and Inclusive Practice

Dyslexia: Identification and support

Dyslexia identification support

3 Enquiry and Research

This version of the content may include video, images and interactive content that may not be optimised for your device.

Copyright © 2018

Intellectual property

Unless otherwise stated, this resource is released under the terms of the Creative Commons Licence v4.0 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en_GB.

Contents

In this section we will look at:

3.1 Identification Research

3.2 The Action Research Task

http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3042

3.1 Identification research

A range of different dyslexia definitions and approaches to identifying dyslexia are used across the world. The variations can be due to the range of different policies from education departments and national approaches as a result of inputs from various stakeholders.

Understanding the range of factors involved which influence the various dyslexia definitions is helpful as it can explain why there may be a particular focus on one area. For example if the definition is to support a specific area of research. Some definitions are very defined , the British Psychological Society focuses strongly on 'word level 'difficulties and is very evident in their definition below.

Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.' *(1999) Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment, Report of the Working Party of the DECP of British Psychological Society (BPS)*

However as you are aware in January 2009, the Scottish Government, Dyslexia Scotland and the [Cross Party Group on Dyslexia](#) in the Scottish Parliament agreed on the following working definition of dyslexia. The aim of this particular definition is

to provide a description of the range of indicators and characteristics of dyslexia as helpful guidance for educational practitioners, learners, parents/carers and others. This definition has been endorsed by the Association of Scottish Principle Educational Psychologists (ASPEP)

The literature review in section 3' Enquiry and Research' of the routemap has a number of papers which will support your professional development and enquiry in this area.

Below are 2 articles which discuss this issue.

There are a number of issues here that highlight what appears to be serious conceptual confusion in the field. These carve out an important agenda both for research and practice.

In order to consider what is at stake, it is helpful first to refer to the important theoretical framework proposed by Morton and Frith (1995; see also Morton, 2004). According to this framework, it is important when considering developmental disorders to separate the biological, the cognitive and the behavioural levels of explanation. Importantly, it is necessary to acknowledge that developmental disorders are dynamic and there are environmental interactions at all levels. So the behavioural manifestations of disorders, such as dyslexia, change with time, and also in different

http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3042

contexts – for example we would see different behaviours in a child taught to read in Italian or in one who received early intervention.

The phonological deficit theory of dyslexia, featured in the documentary, is a theory at the cognitive level. It explains a constellation of behaviours that are normally associated with dyslexia (short-term memory problems, word-finding difficulties, etc.). The phonological deficit theory is a well-specified, falsifiable theory that so far has not been refuted. What many respondents are upset about is that certain behaviours often associated with dyslexia are not explained by the theory – e.g. visual problems, problems of organisation and of motor control. Of course, it is correct that these behaviours often co-occur with dyslexia; they signal important co-morbidities. Why they do is poorly understood. Next steps must involve seeking both biological and cognitive explanations of these associated disorders so that ultimately we can begin to unpick what is dyslexia (the construct under threat), what is not dyslexia and why these behaviours co-occur so frequently. But, to gather everything under the umbrella of 'dyslexia' helps neither theory nor practice. As for the call for 'cut-off points' for 'dyslexia', we can as a profession agree criteria for extra time or a laptop computer, but it is meaningless to imagine quantitative criteria defining a dynamic developmental disorder.

Maggie Snowling

University of York

https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-18/edition-12/dyslexia-debate-continues

Download the article Dyslexia by any other name

Neurodiversity and dyslexia

The Oxford dictionary defines Neurodiversity as

> 'The range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population (used especially in the context of autistic spectrum disorders)'

Dyslexia Scotland Magazine - March 2016 published an article which promoted the view that neurodiversity should be seen as valuable resource – one which has been overlooked in relation to education and the brain patterns previously referred to as 'disorders' are actually different patterns of healthy wiring. They are just wired up to support different strengths in function.
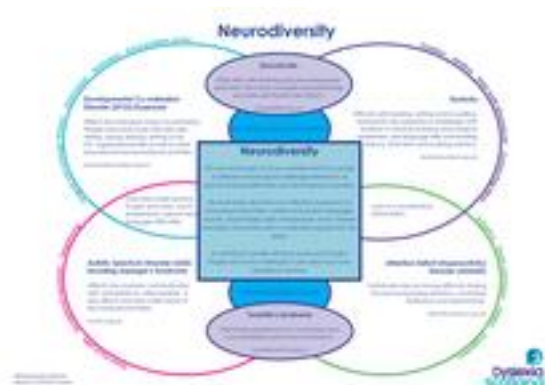
Figure 14 Neurodiversity

View description - Figure 14 Neurodiversity

In England the Department of Education and Skills funded a project called 'The Train the Trainer: Teaching forNeurodiversity' which ran until 31st March 2017. See further information on the **British Dyslexia Association website**

You can access the link for the guide which the project published 'Teaching for Neurodiversity A Guide to Specific Learning Difficulties'

The project highlighted that the concept of neurodiversity is spreading across a range of areas within education. Those who are using the term define it a means of empowerment and to promote the positive qualities possessed by those with a

neurological difference. It encourages people to view neurological differences such as autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia as natural and normal variations of the human genome. Further, it encourages them to reject the culturally entrenched negativity which has typically surrounded those that live, learn and view the world differently.

Activity 15

In your Reflective Log provide a comment on the following questions.

1. What definition does your local authority use to support the identification of dyslexia?
2. What are the implications /impact of the chosen definition?
3. What is your professional view regarding dyslexia and neurodiversity?
4. Hot topics/questions

The route map includes some questions to discuss with colleagues for which there is not necessarily a clear answer. Some of the questions below are for you engage with during professional

---

discussion or to include within your own reflections and action research:

Download a discussion sheet to help you collate responses

- Should the focus and resources be used on the identification or label of dyslexia or should schools concentrate on meeting the needs of the child and young person through a collaborative process?
- Should teachers in Scotland be required to participate in training to carry out the identification of dyslexia?
- Should teachers in Scotland be required to gain qualifications to carry out the identification of dyslexia?
- How can we provide a continuity of support and access to support for dyslexia and inclusion across Scotland?
- How should independent assessments of dyslexia be regarded and supported within schools and what is the legal status of independent assessments?
- Are the roles of identification and tracking for dyslexia understood within 'Assessment is for Learning'? Is it understood that when meeting learners' needs the assessment of learning informs the next steps and should be continuous and separate from 'identification' of dyslexia. The label alone will not

http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3042

provide appropriate support; this is achieved by regular tracking and reviewing of learners needs.

- Can the identification process for dyslexia be a positive experience for children and young people? Does the process enable them to understand their strengths and difficulties in a supportive approach and provide opportunities for their views to be sought?

- Are children and young people, teachers and parents/carers provided with appropriate information/feedback to support their understanding of which approaches/strategies are effective and why?

http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3042

3.2 The Action Research Task

The Action research task has been included within this module to provide an opportunity for you to investigate in further detail an area of interest you have developed. The research task must enable you to

- Demonstrate that you have engaged in enhanced, significant and sustained professional learning
- Outline how your chosen area of practitioner research has been supported by relevant research, literature, policy and practice
- Provide evidence of how this learning has impacted on your skills and abilities, and on learners and learning
- Provide evidence of how you will share your knowledge, experience and learning with others in your learning community
- Provide evidence of how you have taken forward the knowledge and learning from completing the 3 modules and the practiser research task
- Provide evidence of your professional discussions with your line managers and colleagues and how these discussions shaped your thinking and practice

As you have worked through the 3 modules you may have already decided what to focus your action research on. We have made some suggestions below in case you are not sure.

- The definition/definitions your local authority uses for the identification of dyslexia –incorporating why the local authority choose the particular definition, the impact of the chosen definition, the identification process and data.
- The identification process of dyslexia – focusing on case studies
- Numeracy, math and dyslexia
- Language development and dyslexia
- Acquisition of reading skills and dyslexia
- Developing an inclusive school community
- Curriculum accessibility

Consider your use of methodology, for example include case studies and opportunities together with stakeholders' views (this may include interviews, observations and surveys). Electronic surveys can be very useful as they save time and can collate responses.

An action research template has been provided as an example. However you may wish to use your own format.

3.3 Suggested Reading

- Access the Addressing dyslexia Toolkit – [Professional Development](#) section for further suggested reading – this is list is regularly updated.

- The Power of Neurodiversity (Armstrong,T 2010)

- Dyslexia and Co Ocurring Difficulties (BDA 2012)

- Working memory – A Classroom Guide (Gathercole,S and Alloway,T 2008)

- Improving Working memory Supporting Students Learning Alloway,T.P.2010)

- Literature review within the routemap

- [The GTSC website has a range of information and examples of research](#)

Now go to [4 Educational contexts and current debates in policy, education and practice](#)

Figure 14 Neurodiversity

Description

A diagram based on the DANDA model to provide an explanation of what the term Neurodiversity means

Back to Session 1 Figure 1

http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=3042