

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning disability that impacts reading, which can cause difficulties with word recognition, reading comprehension, writing/spelling, short-term memory, and organizational difficulties. Dyslexia can range from mild to severe, and may affect each person differently.

Learning Difficulties

- Memory: comprehension, recall
- Reading: slow, inefficient
- Writing: vocabulary, syntax, grammar, spelling errors
- Handwriting: poor or illegible
- Organization: assignment structure, schedules, deadlines

Learning Strengths

- Intellectual & creative ability
- Lateral/diverse thinking skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Visual & spatial thinking skills
- Holistic information processing
- Oral/interpersonal and/or intrapersonal skills

How Students with Dyslexia Learn Best

Students with dyslexia learn most effectively in a structured learning environment that uses a variety of modes to impart information. They do best when they use multiple pathways of the brain (i.e., visual and auditory), can connect new concepts to what has already been taught, are exposed to repetition to aid weak short-term memory, and are encouraged to use critical thinking skills.

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In the Classroom

- At the beginning of a lecture, review previous material to help put new material into context.
- Provide an outline of the lecture's structure.
- Use a multi-sensory approach where possible (i.e., videos, flow-charts, diagrams, etc.)
- Communicate patterns or themes in course material to encourage association of ideas.
- Incorporate pauses into lectures to summarize key points and allow time for questions.
- Provide additional reading resources to support what students learned in class.
- Only ask students to read aloud in class if they want to.

Assigned Reading

- Identify what is "essential" reading vs "desired" reading to allow students with dyslexia to prioritize their time.
- Assign reading that is also available in an electronic format so that students can utilize text-to-speech software that will read it aloud to them.

Assigned Writing

- Clarify essay titles and required writing format.
- Set interim targets for stages of assignments.