

History and dyslexia

<p>History is part of the curriculum where students with SLCN are likely to experience difficulties. It is a complex subject with unfamiliar terminology and abstract concepts. Successful learning in history requires confidence in talking, reading, writing and thinking. It requires an ability to remember and recall complex information and, at the secondary stage, relies increasingly on understanding the motivation of historical characters and reasons for events. Knowledge and understanding then needs to be presented in extended, specialised narrative forms which will be difficult for students with SLCN. In order for students to overcome these problems, it is important for subject teachers to understand the impact of SLCN and ways to offer support.</p>		
Factors to take into account and characteristics of some dyslexic students which will affect learning	Impact on learning in the history classroom. Students may have difficulty with the following	Implications for planning of classroom teaching
<p>Speech</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being understood when speaking, responding to questions, asking for clarification about what to do • Pretending not to know when asked a question, rather than face the embarrassment of speaking • Students with speech problems often have corresponding difficulties with fine motor skills, e.g. for handwriting • Being very slow to respond to teacher questions or instructions. Needing extra thinking time • Saying longer, multisyllabic words • Decoding written text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the student has a range of opportunities to demonstrate their understanding rather than relying on responding orally to questions • Anticipate difficulties with complex motor skills such as handwriting • Plan for students needing more time to think before responding to a question • When teaching new vocabulary, point out the sound and syllable structure of words • Provide visual reminders of new vocabulary.
<p>Expressive language including writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to contribute to whole-class or group discussions • Word-finding difficulties can disrupt fluency of talking • Using an appropriate narrative structure in their writing or retelling of events • Tendency to omit the motivation and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide (visual) structure for describing sequences, e.g. writing frames • For students reluctant to ask questions, prior to class, arrange a discreet signal that they can use to indicate that they need help. This could be placing a piece of coloured equipment on their desk, or turning over a card • Specifically teach common-use vocabulary as well

	<p>perspective of characters in retelling of events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor ability to predict • Poor ability to ask questions to get help and elicit information • Disorganised and sometimes long-winded in describing their thoughts • Failure to take account of the interests of the listener/reader or write for different audiences, or to 'put themselves in someone else's shoes' • Tangential, inappropriate or irrelevant responses • Tend to use an immature writing style usually associated with a younger child, e.g. 'then he did this, and then he did that, and then...' 	<p>as technical terms, e.g. event, oral account, ideas, beliefs, attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in opportunities for peer-to-peer and group discussion. Consider which style of grouping is most appropriate for a student's needs. Snowballing (peer to peer, then pairs join pairs, then fours join fours, etc.) builds in opportunities to practise describing an opinion • Allow time for the whole class to prepare answers • Model good speaking and listening skills for students with difficulties • Use writing frames or narrative frames to structure language: spoken and written.
<p>Understanding language including reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying attention to information and instructions delivered to the whole class • Complex grammatical forms, e.g. embedded clauses, etc. in written and spoken texts • Understanding what has been said and acting on it • Understanding new vocabulary • Linking new information to what is already known, tending to deal with specific examples without building up concepts • Abstract ideas, particularly time and emotions • Understanding cause/effect and salience, picking out main points • Confusion about which meaning of a word is appropriate in a particular context such as 'class, state, party' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the lesson by recapping on previous learning and giving a simple overview of what this lesson will be about • Consider positioning of the student. Use a seating plan which removes distractions from their field of vision during teacher talk. • Organise teaching so that spoken information is 'chunked' and interspersed with other activity • Plan to introduce new information in a multisensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it • Pre-preparation of text to highlight important information or key words may help • Consider story-boarding complex texts in simple cartoon form to support understanding • Use of comic strip and thought bubbles to explain motivation, intent, etc. • Use questioning to check that information has been understood

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not understanding idioms, metaphors, similes, inference • Poor understanding of question forms • A gap between the student's ability to decode text and their ability to derive meaning from it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid complex grammatical structures, e.g. 'Before you start the map, finish the worksheet.' is more complex to understand than: 'Finish the worksheet, then start the map.' • Slow down rate of speech.
Social and functional use of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding that subtly different types of behaviour are expected in history compared with other subjects and at different parts of the history lesson • Understanding the motivations and intentions of characters from history • Getting into trouble because inappropriate comments seen to be rudeness • Not understanding how to take turns appropriately during discussions • Problems differentiating fact from fiction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and provide visual reminders of expected behaviour in the classroom including when it's okay to chat while you work, how loud this can be, etc. and praise students who get it right • Teach the skills required to work cooperatively in a group and provide feedback after an activity • Discuss and make explicit what is implicit within an account of an event.
Organisational and other including memory, numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering and carrying out instructions • Remembering recently-learned vocabulary and information • Saying multisyllabic words • Placing events in order/sequencing • Organising coursework and completing to deadline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to link new information to the familiar and areas of interest for the student • Provide homework as a worksheet rather than expecting students to record key information in a diary from verbal teacher instructions • Break down processes and tasks into small steps with visual/symbol support, use of task sheets, checklists • Provide concise revision notes with lots of visual rather than textual information – flow charts, timelines, and concept maps.
Emotion and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding ways to avoid tackling difficult tasks or aspects of history class including self-distraction, getting sent out of class for misbehaviour, absenteeism, exiting • Behaving responsibly, difficulty with inhibiting impulsive behaviour 	<p><i>Much of the planning above will make the learning situation more successful and therefore impact on emotional or behavioural consequences.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using sarcasm or implied meaning to tackle misbehaviour. Be explicit about what you consider appropriate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frustration can lead to destroying own work when a problem is encountered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure parts of the lesson involving peer interaction with clear expectations of how cooperation should work• Agree with student, in advance of the lesson, what their own warning signs are and arrange a discreet signal to let them know it's time to use a calming strategy• Help students see strengths as well as difficulties by building in opportunities to reflect on and analyse skills as well as knowledge, e.g. three- or five-point scale.
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