Lecture title:	**Lecture 3B: Learning disabilities: How they affect language learning**

Margin notes	

- misunderstood → in some cultures ignored/ seen as weakness
- 5% world population have a learning disability of some kind

Contents
- Meaning of 'learning disability'
- Dyslexia and Dysgraphia
- Helping strategies

1. Meaning of 'learning disability'

– Not easy to define: still learning about brain, not always obvious

– Children with learning disability:
   o even with appropriate teaching & resources, difficulty remains & has lifelong impact → academic achievement, emotional wellbeing
   o often behind kids of same age
   o specific signs (Butterfield, 2014):
      1. *confusion with verbal instructions*
      2. *taking long time to complete task*
      3. *not speaking*
      4. *forgetting info*
      5. *making errors with words* (i.e. make same errors throughout their life)
   o to know for sure, Ts and parents/ doctors work together over long time

2. Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

dys = difficult, something not working properly

Dyslexia
– 80% of all learning disabilities = reading + writing problems
– Typical mistakes:
   1. *writing letters backwards* (e.g. b – d)
   2. *letters upside down* (e.g. W - M)
   3. *order of letters* (e.g. left - felt)
   4. *backwards* (e.g. dog = god)
   5. *word substitution* (e.g. house - home)
– dyslexic SS continue to make these mistakes throughout adulthood

Dysgraphia – writing related
– Motor-based:
   o Mechanical aspects of writing
          e.g. using pencil correctly - may be tiring, painful

– Language-based:
   o Putting written ideas into logical order. → confuse reader
      ▪ SS may put express ideas clearly when speaking

	3. Helping strategies
	
	– **Individual learning plan** (ILP)
	   o personalised plan
	   o adapts parts of standard curriculum to make sure
	      SS has equal opportunity to achieve in classroom.
	        ▪ developed by parents, Ts & SS take into
	           account strengths and difficulties
	
	– **Assistive technology** (AT)
	   o electronic devices + software supporting
	      learning process
	        ▪ reduce some of the disadvantages
	        ▪ tech used by all
	           • *e.g.* smartphone to take photos, mp3 recorder, use of interactive
	              multimedia
	        ▪ help Ss use other parts of the brain to process info

Summary	Students with learning disabilities (LDs) face lifelong challenges in academic achievement, but with appropriate support they can reach their goals. LDs that affect language development can be difficult to identify, but can be seen in persistent challenges in processing verbal info, interacting with others, and forgetting info. Two common disabilities that affect reading and writing are dyslexia (processing order and shape of letters and words) and dysgraphia (specific challenges in writing). Students with LDs can be helped by an individual learning plan and assistive technology.