

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) is an umbrella term that encompasses a range of neurodevelopmental conditions that affect an individual's ability to acquire and use academic skills. These difficulties are not related to intelligence but rather differences in cognitive processing (British Dyslexia Association, 2022).

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

DYSLEXIA
DYSPRAXIA
DYSCALCULIA
DYSGRAPHIA

DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES

Throughout the process of creating the DiverseMind Handbook, numerous strategies were tried and tested across our broad school curriculum. Only the best from each category of SLD was chosen. Below, we will address one best practice from each of our selected SLDs.

Dyscalculia - Our team decided that by taking a weakness-based approach to dyscalculia, teachers encouraged students to spiral into negative thoughts. All of our initiatives in the handbook come from leaning into individual student strengths.





Dyslexia - In our opinion, the most effective strategy implemented for this SLD was the “In Their Shoes” activity. Teachers were tasked with completing a rigged reading game to simulate dyslexia. As you can imagine, this generated great frustration. The main goal was to build empathy and first-hand understanding of how dyslexia impacts learning. A sentiment that was expressed by all involved parties.

Dysgraphia - Supporting and identifying dysgraphia in class can be difficult. Students may silently slip between the cracks with this SLD. Through the implementation of writing interventions, penmanship classes and 1:1 supports, we identified that the best way to support Dysgraphia is through the effective use of assistive technology. A sentiment echoed in the dysgraphia support exercises.

Dyspraxia - This SLD effects students in such broad ways that our team struggled to condense best practices. Instead, you will find a chart of difficulties and best practices listed in the handbook. These were observed by our professional team of trained Additional Needs Assitants and AEN teachers.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

Teachers were keen to take part in this initiative, their expert input was essential in the creation of effective and meaningful training workshops. Teachers were happy to receive key information about identifying and supporting students with additional needs in their classes. Particular praise was placed on the dyspraxia supports list. Teachers liked that at a quick glance, they could find 3-5 supports for specific students across a broad range of topics. The dyslexia workshop was a particularly poignant class for teachers wh,o although they recognise this SLD in their class, may not have fully grasped the difficulties students with dyslexia face on a day-to-day basis.





The supports for Dysgraphia were subtle but had massive effects on student confidence. Students felt like their work was receiving fair grading without the fear of losing marks due to illegibility. The use of AT was an easy shift for staff as the school uses 1:1 devices anyway. The specific development of typing speed and accuracy was well received by the students

Dyscalculia was highlighted as an SLD that teachers struggled to support as their knowledge was limited on the topic. Our consortium decided to flip the script from a needs focus to a strengths focus. This encouraged teachers to allow students to approach mathematics from a perspective that worked for them. For example, if they are creative, perhaps they could turn their Maths into a game or create something fun. This was well received all around.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the handbook is home to a great wealth of resources, expertly generated and professionally moderated. Teachers like the workshops and believe that there is really useful material here. The biggest change that could be made is the digitisation of some of the workshops.