



Supporting Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia

Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a neurodiverse learning difference that affects how individuals process written and spoken language. It can influence reading, writing, memory, and organisational skills, but does not reflect intelligence or teaching potential. Many trainee teachers with dyslexia bring creativity, empathy, and innovative thinking to the classroom.

Common Challenges for Trainee Teachers with Dyslexia

Trainees with dyslexia may experience difficulties in the following areas:

- **Written Communication:** Spelling, grammar, and structuring written work.
- **Reading & Processing:** Slower reading speed, difficulty scanning dense texts.
- **Memory & Organisation:** Managing multiple tasks, remembering instructions.
- **Verbal Expression:** Anxiety around speaking or articulating ideas under pressure.
- **Assessment & Feedback:** Written assessments may not reflect true understanding.

Practical Support Strategies

Communication & Planning	• Encourage early disclosure and create a supportive environment. • Develop a GITEP Personal Support Plan and review it regularly together with the trainee. • Schedule regular check-ins.
Technology & Tools	• Encourage the use of: - Speech-to-text and text-to-speech software - Grammar and spelling tools - Organisational apps (e.g., Microsoft Outlook, Trello, OneNote)
Lesson Planning	• Use structured templates and visual planning tools. • Encourage co-planning and rehearsal. • Support with visual aids – use <i>Teaching Walkthrus</i>.
Written Work & Assessment	• Allow flexible deadlines and alternative formats. • Provide proofreading support. • Focus feedback on clarity and strengths.
Classroom Practice	• Offer low-pressure practice opportunities. • Give clear, constructive feedback. • Use observation notes to reinforce progress.

Tips for Mentors

- **Build Trust:** Foster open, empathetic communication.
- **Focus on Strengths:** Highlight creativity and resilience.
- **Adapt Feedback:** Use visuals, summaries, and verbal explanations – *Teaching Walkthrus* are good for this.
- **Support Organisation:** Help with planning tools and time management.
- **Encourage Self-Advocacy:** Promote confidence in requesting support.
- **Be Flexible:** Allow extra time and adapt expectations where appropriate.

Guidance for Training Sessions and Lectures

Before the Session	• Share materials in advance: Provide slides, reading lists, and handouts at least 48 hours before the session. • Use clear layouts: Avoid dense text; use bullet points, headings, and visuals. • Offer multiple formats if required: Provide materials in accessible formats (e.g., PDF, audio, large print).
During the Session	• Speak clearly and at a measured pace. • Use visual aids: Diagrams, flowcharts, and mind maps help reinforce key points. • Summarise verbally: Repeat and rephrase important information. • Allow thinking time: Pause after asking questions to give time for processing. • Encourage note-taking alternatives: Allow use of laptops, audio recorders, or shared notes.
After the Session	• Provide a Summary: Reiterate key points and encourage trainees to create a written list of key points and follow-up actions. • If the session has been recorded: Signpost the trainee to where to access the recording for review. • Offer follow-up support: Be available for clarification or one-to-one discussion.
Emotional & Professional Support	• Connect trainees with peer networks or support groups. • Monitor wellbeing and stress levels. • Encourage reflection and self-care practices.

Useful resources

- British Dyslexia Association – www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Dyslexia Scotland – www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk
- The Dyslexia Foundation – www.dyslexiafoundation.org