



## **FE & HE Dyslexia awareness.**

*Colleges of Further and Higher Education have policies for disability awareness and support, including dyslexics. Details are usually on college websites.*

*It is hoped that dyslexics will contact the college Disability Officer and will discuss their individual situations with department staff. However, some dyslexics may not have been identified or may not want to declare their disability, so staff need to have some general awareness. Changes to accommodate the dyslexic student will improve the learning environment for all students. Dyslexia has not prevented students from achieving excellent results, at all levels.*

### **1. You may notice.**

- *A marked discrepancy between ability and the standard of work being produced.*
- *A persistent or severe problem with spelling, even with easy or common words.*
- *Difficulties with comprehension as a result of slow reading speed.*
- *Poor short term memory, especially for language based information, which results in the inefficient processing into long term memory.*
- *Difficulties with organisation, classification and categorisation.*
- *Note-taking may present problems due to spelling difficulties, poor short term memory and poor listening skills.*
- *Handwriting may be poor and unformed, especially when writing under pressure.*
- *Students often show a lack of fluency in expressing their ideas, or show difficulties with vocabulary.*
- *Some students may have continuing pronunciation or word finding difficulties, which may inhibit them when talking or discussing in large groups.*

*The pressures of studying can lead to a high level of anxiety. Dyslexia can accentuate this and create even more stress. A new course of study may highlight difficulties that have previously gone unnoticed.*

*Dyslexic people are often excellent problem solvers. However, they do need to be given the 'space' in which to do this.*

*Dyslexic minds think differently so the learning environment may add pressure and create anxiety, especially to students who have struggled with their earlier education. It is stressful and frustrating to face a lack of understanding and some students may appear hostile. It is easy to misinterpret any display of anger at the system as a student being difficult or being particularly awkward.*

*The student needs a sensitive approach; a chance to talk, to know you are listening and understand.*

*Some students do not reveal their difficulties and dread them coming out into the open. Understanding their dyslexia is likely to offer them the best way forward but they may need help to do this. Signpost towards a specialist dyslexia tutor.*

*Some of your students will not know they are dyslexic, particularly those returning to education, e.g. on Access courses. Discuss your concerns with a specialist dyslexia tutor or the learning support unit in your college.*

### **2. How tutors can help.**

### **In lectures.**

- **Be aware of your language. Vary your speed of delivery.**
- **Introduce new ideas and concepts explicitly. Provide an overview of your topic so students know what to expect. Allow time for questions and give concrete examples.**
- **Help with note taking by providing handouts. Give the spelling of new or difficult vocabulary. Encourage students to find 'buddies' who will share notes.  
(See [Dyslexia Friendly Text](#).)**
- **Provide handouts and summaries before lectures for pre-reading.**
- **Do not expect dyslexics to answer questions or talk in large groups.**
- **Use clear overhead projections or slides. Keep the content limited.**
- **Encourage the use of ICT if students wish, e.g. tape recorders or laptops.**
- **Create a multi-sensory learning environment, e.g. videos, pictures, diagrams, practical and experiential activities.**
- **Allow time for reinforcement and over-learning by frequent revision.**
- **The dyslexic student may be the best person to know what is most helpful.**

### **Assignments and written work.**

- **Give specific instructions and use simple, unambiguous language.**
- **Be explicit in your explanation of the assignment.**
- **Allow assignments to be word-processed.**
- **Signpost the student towards help with planning.**
- **Give exact references for research articles.**

### **Assessing achievement.**

- **Mark for content and information rather than spelling. Do not discredit poor handwriting.**
- **Allow an extended period for timed writing tasks.**
- **Seek special arrangements in exams. This will require an assessment.**
- **This will identify any recommendations for extra time, a reader, a scribe, use of a word processor.**

### **3. Useful information.**

- **Dyslexia in Higher Education: policy, provision and practice.**  
**C.H. Singleton & the National Working Party on Dyslexia in Higher Education.**
- **Adult Dyslexia: Assessment, Counselling and Training.**  
**D. McLoughlin, G. Fitzgibbon, V. Young. Both available from: SEN Marketing. Tel/Fax: 01924 871 697.**  
**email: [sen.marketing@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:sen.marketing@ukonline.co.uk) web: [www.sen.uk.com](http://www.sen.uk.com)**
- **dis-forum. E-mailing discussion group for HE staff and students with an interest in disability. See archives and joining procedure on Web: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/dis-forum.html](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/dis-forum.html)**
- **NADO, National Association for Disability Officers for Disability Officers working in Higher and Further Education Institutes.**  
**Web: [www.nado.ac.uk](http://www.nado.ac.uk)**
- **The TechDis Accessibility Database (TAD). This web site lists and describes a very wide range of Assistive Technologies. There are items to support all areas of**

*disability including dyslexia. It was devised for staff and students in further and higher education. Web: [www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk)*

**(INFORMATION SHEET 21)**