

Overview - dyspraxia

Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder) is characterised by difficulties with co-ordination, but it can also involve problems with organisation, memory, concentration and speech. The medical model of dyspraxia defines it as an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement. Associated with this, there may be problems of language, perception and thought.

Dyspraxia often occurs with other SpLDs such as dyslexia, ADHD and Asperger Syndrome.

Students with dyspraxia may have difficulty with:

- Slow and/or illegible handwriting.
- Spelling and punctuation.
- Taking longer to learn new skills and information.
- Organisation, time management and planning skills.
- Sequencing actions and organising ideas.
- Fine motor skills affecting craft work, lab work, using apparatus and rulers, etc.
- Learning and pronouncing new vocabulary.
- Keeping track of their place when reading, on the page, screen or projector.
- Memory and concentration.
- Writing clearly and sticking to the point.
- General untidiness and clumsiness.
- Oversensitivity to light and noise.
- The ability to screen out background noise during group discussions.
- Anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem.



Top tips for teaching students with dyspraxia:

- Allow extra time for reading and writing tasks.
- Permit rest breaks when needed.
- Provide plenty of recapping, revision and 'overlearning' of new skills and information so that they become automatic.
- Help students break complex information and tasks into smaller, manageable chunks.
- Be sensitive to potential difficulties with memory, handwriting, speech, co-ordination and processing speed; avoid putting students on the spot.
- Be explicit about what assignments require; provide exemplars and templates.
- Encourage students to use calendars, diaries and alarms to help with time management.
- Many of the top tips for teaching students with dyslexia (see related guide) will also help students with dyspraxia.

Useful links

- <http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/furtherhigher-education/>
- www.nadp-uk.org/members/events/docs/nadp-spring2010-colley.ppt
- <http://www.brainhe.com/students/types/dyspraxia.html>

