

## Resources

### General

Always ask people who have disabilities what their particular needs are and make reasonable adjustments according to their specific requirements. Two people with the same disability may not have the same needs.

### Dyspraxia

According to the Dyspraxia Foundation (2001), severely dyspraxic students may experience **difficulties** with some of the following:

**Planning their movements and being aware of the space around them.** They frequently bump into and trip over things.

**Perception.** They often find it difficult to judge heights and distances. This can make them appear clumsy.

**Co-ordinating different parts of the body.** They may find it hard to catch, throw and balance as well as moving the different parts of their body without looking. Sport and dancing can cause acute problems.

**Laterality.** It may be difficult to work out right from left without a reminder.

**Manual and practical work.** Due to their poor motor skills, dyspraxic students often find it difficult to handle equipment (e.g. keyboards, tools, cars, bandages, laboratory and cooking equipment). They often knock over or spill things.

**Handwriting.** They tend to write laboriously slowly. In addition, their hand-writing can be difficult to read. Accurate copying can be difficult.

**Language.** They may find it difficult to pronounce some words and some may stutter.

**Concentration.** They may take a long time to complete a task and find it difficult to do more than one thing at a time.

**Short term memory and sequencing tasks.** They may find it hard to make sense of information when listening to or reading instructions, taking notes from books and lectures, and dealing with maps and charts. They may keep forgetting and losing things as well as finding it difficult to spell.

**Organisation and sport.** They may operate in a muddled way, having little sense of direction, time or weight. They tend to find it difficult to organise themselves and their work. Hence, they are likely to miss appointments and hand in assignments late. They may find it difficult to express themselves.

A combination of several of the above difficulties can lead to emotional problems (e.g. depression, anger, frustration, anxiousness and low self-esteem). Many dyspraxic students find it difficult to relate to others (especially in groups) and some read social cues incorrectly.

### Support

#### 1. Lectures/tutorials

- Discuss the planning and organisation of work, both practical and academic. Show examples of essays, reports and projects. Provide opportunities for feedback and check understanding.
- Provide handouts prior to all sessions – it can help to improve memory and concentration issues.
- Encourage dyspraxic students to record lectures.

## 2. Practical Sessions

- Present instructions in logical sequences.
- Divide processes into smaller steps.
- Check that students can handle equipment safely (e.g. in a laboratory). When necessary, items that can be secured should be – it can prevent spillages and breakages.

## 3. Testing and Examinations

- Many students with dyspraxia are entitled to extra time during examinations. They can also benefit from working on a computer or having an amanuensis available.

For more information, see:

General Marking Guidelines

<http://www.admin.ex.ac.uk/academic/disability/general-marking.php>

Dyspraxia Foundation      [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)

Source: Mary Reece, Disability Officer, University of Exeter, Disability Resource Centre, Old Library, Prince of Wales Road, Exeter, EX4 4SB.

## Sensitive Responses to Disability

Think about the words you use.

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use instead</b>
the handicapped	disabled people
the disabled	disabled people
Cripple, invalid	disabled person
Spastic	person who has cerebral palsy
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of...	has or with... (the condition or impairment)
mentally handicapped, retarded, subnormal	learning impaired
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
able-bodied	non-disabled
disabled toilet*	accessible toilet*

Source: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk) (\*not on the scope list)