



About **Dyslexia**

Supporting literacy in the classroom



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Contents

About this resource 3

What is dyslexia? 4

Neuroscience – Research that informs practice	5
Dyslexia within families	5

Early recognition and intervention 6

Early intervention	7
Indicators and characteristics	8
School-wide screening processes	10
Classroom assessment tools	12

Take a learner-centred approach 14

Know your learner	15
Work with parents, caregivers, and whānau	16

Plan an inclusive approach for learning 17

Identify and build on strengths	18
Use a multisensory approach	22
Provide useful supports during learning activities	27
Provide opportunities for practice	31
Give specific feedback	34
Provide students with time	37
Secondary school – Modifications and accommodations	39

Understanding the challenge of literacy acquisition 46

Literacy teaching activities for primary and secondary teachers 48

Take a phonics-based approach	49
Develop phonological awareness	49
Syllable activities	50
Rhyme and rime activities	52
Phonemic awareness activities	54
Reading strategies and activities	58
Designing reading interventions for older students	62
Writing and spelling strategies and activities	63

School leadership – Setting up for success 66

Developing an inclusive school	67
Culturally responsive, evidence-based practice	68
Response to Intervention model	69
Build a school support team	70
Successful transitions	70
Professional learning	71

References 72

This booklet, along with a pamphlet for parents and whānau and other resources, is available online at <https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Dyslexia>

This document includes links to helpful resources, including video clips and websites. To access the hyperlinks, click on the underlined links in the online version.

Dyslexia

I am stupid.
Nobody would ever say
I have a talent for words

I was meant to be great.
That is wrong.
I am a failure.

Nobody could ever convince me to think that
I can make it in life.

Now read up

By AO

About this resource

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tātou mahi.

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.

Dyslexia is a dynamic condition; people with dyslexia change as they grow and their needs change.

Who is this resource for?

This resource is for teachers, learning support coordinators, literacy leaders and school leaders in primary and secondary schools.

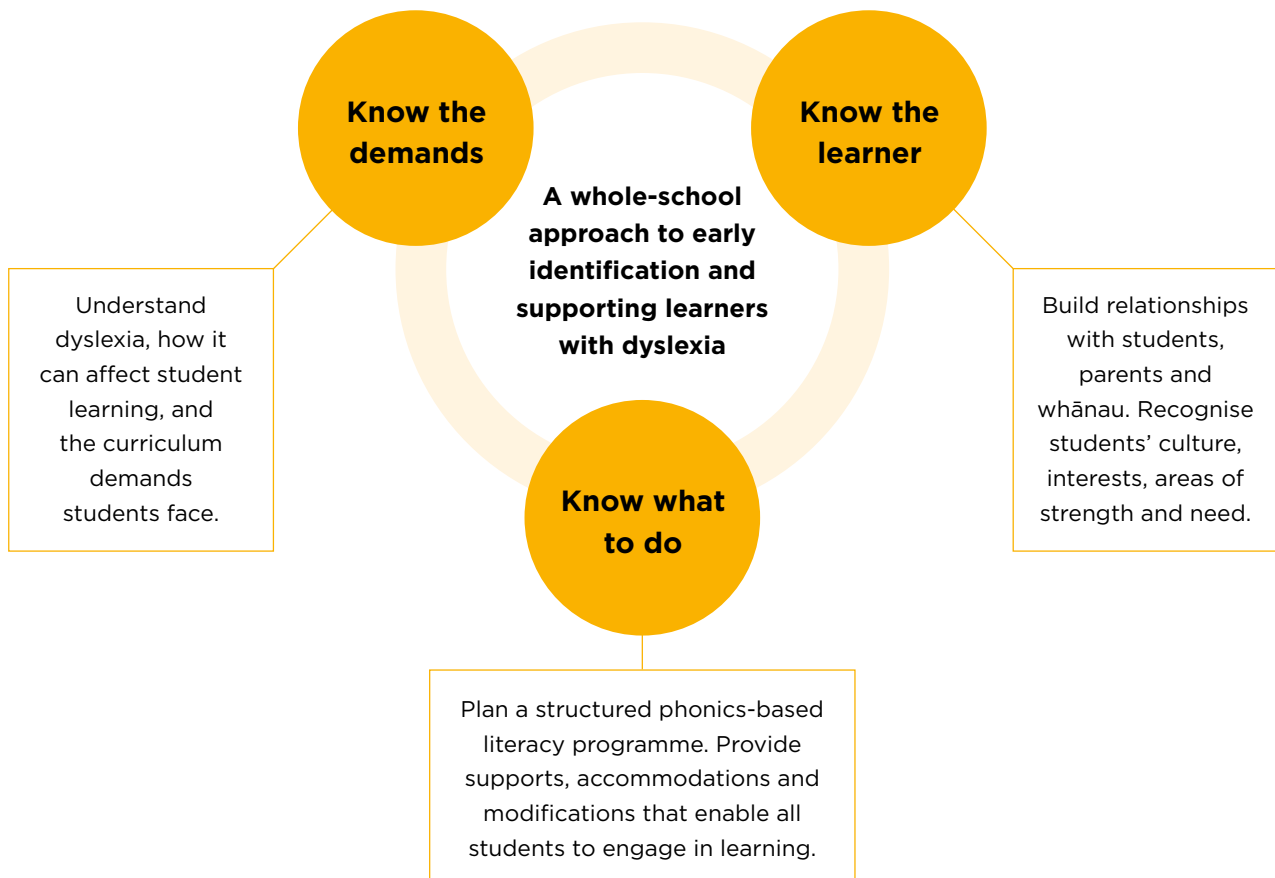
Purpose of the resource

This resource supports the teaching and learning of literacy. It provides practical, strengths-based approaches for:

- ▶ identifying students who show signs of dyslexia
- ▶ planning targeted teaching strategies that support literacy learning

- ▶ building supports, accommodations and modifications into learning programmes to reduce barriers to learning and cognitive overload
- ▶ establishing a whole-school approach to understanding and meeting the needs of learners who may have dyslexia.

The strategies and approaches in this resource align with New Zealand and international research, and the principles of Universal Design for Learning. They promote a range of options enabling students to participate in learning in ways that work best for them, and that are responsive to diversity.



[Adapted from the "Three Knowings" framework: University of Waikato](#)

What is **dyslexia?**

Dyslexia is a specific learning difference which is constitutional in origin and which, for a given level of ability, may cause unexpected difficulties in the acquisition of certain literacy and numeracy skills. Dyslexia is not an intellectual impairment. (Dyslexia Foundation NZ)

“Constitutional in origin” refers to the fact that dyslexia has a substantive neurobiological basis.

Structured literacy teaching is essential and can impact positively on the progress and achievement of students with dyslexia.

Resources

For more information on what dyslexia is and advice on supporting the learning of students with dyslexia across the curriculum, visit:

- ▶ [InclusiveEducation](#), TKI, Dyslexia and Learning guide
- ▶ [SPELD NZ](#)

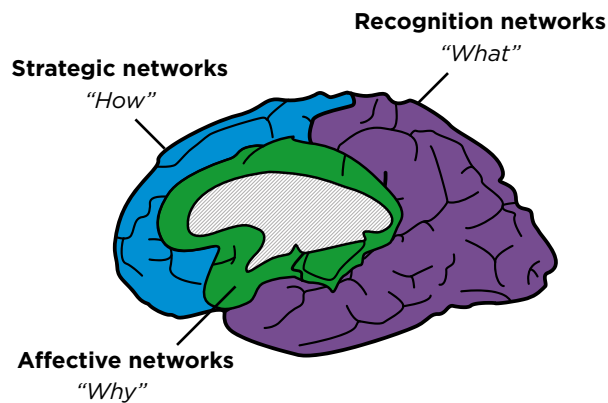
Neuroscience – Research that informs practice

Cognitive neuroscience provides significant insight into what happens in the brain during learning.

We all learn differently

All students learn differently and require a range of supports and flexible options to engage with learning, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Findings from neuroscience indicate that the human brain learns using three primary networks.



- ▶ **Affective networks** influence our emotions and motivations.
- ▶ **Recognition networks** influence what we perceive and understand through our senses.
- ▶ **Strategic networks** influence how we organise and communicate our thinking.

Use a range of multisensory approaches that align with these three learning networks when working with learners who have dyslexia by:

- ▶ presenting material in multiple ways
- ▶ enabling students to express learned content in different ways
- ▶ providing increased opportunities for students to engage in learning.

(Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014)

The reading brain

Reading involves multiple sites and systems in the brain for processing letters into sounds. Systems for phonological processing are affected in learners with dyslexia (Birsh, 2019, Kearns, Hancock, Hoeft, Pugh, & Frost, 2019). Providing a multisensory approach, within a structured phonics-based programme, strengthens the neural pathways needed for reading (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004, Birsh, 2019).

Resource

- ▶ [Video: Dyslexia and the brain](#), on the Understood website



Dyslexia within families

Research from neuroscience indicates that dyslexia has a genetic origin (Milne, 2014). It is not uncommon for a child with dyslexia to have an immediate family member who also has dyslexia.

Notice other children in the family who may experience difficulties with early literacy development and put targeted intervention strategies in place promptly if required.

Given that dyslexia can run in families, teachers need to be sensitive when working with parents and whānau who may have had negative learning experiences during their time at school.

Early recognition and intervention

It is critical that difficulties learning to read are identified as early as possible and that intensive and well-targeted interventions are provided to students. Teachers must take action when difficulties with reading are identified, rather than waiting for a formal diagnosis of dyslexia (Hanks, 2011). Ongoing support is essential for preventing low achievement and poor self-esteem.

Early intervention	7
Indicators and characteristics	8
School-wide screening processes	10
Classroom assessment tools	12

Early intervention

The earlier a student is supported, the more successful the intervention.

Respond early

Early intervention is much more effective than later intervention or remediation. Adopt a preventive approach to early reading difficulties:

- ▶ identify children who need literacy support as early as possible
- ▶ provide them with the necessary interventions to remove barriers to reading skills acquisition
- ▶ monitor their responses to high-quality, evidence-based intervention.

(Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014)

Take an inclusive approach

Understand the learner's specific needs. Plan to use supports and accommodations that remove barriers to participating and demonstrating learning, from the outset.

- ▶ Acknowledge differences
- ▶ Recognise strengths
- ▶ Make accommodations available to all
- ▶ Plan for practice and attainable outcomes.

Early literacy intervention

The key elements of early literacy intervention are:

Phonemic awareness instruction

Teaching students to manipulate the sounds of words (phonemes) to improve reading (blending) and spelling (segmentation) skills.

Phonics instruction

Teaching students how to sound out printed words using knowledge of graphemes, to decode multisyllabic words, and to generalise learned rules of language to new words.

Spelling and writing instruction

Encouraging students to write letters, sound patterns (graphemes), words, and sentences to support and reinforce segmentation strategies and the acquisition of phonics rules.

Fluency instruction

Providing students with practice in reading words accurately to gain sufficient speed to ensure that comprehension is not impaired because of undue focus on word reading.

Vocabulary instruction

Teaching students to recognise the meaning of words they are reading and to build an appreciation and understanding of new words.

Comprehension instruction

Teaching students to monitor their understanding while reading, linking what they read to previous learning and asking questions about what they read.

(Rose, 2009 pp. 64–65)

Indicators and characteristics

All students with dyslexia have the same core characteristics. They have **persistent problems with phonological processing**.

This means they have difficulties with:

- ▶ decoding (when reading)
- ▶ spelling (when writing).

Keep in mind that students with dyslexia present the difficulties they experience differently as they age.

In the first year of school

Notice students who consistently demonstrate:

- ▶ very poor reading even of very familiar words, compared with expectations for their age
- ▶ great difficulty spelling simple, common words (for example, here or going)
- ▶ frequent mix ups of letters or figures (for example, b/d, p/q, or 15 for 51)
- ▶ a poor sense of rhyme
- ▶ they are unsure of the sound a letter or combination represents (for example, h or sh)
- ▶ extremely messy handwriting and poorly formed letters.

After the first year of school

Notice students who, despite focused instruction:

- ▶ are slow to identify the connections between sounds and letters
- ▶ don't recognise familiar words
- ▶ constantly make inconsistent spelling errors, for example, spell a word several ways in one piece of writing
- ▶ leave letters out of words or write them in the wrong order and can't see the errors
- ▶ have good ideas but take longer than average to do written work
- ▶ make errors in reading or writing that involve reversals or confusions with words (for example, saw/was, stops/spots, does/goes)
- ▶ read very slowly and consistently make decoding errors
- ▶ have difficulty decoding single words in isolation
- ▶ show frustration with, or avoidance of, text tasks
- ▶ appear to be fatigued by the effort needed to complete a reading or writing task
- ▶ lack confidence and appear to be developing a poor self-image.

At upper primary and secondary school

Notice students who consistently:

- ▶ struggle to express their ideas in writing, although they may be able to express themselves well orally
- ▶ use incorrect letter order in words when writing but are not able to see what is wrong (for example, galsses for glasses)
- ▶ have trouble finding a word in the dictionary
- ▶ become tangled with multisyllabic words, in oral and written language (for example, preliminary, philosophical)
- ▶ may read, but very slowly, with limited understanding - often because of the time and effort required to access the words
- ▶ are able to understand a class text that is read to them but unable to read the text themselves
- ▶ have poor confidence and self-esteem, which may be seen as lack of motivation, disengagement or challenging behaviours.



The presence of one or even several of these characteristics does not mean that a student has dyslexia. For example, a lot of young children struggle with letter reversals and word confusions in the first year of school. The presence of many characteristics indicates a need to carry out a close assessment of the student.

Students with dyslexia may develop compensatory strategies, which can disguise their difficulties.

Persisting factors

Some of the characteristics of dyslexia continue over time. They can be evident from an early age and still be present when a young person leaves school. Persisting factors or consequential behaviours can include:

- ▶ variable performance, for example, a student may know the spelling of a word one day but not the next
- ▶ poor retention of previously learned reading and writing skills
- ▶ unexpectedly poor output for considerable effort, which may result in fatigue and loss of motivation
- ▶ difficulty with word storage, for example, retaining word patterns for spoken language
- ▶ difficulty with sequencing and with retaining a sequence, such as the letters in a word, over time.

School-wide screening processes

Screening is not the same as diagnosing. The dyslexia screening process gives information about the presence of traits typically associated with dyslexia. The learning support coordinator, SENCO and/or senior leaders need to determine the school-wide process for screening and supporting students who may have dyslexia. These questions can assist with planning next steps.

Has the student had rich early literacy experiences?

- YES** ▶ Assume an adequate level of literacy knowledge and awareness for tasks.
- NO** ▶ Explore further and build knowledge and experiences.

Has the student had their hearing checked and a hearing condition such as glue ear been diagnosed?

- YES** ▶ A hearing condition will affect their ability to hear sounds. It may affect their listening comprehension and their oral language development. Seek advice from a speech-language therapist or hearing specialist teacher.
- NO** ▶ Assume they can hear the normal range of sounds. Eliminate hearing as a possible cause of difficulties.

Has the student had their vision checked and an eyesight condition that is not corrected by glasses been diagnosed?

- YES** ▶ A disability affecting vision may affect their ability to distinguish letters and/or words. Seek advice from a vision specialist.
- NO** ▶ Assume they can see text. Eliminate vision as a cause of difficulties.

Is English the student's first language? If not, is the student fluent in English?

- YES** ▶ Eliminate lack of knowledge of English as a possible cause of difficulties.
- NO** ▶ Assess their English proficiency through standard assessments.

Does the student have good oral vocabulary?

- YES** ▶ Check their listening comprehension.
- NO** ▶ Explore further and focus instruction on building vocabulary.

Does the student have good listening comprehension?

- YES** ▶ Check their ability to read written texts. If difficulties exist, check their phonological awareness.
- NO** ▶ Explore further and focus instruction on oral language.

Are there any other factors or characteristics that would likely have a negative impact on all areas of learning?

Check for factors such as poor school attendance, inability to focus attention on learning tasks, distractibility, and possible signs of emotional disturbance or bullying.

- YES** ▶ Seek appropriate professional advice, support, and assistance.
- NO** ▶ Consider these characteristics associated with dyslexia:
 - poor phonological awareness
 - persistent spelling and decoding errors
 - inaccurate or slow context-free word recognition resulting in poor reading comprehension and written composition.

Does the student make consistent and persistent spelling errors despite explicit instruction?

- YES** ▶ Use school literacy testing data to identify areas that require specific instruction or further investigation.
- NO** ▶ Analysis of these errors can help to identify older students whose difficulties haven't been identified until they are required to write independently.



Classroom assessments

There are a range of assessments that help to identify students' literacy acquisition. These tools can not diagnose dyslexia, but they are valid screening tools indicating strengths to build on and areas that need explicit instruction or further investigation (Snowling, 2012).

Screening tools

There are many different tests available to screen for dyslexia. These tests provide information on specific learning needs. They can be administered by a teacher, SENCO or learning support coordinator. Use the results to plan targeted teaching approaches.

For a list of screening tools, go to the [About Dyslexia](#) page on the Literacy Online website.

Resource

- ▶ *The New Zealand Dyslexia Handbook* by Tom Nicholson and Susan Dymock, Chapter 6, NZCER Press.

Classroom assessment tools

Analyse students' responses to inform instruction, not their scores.

Allow extra time for a student to complete standardised tests, if necessary. This invalidates the stanines (which are standardised based on time) but does not affect the diagnostic value of the test. If the time is extended, keep a record of how long the student takes to complete (a useful comparison for post-instruction assessment). Step in before frustration becomes an issue.

Tool	Purpose	How to use the information to shape instruction
School Entry Assessment (SEA)	General screening for new entrants	Identifies oral language issues for further investigation.
Observation Survey (Six Year Net)	Survey literacy skills of 5-7 year-olds	Screening test to inform decisions for intervention and/or further assessment.
Record of Oral Language (ROL)	Check and record oral language of 5 year-olds	Use to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ group students for specific instruction ▶ construct a systematic plan for teaching grammar.
Junior Oral Language Screening Test (JOST)	Informal check for oral language Use with students who score poorly on ROL.	Identify oral language skills. Use results in referrals to a speech-language therapist.
Running record (for students of any age)	Record of strategies used in reading text	Analyse to identify the kinds of information that students are (or are not) accessing when they read.
Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR)	Standardised reading test	Identify students' skills in word recognition, sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension, and vocabulary range.
Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs)	Standardised tests for students in years 3-10	A starting point for further investigation into reading comprehension and vocabulary, and listening comprehension.
Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle)	Assess literacy development of students in years 4-12	Analyse the comprehension patterns of students and identify next teaching steps. Less useful as a diagnostic tool for students who have difficulties in word recognition or decoding.

Tool	Purpose	How to use the information to shape instruction
<u>Gough-Kastler-Roper Test of phonemic awareness</u>	Checks knowledge and ability to manipulate phonemes	Analyses student's skills in phoneme manipulation to inform instruction or identify potential issues.
Pseudo word test (reading)	Check for letter/sound knowledge	Identifies the specific letters and groups of letters the student can decode.
Pseudo word test (spelling)	Check for sound/letter knowledge	Identifies the specific letters and groups of letters (including spelling patterns) the student can encode.
Spelling tests - formal and informal	Checks spelling knowledge and accuracy; processing strategies used	Use error analysis to help make teaching decisions about phoneme/grapheme knowledge; letter order; use (or not) of spelling strategies.
Writing sample analysis	Shows what individual students can produce	Analyses ideas, coherence, vocabulary, spelling (inconsistent errors), grammar and punctuation to inform instruction.
<u>Learning progression frameworks</u>	A big-picture view of progress in reading, writing, and mathematics through the New Zealand Curriculum.	Illustrations of what students are expected to achieve at each year level. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ writing meaningful text: encoding, and vocabulary knowledge ▶ making sense of text: vocabulary knowledge
New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars (writing)	Indicators of expected achievement	Guidance for next-step teaching of language and vocabulary.
Funding Assessment Guidelines for ESOL	Assesses eligibility for ESOL funding	Assesses English language levels for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Resources



- ▶ [Assessment tools and resources](#) from Assessment online on TKI
- ▶ [Select an assessment tool](#) from Assessment online on TKI
- ▶ *The New Zealand Dyslexia Handbook* by Tom Nicholson and Susan Dymock, Chapter 6, NZCER Press.

Take a **learner-centred** approach

To meet the learning and wellbeing needs of learners with dyslexia:

- ▶ build relationships with your learners and their whānau
- ▶ raise whole-school awareness and understanding of dyslexia
- ▶ commit to inclusion.

Know your learner 15

Work with parents, caregivers, and whānau 16

Know your learner

Students with dyslexia may have a range of emotional responses to the challenges they experience when learning. These can include embarrassment, anxiety, frustration, and anger, which cause additional barriers to learning.

Work closely with your learners to identify and notice times or curriculum areas that cause them stress. Notice when students feel stuck in their learning or display feelings of anxiety or disengagement from activities they find difficult.

Develop growth mindsets

Plan to work with your learners to strengthen their confidence and belief in themselves as capable learners.

Support learners to identify fixed mindsets and replace them with growth mindsets.

When...

I'm not good at this

- ▶ Let's make a plan for practising.

I give up

- ▶ Let's break it into steps.

I'll never be that smart

- ▶ Here's a strategy to work this out.

I just can't do this

- ▶ Remind yourself, "I can't do it yet. I am training my brain."

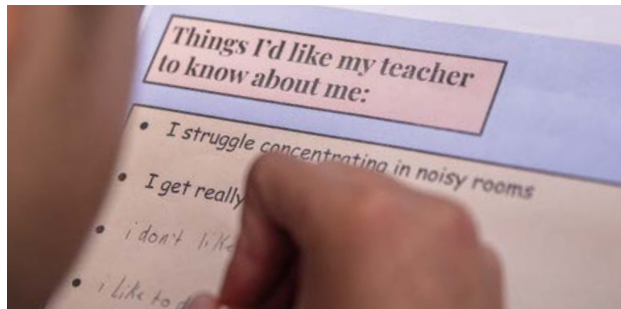
Develop student agency through metacognitive approaches. Metacognition – "knowing how I learn" – encourages active learning and supports students to self-advocate and feel a sense of control.

Resources

- ▶ *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*, (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 13 and Chapter 3 pp. 50–74)
- ▶ *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 10 and Chapter 3 pp. 48–75)
- ▶ [Ask the student what will help and consider a learner profile](#), Dyslexia and learning guide on the Inclusive Education website

Student agency

Enable students to take control of their learning by creating personal learning profiles. Provide options and help them to try out different learning approaches to find out how they learn best and how this relates to their individual strengths and challenges.



Plan interventions that disrupt the downward cycle of limiting beliefs and negative self-talk.

- ▶ Ensure learners experience success to strengthen their self-image.
- ▶ Provide effective literacy instruction and tangible evidence of progress – when students see their progress, their self-concept will improve.
- ▶ Specifically teach metacognitive strategies during reading and spelling.
- ▶ Set realistic targets and give students a sense of control.
- ▶ Give specific feedback, identifying the strategies students are using successfully in their reading and writing.
- ▶ Acknowledge effort made and compare a student's work only with their previous work, not with that of their peers. Formulate feedback in terms of how to improve next time.
- ▶ Encourage resilience and persistence.
- ▶ Provide accommodations and modifications that enable students to access content and present their learning.

(Nicholson & Dymock, 2015)

Work with parents, caregivers, and whānau

A long-term cooperative effort between teachers, families, and whānau plays a crucial role in supporting students with dyslexia. Involving families and whānau requires time, effort, and planning.

Parents and caregivers are a valuable support in:

- ▶ understanding the strengths and needs of students
- ▶ providing insights into what motivates a student, their interests outside school, their likes and dislikes.

Build and maintain relationships with parents, caregivers, and whānau by:

- ▶ communicating in ways that demonstrate understanding and support of their concerns
- ▶ discussing a comprehensive assessment of their child's strengths and needs
- ▶ ensuring that the terms and concepts used are understood – jargon is disempowering
- ▶ listening carefully and responding positively to information from parents and caregivers and to assessments they have had done outside school
- ▶ involving parents and caregivers in determining what they can do at home to support the student's learning – keep expectations to a reasonable level
- ▶ working with parents to maximise consistency and support for the student when they are using other instructional methods or materials at home
- ▶ developing a home-school communication system, for example, home-school notebook or text messaging
- ▶ developing systems for transferring information about a student's needs, progress, and next steps across teachers and classes
- ▶ sharing information about out-of-school programmes that may help boost a student's self-esteem
- ▶ inviting parents and caregivers to support the student in creating a personal learning profile to help teachers get to know the student and discover how they can best support their specific needs
- ▶ quickly addressing concerns about the student's wellbeing, for example, bullying, exclusion by peers, then developing a collaborative plan to keep the student safe.

Keep in mind families and whānau:

- ▶ may find it difficult to understand what dyslexia means for their child
- ▶ may need reassurance and evidence that their child's needs are being met
- ▶ may be anxious about their child's emotional response to their difficulties, as well as about what the school has done or will do to help
- ▶ may have dyslexia themselves and had negative learning experiences during their time at school.

Resources

- ▶ [Partnering with parents, whānau, and communities](#)
- ▶ [Home-school partnerships](#) on the wellbeing@school website
- ▶ *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*, (Ministry of Education, 2003 pp. 161-163)
- ▶ *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, (Ministry of Education, 2006 pp. 184-186)

Plan an **inclusive approach** for learning

Plan to use inclusive supports that remove barriers to accessing, participating, and demonstrating learning. Some students may need these and all students will benefit.

The supports and approaches suggested in this section enable students to participate in learning, in ways that best work for them. They align with the three principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Universal Design for Learning Principles

Engagement

Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning.

Representation

Present information and content in different ways to support understanding.

Action and expression

Offer options and support so everyone can create, learn and share.

Use the three UDL principles to recognise and remove barriers to learning.


Use these classroom approaches:

- ▶ across primary and secondary settings
- ▶ to support professional learning.

Resource

- ▶ [UDL guide](#) on the Inclusive Education website

Identify and build on strengths	18
Use a multisensory approach	22
Provide useful supports during learning activities	27
Provide opportunities for practice	31
Give specific feedback	34
Provide students with time	37
Secondary school - Modifications and accommodations	39

A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of children playing hopscotch on a paved surface. A red hula hoop is on the left, and a green hula hoop is in the foreground. Small white cards with numbers are scattered on the ground. The text 'Identify and build on strengths' is overlaid on the bottom part of the image.

Identify and build on strengths

Support students to see themselves as successful learners by identifying and building on the strengths, knowledge, and skills that students already have. Design learning experiences that value and connect to individual strengths.



It can be empowering and motivating for your learner to know they are able to learn. Show them their areas of strength and need so they can take control of their own learning.

– University of Waikato, 2016a p. 11

Work in partnership with students to identify preferred approaches to support their learning

Ask students:

- ▶ What do I do that makes it easy for you to learn?
- ▶ What do I do that makes it hard to learn?
- ▶ What are your learning preferences? How do you like to learn?

Gather student voice in a variety of ways:

- ▶ One-to-one discussions
- ▶ Feedback surveys
- ▶ Sticky notes
- ▶ Learner profiles



Ask students how they prefer to receive and process information in specific literacy contexts. Provide suggestions to help those who are unsure.

- ▶ Reading – large print books, audio books, small group sessions
- ▶ Writing – keyboards, coloured pens, options for coloured paper
- ▶ Spelling – visual representations of words, repetition, access to spelling checkers and word lists
- ▶ Comprehension and organisation – mind maps, graphic organisers, text-to-speech.

Model support options so learners are aware of what is available to them.

- ▶ Use different fonts that are easy to read, such as Open Dyslexic, Century Gothic
- ▶ Increase font size – demonstrate and provide instructions for how to do this
- ▶ Provide text-to-speech tools on digital devices for reading and writing
- ▶ Provide a range of background colours for paper, computer screens, and visual aids so students can develop their own preferences.

Watch



[Having dyslexia](#)

Identify how student voice can help you build a rich knowledge of your students.

Discuss



Students may not know what helps them. How do you model options and introduce supporting scaffolds?

Explore



The Dyslexia and Learning guide strategy,

- ▶ [Ask the student what will help and consider a learner profile](#)

The Universal Design for Learning guide strategy,

- ▶ [Gather knowledge of learners and context](#)

Identify specific options you can use to support your students.

Support ▾

Build learners' preferred ways of working into learning opportunities

Approaches ▾

Use technology tools.

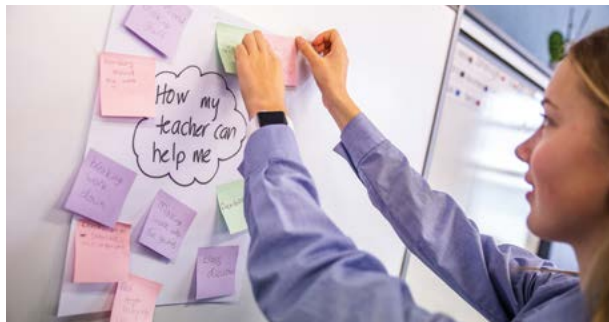
Take a universal approach by modelling and offering options to all. Provide:

- ▶ digital copies of learning content
- ▶ access to screen readers
- ▶ access to speech-to-text, such as [Read&Write for Google Chrome](#), [Dragon](#)
- ▶ digital books.



Create flexibility within the classroom.

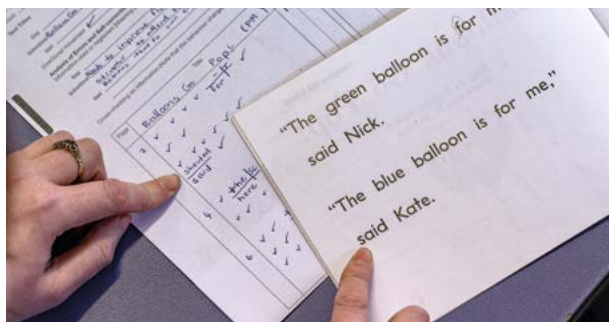
- ▶ Provide quiet spaces to work.
- ▶ Set up seating options – collaborative or individual.



Use a range of assessments to identify students' strengths

Running records

Share these with your students. Talk about which reading strategies they are using successfully.



Writing samples

Use everyday writing or specific samples to identify with students what they can do.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss



How student preferences inform the design of learning opportunities.

Explore



Inclusive ways to encourage students to use assistive technologies.

The Dyslexia and Learning guide strategies,

- ▶ [Provide options to create, learn and share \(years 1-8\)](#)
- ▶ [Provide options to create, learn, and share \(years 9-13\)](#)

Discuss



Ways you share collected data with your students as a learning tool.

Support students to identify and recognise their strengths and how these can be used to support their learning

Increase the visibility of students' strengths in literacy learning.

Provide a range literacy learning activities including:

- ▶ access to digital tools for all learners to support reading, listening, and presentation
- ▶ role-play and drama as part of learning and as options for students to present or share their learning
- ▶ artwork and drawing as options for recording and sharing learning.

Plan to include students' interests, languages, and culture in all aspects of the learning environment.

Consider:

- ▶ visuals and images used in instructions, examples, posters, worksheets, displays, labels
- ▶ interest-based reading material
- ▶ contexts for learning.



Plan to provide leadership opportunities, for example:

- ▶ be the group recorder using video or voice memos
- ▶ lead in areas of personal strength.

Discuss

How you talk with your students about their strengths and how these are used across learning areas.

Consider

Some students may not be aware of the strengths they possess and others may feel uncomfortable talking about their strengths.

How could you use the [My learning strengths](#) website to support your learners?



Catch students doing things right and give them more opportunity.

– Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand

Use a multisensory approach

A multisensory approach takes into account that all students learn in different ways, across contexts. Multisensory activities increase opportunities for students to use sight, hearing, movement, and touch to support their learning. Research shows, when learners with dyslexia use all of their senses they are better able to store and retrieve new information.



Support ▾

Offer a range of ways for students to express their understanding

Approaches ▾

Offer alternative ways to show mastery of material other than in writing.

Options could include:

- ▶ oral or video presentations
- ▶ dioramas, collages or debates
- ▶ mind maps or storyboards
- ▶ slide presentations
- ▶ information set out in bullet points.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Explore

The Dyslexia and Learning guide strategies,

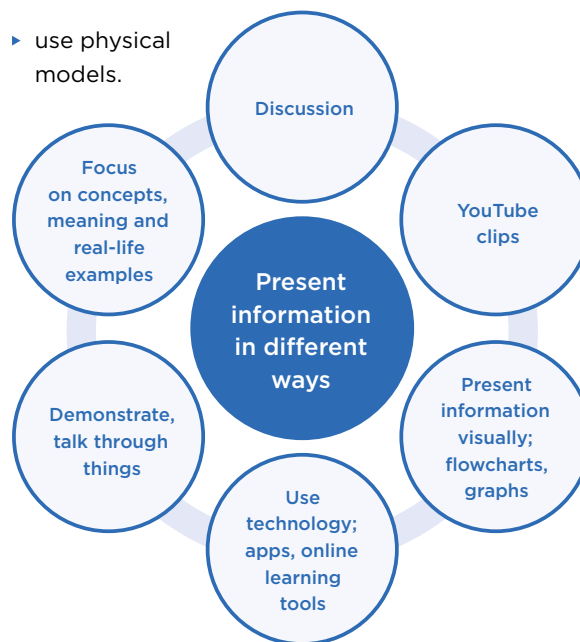
- ▶ [Provide options to create, learn, and share \(years 1-8\)](#)
- ▶ [Provide options to create, learn, and share \(years 9-13\)](#)

Increase the range of ways students can engage with information

Present information in different ways.

Use two or more learning pathways simultaneously whenever possible. When you provide students with written material:

- ▶ talk it through with students
- ▶ use highlighters for keywords
- ▶ draw a diagram on the board
- ▶ show a relevant video clip
- ▶ activate background knowledge through class discussion
- ▶ use physical models.



Adapted from multisensory teaching:
University of Waikato

Discuss

How you work with learners to find out how they prefer to receive information.

Explore

The Dyslexia and Learning guide strategies,

- ▶ [Present information in different ways](#)

Build tactile techniques into your literacy programme

This involves touch

Provide materials with texture so students can trace over or form letters, using:

- ▶ playdough or clay
- ▶ shaving cream or sand
- ▶ sandpaper letters
- ▶ an app to write on an iPad or tablet with their finger.



Support ▾

Build visual techniques into your literacy programme

Approaches ▾

Use images, graphics and colour.

- ▶ Use images alongside words.
- ▶ Support students to create their own pictures to help them remember a concept or word.
- ▶ Use colour to support organisation of ideas.
- ▶ Use bullet points for easy scan of content.
- ▶ Create slide presentations.
- ▶ Create storyboards to organise and sequence ideas.

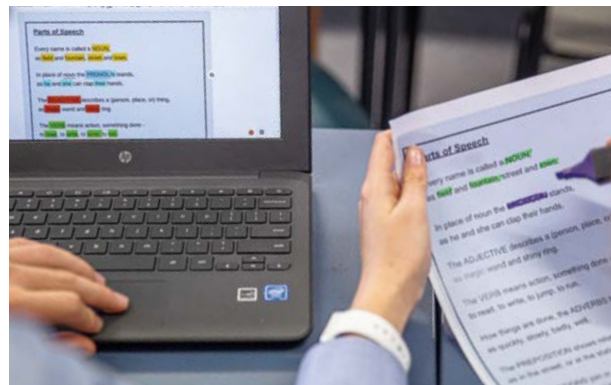
Highlight essential information.

If a student can read a text but has difficulty finding the essential information, use a highlighter to identify it. Use a highlighter pen or highlighter tool online for digital copy.

Use colour coding to identify key information.

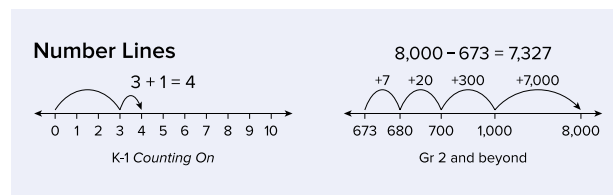
For example:

- ▶ distinguish between roots, affixes, chunks, and syllables
- ▶ highlight addition problems in yellow, subtraction problems in blue
- ▶ colour folders in Google Drive, for example, writing activities in blue, reading activities in red.



Use visual models to illustrate concepts.

For example in maths, draw the process.



Professional learning discussion ▾



Explore

Explore The Universal Design for Learning guide strategy,

- ▶ [Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols](#)

Support ▾

Build kinesthetic techniques into your literacy programme

This involves connecting body movement to learning

Approaches ▾

Use whole-body movements to learn words and concepts.

For example:

- ▶ writing or tracing words and letters in the air
- ▶ jumping, hopping, and skipping – use hoops to identify syllables with one hoop representing each syllable. Students can jump from one hoop to the next as they say each syllable aloud.
- ▶ use dance moves or clapping to explore rhyme in poems, songs, and raps.



Use concrete objects that involve manipulation.

Provide:

- ▶ sticky notes to order ideas and support planning
- ▶ moveable chunks of letters, blends, prefixes, and suffixes for students to manipulate in word games and activities.



Build auditory techniques and aids into your literacy programme

This involves listening and speaking

Record directions, stories, and specific lessons.

Listening to a recording supports students to:

- ▶ replay and clarify understanding of directions or concepts
- ▶ read the printed words silently as they listen.

Provide all students with access to digital tools.

Students can choose to use these supports as needed: screen reader, text-to-speech tools, and audio books.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss

How you support your students to engage with learning material in multiple ways.

Explore

Explore The Universal Design for Learning guide strategy,

- ▶ [Make effective use of technologies to support literacy](#)

Support ▾

Increase access to visual representations to support oral and written work

Approaches ▾

Read it, build it

- 1 Display a target word to the student for several seconds on a computer, mobile device, or whiteboard.
- 2 Cover or remove the word from the student's view.
- 3 Have the student immediately write the word.
- 4 Repeat the process frequently until the student can accurately write the word from their visual memory with minimal to no assistance.

Read it, build it, write it - A technique for teaching sight words

A group or one-on-one activity.

Students have:

- ▶ a piece of paper with three boxes on it, labelled "Read," "Build," and "Write."
- ▶ cards with sight words
- ▶ magnetic letters (or tiles) and a marker.



- 1 Student chooses a card from the word pile and places it in the "Read" box. Student and the teacher read the sight word on the card.
- 2 Students say the letters aloud while building the word in the "Build" box, using their letters.
- 3 Students practise writing the word in the "Write" box.

Professional learning discussion ▾

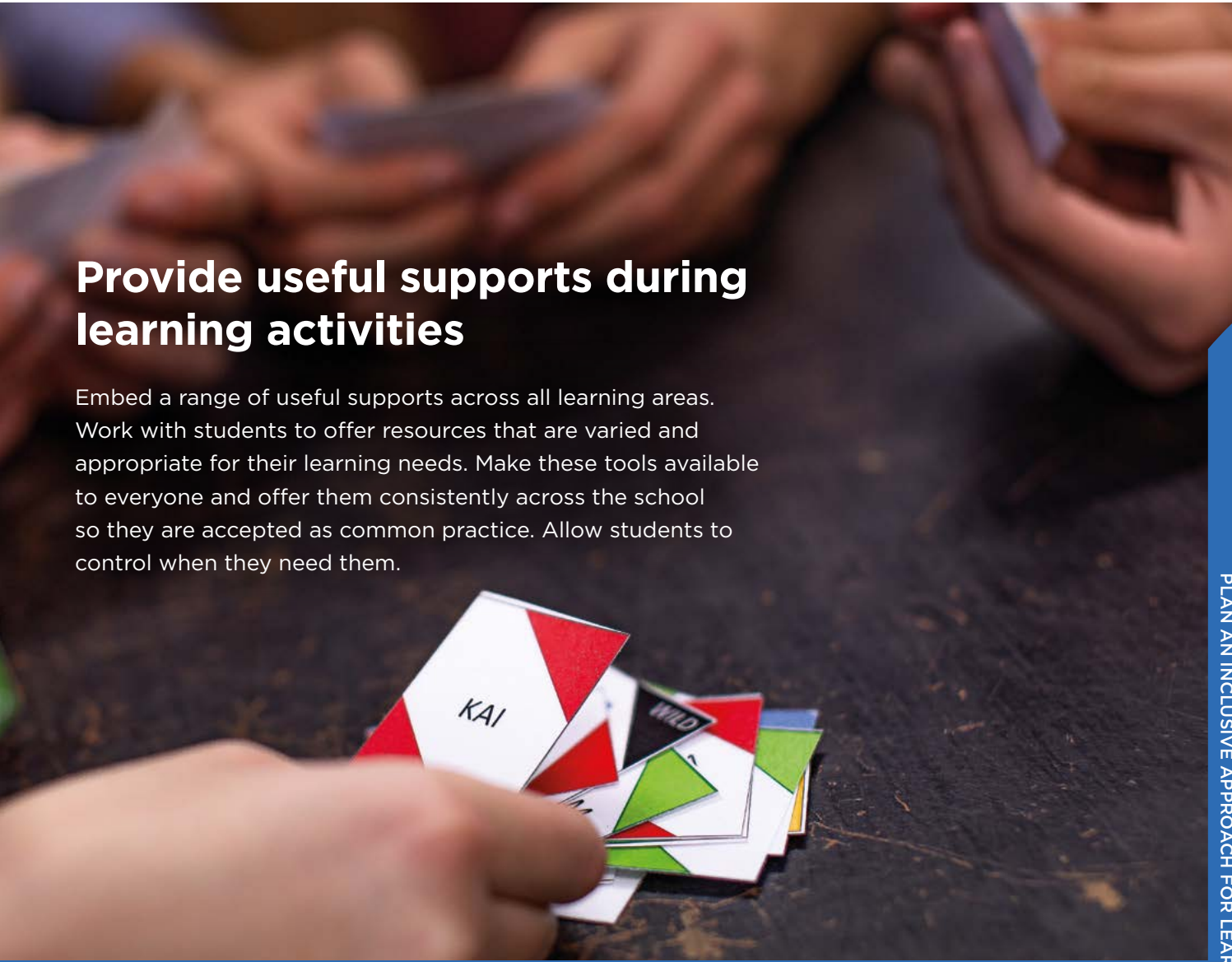
Discuss

How these strategies could be used to:

- ▶ introduce subject-specific word lists
- ▶ learn high frequency words
- ▶ learn tricky words.

Provide useful supports during learning activities

Embed a range of useful supports across all learning areas. Work with students to offer resources that are varied and appropriate for their learning needs. Make these tools available to everyone and offer them consistently across the school so they are accepted as common practice. Allow students to control when they need them.



Support ▾

Build learners' understanding of the big picture/concept

Approaches ▾

Provide visual pathways of learning.

Display a visual map of the big picture. Include:

- ▶ links to individual lessons or information
- ▶ blank spaces for learners to build understanding as they work through a unit, inquiry, or task.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss

- ▶ How do you support your students to see the overview of learning?
- ▶ How do you guide your students through each stage?

Consider

Why it is necessary to provide multiple representations, such as models, drawings, and mind maps?

Support ▾

Support learners to access key information, reducing barriers to note taking, copying information, and recording ideas

Approaches ▾

Provide shared notes through:

- ▶ access to digital copies of teacher notes or learning material
- ▶ collaborative note taking tools, such as Google docs.

Provide options other than writing.

Remove barriers and enable access to technologies so students can:

- ▶ take photos of the whiteboard or modelling books
- ▶ record information through video or voice memo.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Consider



How you work in partnership with your learners. Some students may like to copy notes or rewrite content as it helps their learning, for others this might be a barrier.

Use a range of tools to support students' working memory

Offer a range of supports to reduce barriers to learning.

- ▶ Calculators
- ▶ Fact sheets
- ▶ Charts
- ▶ Process maps
- ▶ Flow charts
- ▶ Big picture maps
- ▶ Spelling supports.



Discuss



How you can reduce pressure on students' working memory when, for example, they have to recall:

- ▶ basic facts to answer complex maths problems
- ▶ specific language features for a response to text
- ▶ dates.

Read



[Working memory.](#)

Identify helpful learning approaches and resources.

Use assistive technologies

Provide all students with access to technologies.

- ▶ Determine the value of specific technologies for each student through careful observation and discussion with the student.

Explore



[Assistive Technologies](#)

Support

Offer supports that encourage students to engage in useful thinking opportunities

Approaches

Ask your learners what helps them to think.

Work with your learners to develop a range of useful options.

- ▶ Consider flexible seating arrangements.
- ▶ Offer students choice about where they sit.
- ▶ Work in collaborative learning groups.
- ▶ Offer quiet spaces or spaces where students can move and access the outdoors.
- ▶ Ask if they might like to work with a peer or another adult.
- ▶ Provide and allow students to use headphones.

Professional learning discussion

Consider

- ▶ How you provide consistent access to supports.
- ▶ How to ensure students can rely on these supports to be available in every class across the school.

Provide online access to shared resources

Ensure all students can access the topic information and tasks prior to classroom instruction.

Include:

- ▶ key vocabulary
- ▶ big picture ideas
- ▶ task pathways
- ▶ videos and readings
- ▶ links to prior knowledge and units of work.

Design the layout of visual information to improve readability

Ensure that your text is dyslexia friendly.

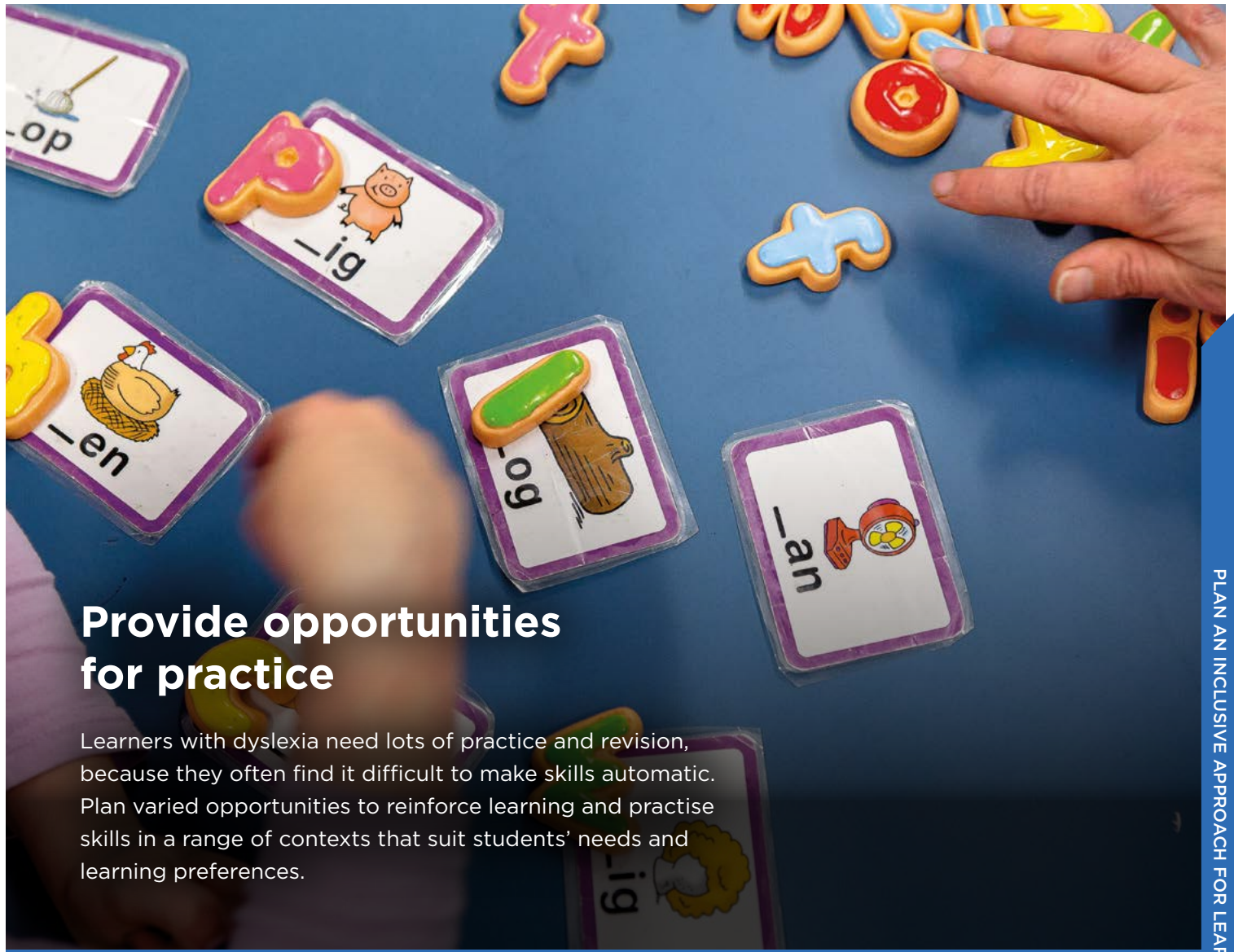
- ▶ Use a sans-serif font, such as Arial, Comic Sans, Verdana or [Sassoon](#) as letters can appear less crowded when they don't have serifs.
- ▶ Use a minimum of 12 point or 14 point font size.
- ▶ Use bold text to highlight only, but don't underline.
- ▶ Use lower-case letters and avoid unnecessary use of capitals.
- ▶ Break text into short readable units.
- ▶ Use at least 1.5 line spaces between text.
- ▶ Keep text left justified.
- ▶ Avoid background graphics.

Read

[Making Information Accessible](#)

Discuss

[Designing for learners with dyslexia: Do's and Don'ts](#) to inform your design.



Provide opportunities for practice

Learners with dyslexia need lots of practice and revision, because they often find it difficult to make skills automatic. Plan varied opportunities to reinforce learning and practise skills in a range of contexts that suit students' needs and learning preferences.

Support ▾

Build in opportunities for students to access additional practice activities

Approaches ▾

Support students to gain mastery of selected skills.

Consider a range of follow-up practice activities that students can choose from. These might include:

- ▶ instructional games
- ▶ peer-teaching activities
- ▶ practice sheets
- ▶ [Quizlets](#)
- ▶ online programmes.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss

“Students require different amounts of practice to master skills or content.” How can you work with students to ensure practice activities are purposeful and relevant to their learning.

Build fluency and automatic recall through regular practice

Practise recall of high-frequency words.

Put basic sight words onto cards to support students to read with speed and accuracy.



Use repeated reading to increase fluency and comprehension.

- ▶ Have students read aloud to an adult (not a peer).
- ▶ Give corrective feedback on miscues.
- ▶ Use a performance criterion (for example, the student has to keep reading the text until they are able to read at 100 words per minute).
- ▶ Have the student read the text more than twice.

Increase opportunities for students to practise reading. Use a range of options such as:

- ▶ reading to a buddy, pet, or soft toy
- ▶ recording reading on a digital device.



Ensure books are at the right level, are of high interest to the reader, and are at their reading level.

Teach students to rehearse learning by, for example, writing stories in their heads or practising their spelling while they walk home or practise sports or dance moves.

Pre-teach topic-specific words.

Support ▾

Support students with exams and tests

Approaches ▾

Work with students to rehearse and become familiar with exam and test formats. Discuss areas that could cause concern or increase their feelings of test anxiety.

Practise:

- ▶ understanding the organisation and layout of exam/test papers, for example, STAR Reading test, PATs, NCEA exams
- ▶ use of dyslexic fonts on NZCER online assessments
- ▶ working with a reader-writer ahead of exam time
- ▶ breaking test/exam papers into manageable chunks
- ▶ time management
- ▶ accessing online systems
- ▶ using IT supports.

Conduct a class review session before a test. Provide support with a study guide that includes key terms and concepts.

Model memory strategies to support recall of words, ideas, and concepts. These include:

- ▶ mnemonic spelling strategies
- ▶ mnemonic concept strategies
- ▶ chunking information
- ▶ visualisation and word association.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Read



[Support Success](#) in the Universal Design for Learning Guide.

How can you build these recommended approaches into your programmes across learning areas?

Discuss



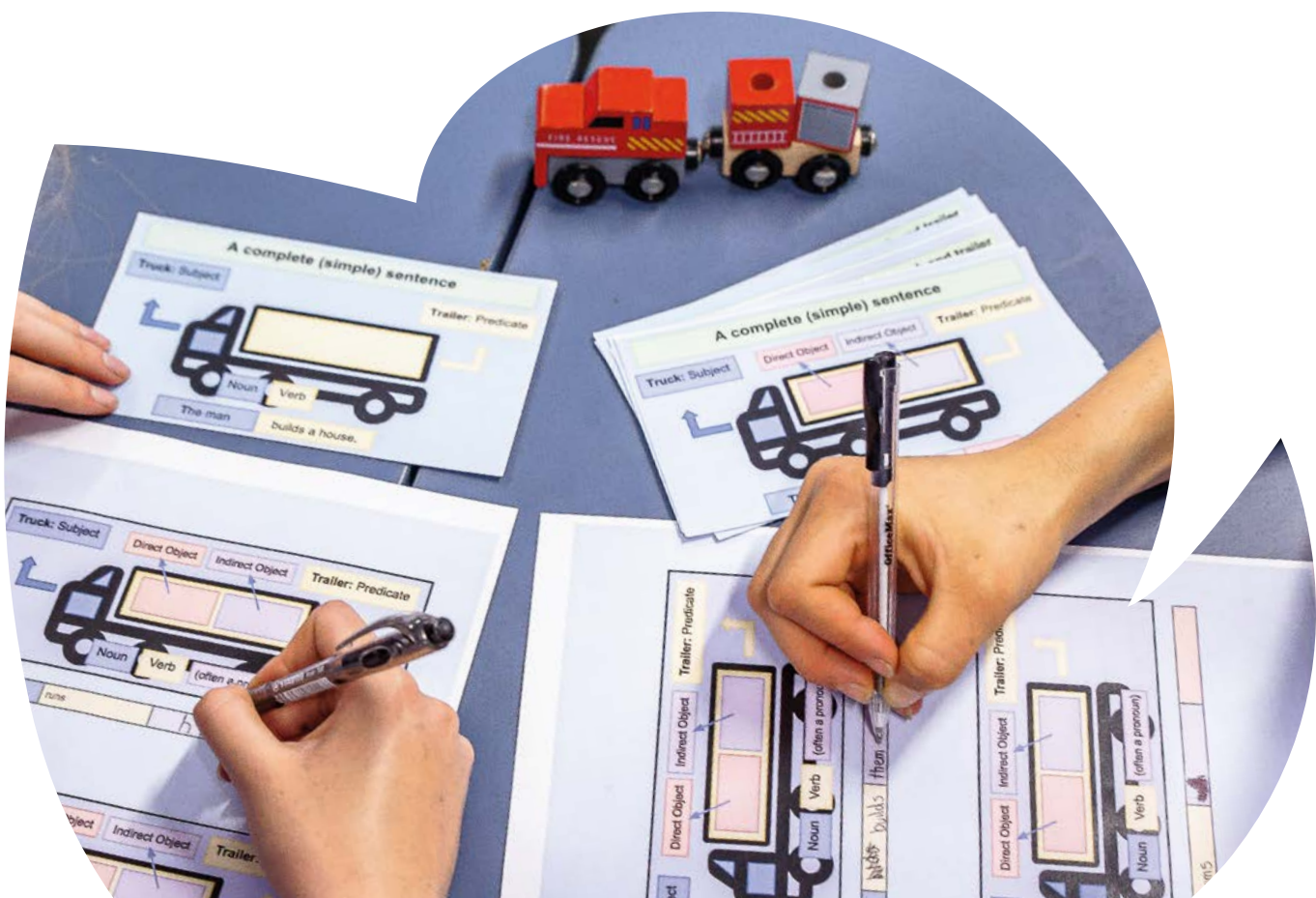
Successful memory strategies and how you use them across learning areas.

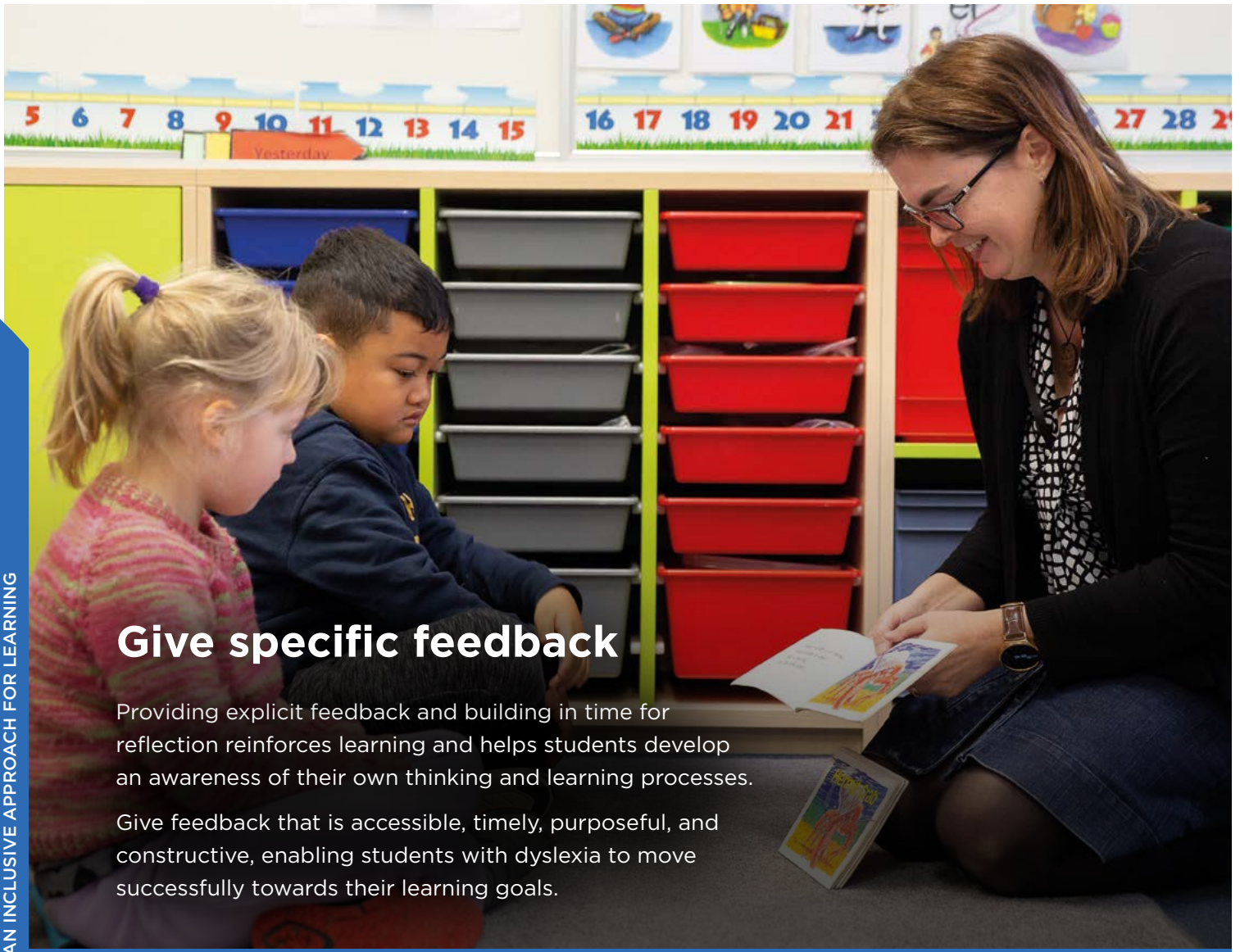
Read



[6 Proven Strategies for Exam Success](#)

How might you model and use these to support learner success?





Give specific feedback

Providing explicit feedback and building in time for reflection reinforces learning and helps students develop an awareness of their own thinking and learning processes.

Give feedback that is accessible, timely, purposeful, and constructive, enabling students with dyslexia to move successfully towards their learning goals.

Support ▾

Accessible feedback options that support learning preferences

Approaches ▾

Ask your learners about the type of feedback that is helpful and how they prefer to receive it. Use a range of media such as:

- ▶ comments in shared documents
- ▶ video feedback, audio recordings
- ▶ one-to-one feedback sessions
- ▶ peer coaching
- ▶ screen readers to have feedback read to them
- ▶ pictures and symbols, for example, “SP” for check spelling
- ▶ sticky notes.

When providing written feedback, ensure students can read it easily and make sense of the text.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss

How will you ensure that your feedback is understood and able to be acted upon?

Consider

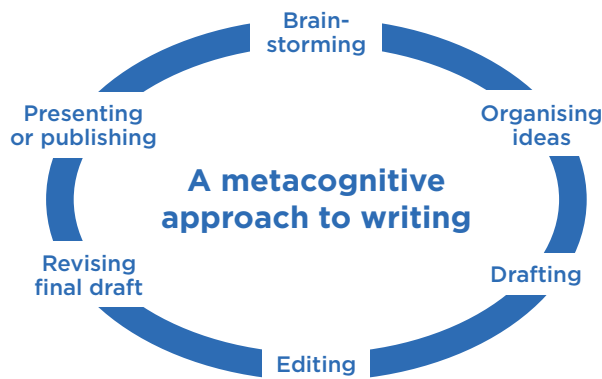
Why it is necessary to provide multiple feedback options, such as video and audio recordings?

Provide specific feedback at each stage of learning

Break tasks into smaller bite-sized chunks and build in time to review and revise before learners move on.

Give specific feedback at each stage so the students know what to repeat or improve.

- ▶ Include specific, positive feedback to highlight even small successes.
- ▶ Use simple, concise sentences with examples to support your feedback.
- ▶ Work with students to analyse miscues or errors. Identify the learning required and together decide what they will change to make improvements.
- ▶ Use a constructive system for marking, where separate consideration is given to content and presentation.



(nasen, 2015)

Use feedback that increases confidence and motivation

Give process feedback such as:

“I see you used the strategy we talked about.”

“Last week we talked about adding describing words. You have highlighted four here.”

Give praise with specific feedback. For example, “Great work, I like the way you broke that word into syllables.”

Discuss



How you provide feedback that supports learners in monitoring their progress, for example, questions, progress reporting and documenting, and rubrics.

Consider



What tools you will use with your students so they can respond to feedback and reach their goals. For example: embed prompts for them to stop and think; show and explain work from their portfolios; use checklists and templates.

Consider



How you invite students to give you feedback.

Read



[Growth Mindset Feedback](#)

**Provide time
for student
self-reflection**

Support learners to reflect on their thinking processes, allowing them to notice and adjust their strategies for continuous improvement.

Facilitate metacognitive awareness. Support learners to consider these questions when tackling a new or known task:

- ▶ Have I done this before?
- ▶ How did I tackle it?
- ▶ What did I find easy?
- ▶ What was difficult?
- ▶ Why did I find it easy or difficult?
- ▶ What did I learn?
- ▶ What do I have to do to complete this task?
- ▶ How should I tackle it?
- ▶ Should I tackle it the same way as before?



Specific metacognitive strategies include:

- ▶ visual imagery – discussing and sketching images from text
- ▶ summary sentences – identifying the main ideas in text
- ▶ webbing – the use of concept maps to present the ideas in a text
- ▶ self-interrogation – asking questions about what learners already know about a topic and what they may be expected to learn from the new text.

(Reid, 2000)

” Dyslexia robs a student of time; accommodations return it.

(Shaywitz, 2015 p. 314)

Provide students with time

Ensure students with dyslexia have the time required to engage with the curriculum, successfully process learning content, order ideas, and demonstrate their knowledge.

Support ▾

Have high expectations by focusing on quality not quantity

Approaches ▾

Support students to identify the important things they need to learn or do to complete the task.

Consider reducing the quantity rather than the complexity of the learning for students with dyslexia.

Support students by:

- ▶ reducing the workload, for example, by accepting one paragraph rather than two
- ▶ reducing and/or adapting the homework load
- ▶ teaching students to identify their next learning steps
- ▶ working together to break work up into manageable chunks.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Watch

[Extra Time is FAIR](#)

Discuss

What specific ways you can do this in your classroom for your student/s.

Support ▾

Support students to direct the pace of learning

Work with your students and ask if they need:

- ▶ more time to do this task in more depth
- ▶ more practice problems in the same or in a different context
- ▶ more teaching – in the same or in a different way
- ▶ more feedback
- ▶ an extended deadline for assignments.

Gather feedback from your students about the pace of your delivery – speak more slowly if necessary.

Professional learning discussion ▾

Discuss



- ▶ How you negotiate timeframes.
- ▶ Who sets the pace of learning and if this is flexible.
- ▶ Are all students expected to complete the same amount of work at the same time?

Plan flexible time frames to ensure success and reduce anxiety

Students with dyslexia need more time.

- ▶ Provide students with ample time to read through written instructions or materials.
- ▶ Give copies of reading material, texts, worksheets, or links to online work in advance.
- ▶ Give access to key vocabulary, videos, and big ideas ahead of time.
- ▶ Provide links to prior knowledge.
- ▶ Give “think time” before accepting answers to a question.
- ▶ Set achievable time frames, for example, 15–20 minutes may not be enough time for a student with dyslexia to write an introduction.

Discuss



How you could put these strategies into practice in your classroom.



Use a range of time management and organisational supports

Present page numbers, assignments, and due dates both orally and visually, whenever possible.

Work with learners to explain which parts of the homework or assignments are essential (“must do”) and which are optional (“may do”).

Use visual timetables and timelines to help students map out what is coming up next and to plan ahead.

Discuss



Ways to engage parents in organisational and time management conversations.



Secondary school - Modifications and accommodations

Accommodation

Change **how** a student learns the curriculum content.

Modification

Change **what** a student is taught or expected to learn.

In secondary school, learners have to read and write large amounts of text. Alongside instructional practices, there are accommodations and modifications that make learning easier for students with dyslexia and help maintain student engagement and self-esteem.

Students with dyslexia thrive in an organised setting where the resources are varied and appropriate (Mackay, 2009). Teach students how to use the learning tools available and make them accessible to all students so that they control when they need them and the tools are accepted as common practice (nasen, 2015).

Support ▾

Process support during learning activities

Approaches ▾

Big picture/ideas first

Provide a clear overview of the unit or topic.

Encourage the student to use it to:

- ▶ understand how things fit together
 - ▶ identify where new knowledge is incorporated
 - ▶ identify questions they have.
-

Shared notes

Don't ask students to copy, take notes or handwrite unless you have confirmed this helps their learning.

Provide shared notes online for easy access. Include:

- ▶ teacher notes
- ▶ whiteboard photos
- ▶ student notes
- ▶ recordings.

Chunk and present the information in the order it needs to be actioned.

Ideas for note taking

When students need to make notes, suggest different approaches.

- ▶ Mind maps, storyboards
- ▶ Sticky notes
- ▶ Images and symbols
- ▶ Bookmarking tools
- ▶ Annotating tools
- ▶ Highlighting, annotating, rewriting, summarising with a peer
- ▶ Photos of information on whiteboards, audio recordings, specific apps.

Provide examples and time to practise.

Unpack instructions

Give students templates, rubrics, checklists, and exemplars to provide structure.

Check students' understanding of instructions. Ask them to explain what they are going to do.

Process support during learning activities

Identify how students learn best

Ask:

- ▶ Does this work for you? Is it helping you learn or making it harder?
- ▶ What else could we try?
- ▶ Is there a learning support teacher or parent who knows you well that we can ask for help?

Provide support:

- ▶ ensure the student knows they can ask questions as often as needed – in class or in emails (without worrying about spelling)
- ▶ check in regularly.

Memory process aids

Students with dyslexia need to learn deeply in order to remember things. Memorising is difficult.

Identify supports:

- ▶ calculators
- ▶ factsheets, charts, process diagrams, maps
- ▶ [Quizlets](#)
- ▶ memory palaces, mnemonics
- ▶ visual images
- ▶ music and song lyrics.

Working spaces and thinking supports

With the student, identify:

- ▶ workspaces that support how they prefer to learn, for example, with learning buddies, in a quiet space
- ▶ ways of working that help them, for example, quiet, moving, music, drawing, fresh air, brain breaks, fidget equipment.

Provide consistent access to supports, including:

- ▶ technologies, apps, headphones, and so on
- ▶ learning buddies
- ▶ time to practise
- ▶ SACs – talk through the specifics of support for assessments and contact learning support if changes are needed.

Support ▾**Allow time to learn deeply from the outset****Approaches** ▾**Reduced workload** (not dumbed down)

With the student, identify:

- ▶ key things to learn
- ▶ tasks that will best help them to learn.

Identify critical gaps in learning. Provide specific tasks and activities to fill these gaps.

Pace and challenge

With the student identify next steps and what they need to succeed:

- ▶ more time to complete the task in depth?
- ▶ more practice problems, in the same or in different contexts?
- ▶ more teaching, in the same or in different ways?
- ▶ more specific feedback?

Flexible deadlines and “good fit” pathways

Highlight deadlines from the outset. Check in frequently with the student on progress. Identify what specific supports are needed.

Identify a pathway through NCEA that is aligned to the student's strengths. Check how it looks with the student.

Online access to shared resources

Ensure all students can access the topic information and tasks prior to classroom instruction. Include:

- ▶ links to prior knowledge, units of work
- ▶ key vocabulary
- ▶ big picture ideas
- ▶ task pathways
- ▶ videos and readings.

(The approaches on pages 40–42 are adapted from the Dyslexia (or similar) strategy map by Kay Messerli, Onslow College.)

Resources

- ▶ [Helpful classroom strategies years 9–13](#), Dyslexia and Learning guide, on the Inclusive Education website
- ▶ [Effective literacy strategies in years 9–13: A guide for teachers](#), on the Literacy Online website



Reading supports across all subject areas

The dramatic increase in the number of words to be read at secondary level creates a barrier for students with dyslexia who have difficulties in word recognition. Slow or inaccurate reading inhibits the comprehension needed to hold a meaningful chunk of text in their working memory in order to understand it.

Additional support for students starting secondary school without secure reading skills is essential.

Vocabulary and comprehension instruction are essential within content area lessons to facilitate learning for students with dyslexia (Reed & Vaughan, 2010).

- ▶ Pre-teach key vocabulary. Build up a sight vocabulary database to support the pronunciation of unfamiliar words they will encounter.
 - ▶ Ensure that books are at the right reading levels for students.
 - ▶ Provide text-to-speech software, such as [Texthelp](#) and [ClaroRead](#).
 - ▶ Use audio books when appropriate.
 - ▶ Teach reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, and close reading, and when to use them.
 - ▶ Limit the quantity of reading students have to do by providing videos, diagrams, and other visuals, and encourage the use of screen-readers.
- ▶ Flip learning, provide text or content information before the lesson so students can prepare and re-visit as needed.
 - ▶ Encourage students to summarise and make sense of what they read by making mind maps and drawing diagrams and flow charts.
 - ▶ Encourage students to take a metacognitive approach:
 - Question the writer's intentions.
 - Reflect on the writer's approach and ask if it could be improved.
 - Consider their own views in relation to the text and whether their opinions have changed as a result of the reading.
 - Ascertain what they have learned and how they will transfer this new learning.
 - ▶ Provide reading materials that interest them.
 - ▶ Lead students into the text, using questioning techniques.
 - ▶ Only ask a student to read aloud if you know they want to.
 - ▶ Scaffold tasks, then slowly remove scaffolds as their confidence increases.

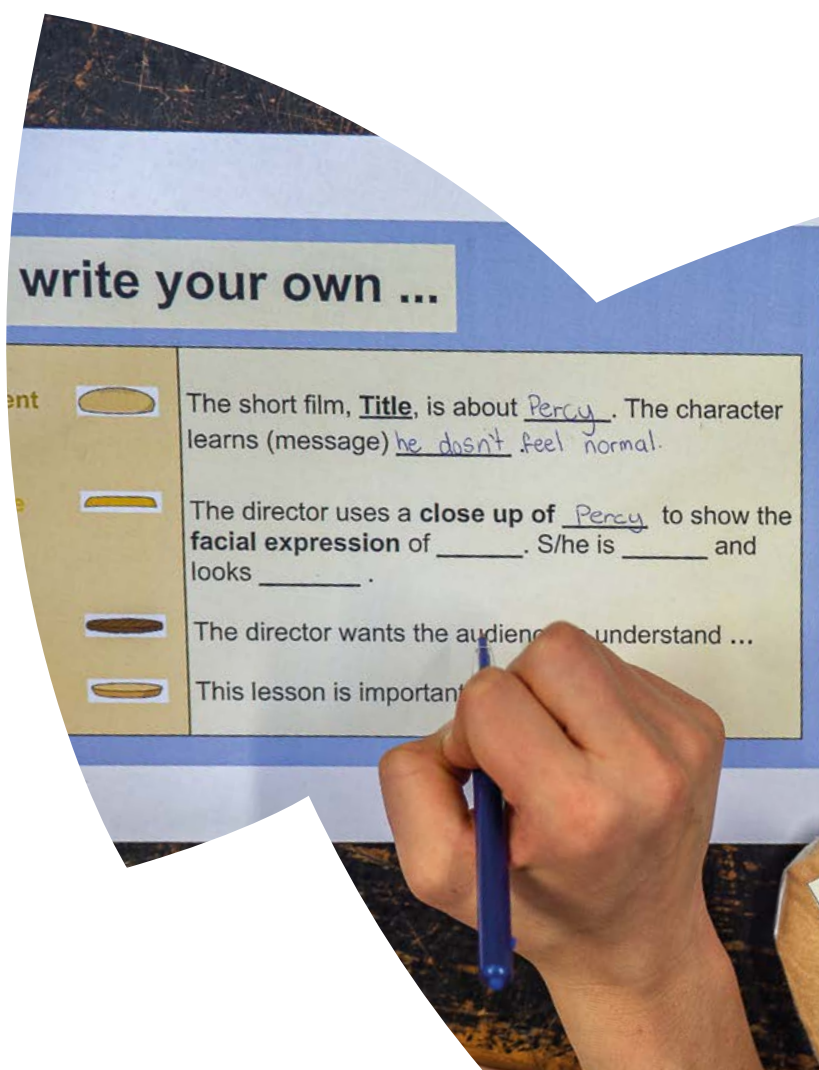
Writing supports across all subject areas

Provide accommodations and modifications to remove barriers caused by difficulties with spelling, sequencing ideas, grammar, and remembering their ideas long enough to record them.

- ▶ Check students' understanding of the task. Help them to interpret questions, understand how much to write, and what to include.
- ▶ Use technology to improve written outcomes, for example, voice recognition software or mind mapping software.
- ▶ Teach "questioning the question" approaches, for example, isolating the topic area, limiting words, and directives.
- ▶ Provide examples and model good practice.
- ▶ Break a writing task into manageable chunks. Teach and encourage students to plan.
- ▶ Encourage a metacognitive approach at each stage of the process of writing, reflecting, reviewing, monitoring, and transferring new learning.
- ▶ Reward achievement at each stage of the writing process.
- ▶ Give specific feedback at each stage so students know what to repeat or improve.
- ▶ Provide written and verbal feedback.
- ▶ Improve proofreading by:
 - building proofreading time into lessons
 - using a buddy system
 - teaching and modelling strategies during lessons
 - providing proofreading checklists
 - encouraging students to read work aloud
 - leaving time between writing and proofreading
 - encouraging the use of text-to-voice software to highlight errors
 - rewarding improvements.

Spelling is often a persistent difficulty for students with dyslexia. It is important that spelling difficulties do not impede students' creativity and ability to demonstrate their knowledge. Encourage the use of ambitious words and teach students to spell key curricular words.

- ▶ Provide subject-specific key words in classroom handouts.
- ▶ Encourage the use of personalised dictionaries.
- ▶ Encourage students to take risks with their spelling, suggesting that they underline these words.
- ▶ Teach the spelling of key words in a multisensory way.
- ▶ Encourage a metacognitive approach by asking students to:
 - analyse their spelling mistakes and identify the learning required
 - decide what they will change to ensure that they spell that word correctly in future.



Assessment and Special Assessment Conditions (SAC)

When barriers are removed, students with dyslexia are capable of achieving at the same levels as other students.

Give students a choice of how they present their work for assessment where possible

Offer alternative ways to show mastery of material, other than a written assignment. For example a video diary, model, slide presentation, recorded interview, oral or video presentation, a debate.

"Your challenge is to show me what you know/have learned about ..."

"Here are the assessment criteria. Choose a way you think is appropriate for the task."

Expertise in presenting in these ways also helps build self-esteem.

Avoid or reduce essay and multiple-choice tests

Where possible, provide an alternative test format. Multiple-choice questions are often unavoidable, but they may be difficult for students because of the similarity of some answers and the volume of reading required to answer them correctly.

Conduct a class review session before a test

Provide students with a study guide that includes key terms and concepts.

Evaluate on content, not spelling or handwriting

Whenever possible, evaluate the content of an assignment rather than spelling and handwriting. Use of a computer will not always overcome the challenges many students with dyslexia experience with spelling.

Special Assessment Conditions

The [New Zealand Qualifications Authority](#) (NZQA) grants entitlement to Special Assessment Conditions (SAC). Entitlement for SAC is required for both internal and external NCEA assessments. Applications are made by schools on behalf of candidates. Schools making an application to NZQA need to provide either:

- ▶ appropriate documented evidence from school-based testing for use of special assessment conditions from the candidate's time at secondary school; or
- ▶ a current report from an appropriately qualified independent registered professional that recommends special assessment conditions to address the candidate's specified assessment needs (NZQA, 2019).



Understanding the challenge of **literacy acquisition**

Literacy acquisition and development is made up of three aspects:

- 1 learning the code
- 2 making meaning
- 3 thinking critically.

(Ministry of Education, 2003)

Typically, learners with dyslexia have difficulty learning the code – specifically, decoding and spelling. In order to learn the code, students must develop:

- ▶ phonological awareness
- ▶ an understanding of the alphabetic principle.

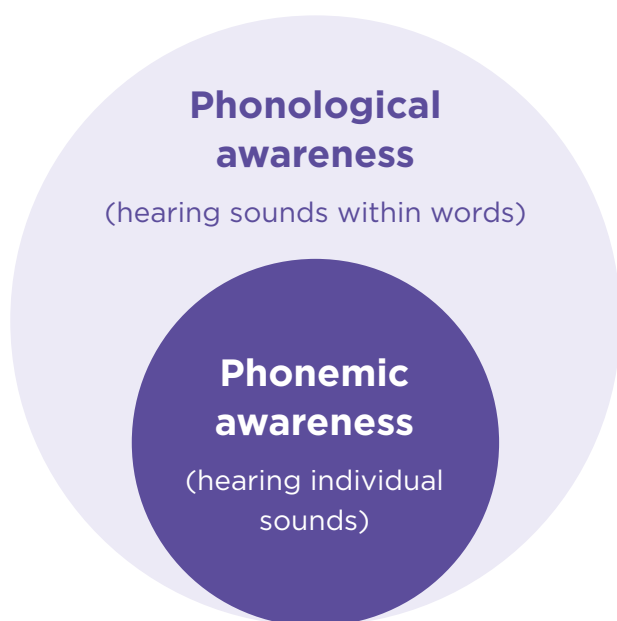
Phonological awareness

Students develop phonological awareness by listening, identifying and manipulating larger sounds – whole words, syllables within words, onsets and rimes within syllables, and individual phonemes.

It is essential for making the connections between sounds and letters, and for literacy development.

Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) within words. Learners need phonemic awareness for successful early reading experiences. Those with dyslexia often have difficulty recognising phonemes when reading and manipulating them when spelling.



The alphabetic principle

The alphabetic principle includes learning the names of the letters of the alphabet and understanding:

- ▶ we use letters to record sounds
- ▶ there are different ways to write sounds
- ▶ we can use more than one letter to write a sound, for example, the letters “ch” make different sounds in “chicken”, “chemist” and “chef”.

Students with little phonological awareness need considerable support to use the alphabetic principle.

Making meaning

Check listening comprehension before making decisions about how to assist students to build their use of comprehension strategies. If students do not have good listening comprehension, or are unable to express their ideas well orally, then their difficulties with reading, or writing, may not be caused by dyslexia.

Fluency

Students with dyslexia may find fluency difficult to achieve because they often read or write slowly as they work out every word with great effort. By the time each word has been read or written, fluency is lost and, along with it, meaning. The student’s working (short-term) memory is taken up with the letter-by-letter effort, leaving little space for holding on to the words and putting them together into meaningful sentences.

Resources

- ▶ [Sounds and words | Phonological awareness](#), Literacy Online
- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 1 to 4](#), (Ministry of Education, 2003 pp. 24 and 32)
- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8](#), (Ministry of Education, 2006 pp. 25–28)
- ▶ [The literacy learning progressions](#), (Ministry of Education, 2010)



Literacy teaching activities for primary and secondary teachers

Plan to provide high-quality, evidence-based teaching in the classroom. Take an inclusive approach, combining the supports and accommodations that remove barriers to learning with specific literacy instruction.

The teaching activities that follow are useful for all students, but essential for supporting those with dyslexia. Many of the suggestions can be used across different ages. Select activities according to identified needs.

Take a phonics-based approach	49
Develop phonological awareness	49
Syllable activities	50
Rhyme and rime activities	52
Phonemic awareness activities	54
Reading strategies and activities	58
Designing reading interventions for older students	62
Writing and spelling strategies and activities	63

Take a phonics-based approach

An explicit, systematic phonics-based approach within a broad literacy curriculum is the most effective way to support learners with dyslexia to build literacy skills.

Provide direct, explicit instruction

- ▶ Teach reading and writing strategies directly and explicitly.
- ▶ Teach one strategy at a time.
- ▶ Provide lots of opportunities for practising the new strategy until the student is able to use it fluently across different contexts.

Plan systematic and cumulative instruction

- ▶ Build on previously learned strategies and knowledge.
- ▶ Weave previously learned strategies and knowledge into current lessons to reinforce them.
- ▶ Regularly monitor student progress to check previous learning is retained.

Resource

- ▶ [Sound Sense: Supporting reading and writing in years 1-3 | The purpose and place of phonics instruction](#), Literacy Online

Synthetic phonics – Instruction focuses on teaching individual letter sounds. Students sound out each letter or letter combination (such as “th”, “sh”) one at a time and then blend these together to pronounce whole words.

Analytic phonics – Focuses on larger spelling generalisations (such as rimes: “ab”, “ad”, “ag”, “ack”, “am”, “an”) and word analogies. Students break words into sound syllables, and use similar sounding words to generalise and expand their vocabulary. This relies on the student’s ability to recognise similarities and make appropriate generalisations (if “game” is pronounced with a long “a” then “came” must be pronounced with a long “a”).

Synthetic and analytic approaches to phonics each involve and develop different skills, and each of these skills is important to effective and efficient development of reading and spelling. There is no one way that works for the decoding or spelling of all words, just as there is no one way that works best for all learners (Milne, 2005).

Develop phonological awareness

Phonological awareness and phonics

Phonological awareness – The ability to hear the sounds within spoken words.

Phonics – The relationship between spoken sounds and the letters that represent them.

Plan to develop phonological awareness at the point the student can detect similarities in sounds between or within words. This may be at the level of whole word, syllable, rhyme, onset and rime, or individual phonemes. To manipulate phonemes, students must first be able to identify the broad sound patterns. As students become aware of the ways in which letters are used to represent sounds, include activities that involve students looking at print as well.

As children develop phonological awareness, they also learn about the reciprocal relationship between spoken sounds and the letters that represent them. During spelling and reading, students combine their knowledge and use of both.

Syllable activities

Use these activities:

- ▶ as part of your junior literacy programme
- ▶ with older students, to provide specific support with hearing and identifying syllables.

Students who have difficulty identifying syllables in words need lots of opportunities for hearing and marking them. When students understand how to do this, prompt them to notice the syllable chunks within printed words to discover how words are made of parts.

Purpose ▾

Build awareness of syllable breaks within words

Activity ▾

Syllable clapping

Application and transfer ▾

Students clap and/or count the syllables in a variety of words. Use:

- ▶ students' names
- ▶ names of items in pictures
- ▶ items from a grab bag of different objects
- ▶ words from topic studies across the curriculum.

Begin with familiar words.

Identify syllables

Feeling Syllables

Begin by focusing on compound words, where each syllable has a meaning on its own, for example, "star/fish", "pea/nut", "rain/bow".

- 1 Model holding two fingers parallel to and touching under your chin while slowly saying the word.
- 2 Have each child hold their fingers firmly under their own chin so they can feel their chin move when uttering each syllable.
- 3 Count the syllables as their chin moves. Move onto words with more syllables, such as "e/le/phant", "um/brel/la".

Distinguish same/different sounds within words

Same or different?

Identify syllables that are the same or different in words. For example, "Which sounds in **promote**" and **provide**" are the same?"

Develop awareness of syllables and word construction

Compound words

- 1 Record compound words such as "playground", "playmate", "football", "drainpipe".
- 2 Help students relate the parts they hear to the parts of the written words.

Purpose ▾

Practise manipulating syllables

Activity ▾

Adding syllables

Application and transfer ▾

Students add missing syllables to familiar words, using a picture or object as a prompt if necessary.



Syllable deletion

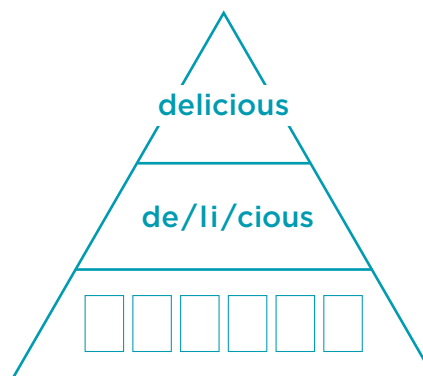
Students practise syllable deletion. Begin with compound words.

- 1 Ask students to clap the syllables as they say the whole word, for example, "toothpaste".
- 2 Say the word with part left out: "Say 'toothpaste' without the 'tooth'".
- 3 Move on to non-compound words: "Say 'invent'. Now say it without the 'in'".

Develop awareness of syllables and sounds

Word triangle

- 1 Write the word at the top of the triangle.
- 2 Break the word into syllables.
- 3 Identify the phonemes using Elkonin boxes.



Extend awareness of syllables

Rhythm and rhyme

Older students can explore syllables and their relationship to rhythm and rhyme in songs, poems, and raps.

Rhyme and rime activities

Rhymes and rimes refer to sounds, not print. As students develop their awareness of rhyme and rimes, prompt them to notice how they are represented in print.

Examples

These groups of words have the same rime (the sound made by the letters after the first consonant/s) and they rhyme (sound the same), but they are not necessarily spelt the same way:

- ▶ fluff, gruff, enough
- ▶ snake, break, flake
- ▶ pie, sky, cry, high.

Rhyme – words with the same end sound.

Onset – the initial part of a word that precedes the vowel of the next syllable. For example, “c” in “cat”; “spl” in “split”. Not all words have onsets. For example, “it” has no onset.

Rime – the part of the syllable that follows the onset.

Digraph – two successive letters whose phonetic value is a single sound, for example, “ea” in “bread”, “ng” in “ring”, “wh” in “whale”.

Purpose ▾

Junior classes
Develop awareness of rhyme in oral language

Activity ▾

Identify rhyming words

Application and transfer ▾

Rhyme is an important feature of early literacy learning. See [Sound Sense: Supporting reading and writing in years 1-3 | Hearing sounds in spoken words](#), Literacy Online, for specific examples.

Older students
Develop and extend awareness of rhyme in oral and written language

Listen to and read poems, raps, and songs

Sung or spoken rhyming text provides a strong rhythmic structure. These prosodic regularities, provide phonological priming and facilitate word recognition.

Activities:

- ▶ identify rhymes in regular reading materials
- ▶ identify patterns of stressed syllables and rhyme in rap, poems, and songs
- ▶ make lists of rhyming words that can be used to create raps.

Provide multiple opportunities to develop and reinforce phonological awareness

Rhyming games

Use spare or between-activity moments for a syllable or rhyming game, such as clapping names or making up a short verse or rap.

Extend phonemic awareness with closer attention to detail

Notice differences

Notice the “odd words out” in a rhyming poem or story where the rhyme scheme is broken for effect.

Practise listening to and making up rhymes

Innovate on rhymes

Extend an activity by having students innovate on a rhyme pattern in a poem or story to make up further lines.

Purpose ▾

Identify rhyme in texts

Activity ▾

Read rhyming text

Application and transfer ▾

- ▶ Read picture books in narrative verse by authors such as Lynley Dodd and Julia Donaldson to juniors and encourage them to join in the reading.
- ▶ Older students can read aloud the rhyming fairy tales of Roald Dahl, traditional ballads, limericks and sonnets, and rap and hip hop songs (locate playlists such as, <https://britannicalearn.com/blog/classroom-hip-hop-playlist>)



Students can create their own poems and songs, reciting and recording them or dictating them for others to record.

Manipulate sounds within words and syllables

Manipulate onsets and rimes

Play with onset and rime activities that encourage manipulation of the beginnings and ends of words.

- ▶ “What other words can you make by changing the first sound of your name?”
- ▶ “Change the last syllable of your name to rhyme with “weta”.

Manipulate blends and digraphs within words and syllables

Blends and digraphs

Using chunks of text ask students to make the sounds and connect them together to form words

- ▶ “What do you get if you join ‘sh’ and ‘ip’?” (“ship”).
- ▶ “What other words can start with the /sh/ sound? What other words end with the /ip/ sound?”

Practise recognising common onsets and rimes in print

Onset and rime games

- 1 Using two dice, one has an onset written on each face and the other a different rime written on each face.
- 2 Students roll the dice and say the resulting word (it may be a nonsense word).
- 3 Play in pairs with one student reading the separate dice and the other student putting the sounds together. Students can make nonsense but pronounceable words.

Display written lists of familiar words that share the same onset or that rhyme

List rimes and onsets

As students develop onset and rime awareness orally, introduce them to the ways rimes are written. Select rimes that are nearly always spelled the same way first. Students can build lists of words they know that use these rimes.

Use the same approach with onsets.

Phonemic awareness activities

When teaching phonemic awareness:

- ▶ teach only sound/letter relationships that aren't known – assessing what students can already do is essential
- ▶ gradually shift across to noticing the graphemes (letters) that represent the phonemes

- ▶ provide lots of practice opportunities that incorporate specific instructional feedback
- ▶ support students to make connections so they can apply what they know in different situations.

As students become aware of how letters represent sounds, include short texts in these activities.

Purpose ▾

Develop awareness of initial sounds in words

Activity ▾

Initial sounds box

Application and transfer ▾

When discussing a new sound, have the students:

- ▶ bring objects from home that begin with that sound, for example, when introducing the /h/ sound, students may bring a hat, a toy horse or a hula hoop
- ▶ place the objects in a box
- ▶ take the objects out one at a time, saying and recording the names of the objects
- ▶ identify the initial sound of the name of the object.



Identify initial sounds, including blends

Picture sort

Students sort six cards with pictures of a bear, a pig, a pin, a bat, a pen and a bike, into two groups according to the initial sounds associated with the pictures.

Extend to include middle and end sounds

Once students achieve mastery with the initial sounds, they can complete the same task for the ending and middle sounds.

Connect sound to print

Introduce written words for the pictures. Recognise that where the initial sounds are the same, the initial letters are the same too.

Purpose ▾

Identify initial sounds, including blends

Extend to include middle and end sounds

Discriminate between initial sounds

Extend to include final and middle sounds

Transfer to print

Develop awareness of initial sounds

Activity ▾

I spy

Odd one out

Alphabet sound game

Application and transfer ▾

Use the initial sounds of words as the clues for identifying objects or people, for example, “I spy something that begins with /m/”.

Use blends as well as single letter sounds.

As students become proficient at identifying sounds, ask them to look for things that end with the focus sound, or that have the sound in the middle of the word. For example, “I spy:

- ▶ someone whose name ends with /l/” (Paul).
- ▶ something in this room that has the sound /b/ in the middle of the word” (cupboard)”.

Students listen to three or four words, then say which words start with the same sound and which word does not belong, for example, “dog”, “desk”, “fun”.

Continue the activity for ending sounds, for example, “pat”, “fit”, “run”, “lot”; and middle sounds: “pat”, “sit”, “lap”, “sad”.

Introduce the written words for each set and prompt students to notice that when the initial (or other focus) sounds are the same, the written words start with the same letter.

Work through the alphabet orally, finding objects to correlate to each sound. Be sure to specify the sound clearly (for example, the long or short vowel sound, the hard or soft /k/ sound).



- ▶ Extend the activity by asking the students to think of a food, an animal or a place that begins with each sound.
- ▶ Transfer learning to print by matching printed words (with pictures or objects) to the spoken words.

Purpose ▾

Identify initial sounds in different contexts

Activity ▾

Alliteration

Application and transfer ▾

Read stories and poems that use alliteration, stressing the sounds as you read. Encourage students to notice and identify repeated sounds.

Older students can explore the effects of alliteration in poetry, speech, and advertising.

Listen for, and manipulate phonemes

Phoneme deletion

Students omit or break off the first phoneme in a syllable or word. For example:

- ▶ “I’ll say a word, then you repeat it without the last sound. So if I say ‘bear’, you say /b/”.
- ▶ Alternate this by asking students to omit the initial phoneme and say what is left of the word. “What is left if you leave out the first sound in ‘nice’?” (‘ice’)
- ▶ Use blends: “What word do we get if we take the /l/ out of ‘flat’?” (‘fat’)

Phoneme substitution

Ask students to change the initial, middle, or ending sound in a word.

- ▶ “If the word is ‘cat’ and you change the first sound to /b/ what is the new word?”



As students become proficient at substituting initial sounds, proceed to their substituting middle and ending sounds.

- ▶ “What rhymes with ‘big’ and has /a/ in the middle?”

Extension - use consonant blends (two or more phonemes) at the beginning. For example,

- ▶ “What would you hear if you took the /tr/ off ‘tree’ and replaced it with /fl/?” (‘flee’)
- ▶ “What would you hear if you took the /j/ off jump and replaced it with the sound /gr/?” (‘grump’)

Purpose ▾

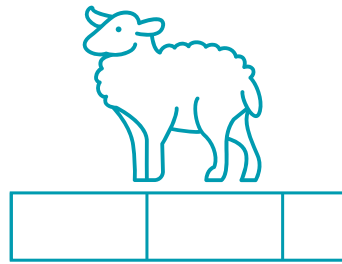
Listen for phonemes using multisensory approaches

Activity ▾

Elkonin sound boxes

Application and transfer ▾

Students build phonological awareness by segmenting words into sounds or syllables.



- 1 Pronounce a target word slowly, stretching it out by sound.
- 2 Ask the child to repeat the word.
- 3 Use a template or draw boxes (squares) on a piece of paper or whiteboard, one box for each syllable or phoneme.
- 4 Have the child put counters, one for each phoneme in each box as they repeat the word. For example, sheep has three phonemes and will use three boxes. /sh/, /ee/, /p/.
- 5 Coloured counters may be used to differentiate consonants and vowels.

Tap out sounds

Students tap out each sound heard in a word with their hand by starting at the opposite arm's shoulder for the first sound and moving down the arm for each additional sound.

Finger spelling

Students touch an individual finger with their thumb for each sound heard, not for each letter.

Practise distinguishing phonemes in routine contexts

Sounds-based class routines

Use formal and informal experiences to build routines that rely on phonemic awareness. For example, call students to group or line up according to the first (middle or last) sounds in their names.

Resources



- ▶ [Sounds and Words | Phonological awareness](#), Literacy Online
- ▶ [Sound Sense: Supporting reading and writing in years 1-3 | Hearing sounds in spoken words](#), (Ministry of Education, 2018)
- ▶ [Exploring Language: A handbook for teachers | Letters and sounds](#), (Ministry of Education, 1996)

Reading strategies and activities

Students with dyslexia often use the context to “guess” words as a compensatory strategy when reading (as all children do while they are acquiring literacy skills). This works well for them as long as the surrounding context is supportive. When students are unable to recognise words in print easily, fluency is diminished and this impacts on comprehension.

The development of reading skills depends on oral language skills. Interventions to boost children’s oral language comprehension skills will also improve reading comprehension skills.

Teaching strategies

Plan to provide:

- ▶ explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics
- ▶ strategies for decoding –
 - using grapheme/phoneme knowledge and spelling knowledge
 - recognising parts of words (roots, affixes, chunks, and rimes)
 - using analogy (comparing the unknown word with all or part of a known word)
 - recognising words on sight (automatically)
 - knowing the position of a letter relative to the other letters in a word (for example, distinguishing “trap” from “tarp” or “part” by correctly locating the letters in relation to each other within the word)
 - using the context to confirm partial decoding attempts.
- ▶ instruction in making meaning from text
- ▶ many opportunities to read and write connected text within a literature-rich environment, both with teacher support and feedback and independently.
- ▶ instruction (including grouping practices and the level of explicitness) to meet the needs of each student.

For older students (7–12 years) with persisting reading difficulties

- ▶ Provide intensive, focused, systematic programmes of direct instruction, with a strong emphasis on structured, explicit phonics to improve reading accuracy.
- ▶ Adapt key components from early reading intervention; include word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension activities (Griffiths & Stuart, 2013).

For secondary school students who have dyslexia

- ▶ Place learners in ability-appropriate groups across all subject classes.
- ▶ Provide specific support with reading and recording so they can develop conceptual abilities alongside their intellectual peers. Simultaneously provide:
 - In-class interventions to build vocabulary, text comprehension, and fluency across all areas of the curriculum.
 - More intensive interventions for the word-level components (phonemic awareness/phonics), which constrain students’ ability to attend to meaning in processing text (Reed & Vaughan, 2010).

For learners with English as a second language who have dyslexia

- ▶ Select materials that acknowledge diversity.
- ▶ Use a multisensory structured language approach to explicitly teach the correspondence between written letters and the sounds they make.
- ▶ Link assessments to reading material which is “culture-fair” (Peer & Reid, 2000).

These students face an additional challenge pronouncing vowels and consonants that are not in their native language. Differences in stress, intonation, and rhythm affect their comprehension.

Reading activities

Select activities to reinforce the teaching strategies.

Purpose ▾

Learn high frequency words

Activity ▾

Build word lists

Application and transfer ▾

Base early literacy on word families and phonic patterns, and avoid random lists of high-frequency words which overload struggling learners.

Use lists such as [Dolch](#) to check for vocabulary that needs to be taught. Teach these words out of context in the first instance; when students can recognise a word out of context, they will usually be able to recognise it in a sentence (Beers, 2003, p. 213).

Teach a few words at a time. Write them on index cards for the student to keep and read. As a word is learned, add a new word.

Reinforce word learning by using:

- ▶ a word wall in junior classes
- ▶ topic word lists that students can add to themselves in senior classes.

Allow plenty of time for reading at the student's independent level. This enables students to practise the words they have learned as they read running text.

Strengthen letter/sound connections

Specific features of words

Select a word feature that the student knows well and use this to explore other less well-known aspects of that feature. Features could include:

- ▶ short and long vowels or consonants (including blends and digraphs)
- ▶ letter clusters and chunks (including commonly encountered syllable patterns and rimes)
- ▶ word families (using root words, prefixes and suffixes, and compound words)
- ▶ analogies and how to maximise their use.



Purpose ▾

Develop decoding skills

Activity ▾

Practise checking decoding attempts

Application and transfer ▾

Model, then guide students to use the meaning and context along with any visual information to check that partial decoding attempts are correct.



Allow time for individual or small group instruction where students can be guided (scaffolded) to use strategies to decode words (for example, how to segment and blend the sounds in words).

Support students to decode

Prompt students as they read

Use prompting rather than correcting to help students to decode words themselves. Prompts can be general (“Try that again.”) or specific (“Can you find a pattern you know?”).

- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 1 to 4 | Prompting](#) (Ministry of Education, 2003 p. 81)
- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8 | Prompting](#) (Ministry of Education, 2006 p. 83)

Encourage fluency

Model fluent reading

At all year levels, teacher modelling is an important way to encourage fluency. When you read short extracts aloud, students are better able to continue reading the text with fluency and accuracy; cue students into meaning and structure.

Increase word and text knowledge by building on the known

Word recognition strategies

Teach students to use phonological and spelling knowledge to recognise words.

- ▶ Start with known sounds or spelling patterns and develop lists of words that fit these patterns.
- ▶ Highlight the known patterns in the words and make connections between known and unknown words.

Teach students how words can often be analysed into the parts they are “built” from.

- ▶ Start with familiar parts – roots, affixes, chunks, syllables, and rimes.
- ▶ Use “word-part” cards to explore possible combinations.

Teach students to draw on prior knowledge of text to help with the prediction of structures and vocabulary.

Purpose ▾

Develop awareness of punctuation in texts

Activity ▾

Identify punctuation

Application and transfer ▾

Have students search for common punctuation marks in texts they are reading, or in shared reading texts.

- ▶ Start with the most common punctuation marks (full stops and speech marks) and gradually increase the range, focusing on where the punctuation occurs and what its function is. Discuss how readers use punctuation marks to signal pauses and intonation.
- ▶ Expand this awareness to the use of symbols and numbers in text (for example, in notices, advertisements, math texts or newspapers).

Scaffold reading practice

Use electronic storybooks

Have students read digital stories. Ministry of Education online readers are available on:

- ▶ [iTunes](#)
- ▶ [Google Play](#)



Resources



- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 1 to 4 | Building comprehension](#) (Ministry of Education, 2003 pp. 131-135)
- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8 | Teaching comprehension](#) (Ministry of Education, 2006 pp. 141-152)
- ▶ [Sound sense: Supporting reading and writing in years 1-3 | Reading and writing](#) (Ministry of Education, 2018 pp. 18-22)
- ▶ [Effective literacy strategies in years 9 to 13: A guide for teachers](#) (Ministry of Education, 2004 pp. 51-98)



Designing reading interventions for older students

Older readers who are significantly behind their peers (more than three or four year levels) require blocks of time devoted to intervention to accelerate their reading development (Reed & Vaughan, 2010).

Identify the specific nature of the difficulties a student is experiencing, such as:

- ▶ word decoding and reading accuracy
- ▶ slow reading speed
- ▶ reading comprehension (Turner & Bodien, 2007).

The majority of older students with reading difficulties can decode single-syllable words, but they often have difficulty reading multisyllabic words quickly and accurately. These students need a process for breaking a longer word into its constituent parts so it can be pronounced and understood.

This process can take two forms:

- 1 identifying the syllable types (that is, closed; open; silent e; r-controlled; vowel pair; and final stable syllables)
- 2 identifying the morphemes (that is, prefixes, suffixes, and roots) that make up the word.

Reading instruction should include:

- ▶ the prosodic features of language (intonation, stress, and rhythm)
- ▶ expert modelling of fluent reading
- ▶ opportunities for students to apply skills to authentic texts through assisted and repeated readings
- ▶ immediate instructional feedback related to students' individual goals for rate, accuracy, and expression (Reed & Vaughan, 2010).

Using the Response to Intervention model, described on page 69, provide Tier 2 or Tier 3 support as needed for each child and assess the effectiveness of the intervention frequently.

Writing and spelling strategies and activities

The teacher's role is to understand how writing vocabulary develops and to teach the strategies that proficient spellers use, providing support until students are able to operate independently.

Words with irregular spellings make spelling even more challenging for students with dyslexia. They may:

- ▶ have an over-reliance on phonetic spellings
- ▶ attempt to recall a visual image of an irregular word, leading to an incorrect letter sequence (for example, "bule" for "blue", "siad" for "said", "fredn" for "friend")
- ▶ not have the ability to use visual memory of known words to check that the words they write "look right".

Teaching strategies

- ▶ Explore:
 - the relationships between sounds and letters and learn about how words are constructed (morphology), for example, with roots and affixes
 - how words are spelt (orthography), for example, with spelling patterns, "rules" or conventions.
- ▶ Select one or two spelling needs to focus on at a time. Focusing on too many areas can cause students to become confused and frustrated.
- ▶ Choose words that students use in the context of their regular writing.
- ▶ Draw on students' existing spelling strengths (for example, using words they can spell easily or sound/letter patterns they know, then making analogies that will help them to spell words that have similarities).
- ▶ Analyse errors in written samples and tests to determine areas of strength and weakness (for example, medial vowel difficulties (those in the middle of words) or difficulties with specific consonant clusters).
- ▶ Reinforce the spoken aspects of language to help students organise their thinking and to ensure sequencing is supported at the word, phrase, and sentence level, as well as over the whole text.

Writing and spelling activities

Automatic retrieval of words from long-term memory is the most efficient spelling strategy, but these teaching activities used together or separately can help students to spell unfamiliar words. Build metacognitive awareness by explicitly identifying skills used in the activities so students can select approaches for themselves.

Purpose ▾

Build on known spelling patterns

Activity ▾

Spelling patterns

Application and transfer ▾

Explicitly teach spelling patterns and the relationship between the sounds and letters (using rime, chunking, and phoneme recognition) so students can build on what they already know.



Select words for instruction from class studies or topics. Explicitly introduce new words. Plan for students to see/read those words many times.

Practise making connections - using what they know

Make links

A student who can spell “night” can use this knowledge to help spell “right”. If the student knows how to write “looked” they can write the inflection ending for “jumped”, but will need to know a different word to link to the inflection in “wanted” or “played”. With examples for all the sounds that this inflection makes, the student has a point of reference they can use to learn how to spell new words.



Word analysis - build on the known

Word banks

Analyse the words students are able to spell, then show them how to use what they know to spell other words. Students can build a personal bank or chart of words they can spell, based on knowing how to spell one word.

Purpose ▾**Activity** ▾**Application and transfer** ▾**Regularly access known words****Write every day**

Through regular writing and focused instruction, support students to:

- ▶ make connections between the sounds they know (in isolation and in words or parts of words) and the sounds in the words they want to write
- ▶ learn there are sound-to-letter mismatches within many words; this helps them to learn spelling patterns.

Scaffold learning**Write conversations**

Teacher and student carry out a conversation in writing. The teacher can scaffold the student's writing and, without overemphasising spelling, select one or two things to explore (such as a spelling pattern that occurs more than once or the shape of a word) as the "conversation" progresses.

Support and reinforce new learning**Interactive, paired and shared writing**

The pen may be held by the teacher or the student, and the text is discussed orally before being written. As the writing progresses, discuss spelling, word order, and the sequencing of ideas. Support and reinforce new learning.

Practise using models for writing**Make literacy resources for others**

Older students can create simple texts and games for younger students (for example, by adapting a fairy story, a nursery rhyme, a myth or legend or a word game). Use models for support when necessary. As an added benefit, this often increases participation and builds self-esteem.

Develop awareness of punctuation**Position punctuation**

Focus on the use of punctuation in students' writing or in shared writing texts. Start with the most common forms of punctuation and gradually increase the range, focusing on their functions and how they affect meaning.

Give students a list of punctuation marks (full stops, speech marks, commas, exclamation marks) and have them refer to the list as they write.

Resources

- ▶ Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8 | Spelling (Ministry of Education, 2006 pp. 161-166)
- ▶ [Monitoring progress in developmental spelling: Splrs at wrk](#) (Croft, 2019)
- ▶ [Sounds and Words | Spelling](#), Literacy Online
- ▶ [Exploring language: A handbook for teachers](#) (Ministry of Education, 1996 pp. 92-93, 105-115)

Strategies writers use to construct meaning:

- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 1 to 4 | Creating texts](#) (Ministry of Education, 2003 pp. 136-141)
- ▶ [Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8 | Supporting the writing process](#) (Ministry of Education, 2006 pp. 153-160)
- ▶ [Effective literacy strategies in years 9 to 13: A guide for teachers](#) (Ministry of Education, 2004 pp. 84-171)

School leadership

Setting up for success

The key principle for providing a dyslexia-friendly learning environment is consistency throughout the school and across the whole staff, teaching and non-teaching (nasen, 2015).

Developing an inclusive school	67
Culturally responsive, evidence-based practice	68
Response to Intervention model	69
Build a school support team	70
Successful transitions	70
Professional learning	71

Developing an inclusive school

The [Inclusive Education](#) website provides practical guidance for schools to recognise, plan for, and meet the learning and wellbeing needs of diverse learners.

Features of a school in which all students, including those with dyslexia or who show signs of dyslexia, are valued and supported include:

- ▶ strong and supportive leadership
- ▶ ongoing targeted professional development for teachers
- ▶ staff who recognise the particular strengths and needs associated with literacy learning difficulties, such as dyslexia
- ▶ a strong emphasis on good first teaching, with early intervention where needed, and provision of accommodations – a “don’t wait to fail” approach
- ▶ working with specialists such as RTLB to support classroom teachers assess and plan specific instruction for students with literacy needs
- ▶ a consistent school-wide approach with teachers working together to create consistency for learners across the school
- ▶ the use of effective, evidence-based strategies and selected programmes that meet students’ needs
- ▶ ways of identifying, valuing, and nurturing areas of interest and strength to maintain students’ engagement and self-esteem
- ▶ efficient systems for recording, and rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and sharing of information
- ▶ valuing student voice and their knowledge of themselves as learners
- ▶ strong partnerships with parents, caregivers, and whānau, including effective two-way communication
- ▶ effective processes for transitions into, out of, and between schools and between classes – good communication is essential
- ▶ a whole-school approach to identifying and meeting students’ learning needs
- ▶ a culture of high expectations for all, with the understanding that accommodations enable successful learning outcomes.

Culturally responsive, evidence-based practice

In your school take into account our unique Aotearoa New Zealand context and the influence that ethnicity and culture may have on:

- 1 identifying and understanding the needs of a student with dyslexia
- 2 the selection, implementation, and interpretation of approaches and interventions to support a student with dyslexia. (Reveley, 2016)
- 3 ways of working in partnership with a student and their whānau. (Berryman, 2015)

Treaty of Waitangi principles and what they could look like in action

(Macfarlane, 2015)

Article	Principle	Article summary
1	<p>Partnership</p> <p>Guarantees a say in decision making.</p>	<p>As partners whānau are involved and adequately resourced to participate in all decisions.</p> <hr/> <p>There is a balance of power. Power is shared with whānau, hapū, iwi, and Māori communities.</p> <hr/> <p>Tikanga-based and culturally appropriate ways of engaging and communicating with whānau, hapū, iwi, and Māori communities are used at the conception of, and throughout the engagement process.</p>
2	<p>Protection</p> <p>Māori retain the right to self-determination regarding all issues of importance to them.</p>	<p>The mana and wellbeing of tamaiti and the whānau remain intact and/or is actively promoted/enhanced.</p> <hr/> <p>Whānau, hapū, iwi, and Māori community perspectives and preferences add strategic value.</p> <hr/> <p>The language of choice (te reo Māori only, English or bilingualism) is valued and incorporated appropriately.</p>
3	<p>Participation</p> <p>Guarantees the equity of rights, privileges, opportunities, and outcomes.</p>	<p>Whānau, hapū, iwi, and Māori communities have access to appropriate and “just in time” services and support.</p> <hr/> <p>Culturally sustained participation and practices are actively encouraged to enhance outcomes.</p> <hr/> <p>Specific cultural expertise is resourced appropriately and of strategic value in order to enhance practice and facilitate equitable outcomes.</p>

Response to Intervention model

The Response to Intervention (RTI) model is a whole-school, tiered approach, designed to improve student learning outcomes. Using the model helps educators to make suitable adjustments to teaching and learning. This ensures that the right levels of support are in place for individuals and groups within effective universal teaching and learning practices that benefit all learners.

The RTI model is tailored to individual needs, allowing children and young people to move flexibly between the tiers of support according to their rates of progress.

RTI allows early identification of learners who are not progressing as they should despite accessing evidence-based learning experiences within a strong general education programme.



Universal

Tier one



Targeted

Tier two



Individualised

Tier three



(Also known as the Tiered Support Model.)

Tier 1 - Universal: Evidence-based literacy teaching and learning.

For learners experiencing difficulties, plan to provide:

- ▶ specific, targeted teaching as part of the learning programme
- ▶ frequent progress monitoring
- ▶ flexible groups for differentiated learning.

Tier 2 - Targeted: More deliberate and direct approaches to support learners, whānau, and educators.

Typically taking place alongside peers, these more targeted small-group supplementary supports include:

- ▶ intensive instruction in identified area(s) of need, sometimes from a support teacher
- ▶ frequent individual progress monitoring
- ▶ extra support, which may be 2–3 hours a week.

Tier 3 - Individualised: More tailored supports for the specific needs of learners, within their contexts.

This teaching approach is personalised, multisensory, structured, and sequential. Individualised support may include programmes supported by specialist teachers such as Resource Teachers of Literacy and Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour.



Build a school support team

Despite good-quality teaching in the classroom some students might still experience difficulties. At this point more explicit Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions may be planned.

A support team may be required for the student. This can be informal or formalised through an IEP. It will include school staff, the family/whānau and other resource people as needed. Clarify roles and responsibilities.

Internal supports:

- ▶ senior teacher or syndicate leader (primary), dean or department head (secondary)
- ▶ SENCO
- ▶ learning support coordinator
- ▶ school literacy leader.

External supports:

- ▶ Resource teacher of literacy
- ▶ Resource teacher of learning and behaviour.

Successful transitions

As students move from one setting or teacher to another, there will be changes and differences that can be stressful. All staff involved in a transition need to be aware of the student's needs to ensure a collective responsibility for success.

From an early childhood education service to school

If early childhood education service staff or parents and caregivers have concerns about a child's progress, open communication and careful observations will be needed. Supports such as pre-entry visits and careful pairing with a more confident peer may be useful.

From class to class, school to school

To build on learning as students move up year by year, schools need to develop school-wide processes for documenting progress and the next teaching and learning steps, for example, the sounds, letters, and spelling patterns taught and mastered. By doing this, teachers can reinforce and build on the previous year's work, then move on to the next steps, rather than having to rediscover what students have already been taught and learned. Effective teaching strategies and areas of strength and interest should be noted and accessible for all teachers involved. An individual profile is a useful tool. This information is important for transitions between schools.

Professional learning

Plan cohesive, school-wide professional learning for teachers, teacher aides, and support staff. Provide them with time, information, and practical support to develop their understanding and plan approaches that enable them to constructively engage with learners who have dyslexia.

To support learners with dyslexia, teachers need:

- ▶ to understand what dyslexia is and how it affects learning
- ▶ to understand the importance of early identification and intervention
- ▶ knowledge of reading and spelling processes and the challenges of acquiring literacy so they can plan teaching approaches that support students to develop literacy skills
- ▶ to provide accommodations that remove barriers in the classroom so that students can access information, participate fully in learning activities and demonstrate their learning
- ▶ to understand the challenges learners with dyslexia experience beyond literacy, particularly in their working memory and organisational skills
- ▶ to understand the need for multisensory teaching that is structured, cumulative, sequential, and where necessary, repetitive to circumvent the weakness in memory and learning that children with dyslexia often experience.

Teacher inquiry

In your professional learning conversations with teachers, support them to inquire into their practice and identify how they can recognise and support learners with dyslexia. With reference to Our Code, Our Standards, consider how they can gather evidence of their practice to demonstrate how they are supporting learners with dyslexia and engaging with their whānau.

Discuss



- ▶ How you will identify the specific needs of students with dyslexia in your school.
- ▶ How you will build a cumulative phonics programme across your school.
- ▶ How you will implement the RTI model in your school to provide targeted teaching and improved student learning outcomes.
- ▶ How you will identify the needs of your teachers and provide ongoing professional learning to recognise and support learners with dyslexia.
- ▶ How you could implement a school-wide multisensory approach to teaching.
- ▶ What are the barriers to success? What systems need changing? What approaches need implementing?

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