

8

Special educational needs

Activities

Finding out about literacy intervention programmes

Aim

To become familiar with published programmes.
To evaluate published programmes.

What to do

Ask students to read Brooks, G. (2007) *What Works for Pupils with Literacy Difficulties? The Effectiveness of Intervention Schemes*, 3rd edition. Available at: http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/pri_lit_what_works0068807/pri_lit_what_works0068807.pdf

They should then look at the Primary National Strategy materials for Early Literacy Support and Year 3 Literacy Support. Using their knowledge of the different special needs that children have in reading they can suggest which individual needs these two programmes are suitable for. They can consider if they are suited to all children who have difficulties. Some students may be able to draw on their experience of working as teaching assistants or learning support assistants when they are discussing these programmes.

Finding out how to support children with special educational needs

Aim

To feel confident when working with children with special educational needs.

What to do

During their school placement students should talk to teachers, teaching assistants and learning support assistants about how they work together to support children with special educational needs and children who are gifted.

They should also observe a lesson where there are SEN or gifted pupils. If possible they should ask for a copy of the lesson plan to see how the teacher intends to meet the language and literacy needs of SEN and gifted children. They should note how the teacher provides access to the curriculum and observe the children's participation and their learning.

Thinking about the impact of having a special need

Aim

To consider how to support children with special educational needs.

What to do

Students should think of something that they are not very good at. Give some examples such as cooking or talking to a large audience.

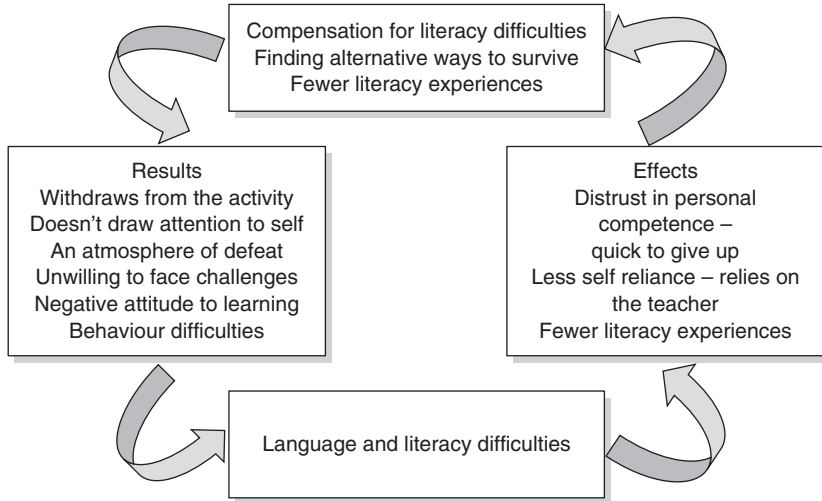
They should then think of:

- why they find these activities difficult;
- how they feel when they have to do them;
- how they talk about these activities to others; and
- what might help them to become more skilful.

Links can be made between what the students say and the experiences of children with special needs in literacy as in the table below:

Why <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too much pressure• Didn't see the point	What this might mean <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unrealistic adult expectations• Need to see the purpose• Need to feel motivated
How they feel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid the activity• Expect to fail• Feel intimidated by others• Make jokes about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gain less practice• Have low self-esteem• Become anxious• Use distracting behaviour tactics

Reading and writing difficulties



The students' experiences can then be compared with what happens to children with literacy difficulties as in Figure 8.1.

What might help:

- Opportunities to practise.
- Building up self-esteem and self-belief.

This means:

- work would have to be at the appropriate level;
- teaching should be through modelling and encouragement and from a sympathetic, positive adult who understands the difficulties;
- activities should be short tasks that result in success and have a purposeful outcome.

Links can be made between what might help and the DfES circles of inclusion shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.1 Reading and writing difficulties

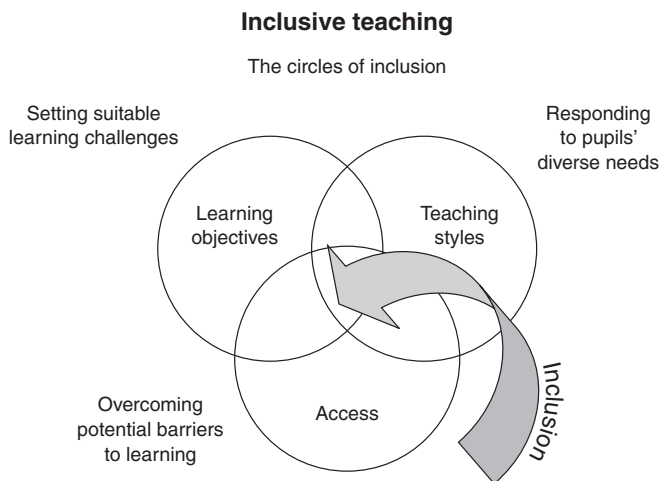


Figure 8.2 Circles of inclusion

Differentiating a task to accommodate children with different needs

Aim

To find ways of differentiating literacy learning.

What to do

Remind the students that there are many ways of learning the same thing and that each of the following variables can be altered in order to differentiate work:

- the activity – different activities can lead to the same outcome;
- the input – that is provided by the teacher before the children begin the activity;
- the support – provided by adults and peers during the activity;
- the resources – more, less and different resources can be used;
- the outcome – different children can produce different responses to the same task;
- the criteria for success – can be different for different groups of children.

The students' task is to take one learning objective and plan activities for children with difficulties in literacy, average attainers and more able children.

In this example the learning objective is to identify the beginning, middle and end in a story.

Possible suggestions for differentiation might be:

Activity

- Sequencing activity using prepared cards, pictures, pictures and words or just words

- Sequencing activity using story props
- Drawing and completing a storyboard
- Making a collection of two openings, two endings and two middles using familiar story books

Input

- Model from the teacher
- Have previously seen and discussed examples

Support

- Guided task
- Paired working – weaker and stronger readers and writers work together
- Scribe for the child

Resources

- Word processing
- Concept keyboard or prepared word bank on a word processing package
- Word bank for the class

Outcome

- Storyboard without captions
- Storyboard with captions
- A display of beginnings, middles and ends

Planning for a child with special educational needs

Aim

- To consider how to remove barriers to learning and make the curriculum accessible.

What to do

Special needs can make some aspects of 'normal' teaching difficult for children. However, some aspects of 'normal' provision can be helpful. In this activity students need to think about which practices and resources should be avoided and which can be used to benefit the child's learning.

Below is a description of the characteristics of dyspraxia. Figure 8.3 is a planning sheet with suggestions about what to avoid and what to make use of in the classroom when teaching a child with dyspraxia. This should also be read.

Dyspraxia is an impairment or immaturity of the brain which results in messages not being properly transmitted to or from the brain. Children with this condition sometimes appear thoughtful but seem to have difficulty in putting their thoughts into action. They are often clumsy and have difficulty in

controlling material such as paper and pencils. They may have a poor short-term memory, be sensitive to touch and have little sense of direction. Language delay may occur with dyspraxia and children may be unable to answer simple questions, even if they know the answers. Their behaviour may be immature and they may have temper tantrums.

Subjects that the child might find difficult

- Language and literacy, anything involving recording
- PE, anything involving physical dexterity

Teaching methods that might be difficult for the child

- Question and answer sessions
- Writing sessions
- Handwriting sessions
- Copying from the board
- Reading from left to right without help
- Following instructions

Things to avoid

- Copying from the board
- Too much writing with paper and pencil
- Competitive tasks

Aspects of existing provision which might be helpful

- Use of the computer for writing
- Computer reading programmes where direction is clearly indicated
- Paired work with an understanding child or friend where written tasks can be shared
- Paired reading
- Taped stories
- Shared reading
- Shared writing
- Matching writing activities and reading books relevant to children's interests

How to help (use of resources, additional adults, differentiation, etc.)

- Some one-to-one work with an additional adult
- Computer
- Tape recorder
- Reminding about the task in hand
- Short, achievable tasks
- Help the child to feel successful perhaps by having an adult doing part of a task
- Giving time to answer questions
- Recording through pictures or a limited number of words

- Handwriting practice through play activities, chalk, water
- Adult pointing while reading
- Lots of practice through repetition
- Practice in tasks that need coordination

Figure 8.3 Planning for a child with dyspraxia

The students should think of a child with special educational needs who they know. Then, using a blank planning sheet, they should list the subjects and teaching methods that might cause the child problems, and teaching methods and resources that will help the child. Finally they can use this to plan a writing session for the child.

A version of this activity first appeared in Browne, A. and Haylock, D. (2004) *Professional Issues for Primary Teachers*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Websites

British Dyslexia Association: <http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk>

Department for Children, Schools and Families, Standards Site, Gifted and Talented:
<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/giftedandtalented/>

This website contains news about gifted and talented initiatives, practical guidance and advice.

DCSF Young Gifted and Talented: <http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/HomePage.aspx?stakeholder=14>

This is a database of resources for teachers and parents.

Dyslexia Institute: <http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk>

QCA Gifted and Talented: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_6410.aspx

This is a website of guidance on teaching the gifted and talented.

ICAN-children with speech and language impairments: <http://www.ican.org.uk/>

National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE): <http://www.nace.co.uk>

This association offers information, advice and conferences; it provides publications for teachers and pupils and also has a resources centre and nationwide consultancy.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC): <http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk>

This is the main organisation of support for parents of gifted and talented children.

National Association for Special Educational Needs: <http://www.nasen.org.uk>

National Autistic Society: <http://www.nas.org.uk>

Links to on-line reading

Brooks, G. (2007) *What Works for Pupils with Literacy Difficulties? The Effectiveness of Intervention Schemes*, 3rd edition. London: DfES. Available at: http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/pri_lit_what_works0068807/pri_lit_what_works_0068807.pdf

This research report reviews intervention schemes that have been devised to help pupils with difficulties in reading, spelling and writing. It provides information about the schemes and their effectiveness in order to inform schools' practice and choices of approach.

Carrington, V. and Luke, A. (2007) 'Reading, Homes and Families: From Postmodern to Modern?' Tasmania: Department of Education, School Education Division. Available at: <http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/English/luke2.htm>

This article suggests that the difference between home and school literacy causes some children to be identified as at risk. It was originally published in A. van Kleeck, S. A. Stahl and E. B. Bauer (eds) (2002) *On Reading to Children: Parents and Teachers*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

DCSF (2008) *Raising the Achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils*. Available at: http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/raising_grt_achieve/

This publication contains advice for those who work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

Delalande, D. (2000) 'From bookbags to driving theory', *Literacy Today*, 24. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/delalande.html>

This is a summary of an outreach programme designed for Traveller parents of pre-school children.

Lindsay, G. and Dockrell, J. (2003) 'Oral language difficulties', *Literacy Today*, 35. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/lindsay.html>

This research summary suggests that speech and language difficulties have a significant impact on literacy development and need early remediation if this is to be avoided.

TDA (2006) *Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools: A Guide for the Beginner Teacher*. Available at: <http://www.tda.gov.uk>

This is a helpful summary of teachers' responsibilities. It also includes advice on strategies to use and contains links to sources of information.

Whiteley, H. and Smith, C. (2002) 'Early literacy intervention', *Literacy Today*, 33. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/whiteley.html>

In this article the authors suggest that systematic, intensive, daily intervention designed to develop phonological awareness skills is not effective for all children. For these children, early one-to-one tailored intervention, which considers the whole child, is likely to be the most effective way forward.