

MAXIMISING POTENTIAL: Points for reflection: Unit 2

PLANNING RESPONSES: AN EXAMPLE

The information stored in the accompanying grid was developed by dyslexia specialist Margaret Crombie and modern language specialist Hilary McColl in the course of working together to produce advice on modern language learning requested by the British Dyslexia Association.

The grid serves as an example of a problem solving approach to meeting the needs of learners who experience difficulties in foreign language learning. It is intended as a reference sheet in its own right, and as an introduction to Task 2. The task uses a similar approach to plan effective ways of responding to the needs of other pupils or groups of pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

The first column

Start by looking at the first column in the dyslexia grid. It contains descriptions characteristic of dyslexic learners in general. A single dyslexic learner is unlikely to experience all of these characteristics, and not all of them to the same degree, but it is important to remember that learners who experience these difficulties do not choose to do so; these are the conditions under which they work, and these provide us with a fixed starting point. The dyslexia specialist provided the bulk of the information in the first column. Note that these are examples of the most commonly experienced characteristics; more details could have been included, for example: individual learners' strengths and interests.

The second column

The second column examines the effect each of these difficulties will have on language learning for this group of learners. The modern language specialist may be aware that certain learners are struggling with these aspects of language learning, but may not be aware of the true cause of the difficulty; learners may be seen as lazy or uncooperative, for example. Assistance from the Support for Learning department can help to identify learners who are known to be dyslexic, though there may be others in the class who are mildly dyslexic but who have not been identified. Measures put in place to help dyslexic learners should help them too.

The third column

The third column suggests measures which the language specialist can incorporate into classroom practice that will help dyslexic learners and others. It is always best, if possible, to develop teaching and learning approaches that will also benefit the rest of the class, and that are sustainable beyond the lifetime of project. Staffing and time are valuable resources, but scarce.

The fourth column

Despite all that Modern Language teachers can do, however, some additional help may be needed in order to allow them to carry out plans detailed in the third column. These additional support needs go into the fourth column. They can include:

- support for the Modern Language teacher (for example, to create a set of help sheets for the class, or ICT training in some application that SfL recommend as likely to be helpful)
- support for a learner or group of learners to bring them up to speed on a particular skill (for example, dictionary skills or working with others)
- an additional measure agreed with the learner(s) (for example, spending extra time working at home)

- arrangements agreed with the school timetabler (for example, to allow teachers to work co-operatively, or to facilitate access to the ICT suite).

Use this illustration as a model when you move on to Task 2, but be flexible. None of the examples in this grid will exactly parallel your own situation. The grid that **you** produce will be a unique document designed to respond to the needs of the specific pupils you have targeted.

Remember that gifted and talented learners can have additional support needs too, and these can be identified and planned for in the same way.

Maximising Potential: Unit 2 – Dyslexia Grid

CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIC LEARNERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Factors to take into account Characteristics of dyslexic learners which will affect learning	Effect on foreign language learning Learners may have difficulties with the following	Strategies Incorporating these strategies into normal classroom practice may help	Additional support Examples of additional support which may be needed
Phonological processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor grasp of sound/symbol correspondence Lack of awareness of individual sounds within words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation, even of frequently encountered words Recognising familiar words & phrases and confusion of similar sounding words Reading, especially if asked to read aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early introduction to phonic system of the new language Introduce new material in a multisensory way - show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it, etc. Ask student to read aloud only if s/he volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use practice cards for reinforcement Provide tapes to accompany printed materials Use Language Master/PALE Pair student with a good reader
Memory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working memory is limited; if overloaded, information may be lost There may be inaccurate representations in long-term memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering and carrying out instructions (in either language) Remembering recently learned vocabulary Repeating multi-syllable words May know the answer but be unable to 'get it out'! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present new information in bite-sized chunks Set limited but realistic targets Make use of additional channels of learning - music, actions, graphics Allow extra time for recall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide materials for further revision at home or with additional support
Auditory discrimination/ perception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure of the sound which has been heard Difficulty in perceiving the difference between similar sounds Difficulty in knowing where a spoken word ends and a new word begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing whether a sound is being pronounced correctly (e.g. repeating after the teacher) Ability to recognise the difference between two words containing similar sounds in either language Listening tasks Answering oral questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide text to accompany sound. When speaking to dyslexic students, exaggerate word separation at first, then let them hear it as it would be spoken normally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If student has a choice of language, opt for one which is phonically similar to home language - e.g. Italian or Spanish may be better for English-speaking student than French.
Sequencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting things in order: e.g. alphabet, word order in a sentence, letter order in a word, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing words from dictionary Ordering days in week, months in year, numerical data, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide frequent practice using variety of strategies - rhyme, rhythm, games, songs, etc. Have lists/diagrams etc. on the wall for reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of technical aids, such as foreign language spelling and word checker Encourage the use of mnemonic strategies

Unit 2 -- Characteristics of dyslexic learners and implications for modern language teaching (continued)

<p>Factors to take into account Characteristics of dyslexic learners which will affect learning</p>	<p>Effect on foreign language learning Learners may have difficulties with the following</p>	<p>Strategies Incorporating these strategies into normal classroom practice may help</p>	<p>Additional support Examples of additional support which may be needed</p>
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwriting may be painfully slow and the result inaccurate and difficult to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copying from the board Committing to paper what can be produced orally Spelling may follow English phonic code ('mother tongue interference') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the amount of writing required for class work, but do not eliminate it Avoid assessing written work if very poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept assessments in forms other than writing - taped, word processed, etc. Provide photocopied notes with tapes which can be used for practice at home
<p>Speed of processing information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tendency to be slower in responding to incoming information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to information or instructions given verbally in either language Responding to a continuous flow of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow down speed of presentation to allow extra time for processing information Be prepared to allow student extra time to answer questions and to complete work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for extra time and other special arrangements for external examinations
<p>Difficulty with directionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tendency to confuse left/right, up/down, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following and giving directions Responding accurately to instructions which rely on prepositions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide pictures, arrows, etc. as well as text Give visual clues when speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pair student with another who has no difficulties in this area and who can help
<p>Grammar and syntax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor understanding of grammar and syntax in first language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming accurate sentences Rules of grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach rules and reinforce daily Use diagrams, cards and other language building blocks, etc. to demonstrate linear sequences and patterns of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write rules onto revision cards for students to use as reference in class and at home
<p>Visual discrimination/recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor ability to discriminate and/or differentiate between words in and between words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiating between similar looking words (in either language or between languages) Differentiating between accents, and therefore assigning correct pronunciation Confusion between languages, e.g. pain (bread) in French confused with the English word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use picture cues for association Use practice cards for daily revision of common words with accents Highlight accents in colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Language Master to aid learning of common words to help with accents and to reinforce easily confusable words

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