



Newsletter No 13 January 2023

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British Dyslexia Association: Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide

The BDA have a Good Practice Guide for Dyslexia Friendly Schools. It contains lots of practical ideas for making schools and classrooms dyslexia friendly. I love some of the checklists it has such as:

Page 28 How Dyslexia Friendly are you?

Page 31 Making my classroom dyslexia friendly; top 10 tips

Page 33 Is your school dyslexia inclusive?

An abridged version is available at this link

<https://www.yesataretlearningtrust.net/Portals/0/Dyslexia%20Friendly%20Schools%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf>.

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: Dyslexia Hub Ireland <https://dyslexiahub.ie/>

In December 2022 DAI has announced that their new learning website Dyslexia Hub Ireland is now live. The Hub provides access to free online Structured Literacy video lessons. It also has sections on Empowering Parents, Emotional Wellbeing, Technology and a Voices of Dyslexia area where you can hear from a range of people who have experienced dyslexia first-hand as they reflect on their experiences and share insights.

The hub is designed to be accessible with information broken down into bite-size chunks, lots of videos, and signposting to additional resources. There is no need to log in or remember a password – you can explore the hub and learn freely in your own time and at your own pace. The hub is primarily aimed at parents and young people with dyslexia at primary level, however, the content will also be of interest to older individuals with dyslexia, educators, and others. More content is coming in 2023, as well as another hub specifically on Adult Dyslexia.

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland has an updated working definition of dyslexia.

It states 'Over recent months, we (DAI) have been reviewing and updating our working definition of dyslexia. We are promoting this understanding of dyslexia to better reflect the range of presentations that occur in dyslexic people, and the preferences of people with dyslexia.

Defining Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difference that can cause difficulties with learning and work. It affects approximately 1 in 10. It occurs on a spectrum with some people mildly affected and others more severely. With the right understanding, accommodations and support people with dyslexia can achieve success in education, the workplace and in wider society. Everyone with dyslexia is different but there is a commonality of difficulties with reading, spelling and writing and related cognitive/processing difficulties. Dyslexia is not a general difficulty with learning, it impacts specific skill areas. The impact of dyslexia can change according to the environment (i.e. what a dyslexic person is being asked to do and under what circumstances).

While people with dyslexia may develop strengths due to their dyslexia such as determination, problem solving and resilience, dyslexia does not automatically bring specific gifts or talents. The Dyslexia Association of Ireland recognises and respects the individual variation that all human beings display, including those with dyslexia.

Language, Recognition and Rights

Some people prefer the wording 'a person with dyslexia', while others prefer the term 'a dyslexic person'. When working with individuals it is important to use the terminology that the person is most comfortable with. When communicating with a wider audience the terms may be used interchangeably to reflect the variation of preference that exists.

Dyslexia is a recognised disability under Irish and EU law (such as under equalities, accessibility and disability legislation). However, many dyslexic people do not consider themselves 'disabled' and the individual's view should be respected.

Footnote: Sometimes in the past other terms have been used for dyslexia including specific learning disabilities (SLD / SpLD), specific learning difficulties, learning disabilities, specific reading difficulties, reading disorder. DAI welcomes feedback from all stakeholders on this definition. www.dyslexia.ie

Dyspraxia: Practical Strategies from Dyspraxia Foundation UK

This link contains very practical strategies for dyspraxia. It outlines the concern, why it is there and what teachers can do about it. As many of the difficulties people with dyspraxia have are shared by those with dyslexia, much of the content will be of help to these students as well.

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/dyspraxia-post-16-strategies.pdf>

Exemption from Irish, New DES circular 0055/2022

There is a new circular on Irish exemptions 0055/2022

<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f33d5-exemptions-from-the-study-of-irish-post-primary/> .

There is a new reason for granting an exemption which is that it recognises that there is a small cohort of students who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these students, consideration may need to be given to

adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. Full details are in the circular.

JCSP resources

The JCSP programme has literacy and numeracy resources many of which are free to download. They were on the PDST site but are now on the following site <https://jcsplibraries.com/jcsp-workbooks/>. Some are also available for purchase from the Blackrock Education Centre at <https://www.becpublishing.com/post-primary-resources-literacy-CAT9P0.html>,

www.Litcharts.com

I have often recommended the Sparknotes No Fear Guides where Shakespearian plays are shown with the original Shakespearian language alongside a modern English translation. This is so helpful for students with dyslexia who find the old-fashioned language difficult to understand. Unfortunately a paywall has been put up on the Sparknotes site. The good news is that Litcharts provides the same service without a paywall.

New book on dyslexia activities for kids and teens

Gavin Reid, along with Nick and Jennie Guise, have published the *Big Book on Dyslexia Activities for Kids and Teens. 100+ creative, fun, multi-sensory and inclusive ideas for successful Learning.*

Written with parents and teachers in mind, it is full of interesting and creative activities for children and young people aged 5-19 with dyslexia. The authors provide over one hundred tried-and-tested fun and imaginative activities and ideas to unlock the learning of children and teenagers with dyslexia in creative ways. The book is split into parts addressing literacy, numeracy, learning and cross curricular subjects. With fun activities like 'Spelling Ping-Pong' and 'Class Got Talent', it focuses on key skills such as listening, memory, spelling, writing and key board skills.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is a term increasingly used to describe the idea that people experience the world in different ways and there is no one 'right' way of thinking, learning and behaving and differences are just that and not deficits. It refers to the diversity of all people including ASD, ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia as well of neurological conditions. Different people think differently, not just because of differences in culture or life experiences, but because their brain is wired differently. Neurodiversity is broadly defined as an approach to learning and disability that suggests neurological conditions appear as normal variations in the human genome. More details are in an article on neurodiversity by Dr. Keith Murphy at <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2022/1011/1328464-neurodiversity-neurotypical-neurodivergence-neurotypical/>

Phonic literacy resources in Irish

Examples of some structured phonics literacy resources in Irish are:

<https://www.seideansi.ie/>

<https://www.maradearfa.ie/>

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/cod-na-gaeilge>

https://www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk/.../fonaic_na_gaeilge.html

<https://ccea.org.uk/lear.../clar-luathleitheoireachta-cleite>

<https://www.comhairle.org/eng.../teachers/teacher-resources/>

Reading Pen now available in libraries

Reader Pens read words and full lines of text aloud for independent reading. They are now available in selected branches of libraries. Those with dyslexia, those who have difficulty with reading or pronunciation, those learning languages or those with vision problems will find these pens extremely helpful pieces of technology. This device reads text out with natural speaking voice. The pens have built-in dictionaries so you can access definitions as you read for better understanding.

These devices can be borrowed, by any library user for an eight week loan period. They are also available for reference use inside the library.

Seeing AI and Envision AI

Both these apps will read text aloud, along with other many functions. While primarily designed for those with vision difficulties, they are useful tools for those who would benefit from having material read aloud. Seeing AI <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ai/seeing-ai> is only on Apple while Envision AI <https://www.letsenvision.com> is for both Apple and Android. Seeing AI is free and Envision AI offers a free trial. With both the camera takes a picture of text and will then read the text aloud.