For Managers: Dyspraxia

Further introduction

Dyspraxia is lifelong. It can impact on co-ordination and the organisation of movement. It may also be associated with problems of perception, language and thought. Students with dyspraxia may have difficulties communicating and organising mathematical information, speed of processing, and concentration. It should be recognised that dyspraxia may present along a spectrum of difficulties meaning individual strengths and weaknesses may vary.

Contents

Challenges and strengths in academic courses

The way academic courses are organised may mean that dyspraxic students do have some problems, because of issues to do with:

- Practical work
- Personal organisation
- Procrastination
- Memory and attention span
- Written expression
- Visual, spatial and oral skills

Dyspraxic people often have strengths as well, such as:

- Creativity
- Determination
- Motivation
- Strategic thinking
- Problem-solving

Recommended provision

Equipment and software

- Dyspraxic learners may prefer to type or use speech recognition software. They may require ergonomic mice, keyboards, desks and chairs designed for their needs.
- Ergonomic pens e.g. Scribolino, grips, drawing slopes, flexible curves, drafting tools
- Graphic pads, pad software, drawing software.
- Software based equation building applications.
- Square paper
- Time management apps and diaries.
- Dividers and coloured tabs to support organisation

Physical learning environment

All work areas need to be well spaced, easily accessible and uncluttered. Quiet working areas are preferable.

Online learning environment

Because of difficulties with handwriting, dyspraxic students may prefer to use assistive technology. Graphic pads linked to maths writing software can help communication and readability. Some learners will use speech recognition software and may wish to use headphones. Note taking can be difficult so prepared resources are essential.

Additional/alternative provision

Think about providing 1:1 support.

Tutor training

We recommend that you include a discussion on these Manager and Tutor leaflets in tutor training at your institution. Over the coming years, accessibility training will become an important feature of maths support tutor training at local and national levels. For further information on tutor training, contact your maths support network.

Working with other university services

It is important to know the Disability Department in your institution who can supply further details about dyspraxia.

- You should have information leaflets about the Disability Department available for students in your centre and vice versa.

- The Disability Department may also be able to recommend that other students use your maths support centre.

- If you think a student in your centre has dyspraxia, you should encourage and support the student to make contact with the relevant Disability Department in your institution.

Recommended reading

Yeo, D. (2008) Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Mathematics. John Wiley. Oxon.

Trott C. (2009) Dyscalculia in Pollak D (ED) Neurodiversity in Higher Education: positive responses to specific learning difficulties, Wiley Blackwell, Chichester