


Dyslexic-type Difficulties In Mainstream Schools

Enhancing Learners' Access
to Literacy



General consensus that ten percent (10%) of the population are dyslexic;

Means that on average in a class of 30 pupils:

- at least **three** have dyslexic-type difficulties
 - for one of whom it will be severe, requiring specialist intervention and access arrangements for assessment.
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If such intervention provided outside a school:

- expensive;
- suggest that the methods involved are beyond a classroom teacher;
- transfers responsibility from the school;
- marks the learner out as 'different';
- delivery will require compromising curriculum delivery for the learner.

BDA suggests that such disadvantages can be avoided through schools, either singly, or in clusters being encouraged by both the Government, Ofsted and Local Authorities to recognise that it is better for both pedagogical and financial reasons instead to take an approach through appropriate quality professional development of existing staff.

Such professional input needs to be of a consistent and high standard.

B.D.A. accredits training courses for specialist practitioners at three levels to ensure that there can be a graduated and consistent within-school response to learners who have demonstrated a specific learning difficulty.

All training integrated with work in school.



Three levels of professional development:

Accredited Learning Support
Assistant (ALSA)



**Approved Teacher / Tutor Status
(ATS)**



Associate Membership of the BDA
(AMBDA)



Approved Teacher / Tutor Status


Pivotal qualification

Directs work of ALSA

Liaises with SENCo and AMBDA holder

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1. Accredited Learning Support Assistant (ALSA).

- Deliver specialist response support to the needs of learners in their normal curriculum activities based on recommendations from specialist teacher
 - Mentored during course and receive qualification from validating IHE.
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24 hours course contact time
+
20 hours monitored support

Course validated by Institute of Higher Education

Minimum FEHQ Level 3

Sometimes part of Foundation Degree



2. **Approved Teacher or Tutor Status. (ATS).**

Have critical understanding of nature and causes of dyslexia.

Competent in informal, curriculum-based observation and assessment and the delivery of appropriate specialist teaching to both individuals and small groups.

Minimum FEHQ Level 5, usually Level 7 (Post Graduate)

40 hours lectures **plus** seminars, tutorials and study time.

20 hours of supervised and assessed specialist teaching using a **cumulative, structured, sequential, multisensory** programme based on phonics and morphology.


Can be delivered evenings or week-ends.

Distance courses also available.



3. Associate Membership of the B.D.A. (AMBDA).

Holders of AMBDA, ATS competencies plus:

- psychometric assessment techniques;
 - conduct diagnostic assessments for dyslexia;
 - competent to write reports on learners for parents, other professionals and examining bodies;
 - assessments recognised for Access Arrangements by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ);
 - entitled to a Dyslexia/SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) to make recommendations for a Disable Students Allowance (DSA).
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Further 50 hours of lectures, seminars and guided including 12 hours on psychometric and educational testing.

30 hours of evaluated, specialist teaching, using a **cumulative, structured, sequential, multisensory** programme based on phonics and morphology.

FEHQ Level 7 (Post Graduate)


Again delivered evenings, week-ends or by distance learning.

Parallel courses for meeting needs of learners post-16 years in academies, sixth-form collages, FE or Community Education



Specialist teaching techniques and support strategies effective for those with dyslexic-type difficulties are also effective with **all** learners.

Introduction into everyday classroom practice leads to a dyslexia-friendly environment in which individualisation teaching and learning for **all** learners becomes the norm.



Assessment becomes a natural way of determining the effectiveness of such teaching and learning rather than a spasmodic imposition of stress producing procedures.

Colleagues come to respect contributions specialist training can make on a day to day basis.

Parents, carers and learners gain confidence that any difficulties can be addressed by those with relevant knowledge, skills and understanding.



Consistent appropriate specialist teaching and support means those with dyslexic-type difficulties leave education personally equipped to cope with the undoubted difficulties they will continue to experience.

Crucially, they will have been helped to develop **their own learning and personal strategies** to meet those difficulties. T

They can be confident that they **can** learn and that they **know how to do it.**




All the above builds on and increases effectiveness of changes to English National Curriculum with introduction of direct phonics teaching through 'Letters and Sounds'.

Enhancing achievement of learners with dyslexic-type difficulties needs both funding and encouragement through evaluation.




Examples of effects of direct funding of courses:

- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators following Warnock Reports;
 - Teacher Development Agency direct funding of ATS courses.
 - Isle of Man and Guernsey provision of specialist teachers;
 - Northern Ireland courses to place ATS holder in every primary school.
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Evaluations of outcomes universally positive for both learners and schools.

Significant numbers of 'graduates' went on to senior roles taking their deep understanding of SEN, in particular dyslexia and individualised teaching with them.



Crucial element was funding went direct to Providers of ATS Courses.

Block fees and numbers can be negotiated / bid for.

Administrative costs of decision-making reduced.


Schools recognise direct financial support for policy implementation.

Part-time / distance delivery eliminates need for 'cover'.

Effects of specialist training immediately apparent through monitored specialist teaching and assessment.

Ofsted and other DfE evaluations of schools need to have availability of qualified specialist teachers built-in to criteria.

Ideal scenario:

- ATS holder in every school supported by appropriate number of ALSA holders.
 - Cluster of Primary Schools / Secondary School have access to holder of AMBDA.
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Cost to school(s) of enhancing ATS qualification to AMBDA quickly recouped by major reduction in need for Educational Psychology services for diagnosis and reporting for dyslexia and JCQ Access Arrangements.

These services then have greater availability for other neurodiverse difficulties.

Waiting times for intervention reduced or eliminated.

