

# Dyslexia Tips: Teaching

## Strategies

### Hands-on & Project Based Learning (PBL)

**Why** - Dyslexics often learn best through hands-on projects and experiences rather than a lecture. Additionally, Project-Based Learning measures a student's ability to learn in depth. It doesn't rely on timed tests or multiple-choice tests to measure understanding which is key for dyslexics.

### Use Dyslexic Friendly Font & Formatting

**Why** - Good fonts for dyslexics include The Dyslexie Font, Comic Sans, Helvetica, Courier, Arial and Verdana. It is important to make the font relatively large, and increase the spacing between letters, words, and lines.

### Check for Understanding Frequently

**Why** - If a student isn't grasping concepts, checking for understanding helps prevent them from falling behind or being moved to the next level before they are ready.

### Be Patient

**Why** - If a student feels you are rushing them, it can add stress and anxiety. Additionally, for dyslexics, some activities, like reading and writing, might take longer.

### Allow for Reading Options

**Why** - Let students read graphic novels or books on subjects they are interested in. Reading is difficult enough for a dyslexic, so make it a little less torturous.

### Give Directions Slowly

**Why** - For some, a lot of directions spoken quickly can be overwhelming and hard to remember. It is important to give directions slowly and in simple steps.

### Build in Extra Reading Time

**Why** - When asking all students to read material individually in class, add in more reading time than what an average student would require.

### Form Reading and Math Groups by Ability

**Why** - Placing students in math and reading groups by ability can benefit their learning and self-esteem. It is important to set a tone in the classroom that no group is better or smarter than another. Don't rank the groups. Instead, give the groups fun names (ex. penguins, lemurs, & otters).

### Be Encouraging and Supportive

**Why** - School can be difficult, but if a teacher is supportive and demonstrates to the student they are behind them it can really help the student's motivation and engagement.

### Let Students Express Themselves in Different Mediums

**Why** - Allowing students to express themselves in different mediums can promote self expression and help showcase their strengths.  
**Suggestions** - Art projects, drawing, building, videos, singing, dancing

### Suggest and Encourage Brain Breaks

**Why** - Having a positive attitude when it comes to brain breaks helps students understand they are important and not a waste of time. Furthermore, encouraging students to advocate for brain breaks not only teaches them how to self regulate but gives them independence.

### Don't Give Unnecessary Timed Assessments

**Why** - Fast does not equal intelligence. Timed assessments can punish dyslexics and not give them the chance to demonstrate their best work. This can cause dyslexics to come across as less intelligent or lazy when, in reality, they just need more time to read and answer problems.

## Things to Avoid

### Pulling Students Out in Front of Peers

**Why** - Pulling a student out of class for one-on-one instruction can be humiliating.

#### Alternatives

- Pull students out during activities when other students are distracted.
- Teach students to independently excuse themselves without having to be "pulled" by a teacher.

### Not Creating an Inclusive Classroom

**Why** - Often students with learning differences are perceived as "dumber" or inferior to their non-dyslexic classmates, making them feel isolated and insecure. It is important for teachers to recognize and correct this misperception.

#### Alternatives

- Openly discuss learning differences and how they have positives.
- Celebrate role models who are dyslexic.

### Making a Child Complete a Problem in Front of the Class

**Why** - When a child is forced to complete a problem in front of the class, they can feel unnecessary pressure and stress. Going to the board can be terrifying, and when a dyslexic is asked to spell a word in front of their peers, anxiety builds.

#### Alternatives

- Have several students work together to solve a problem.
- Allow students to work the problem out individually, and check they have the correct answer before calling them up.

### Calling on Kids to Read or Spell Out Loud

**Why** - This is a dyslexic's worst nightmare. Reading and spelling is already hard enough, but when a dyslexic has to process the information in their head and then say it out loud in front of their peers, it is extremely stressful.

#### Alternatives

- Only take volunteers to read.
- Have students read out loud in groups of 2-4 of their choosing.
  - They are with people they trust
  - This is less stressful