

Dyslexia and how it is recognised, diagnosed, and the strategies.

Identification and diagnosis

problems learning the names and sounds of letters Dyslexia manifests itself in different ways for different people. Each person with dyslexia will have their own set of strengths and weaknesses. For a long time, dyslexia was considered primarily a fault and a challenge. Despite having average to above-average intelligence. Strengths of Dyslexia include, Strong problem-solving skills, being very creative, observant, problem solvers, good at creating connections, and being empathetic are just a few of the many strengths of dyslexia (Welcome to dyslexia, 2022). Some indicators may include the following: **Difficulty learning nursery rhymes, Difficulty paying attention, sitting still, listening to stories, Likes listening to stories but shows no interest in letters or words, Difficulty learning to sing or recite the alphabet, A history of slow speech development, Confuses words e.g. cucumber, flutterby, Difficulty keeping a simple rhythm, Finds it difficult to carry out two or more instructions at one time, (e.g. put the toys in the box, then put it on the shelf) however may have no issues with smaller tasks. Forgets names of friends, teachers, colours, and so on. Poor auditory discrimination. Confusion between directional words e.g. up/down. Family history of dyslexia/reading difficulties. Difficulty with sequencing e.g. coloured beads, classroom routines. Substitutes words e.g. "lampshade" for "lamppost". Appears not to be listening or paying attention.** Obvious 'good' and 'bad' days for no apparent reason (British dyslexia association 2022).

A dyslexia diagnosis can only be made after a thorough examination. This assessment considers a child's reading skills as well as other characteristics such as academic competence and family background. A lot of information is usually needed, therefore the person conducting the evaluation or assessment will put the child through a number of tests. This thoroughness is required since alternative possibilities must be ruled out. However, it is possible that someone might have poor reading skills without being dyslexic. A child's home situation could be chaotic, making learning difficult. There could also be a major intellectual disability such as global delay. These are not the same as dyslexia. To rule out these and other possibilities, a thorough examination is required (Edublox online 2022).

Screening tests determine the severity of a child's dyslexia, indicating whether it is mild, moderate, or severe. The screening tool assists the assessor in determining the child's strengths and weaknesses in terms of cognitive abilities. Screening tests can also help determine a child's preferred learning style and learning differences, allowing for the development of novel teaching and learning tactics. These tests are also available online and can be used to determine whether the child has more serious issues to a large extent. They, too, cannot be completely trusted to make a final judgment. There is no 100% reliable screening test; a few false positives and negatives may occur during the procedure. A full diagnostic assessment which is a complete assessment by a professional psychologist is the most reliable technique to determine whether or not a child has dyslexia. Other problems that may be linked to dyslexia that a psychologist can detect include:

Dyscalculia – a learning disability in math. **Dyspraxia** -where a child struggles with moto skills. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder often abbreviated as **ADHD** (dyslexia UK 2022).

MEDICAL / SOCIAL MODELS

Medical And Social Model Thinking In Schools

MEDICAL MODEL THINKING	SOCIAL MODEL THINKING
Child is faulty	Child is Valued
Diagnosis	Strengths and Needs defined by self and others
Labeling	Identify Barriers and develop solutions
Impairment becomes Focus of attention	Outcome based programme designed
Assessment, monitoring, programmes of therapy imposed	Resources are made available to Ordinary services
Segregation and alternative services	Training for Parents and Professionals
Ordinary needs put on hold	Relationships nurtured
Reentry if normal enough OR Permanent Exclusion	Diversity Welcomed, Child is Included
Society remains unchanged	Society Evolves

(Source: Ukdisabilityhistorymonth, 2022)

Barriers

The necessity of preventing, treating, and labelling disabled children has been demonstrated by the medical model approach. This entails sending special-needs children to specialised schools. Children may become alienated from their peers and community as a result of this strategy, and children with disabilities may receive a limited education as a result of their expectations being depicted as low. The medical model was what society followed for a long time, but as society grew, the social model emerged as people became more accepting of people with disabilities and gained more knowledge. The medical model focused on changing the disabled child, whereas the social model focused on improving the environment rather than the child. The social model recognises that all children, whether or not they have special needs, have strengths, abilities, and preferences. This concept aims to give inclusive practice to all children and suggests that the problem is the environment, curriculum, resources, and attitudes toward disability, rather than the disability itself. The possible drawbacks with social models are that it is impractical to expect mainstream schools to cover all the needs of children with special needs, and resources and staff may be limited. UK disability history month 2022).

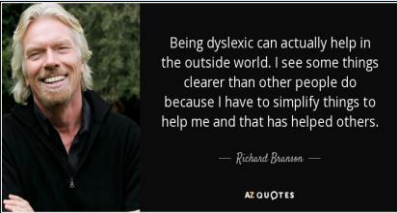
Strategies

There are many strategies that could be implemented into the school day to help support children with Dyslexia, one being an inclusive classroom that benefits all children. Whether it is a small group of children with Dyslexia or a larger general classroom. Certain aspects of inclusive classrooms, such as consistent routines and clear schedules, benefit all children. Many students benefit from multisensory lessons and assistive teaching tools, but these modifications are especially important for dyslexic pupils (The Dyslexia Resource, 2022).

One assistive tool for teaching children with Dyslexia is a computer software called ‘Lexia’ this digital package helps children gain confidence in reading and spelling as the solutions are based on a personalised learning approach and are intended to provide children with more control over the time, place, path, and pace of their learning. Teachers can differentiate and prioritise instruction with Lexia, allowing children to develop crucial reading skills at their own speed, thus building on their confidence without adding pressure (Lexialearning.com. 2022). However, the Lexia package is expensive making it out of reach for many schools therefore other strategies will be put in place.

Other strategies that schools may implement to support children with Dyslexia would be an Individual Education Plan an IEP for short. This a written document that outlines the learning goals that must be met by a specific child over a set period, as well as the teaching strategies, resources, and supports required to meet those goals. An IEP can be appropriately compared to a product. However, there is a process that goes into creating the plan, and the quality of that process defines the plan's quality and effectiveness.

An IEP is created through working in partnership involving the school, parents, the child, and other relevant agencies such as the educational psychologist. It refers to the components of the educational program that have been adapted or adjusted, and it focuses on the child’s priority learning needs, even if the child has additional learning needs that may not necessarily need the same level of planning and monitoring. Only the areas identified in the assessment should be covered, rather than every part of the curriculum and school life for every student with special educational needs. Adaptation and support should be tailored to each child’s specific learning needs (Nice.ie, 2022).



(Source: Bing.com, 2022)

Conclusion

To conclude, Buck (Contemporary Issues in Teaching and Learning, 2013) said “**If children can’t learn the way we teach, then we have to teach the way they learn**” suggesting that teachers should be flexible in the way that they teach, ensuring that they have an inclusive classroom where all children can develop and thrive in their individual ways without prejudice and discrimination.

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