

MANCHESTER INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

DYSLEXIA POLICY

Introduction

In the UK, academic institutes now consider that if a student is at a substantial disadvantage, the educational provider is required to make reasonable adjustments.

Assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures should provide disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.

The effects of dyslexia

Dyslexia nearly always affects both speed and accuracy in reading and writing. It does not generally affect higher level language skills such as oral comprehension, and reading comprehension is only affected if the ability to decode text is seriously impaired. Most dyslexic students can be slow readers, and as accuracy is also affected they generally need to re-read texts more often than students who are not dyslexic.

Most students with dyslexia cannot produce written work as quickly as other students; they are likely to make more spelling errors even in word-processed work; their punctuation and grammar may be weak and they often omit, repeat or insert small function words or word endings in both reading and writing.

Dyslexic students typically find it very difficult to proof read and edit their work, as they lack awareness of detail in texts. They may submit assignments which look as if they have not been checked for inaccuracies. As a result of weakness in working memory they may have difficulty transcribing or copying, resulting in inaccuracy, which when numbers are involved may have serious implications.

Some generalisations about dyslexic students' performance when writing

Some of these apply to students some of the time while others will not apply at all. Dyslexia affects individuals in very different ways; it is rarely the same for any two people. Students have different experiences of learning, their needs have been identified at different times in their learning careers, they have received differing amounts of support and they have developed different coping strategies.

1. Dyslexic students tend to think in a holistic, non-linear way i.e. a non-verbal way, which is difficult to convert into the linear nature of words.
Therefore, dyslexic students can use more time and mental energy to put ideas into words but may grasp the global picture very easily.
2. Dyslexic people usually have a strong perception of what they intend to write. They retain the mental image of the ideas they want to convey in spite of the actual way this is ultimately expressed in writing.

So there is an inability to see that their writing does not reflect their ideas. An inability to proofread their work. Mistakes in exams will not be identified or corrected.

3. Dyslexic students do not learn language skills subliminally. They cannot improve these skills through the process of error identification alone.
Detailed explanations of underlying spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax rules are needed to develop language skills. Standard feedback normally provided is insufficient for the needs of most dyslexic students.
4. Dyslexic people may find it hard to 'read between the lines'.
Dyslexic students need direct but positive comments e.g. "this was good because...". Telling a dyslexic student not to do something without providing a reason can be completely useless.
5. A dyslexic person can find it difficult to present ideas in organised and structured formats e.g. essays, reports, examination scripts etc.
The principles of good presentation need to be taught. Samples and model answers for each format should be presented and explained.
6. Technical mistakes in written English and poor presentation may mask the ideas and knowledge the student wishes to convey, which can be frustrating for the student and difficult for the marker.
When marking, look beyond the poor language skills for knowledge and ideas.
Typical mistakes made by dyslexic students
 - bizarre or inconsistent spellings even of 'common' words, for example said, what, when.
 - incorrect use of homophones e.g. hear and here, there and their.
 - omission or transposition of letters, syllables and words e.g. siad for said.
 - poorly constructed sentences e.g. very long rambling sentences with no punctuation.
 - tenses are used incorrectly and inconsistently.
 - vocabulary is restricted or poor.

Guidelines for Primary Tutor, Supervisors & Examiners:

Although marking criteria will generally focus on content over form, the structure, and coherence of written work will always be an assessment criterion. Dyslexic candidates who find it difficult to produce well-structured work with a logical sequence should be advised to seek extra support in writing their case study.

Primary Course Tutors are responsible for finding out who, in their training group, is dyslexic.

It is helpful for students with specific learning difficulties to be given constructive feedback to help them to identify ways of improving their written language skills.

Marking Aims

- to mark work fairly, neither overcompensating nor penalising for dyslexic difficulties, mark for content and ideas only (especially in exams)
- to disregard an individual's dyslexic mistakes

A Brief Summary Of The Guidelines

- Read fast, looking for ideas, understanding and knowledge.
- Make constructive comments.
- Explain your comments in a straight-forward way.
- Write legibly and use good, clear language.
- Let the student know if you are marking just for ideas and understanding.
- Use two pens, neither red, one for ideas, the other for language (if you do not correct the language, only one pen is necessary).
- If you correct the language, explain what is wrong with it and why the correction is better, do not correct everything – check with the student what is helpful.
- Be sensitive: many dyslexic students have been badly hurt by lack of understanding in the past.

This policy will be reviewed every 18 months and updated a minimum of every 36 months.

Reviewed June 2019