

What is ... **Dyslexia**

We are **ALL DIFFERENT**. Consider that 1 in 10 people are dyslexic to some degree and you'll realise this is a widespread neurological difference. It is **not related to general intelligence**. Dyslexic differences may include great strengths, as well as the difficulties which make survival very hard work in an environment where written words rule. This environment turns a difference into a disability.

Dys - lexia means 'difficulty with words'. Reading and spelling skills that most people learn to use automatically are, for dyslexic people, much harder to master in the first place. Even when they are mastered, they are not fluent or automatic - dyslexic students have to give much more **time, effort and concentration** to take in information through reading and notetaking, and demonstrate knowledge through writing.

Beyond the written word: dyslexia is a different way of processing information. Problems with learning also arise if it demands efficient

- ▼ Short term memory (remembering what you've read or written, listening and taking notes in lectures)
- ▼ Sequencing information in a linear way (structuring written work, organising ideas, working through calculations)
- ▼ Processing information at speed (in lectures, skimming and scanning for reading research in books or on the internet)
- ▼ Time management skills (meeting deadlines when you have to start work much earlier than other students, planning revision)

BUT the different way of processing information may also lie behind **POSITIVE STRENGTHS** in

- ▲ Making unexpected connections between ideas
- ▲ Thinking in pictures
- ▲ 3 dimensional visualisation
- ▲ Creativity
- ▲ Seeing the whole picture

If you think you may be dyslexic, try answering the questions in this checklist:

Do you experience *considerable* difficulty with any aspects of reading, writing or organisation?

Reading

- are you unable to skim read? ☐
- do you misread words? ☐
- do you have difficulty remembering what you read? ☐
- do you sometimes choose to answer a question because it is the shortest? ☐
- do you read more slowly than your fellow students? ☐
- do you rarely read for pleasure? ☐

Writing

- is your spelling very uncertain? ☐
- do you confuse little words like on/of, in/is, where/were? ☐
- do you have problems with grammar? For example, using the wrong tense, or sentence punctuation. ☐
- do you always take longer than your friends to complete written work? ☐
- do you find it very difficult to keep up in lectures with notetaking/copying? ☐
- do you have difficulty seeing your own mistakes - proofreading? ☐

Other difficulties - do you have:

- major problems organising your written work ☐
- memory problems - particularly with short term memory ☐
- problems with sequencing ☐
- inaccuracy in calculations ☐
- poor spatial awareness ☐
- a poor concept of time ☐
- a short concentration span ☐
- do you lack confidence? ☐

Do you recognise yourself?

There is a spectrum of dyslexic differences: some people are mildly dyslexic, but for 1 in 4 dyslexic people the differences cause severe difficulty.

With greater awareness of dyslexia, more people are recognised as dyslexic and supported at school. But many students reach university before they're able to understand what lies behind the difficulties they thought were 'just me'.

For some students, the greater demands of study at university, challenge their coping strategies. For many, other peoples' lack of understanding of the 'hidden' differences, leads to over-sensitivity to failure, frustration, anxiety and stress.

Find out more from:

www.dyslexia-college.com

or the British Dyslexia Association at www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

If you know you are dyslexic, or wonder if you might be, contact the Dyslexia Unit Student Service (01248 383843 or email pssa03@bangor.ac.uk) . **There is understanding and support for dyslexic students at Bangor.**