Support Strategies and Tips for Educators

The tables in this resource are based on the work from the pupils at Trinity Primary School who participated in Case Study 1: Section 3 of the PLA Mission Superheroes: Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice: From Understanding to Action.

When using the table, it is important to note that:

- The challenges identified by the Primary 7 group of children were **not all relevant to all learners**, but many learners found that they shared the same challenges

- The challenges have been included in the **pupils' own words**

- Below each section of the table is a row of additional strategies/top tips to complement those thought of by the children. These strategies are divided into those more suitable for parents and carers and those more applicable to educators. Educators should consider sharing these strategies with parents and carers.

- The pupils at Trinity Primary who wrote the first two columns have access to iPads and refer to this device in their strategies. A range of devices are used across Scottish local authorities all of which have similar apps and capabilities - see section 4.5.1 for further information on using technology to support a young person.

An overview of key strategies is included however educators should ensure that they refer to the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit for further information and guidance on each of the associated difficulties. The Reading Circle is an excellent resource for educators to use to understand the key areas involved in the acquisition of reading skills and approaches to support learners.

Phonological Awareness Skills
What - the awareness of the sounds and structures of **spoken** language such as rhyming, awareness of sounds in words and words in sentences, awareness of syllables. **Important** - critical skills for learning to read and spell https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-yLysHrRtE&t=3s ****Phonological awareness is an auditory (listening) activity - no reading or writing is involved****
Top tips for educators to support phonological awareness
• Onset and rime activities (for example, what is the first sound in c-at and word families) • Sound isolation games (what is the first, middle, last sound in a word) • Sound blending (putting sounds together to make words) • Sound segmentation (taking sounds in words apart)
Further information to support phonological awareness
• Strategies and Resources | Addressing Dyslexia • Reading Circle | Addressing Dyslexia

Whilst developing phonological awareness skills does not include actual reading and writing, these skills are crucial for learning to read and write. The pupils described their reading and writing challenges and compensatory strategies as follows:

Reading And Spelling	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
Reading long or unfamiliar words	• Someone helping me break them down for me • Coloured overlays • Words being read to me, either by someone else or by the iPad

Spelling	• Sound charts • Word lists Assistive technology such as • Spellcheck • Predictive text • Speech to text and dictation

Top tips for educators to support reading

- 'Walk' through a book before starting to read it - look for tricky vocabulary and try to look for hooks (things that make connections) for the young person
- Echo reading (model reading a short piece of text to the young person and they repeat it back)
- Give young people thinking time when they come across an unknown word
- Provide decoding strategies for when a young person comes across an unknown word – do not just tell them (stretch it out, chunk it)
- Interactive reading

Top tips for educators to support spelling

- Use active spelling approaches
- Look for patterns or learn words with certain sounds together
- Look-say-cover-write-check

  1. **Look** - encourage the pupil to deconstruct the word e.g. consider using highlighters for tricky parts/vowels

  2. **Say** - pupil says the words aloud. **Top tip:** ask the student to clap the syllables or say the word as it sounds not as it is spelt

  3. **Cover** the word

  4. **Write** - the pupil can use an active spelling strategy to write the word

  5. **Check** – the pupil compares the two words and repeats if incorrect

  Top tip: provide students with a grid and encourage them to repeat this several times for the same word

Further information to support reading and spelling

- Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit
- Dyslexia Scotland's leaflet on supporting spelling
- https://addressingdyslexia.org/professional-development/**scf-legacy**/↗

Sequencing and Directionality

Sequencing

What - the ability to understand, remember and organise information in a logical order

Important - for reading comprehension, writing, solving maths problems and completing daily tasks

Directionality

What - the ability to understand spatial orientation and movement in a specific direction

Important - for reading, writing, handwriting and maths

Pupils' challenges	Pupils' strategies
Left and right!	• Which hand I wear my watch • Wearing a bracelet • Thumbs and fingers
Which ways letters/numbers go	• Having visual reminders either in my jotter or round the classroom
Being given a whole load of instructions	• Post it notes • Breaking down instructions into chunks • Giving the instruction to me step by step • 'To do' app on my iPad
Sense of direction! I have none!	• Being given simple, clear instructions and visual reminders

Top tips for educators to support sequencing and directionality

Directionality

- Encourage correct direction of letters by using prompts such as 'b' - bat before ball and 'd' - c before d

Sequencing

- Talk through stories identifying beginning, middle and end. Create story maps
- Visual timetables

Reading Fluency	
What - the ability to read text accurately and with appropriate speed and expression **Important** - it allows learners to focus on the understanding and meaning of text rather than decoding each word. Comprehension and decoding are essential for fluency	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
Reading aloud!	• Not being asked to read or being given the option to say no • Using the coloured overlay with the underline • Giving time • Having the iPad read it to you instead of having to ask someone to read it - using 'Read available' on the iPad
My words trip over themselves	• Being given time to find the words • If it is something where I have to say something in public, having visual cues and having time to practise it with someone I trust
Top tips for educators to support reading fluency	
• Volunteer reading • Choral reading - the teacher leads a group of pupils all reading aloud together • Identify and discuss tricky/unknown vocabulary before reading	
Further information to support reading fluency	
• Additional information on comprehension can be found in the **Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit**	

Short Term and Working Memory

Short-term memory

What - the ability to hold a small amount of information for a brief period of time without changing it, for example, remembering a phone number long enough to dial it.

Important - for following instructions, supporting reading and writing (remembering the start of a sentence to get full meaning), learning new information (temporarily until transferred to long term memory), problem solving and discussions.

Working memory

What - the ability to temporarily hold and mentally manipulate information in order to complete a task.

Important - for learning across the curriculum but especially for reading, writing and maths

Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
Having an idea and being able to remember it long enough to write it down	• Using voice notes on iPad to speak it into the iPad whilst I remember it • Someone writing what you say when I say it • People remembering that my short-term memory isn't good!
Quick recall, things like times tables	• Times tables square • Not asking me to recall my times tables quickly
Remembering things	• 'To do' app on my iPad • To do lists • Post it notes • Reminders

Top tips for educators to support short-term and working memory

- Remind children of tasks and routines in class (use timetables, checklists)
- Use visual prompts alongside oral instructions (checklists, written instructions, colour coded notes)

- Use of checklists including electronic checklists
- Use multi-sensory learning

Further information to support short-term and working memory

- **Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit**

Number Skills	
What - the ability to understand, work with and use numbers effectively **Important** - for maths and everyday tasks involving time, money and measurement	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
Maths in general! (for some - other dyslexic children are very good at Maths) Sequencing Memory Language of Maths Remembering procedures such as long multiplication Working at speed	• People remembering that dyslexia can affect Maths, not just reading and writing
Word problems	• Having them read to me • Highlighting the important parts • Being given tips on which strategy or operation you need to use
Working out what is the important information and what is extra numbers or words	• Having someone highlight the key elements for me
Know what the question is asking but not sure how to solve it	• Breaking it down into simple equations • Having someone write the question for me

Multiple step processes	• Writing an example • Breaking down the different steps and what you have to do for them
When breaking down the problem, I forget the start when I have got to the end	• Breaking it down into sections • Taking it bit by bit (having someone break it down for me) • Quietly checking in with me that I understand it where I can check without everyone knowing
Times tables!	• Times table squares • Number squares • Concrete materials

Top tips for educators to support number skills

- Accurate use of calculator
- Use of physical objects such as Numicon, number lines and dienes cubes
- Maths Songs and Chants
- Encourage learners to talk aloud and talk through the number process as they are doing it

Further information to support number skills

- Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit

Organisational Skills	
What - the ability to plan, manage, and complete tasks efficiently and independently **Important** - to help pupils complete tasks independently	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
Homework - getting it in on time	• Constant reminders • Being given something that says what I need to do and when it needs to be in • Using iPads to set reminders • Having a visual timetable/calendar on display • Diaries
Reading timetables	• Making it visual or colour coded so it is easier to decipher
Remembering what I have to do and when	• Having a daily/weekly/termly planner • Making a personal Dyslexia Planner which is visual and I can use in my own way
Getting lost in High School	• Visual map • Being given time to find my way around
Top tips for educators to support organisational skills	
• Support learners by providing notes or print outs before or during a lesson • Use One-Note, a digital note taking app (refer to Section 4, 4.5.1.). • Use To Do App Guide: (refer to Section 4, 4.5.1.) • Peer buddy to give and receive help with organisation	

Oral Language Skills	
What - the ability to understand and use spoken language to communicate effectively **Important** - for understanding instructions, engaging in discussions, developing reading comprehension and expressing ideas clearly both in speech and writing.	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
You know what you want to say but you can't get it out	• Being given time to think about it, not having to answer straight away • Telling my idea to someone I trust before sharing it • Talking it through with the teacher when they know it helps me to say it out loud but not in front of the class
Different words come out than what I mean	• People knowing I can get my words wrong • Being patient
Being interrupted when I have an idea	• Being allowed the time and space I need to finish, knowing that I might need more time
Learning other languages	• This is hard! Knowing I find learning another language difficult. I find spelling in different languages really hard
Top tips for educators to support oral language skills	
• Introduce subject specific vocabulary • Use visual aids such as mind maps and story maps • Encourage story telling activities using different stimulus including pictures, sounds • 'Think, Pair, Share' activities. Pupils are provided with a scenario or stimulus and given time to think about it and come up with their thoughts. They then discuss their thoughts with a partner (pair) before sharing their ideas with the whole class.	

Auditory and Visual Processing Skills	
Auditory **What** - the ability to accurately receive, interpret and make sense of information that is heard (how the brain interprets sound, not hearing ability) **Important** - for phonological awareness, reading and spelling and listening comprehension **Visual** **What** - the ability to accurately receive, interpret and make sense of visual information (how the brain interprets visual input, not eyesight itself) **Important** - for reading, spelling, handwriting	
Pupils' challenges	**Pupils' strategies**
In assessments, such as the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs), reading the question, especially under time pressures is really hard	• Having the questions read to me. I know the answer when I finally get the question, but it takes ages
Listening to instructions, especially multiple, complex ones	• Teacher writing down what we are doing • Repeating instructions multiple times • When a teacher is writing something on the board, saying what they are writing and then reading it again once they have written it • Giving one instruction at a time
When it is noisy, it is really hard to process things	• Having a quiet space
When I listen to something, I remember it but then when I have to do something it takes me time to	• Being given time to process things • People being patient and realising I might need an instruction more than once

process what I have to do and let the thought become an action	
Visual - white is really hard	• Having background colours on slides and pages really help • Buff coloured jotters - but for P6 and P7 we would like buff jotters with thinner lines • Colour tints on iPads • Coloured overlays
Busy pages are hard to break up	• Having simple pages, not too much info • Using 'Hide distracting items' on the iPad when researching online

Top tips for educators to support auditory and visual processing skills

Auditory

- Check in with pupils discreetly to establish their understanding
- Use IT for assessments (Alternative Assessment Arrangements)
- Repeat number and word sequences

Visual

- Format text (see section on digital text below)
- Highlight key words
- Use colour overlays or change the background of screen or text, to remove black text on a white background
- Use trackers (e.g. ruler, card or overlay) when reading
- Reduce 'clutter' on a page - only include relevant information to avoid visual overload

Further information to support auditory and visual processing skills

- Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit