

**EAL learners and dyslexia**

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# Plan of the session

1. An audit of the skills and knowledge associated with reading proficiency
2. Identifying dyslexia in a child who is learning EAL and reading in English
3. Basic strategies in teaching pupils with EAL who show learning difficulties in literacy

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# **An audit of the list on page 4 of the handout**

Which of the skills and areas of knowledge listed in the left hand column would expect to be particularly weak in each of the children described at the top. Write a cross in that row of the relevant column. Leave other cells blank but put a question mark if you are not sure.

# Audit of skills and knowledge

<b>Monolingual child who has dyslexia</b>	<b>Early stage EAL learner with reading difficulty</b>	<b>EAL learner who has dyslexia</b>

## 2. Identifying dyslexia

- a) Weak phonic knowledge > underlying reading difficulty?
- b) Weak reading comprehension < limited understanding of English?
- c) Computer-based test batteries – value and limitations?

### 3. Basic teaching strategies

- a) Build on strengths and achievements
- b) Compensate for areas of comparative weakness when developing *reading* skills
- c) Compensate for areas of comparative weakness when developing *writing* skills

# **A) Build on strengths and achievements**

- A.1 Competence in other languages, including literacy knowledge and skills
- A.2 Breadth of cultural experience
- A.3 Phonological awareness and skills
- A.4 Motivation
- A.5 Self-esteem

## **B) Compensate for areas of weakness when developing reading skills 1**

**B.1 Consistent routines and demands**

**B.2 Contextualising word-level teaching**

**B.3 Culturally appropriate materials**

**B.4 Practice in cognitive and metacognitive strategies**

**B.5 Activate/introduce appropriate schema**

# Compensate for areas of weakness when developing reading skills 2

B.6 Develop habit of advance organising

B.7 Constant checks on comprehension

B.8 Slow down reading rate - for a purpose

B.9 Employ multisensory approaches

B.10 Stress over-learning (in meaningful contexts)

## **Compensate for areas of weakness when developing reading skills 3**

**B.11 Modify tasks so that pupil can show comprehension of what is read in a way that does not place heavy demands on expressive language or writing skills**

**B.12 Use pair and group work to enable peers to scaffold emerging skills and knowledge with a struggling reader**

## **C) Compensate for areas of weakness when developing writing skills 1**

- C.1 Analyse the writing of children learning EAL closely so as to identify any specific difficulties they may have with English**
- C.2 Draw learners' attention to the roles that adverbs and adverbial phrases play**
- C.3 Expose EAL learners to different genres of written English**

## Compensate for areas of weakness when developing writing skills 2

- C.4 Draw learners' attention to ways in which writers develop plots and characters, link ideas, bring stories to an end and use features of grammar and give them direct (explicit) teaching in these aspects.
- C.5 Provide direct instruction about specific features of writing and give detailed feedback to children on their writing.

# Compensate for areas of weakness when developing writing skills 3

C.6 Build on children's cultural and linguistic experiences by encouraging them to talk about writing done at home and by forging closer links with families to understand the ways they try to support their children with writing at home.

# Questions

- Which of those suggestions seems likely to be helpful in working with pupils with significant learning difficulties whom you have taught or are now teaching, in particular those who are thought to have dyslexia?
- What other suggestions would you make?