



Supporting Trainee Teachers with Dyspraxia

Understanding Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder – DCD) affects motor coordination, planning, and sometimes speech and memory. It can impact physical tasks, organization, and confidence, but does not reflect intelligence or teaching ability. Many trainee teachers with dyspraxia are empathetic, creative, and highly reflective.

Common Challenges for Trainee Teachers with Dyspraxia

Trainees with dyspraxia may experience difficulties in the following areas:

- **Physical Coordination:** Navigating classroom spaces, handling equipment, fatigue.
- **Planning & Organization:** Sequencing tasks, managing time, organising materials.
- **Communication & Processing:** Processing verbal instructions, expressing ideas clearly.
- **Written Work:** Handwriting difficulties, layout issues, fatigue from writing.

Practical Support Strategies

Communication & Planning	• Encourage early disclosure. • Develop an Individual Support Plan (ISP). • Use visual schedules and checklists.
Technology & Tools	• Provide access to speech-to-text software. • Use digital planners and timers. • Offer ergonomic tools.
Lesson Planning	• Use structured templates and visual aids. • Break tasks into manageable steps. • Allow rehearsal and practice teaching.
Written Work & Assessment	• Allow typed submissions and flexible formats. • Provide extra time. • Focus feedback on content and clarity.
Classroom Practice	• Support with layout and movement strategies. • Allow time to set up and pack away. • Use peer support or co-teaching.

Tips for Mentors

- **Be Clear and Structured:** Use bullet points, numbered steps, and visual aids. Avoid long, unstructured verbal instructions. Repeat and rephrase key points.
- **Check for Understanding:** Ask open-ended questions like “How do you see this working in your lesson?” Encourage the trainee to summarise tasks in their own words.

- **Be Patient and Non-Judgmental:** Allow time for processing and responding. Avoid rushing or interrupting. Be mindful of tone and body language.
- **Offer Reassurance and Encouragement:** Recognise effort and progress, not just outcomes. Celebrate small wins and creative solutions. Reinforce that challenges are manageable with support.
- **Use Multi-Modal Communication:** Combine verbal, written, and visual feedback. Offer follow-up emails or summaries after meetings. Encourage use of digital tools for communication and planning.
- **Support Emotional Wellbeing:** Check in regularly about stress and workload. Encourage self-care and reflection. Be a consistent and reliable point of contact.

Guidance for Training Sessions and Lectures

Before the Session	• Share materials in advance. • Use clear layouts and visual summaries. • Offer materials in multiple formats.
During the Session	• Speak clearly and at a steady pace. • Use visual aids and structured slides. • Allow time for note-taking and processing. • Offer alternatives to handwriting.
After the Session	• Provide written summaries and key points. • Offer recordings or transcripts. • Be available for follow-up questions.
Emotional & Professional Support	• Monitor stress and fatigue levels. • Encourage reflection and self-care. • Connect trainees with peer support networks.

Useful resources

- Dyspraxia Foundation – <https://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>
- Developmental Coordination Disorder UK – <https://www.dcd-uk.org>