

ECEY6006

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Introduction.

Hello everyone,

My poster will focus on Dyslexia. I will be exploring dyslexia as an additional learning need. This discussion will cover how dyslexia is identified and diagnosed, explore common challenges learners face in educational settings, and emphasise a widely used support strategy that assists children with dyslexia in schools. Dyslexia is one of the most common learning difficulties seen within education (Reid, 2016). Dyslexia primarily impacts skills related to reading, spelling, and writing, but its effects can differ greatly from one person to another (British Dyslexia Association, 2023). Some children struggle with reading fluency or decoding words, while others face challenges with memory, organization, or information processing (Vellutino et al.). It is also important to recognise that dyslexia is not related to intelligence. Many children with dyslexia demonstrate strong learning abilities and often excel in creativity and problem-solving. However, students often struggle to succeed in classrooms that emphasize literacy-based tasks (Snowling, 2013; Shaywitz, 2003). Awareness of dyslexia has increased over the years; however, concerns remain about whether schools effectively identify and support affected learners (Rose, 2009).

Identification and Diagnosis.

Dyslexia is typically identified when a child consistently struggles with reading, spelling, or writing beyond what is expected for their age. Teachers may observe indicators such as slow reading, poor spelling, or challenges in identifying sounds within words. Parents may also become aware of these difficulties during reading activities or homework at home. Schools will normally begin by using classroom observations and literacy screening assessments. If concerns persist, professionals may refer the child for a specialist assessment, as outlined in the Rose 2009 Review.

A formal diagnosis is usually carried out by an educational psychologist or specialist teacher. These assessments evaluate phonological awareness, memory, processing speed, and literacy skills to provide a comprehensive understanding of the child's strengths and challenges (Reid, 2016; Shaywitz and Shaywitz, 2020). One major advantage of diagnosis is that it can help children receive support earlier. Snowling and Hulme (2012) demonstrated that early intervention strengthens literacy skills and lowers the risk of children falling behind academically. However, the process of identification is not always consistent.

Some learners are identified early, while others may wait years before receiving support. These delays can affect confidence, self-esteem and academic progress (Morgan et al.). Limited school resources or a lack of specialist training can sometimes cause this issue. There are also different ways of viewing dyslexia. The medical model focuses mainly on the individual and their learning difficulty (Oliver, 1996). The social model contends that educational systems and teaching methods often create additional barriers for learners (Shakespeare, 2013). Both perspectives are essential. children require individualised support, while schools must promote more comprehensive learning environments.

Barriers Linked to Dyslexia.

Children with dyslexia face various challenges in education that impact both their learning and emotional wellbeing.

Educational and Institutional Barriers.

A primary challenge stems from the curriculum's heavy emphasis on reading and writing.

Classroom activities often rely on strong literacy skills, which can create challenges and frustration for learners with dyslexia (DfE, 2014; Snowling and Hulme, 2019). Timed assessments often increase pressure, particularly for children who require extra time to process information or organise their thoughts. Support can also differ between schools depending on teacher training, resources and funding. Research by Washburn et al. 2014, revealed that some teachers lack the knowledge and confidence needed to effectively support learners with dyslexia. Over time, these barriers can reduce motivation, confidence and participation in lessons. Some

children begin to avoid classroom activities because they worry about making mistakes or feeling embarrassed in front of their peers.

Cognitive and Emotional Barriers.

Dyslexia is often associated with challenges in phonological processing, working memory, and processing speed (Vellutino et al.). As a result, learners often find it difficult to follow instructions, retain information, or organize their ideas during lessons.

The emotional effects are also important to consider. Repeated challenges in school often cause stress, anxiety, and lower self-esteem (Burden, 2008; Alexander-Passe, 2015). Some learners hesitate to read aloud or join class discussions because they fear judgment or making mistakes. Dyslexia impacts more than academic performance. It also plays an essential role in shaping a child's confidence, wellbeing, and overall school experience.

Support Strategy – Multisensory Structured Teaching.

One commonly used support strategy for dyslexia is multisensory structured teaching. This approach uses visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities together to support literacy development. For example, learners might trace letters while vocalizing their sounds or use colored tools to segment words into smaller parts (Ritchey and Goeke, 2006). Lessons break down content into small, organised stages to make learning more manageable and reduce overwhelm. Shaywitz (2003) demonstrates that multisensory teaching enhances reading fluency, spelling, and memory retention. It can also increase confidence because learners experience success through smaller and more achievable tasks. Another benefit of this approach is that it recognises that children learn in different ways. Many learners engage more effectively through movement, visual cues, and interactive activities rather than relying solely on written tasks. However, there are also limitations.

Multisensory teaching requires time, planning and specialist training. Teachers in larger classrooms often struggle to provide consistent support while addressing the needs of the entire class (Norwich, 2013). This emphasizes that even well-designed strategies depend considerably on school resources and staff training.

Conclusion.

To conclude, dyslexia is a complex additional learning need that affects children in different ways. While diagnosis enables learners to access support and better understand their challenges, the timing of identification and intervention for children remains inconsistent. Dyslexia-related challenges can hinder academic performance, confidence, and emotional wellbeing, particularly when teaching methods do not accommodate diverse learning needs. Multisensory structured teaching is one effective strategy that can support literacy development and improve confidence. However, successful support also depends on schools having appropriate resources, staff training and awareness. Enhancing outcomes for learners with dyslexia requires providing targeted individual support alongside implementing broader educational reforms that promote comprehensive learning environments for all students.

Thank you for listening.

My questions

1. Why might some children with dyslexia remain unidentified for several years?

The answer

Some children may develop coping strategies that hide their difficulties, while others may attend schools with limited resources or Lack of specialist training. In some cases, dyslexia may also be misunderstood as a lack of effort or low ability, which can delay appropriate support and intervention.

2. Imagine a school where dyslexia support is excellent. What would the classroom and teaching look like?

The answer:

The classroom would be inclusive, with clear, structured teaching, multisensory activities, and assistive technology available for learners. Teachers would differentiate tasks, give extra processing time, and regularly check understanding, ensuring all learners can access the curriculum confidently.

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