different learning styles and be flexible in your teaching style.
1. Encourage and support a whole-school policy on learning differences and early screening, identification and intervention.
1. Be aware of the criteria for provisions regarding exemption from the study of a second language, supplementary teaching, special arrangements or accommodations for state exams etc...

Teachers should:

- Differentiate in the classroom by modifying class work and homework, materials, texts and tests.
- Build up a bank of resources for the pupil. This will not be your last pupil with dyslexia, and you will be more prepared for the next one.
- Plan teaching-learning activities which enhance the understanding of the relationship between new ideas and concepts and those previously learned.
- Employ visual and oral stimuli in the classroom environment;
- Differentiate tasks, including practical activity, to provide opportunities for extensive enhancement of practice and consolidation;
- Employ the appropriate degree of verbal language, including informal and formal language, in the context of practical experience to develop understanding;
- Provide opportunities for individual, small group and whole class work;

- Prepare charts, overhead projector acetates, ICT projector presentations and blackboard work that is clear and precise, and, where appropriate, supported with pictorial cues;
- Employ ICT resources including power point, CD-Roms, floppy discs, internet sites and if appropriate voice activated and recognising programmes;
- Evaluate all commercial texts and sources to ensure readability;
- Prepare workstations for individual work;
- Assess the whole pupil rather than the specific learning difficulty;
- Be aware of and keep a record of error patterns in reading, spelling and writing;
- Implement the pupil's individualised education plan effectively in the classroom setting;
- Cooperate collegially with support teachers, including, where relevant, the special education needs coordinator;
- Implement the policy, practices and procedures established in the school's special education needs/dyslexia policy;
- LINK: See the section titled Strategies for Mainstream Teachers – ages 12 +

• Mainstream post-primary teachers can address memory difficulties by –

- Training pupils in the creation and use of mind maps and other approaches for organising ideas
- Frequently assessing the work of the pupil informally and formally
- Sitting the pupil close to the teacher as necessary
- Ensuring clarity of classroom and homework tasks
- Consolidating and practicing familiar skills
- Rehearsing familiar knowledge
- Making sure the pupil receives important information in written form

• Mainstream post-primary teachers can address sequencing difficulties by –

- Providing thorough understanding and meaning for the specific sequence
- Encouraging the use of mnemonics for sequences that must be memorised
- Giving multi-sensory support for sequences, e.g. pictures, rhymes

• Mainstream post-primary teachers can address visual-perceptual difficulties by –

- Using a large font and coloured paper for class handouts
- Using a variety of chalk colours on the board or a variety of pen colours on the white board

- Writing in large, printed letters on the board
 - Not writing too much on the board
 - Carefully explaining visual graphic imagery such as tables, graphs, maps
 - Encouraging the learner to use a book mark under the text as he/she reads
 - Encouraging the learner to use a highlighter or underlining pencil while they read
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- Mainstream post-primary teachers can address reading difficulties by –
 - Negotiating with pupil as to if, when and how they will read orally before the class
 - Encouraging reading for meaning strategies and Metacognitive strategies to support comprehension
 - Highlighting significant text, and focussing upon formal terminology in curriculum areas
 - Providing graphic and picture cues
 - Constructing logs/diaries of essential words and lists of specific terminology assisted with picture and graphics cues
 - Structuring pupil-teacher conferencing opportunities
 - Providing sufficient time for silent reading in class time
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- Mainstream post-primary teachers can address mathematical difficulties by –
 - Using mind maps and graphical and pictorial cues
 - Using materials for the development of understanding throughout the syllabus
 - Analysing pupils error patterns in written calculations
 - Developing informal and formal mathematical language through practical activity with structured apparatus and concrete materials, and in concrete fashion during activities involving problem solving or investigational situations
 - Using practical situations, and cross-curricular opportunities such as physical education to develop spatial awareness of pupils
 - Training and practising the appropriate and sensible use of the calculator
 - Employing mathematical games, physical and IT generated, to assist with consolidation and practice
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- Mainstream post-primary teachers can address writing difficulties by –

- Training and practicing the use of mind maps and other methods to plan and structure written work
 - Encouraging the process of drafting and redrafting
 - Providing writing frames to develop ideas and concepts
 - Training the skills of editing and proof-reading
- Mainstream post-primary teachers can address emotional and behavioural difficulties by –
 - Reducing the pressure upon the pupil to verbally respond in a whole-class context
 - Creating opportunities for collaborative working environments
 - Demonstrating that all pupil responses are valued
 - Ensuring that classroom-based and homework tasks are appropriate to the ability of the pupil
 - Providing consistency of approach through partnership with parents, explaining the strategies to be employed in the classroom and those to be mirrored at home
 - Reducing pupil anxiety by planning for pupil success, goal achievement and reward giving
- Mainstream post-primary teachers can address speed of processing difficulties by following this procedure –
 1. Ask the group a question.
 2. Ask the pupil with dyslexia the question.
 3. Allow a five-to-ten second pause by silently counting to yourself one thousand and one, one thousand and two, etc.
 4. If the pupil cannot respond, reframe or rephrase the question.
 5. If the pupil does not jump in with an answer after a few seconds, move on to another who does know the answer.
 6. Don't linger to highlight the uneasiness on the part of the pupil with dyslexia in forming a response.
 7. Avoid expressions such as "I know you know it. We will wait until you get it." or "We talked about this last time. I know you can get it if you just focus on what you learned!"
 8. Rather, if the pupil struggles, as the class ends think about a question that you might ask the group the next time. As the pupil leaves let the pupil know that you might ask that question next time. That provides a cue so the pupil with dyslexia can formulate a response for the next class.
 9. Develop a cue to let the pupil know that you will be asking him or her a question in a few minutes. For example, let the pupil know that you will walk by lightly giving a tap on the shoulder before asking a question. This allows the pupil the time needed to get ready to reply.