



## Nova's Dyslexia Friendly Classroom Strategies

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# Dyslexia Friendly Classroom

(Also friendly to those with many other learning differences and humans in general)

According to the BDA 10% of the population are dyslexic, 4% severely so.

## The Rose report definition

- ☐ Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.
- ☐ Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- ☐ Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- ☐ It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut off points.
- ☐ Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

## Reading and copying from the board

Try copying the following sentence onto a piece of paper.

Hvad far du, hvis du krydser en ko med en trampolin?

This will have been a bit tricky – you will not have recognised the words (unless you are Danish) so you will have had to look up and down more times than if it were in English. This is what copying English is like for many of our dyslexic pupils when they cannot read the word or retain more than one word or letter at a time.

Now try copying this sentence onto a piece of paper:

你会说中文吗？

Unless you can speak and write in Chinese, this would have been very challenging. You are not familiar with these letter/word formations; you will have been constantly looking up and down and losing your place. This is what copying from the board is like when you struggle to identify the letters you are using as can happen if you are severely dyslexic.

## General Strategies



How can we help?

- ☐ All teachers to use a pastel coloured background on your flip charts/PowerPoints to support visual stresses
- ☐ Keep Flip-charts and PowerPoints clutter free
- ☐ Use defined colours to separate information on the board if there does need to be a lot on there
- ☐ Allow thinking time rather than expecting speedy, immediate responses
- ☐ Provide regular opportunities for recording work in alternative ways e.g. recording, drawing, acting, dictating to peers, diagrams and charts
- ☐ Plan in some whole class movement opportunities
- ☐ Incorporate lots of visuals into work and flipchart/PowerPoint presentations
- ☐ Focus on including brief positive feedback as well as specific, and constructive feedback for moving learning forward

## Copying from the board



How can we help?

- ☐ Minimise copying from the board as much as possible if it is not necessary to progress learning
- ☐ Provide an iPad for the child to take pictures of text and images on the board that need to be used in their learning that lesson
- ☐ Position the pupil close to, and centrally to, the board.
- ☐ Adjust the colour of the whiteboard background – cream is better than white.
- ☐ Consider font – Comic Sans, Veranda and Tahoma are amongst those considered dyslexia friendly.
- ☐ Consider font size – Minimum 28 point for Power Point and 12 on paper.
- ☐ Use 1.5 line spacing where possible.
- ☐ In some cases, do not expect any copying from the board. Give out handouts of the PowerPoint for pupils to copy from or encourage highlighting of key words and phrases instead.

## Verbal Memory



How can we help?

- ☐ Praise a pupil when they have asked for instructions to be repeated, not everyone can retain verbal instructions – they need to ask. Bullet point the instructions on a post it note if necessary or use a task checklist as shown on the next pages.
- ☐ Put homework on a digital platform if possible, and provide the written instruction for what they need to do at home rather than getting them to write it down or remember – in some cases maybe take a photo of homework if written on the board and send it home.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for pre/post teaching or going through the lesson presentation before or after

# Task Plan

**What do I need?**

- 1..... 2.....  
3..... 4.....

**What do I need to do?**

.....

☐

.....

☐

.....

☐

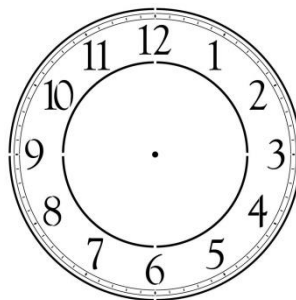
**What do I do next?**

.....

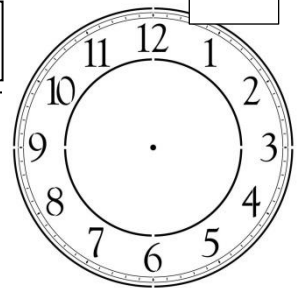
☐

**Reward**

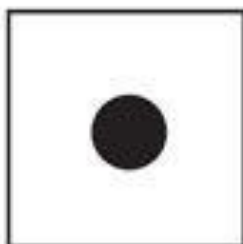
**Start**



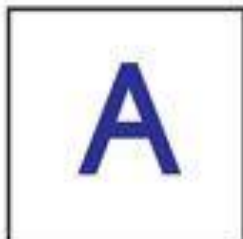
**Finish**



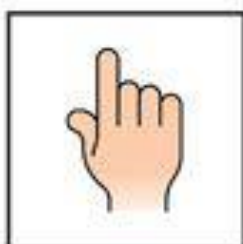




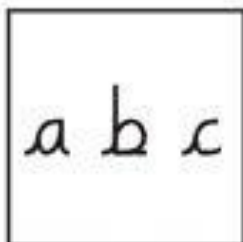
Have you used **full stops** correctly?



Have you used **capital letters** at the start of your sentences?



Does your sentence have **finger spaces** between each word?



Are all your letters the **right way** round?



Does it **make sense**?



Have you used **interesting words**?



Have you used **connectives**?

## Slower processing speed



How can we help?

- ☐ Slow down. Chunk information. Pause between chunks.
- ☐ Allow more time for a pupil to respond, either verbally or in writing. Even if the wait feels uncomfortably long.
- ☐ Be prepared to patiently repeat instructions.
- ☐ Keep in mind – the pupil can often do the task – they just need longer.

## Building Vocabulary



How can we help?

- ☐ Have subject specific language within reach. Having key words on the wall is a good start but has the same issues as copying from the board.
- ☐ Having key word mats, ideally with definitions and visual prompts, on the table works well. These could also be available on google classroom for pre learning and revisiting.



## Reading and Spelling



How can we help?

- ☐ Never **force** a pupil who struggles to read to read aloud in class, but do allow them to volunteer.
- ☐ Have key word mats on the desks; the more a pupil is able to copy or easily check a spelling the more likely it is they will spell it correctly independently in time.
- ☐ Have dictionaries available. Allow pupils to ask Siri for a spelling if appropriate.
- ☐ Make use of Clicker regularly to support with writing and identify spelling errors
- ☐ Use multimedia for homework and revision. A traditional revision guide will not work for all. Hands on activities and on-line videos may be more accessible and make information stick more effectively.

## Organising Writing



How can we help?

- ☐ Provide writing frames – there is an example on the next page and the link below gives access to many more free printable writing frames for all subjects. You can also create bespoke ones on Clicker.
- ☐ Provide Technology support e.g. Clicker with different levels of support and scaffolding, using an iPad or recording device to record sentence ideas,

<http://bit.do/writing-frames>

- ☐ Provide a WAGOLL (what a good one looks like) so pupils can visualise what their finished product should look like before they begin.
- ☐ Make use of Clicker regularly to support with writing and scaffolding
- ☐ Model the use of alternative methods of recording information. Examples include –
  - ☐ Bullet points
  - ☐ Mind maps
  - ☐ Spider diagrams
  - ☐ Cloze exercises
  - ☐ Story boards
  - ☐ Sequencing
  - ☐ Drawing

### To write an explanation text

Write your title here. Include either **How** or **Why** in your title.

Complete the sentences below.

I am going to explain how/why

First

---

---

Then

---

---

After that

---

---

Finally

---

---

Draw a diagram to go with your explanation.



## Editing work



How can we help?

- ☐ When they have finished, get them to edit and improve.

You could use the three S's

**Sense** – read it back, does it make sense?

**Sentence** – read it back, have you used appropriate punctuation?

**Spelling** – are you happy with your spellings? If not check them.

## Self esteem



How can we help?

- ☐ Recognise and celebrate strengths.
- ☐ Make the pupil feel comfortable asking for information to be repeated or for more help.
- ☐ When marking, pick out the positives, only pick out keyword spellings, and not too many. Content is far more important than spellings – excellent vocabulary spelled wrong is better than poor vocabulary spelled correctly.



## Remember

As always – one size does not fit all.

Some children may have individual reports and assessments from professionals that can give you a more in-depth idea of what kind of support can help them specifically – be sure to review this regularly and ensure the support in the classroom is in place.