

CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIC LEARNERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Factors to take into account Characteristics of dyslexic learners which may affect learning	Effect on MFL learning Dyslexic learners may have difficulties with the following	Teaching/learning strategies Incorporating these into classroom practice may help	Additional support May include the following
Phonological processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor grasp of sound / symbol correspondence. Lack of awareness of individual sounds within words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation, even of frequently encountered words. Recognising familiar words & phrases and confusion of similar sounding words. Reading, especially if asked to read aloud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early introduction to phonic system of the new language. Introduce new material in a multisensory way - show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it, etc. Ask student to read aloud only if s/he volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use practice cards for reinforcement. Provide tapes to accompany printed materials. Use Language Master / PALE. Pair student with a good reader.
Memory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working memory is limited; if overloaded, information may be lost. There may be inaccurate representations in long-term memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering and carrying out instructions (in either language). Remembering recently learned vocabulary. Repeating multisyllable words. May know the answer but be unable to 'get it out'! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present new information in bite-sized chunks. Set limited but realistic targets. Make use of additional channels of learning - music, actions, graphics. Allow extra time for recall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide materials for further revision at home or with additional support.
Auditory discrimination / perception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure of the sound which has been heard. Difficulty in perceiving the difference between similar sounds. Difficulty in knowing where a spoken word ends and a new word begins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing whether a sound is being pronounced correctly (e.g. repeating after the teacher). Ability to recognise the difference between two words containing similar sounds in either language. Listening tasks. Answering oral questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide text to accompany sound. When speaking to dyslexic students, exaggerate word separation at first, then let them hear it as it would be spoken normally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If student has a choice of language, opt for one which is phonically similar to home language - e.g. Italian or Spanish may be better for English-speaking student than French.
Sequencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting things in order: e.g. alphabet, word order in sentences or letter order in words, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing words from dictionary. Ordering days in a week, months in a year, numerical data, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide frequent practice using variety of strategies - rhyme, rhythm, games, songs, etc. Have lists / diagrams etc. on the wall for reference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of technical aids, such as foreign language spelling and word checker. Encourage the use of mnemonic strategies.

Adapted from Crombie, M. & MCColl, H. (2001). 'Dyslexia and the Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages', Peer, L. & Reid, G. (Eds.) *Dyslexia: Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*. London: David Fulton Publishers. © Crombie & McColl.

Characteristics of dyslexic learners and implications for modern language teaching *continued*

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Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwriting may be painfully slow and the result inaccurate and difficult to read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copying from the board. Committing to paper what can be produced orally. Spelling may follow English phonic code ('mother tongue interference'). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the amount of writing required for classwork, but do not eliminate it. Avoid assessing written work if very poor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept assessments in forms other than writing - taped, word processed, etc. Provide photocopied notes with tapes which can be used for practice at home.
Speed of processing information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tendency to be slower in responding to incoming information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to information or instructions given verbally in either language. Responding to a continuous flow of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow down speed of presentation to allow extra time for processing information. Be prepared to allow student extra time to answer questions and to complete work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for extra time and other special arrangements for external examinations.
Difficulty with directionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tendency to confuse left/right, up/down, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following and giving directions. Responding accurately to instructions which rely on prepositions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide pictures, arrows, etc. as well as text. Give visual clues when speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pair student with another who has no difficulties in this area and who can help.
Grammar and syntax <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor understanding of grammar and syntax in first language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming accurate sentences. Rules of grammar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach rules and reinforce daily. Use diagrams, cards and other language building blocks, etc. to demonstrate linear sequences and patterns of language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write rules onto revision cards for students to use as reference in class and at home.
Visual discrimination/recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor ability to discriminate and/or differentiate between words in and between words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiating between similar looking words (in either language or between languages). Differentiating between accents, and therefore assigning correct pronunciation. Confusion between languages, e.g. pain (bread) in French confused with the English word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use picture cues for association. Use practice cards for daily revision of common words with accents. Highlight accents in colour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Language Master to aid learning of common words to help with accents and to reinforce easily confusable words.

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