



# ADysTrain

Dyslexia



Examples of good practices

Compiled by

Dr Ian Smythe

Ibis Creative Consultants Ltd

In Collaboration with the  
Adystrain Partnership



## Dyslexia

### Examples of good practices

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>1. Psychotherapy and dyslexia</b> .....	5
Dr Eva Gyarmathy, psychotherapist, Budapest, Hungary	
<b>2. Help at home</b> .....	6
Dr Eva Gyarmathy, Senior researcher of the Institute for Psychology, Budapest, Hungary	
<b>3. Dyslexia and higher education</b> .....	7
Dr Eva Gyarmathy, lecturer at the Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary	
<b>4. Quick help</b> .....	8
Dr Eva Gyarmathy, Senior researcher of the Institute for Psychology, Budapest, Hungary	
<b>5. Dyslexia and private enterprise</b> .....	9
Dr Eva Gyarmathy, Senior researcher of the Institute for Psychology, Budapest, Hungary	
<b>6. Restaurant Santa-Clara – An Unintentional Good Practice</b> .....	10
Mag Thomas Schmalzer & Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech, FHJ, Austria	
<b>7. LingCheck – An innovative spell checker for adult dyslexics</b> .....	11
Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech & Mag Thomas Schmalzer, FHJ, Austria	
<b>8. Erster österreichischer Dachverband Legasthenie (EÖDL)</b> .....	12
Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech, Mag Thomas Schmalzer & Rene Wenzel, FHJ, Austria	
<b>9. Teaching methods</b> .....	13
Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business Administration Vienna	
<b>10. Written communication with students</b> .....	14
Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business Administration Vienna	
<b>11. Structuring courses at university</b> .....	15
Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business Administration Vienna	



## Dyslexia

### Examples of good practices

<b>12. What compensation strategies an entrepreneur developed</b> .....	16
Prof Dr Joachim Höhn, partner of the firm E-Learning concepts	
<b>13. Website accessibility</b> .....	17
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>14. Computer loans</b> .....	16
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>15. Screening of all persons</b> .....	19
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>16. Provision of free software</b> .....	20
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>17. Dyslexia friendly material on CD</b> .....	22
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>18. Using coloured paper</b> .....	23
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>19. Leaving leaflets on dyslexia lying around including checklists</b> .....	24
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>20. Introduction of appointment cards with a map on the back</b> .....	25
Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK	
<b>21. Learning Diary in English Studies</b> .....	26
Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland	
<b>22. Easy memo for a manager</b> .....	27
Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland	
<b>23. Support for self-advocacy</b> .....	28
Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland	
<b>24. Talking books as reading aids</b> .....	29
Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland	



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

## Introduction

Dyslexia is a difficulty that affects 10% of the population across Europe, irrespective of age, gender or language. It is also irrespective of the social, educational or working environment. However, the difficulties of the dyslexic individual may dictate where the person studies, what they study and the employment throughout life.

The problems of the dyslexic individual are defined by difficulties in learning to read and write - the ability to access and produce the written word. Unfortunately academic success is built around those skills, and while a working environment can be found that is relatively free of demanding literacy skills, they jobs are frequently menial tasks that do not tap the underlying skills of the individual. That is, the employment (and rewards) are determined by the academic skills which are literacy dependent, rather than on their real skills.

Furthermore, prospects of promotion will be limited, since higher rank almost always demands greater reading and report writing.

The purpose of this compendium is to highlight how different organisations and individuals can adapt their environment to assist the dyslexic individual. This can be anything from making lectures more accessible, to providing guidance in a preferred format. Remember that this is not about giving them an advantage, but attempting to minimise the disadvantage. In the case of education, it is allowing them the opportunity to fulfil their potential. In business it is allowing the individual to contribute fully to the profitability of the company.

What is clear for all those who have implemented such change is that this helps not only the dyslexic individual, it helps everybody.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**01**

## **Psychotherapy and dyslexia**

by Dr Eva Gyarmathy, psychotherapist

Repeated long term failure as a consequence of dyslexia often causes mental disorders. Failure of be able to follow the norm and problems of self-esteem caused by specific learning disorders lie behind mental problems in the case of some of my patients, for instance.

As a supplement to the therapy, it often means a great breakthrough when we ascertained and made it clear that the patient suffered due to failures caused by dyslexia. The informational leaflets and materials downloadable from the internet makes it possible for other therapists beside myself to apply them as a supplement to the treatment.

One of my fellow therapists recounted that a patient, a young man who despite his excellent abilities could in no way obtain a degree in higher education, succeeded in passing his final examination after a change in learning methods. Shortly after that, the therapy itself terminated, as the young man finally found himself able to succeed. He stated that it helped a lot in itself to know what was responsible for his failures. As he had already known that he was intelligent enough to obtain a degree in higher education, he had believed that his failures were due to his laziness and mental weakness. As a consequence, he continually suffered from remorse, he scolded himself and believed he had a weak character.

The change in learning methods also proved to him that his dyslexia is not a drawback, and if he learns to learn efficiently, he can continue to be successful.

The therapist sketched the essence of dyslexia on a mind map. Then they discussed what should be changed during exam revision time. The young man began to learn far more consciously. He did not attempt to assign himself lengthy learning phases, but instead learned regularly for brief periods.

He found out that the music he listened to did not help him, because his favourite songs distracted his attention. When he changed to simple instrumental music, he was able to pay attention well. Therefore it is not simply if listening to music is a preference, but what type of music creates the most effective learning.

During lectures, he took notes using drawings, which, at home, he supplemented with information from books. He processed all materials using mind maps. As a consequence, by the time he had to sit the examination, it was easy for him to prepare for the exam questions.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**02**

## **Help at home**

by Dr Eva Gyarmathy, senior researcher at the Institute for Psychology

Success is the best advertisement.

A grandmother, a remedial teacher by profession, helped her granddaughter prepare for her school-leaving examination with the help of Adystrain materials. She was very happy about the learning methods she acquired from the materials on the internet, as she saw that they make learning for dyslexics easier.

Her granddaughter, aged 19, had twice failed the school-leaving examination. Owing to her diagnosis of dyslexia, she had obtained a waiver from a few subjects and could use extra facilities at the exam, but still, she could not succeed. The grandmother had already learned a lot with her granddaughter, but with little success.

Now they discussed all concepts the girl could not explain. They prepared mind maps for each examination question. The girl learned that she can remember new connections better using visual associations. There were small mnemonic (memory helping) drawings all through her notes and books.

The grandmother was asked by one of her colleagues to share these materials on learning methods with her, so that she could help her own daughter, who failed second grade at secondary school due to similar difficulties.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**03**

## **Dyslexia and higher education**

by Dr Eva Gyarmathy, lecturer at the Eötvös Loránd University

One's own experience is always the best reinforcement.

As a university lecturer, I regularly give presentations to teacher trainees and I also teach the method of mind maps. Before actually teaching it, however, I use it in practice from the beginnings.

The students usually copy the mind maps and use them happily. However, the point at which they truly appreciate them is when we prepare such a visual sketch for each exam question together before the exams. This is when they realize how much it means to have an overview of the material. They also start using this method for other courses. Fellow instructors have noted that they are now able to identify those students who took my courses, as they all come to the examinations with mind maps.

One of my students, who tended to be very quiet in class, came up to me after I taught them about mind maps and told me that using mind maps has made a huge difference to her, as she now learns better and more quickly than before. She was now only concerned that this could mean she was dyslexic.

We discussed the issue and concluded that one need not be dyslexic for mind maps to be an efficient tool, but it transpired that she displayed further signs of dyslexia. Subsequently, she became more conscious in using the methods they learned.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**04**

## Quick help

by Dr Eva Gyarmathy, Senior researcher of the Institute for Psychology

The methods that can help dyslexics are not simple and require practice and effort, which not everyone is willing to invest. Sometimes, however, this unwillingness itself can be of help.

A high school manager started using methods she learned at the Adystrain training. She achieved success with several dyslexic students, but the quickest success she had was with a young man who was less, or not at all dyslexic.

The boy's father saw her about his son, who claimed he could not read. The boy could be dyslexic, and might need some waivers and extra facilities. The father was not happy about waivers, but reckoned it was not a great deal if in turn the boy can obtain his school-leaving examination.

The young man had a year until his school-leaving examination, and his school record was extremely poor. The manager decided to teach the boy the different reading techniques and the use of mind maps.

She started sessions with the boy. Progress was very slow, and the young man found the new techniques highly tiresome. After the second session, he announced to his father that he could read, after all, and he will get along fine.





**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**05**

## **Dyslexia and private enterprise**

by Dr Eva Gyarmathy, Senior researcher of the Institute for Psychology

An entrepreneur, whatever they may do by occupation, has a number of tasks that are close to impossible to tackle for a dyslexic.

A young lady, who participated in the training, saw me to ask for help. She said she was dyslexic, which was why she had been interested in the training in the first place. Although she had no employees, she wanted to make her own enterprise more dyslexia-friendly.

It turned out that what she had problems with was not her job, but official papers, invoices and accounting. She kept mixing up invoices, forgetting paying in cheques, misplacing or never reading official letters, which can lead to severe consequences. She regarded herself very disorderly and neglectful. She had tried making a change, but eventually always ended up where she had started off. She started using notes, but she misplaced them; she started using a calendar, but forgot to enter deadlines. So far, her attempts have not resulted in much success.

During the training, it became clear to her that she was not after all neglectful, but instead, that was the way she normally functioned. She was ready to accept this, but the problem would still remain.

We thought it over and tried to establish what changes she could make. It turned out that the best would be to hire a reliable accountant who would manage her affairs, fill out all forms for her and notify her when she had official obligations and tasks. This would involve some financial sacrifice, but she would still be better off than paying the penalties. To be able to meet other deadlines, she made a huge calendar that she hung on the wall in the kitchen. Thereby, while preparing breakfast, she could always check what tasks she had that day and for that week.

Looking back after five months, these methods seem to have been fully successful. The lady pointed out primarily that her level of stress is now much reduced and she feels better now that she managed to accept that what is her weakness is her strength, as well. She said:

“The reason I’m such a good graphic artist is the same why I’m so bad at filling out official papers. I’m better off doing what I’m good at. Through my work as a graphic artist, I earn the money to pay for the accounting, and I even feel better now.”



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**06**

## **Restaurant Santa-Clara – An Unintentional Good Practice**

by Mag Thomas Schmalzer & Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech, FH JOANNEUM, Austria

The restaurant Santa-Clara in the heart of the old-town in Graz is to be considered an unintentional best-practice example for dyslexics. The restaurant offers high quality food in a friendly atmosphere serving dishes in Mediterranean - French style with different offerings on the menu every day.

The peculiar fact of the restaurant is that it does not provide menu cards at all but waiters and waitresses recite a complete list of all dishes available and provide explanations where needed in an oral form.

The intention of this is to establish a more personal feeling between guests and hosts. Unintentionally the restaurant also serves as a model providing a dyslexia friendly mode of communication. Dyslexic guests have no need to go through pages of text laid out in a way that is not taking into consideration the needs of the dyslexic part of the population. In contrast guests receive all information through a friendly face-to-face conversation.



Dyslexia

Examples of good practices

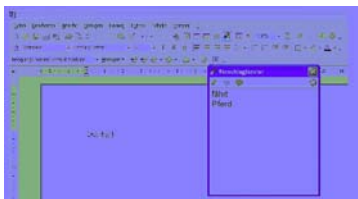
07

## LingCheck – An innovative spell checker for adult dyslexics

by Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech & Mag Thomas Schmalzer, FH JOANNEUM, Austria

In Austria and Germany an innovative software was introduced for adult dyslexics called LingCheck. LingCheck was developed by the Norwegian company LingIT. The software is especially for dyslexic people who need a more powerful support than the Microsoft Word spell checker can offer.

By the use of LingCheck, dyslexics have the possibility to use the advantages of a PC. Usual spell checkers are made for people without dyslexia. Normally these programs correct words which imply one mistake only. The software corrects multiple mistakes per word such as Apschid, vrüstücken or dasechlich. Also LingCheck corrects words with wrong initial letters like trinken or kleich. In most of the cases normal standard software doesn't cover these kinds of mistakes.



The software works in combination with Microsoft Word and other Microsoft software like Outlook or Power Point. While the author writes the text LingCheck presents continuously suggestions and corrections in a suggestion-window. The corrections as well as the whole text can be read by the speech synthesizer. The user can also look up the word definition. Both functions make it easy for the user to find the correct word. The definition of a word can be looked up in a dictionary. This function helps if the user has to select between words that are phonetically similar like „wird“ and „Wirt“, „Leere“ and „Lehre“ and „war“ and „wahr“.



The Norwegian company LingIT AS was mainly established by employees of the scientific university of Norway (NTNU). The Headquarter is situated in Trondheim. Founder and CEO is Torbjørn Nordgård, professor for computer linguistics at the NTNU. The Norwegian version of LingCheck (LingDys) was sold over 10,000 copies already. Internet: [www.lingit.com](http://www.lingit.com)



Dyslexia

Examples of good practices

08

## Erster österreichischer Dachverband Legasthenie (EÖDL)

by Mag(FH) Bernadette Frech, Mag Thomas Schmalzer & Rene Wenzel,  
FH JOANNEUM, Austria

Adults suffering from dyslexia are often discriminated in the Austrian society. Sometimes they are treated as outsiders. Therefore, associations that give support to dyslexics take an important part in their life.

The First Austrian umbrella organisation for dyslexia (Erste österreichische Dachverband Legasthenie EÖDL) is one of leading organisations in this field in Austria. One of their main services for people who are interested in or affected by dyslexia are information - and training materials on adult dyslexia.

These training materials include audio-supported courses on the topic of dyslexia, e-trainings, downloadable worksheets and even a book dedicated to the issue of adult dyslexia. All these training materials are free of charge and designed dyslexia-friendly. The materials supplement the AdysTrain modules and can be easily downloaded under [www.legasthenie.at](http://www.legasthenie.at).

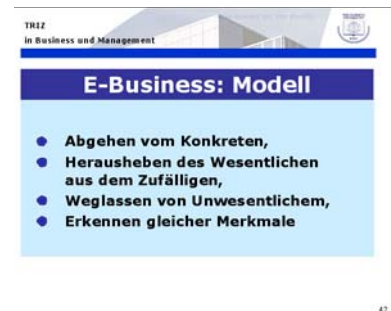
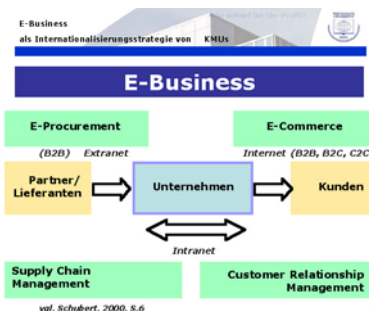


## Teaching methods

by Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business Administration Vienna

The following teaching methods are not only good for dyslexic students, they were found to support the study progress of all students.

- I give lectures notes (handouts) in advance of a lecture. We use at our university an E-Learning platform to which lecturers can upload all study materials. It is the obligation of the students to download and print the handouts in time.
- I allow students to record my lectures, but few students currently ask.
- I start the lecture with an overview of the whole lecture to provide a comprehensive picture of the lecture.
- I present information in a variety of formats (graphics, tables, diagrams). I do not like to have too many power point slides because I often prefer to tell examples, success stories etc.





**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**10**

## **Written communication with students**

by Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business  
Administration Vienna

I receive many e-mails from my students. Usually they ask questions on something or they send concepts of their tasks (individual or group work, diploma thesis etc). Answering by e-mail I do not use the whole line for my messages, I cut the lines. My texts are visible on the left side of an e-mail, the lines contain a maximum of 30 letters. I call it the “newsletter approach”.

This approach supports the comprehension of the message: the reader can not be lost among the long lines of an e-mail. (Honestly said, I prefer to receive such mails too.) Further I do not use cursive fonts in my e-mails. I learned that for marking something it is often better to use bold letters instead of colours like blue, green etc.



Dyslexia

Examples of good practices

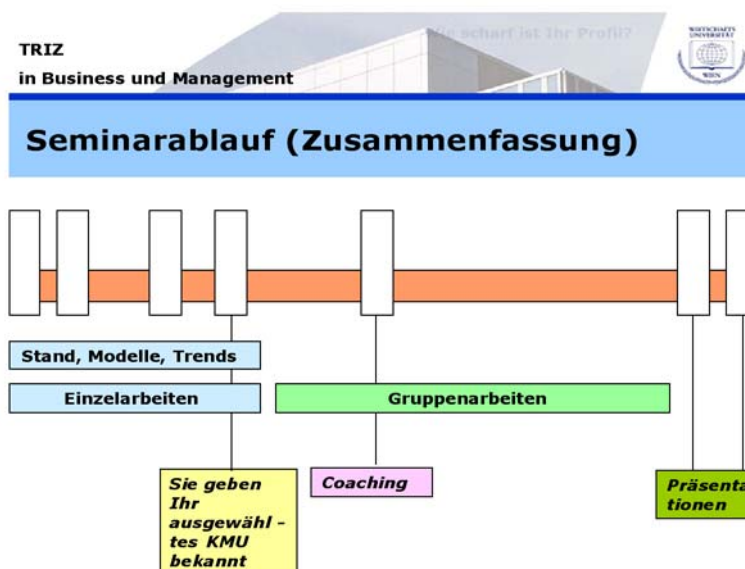
11

## Structuring courses at university

by Dr Petra Rietsch, docent at the University of Economics and Business Administration Vienna

The majority of students – dyslexic and non-dyslexic – prefer to choose a course where the grades are awarded on so-called project works. In this case the students can develop their tasks during the semester. Students do not like to come into situation when everything depends on the final exams. I am in the position to structure my courses in such a way I want to have them. So, I developed a combination of tasks which contain individual homework and group project works. The students prepare the results of their work in a written form and present them during the seminar.

In the first seminar of the semester I give a picture of all tasks and deadlines. Additionally I reserve one seminar for coaching the groups. During this session I get a feedback on students work progress and I can advise them on improvements.



8



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**12**

## **What compensation strategies an entrepreneur developed**

by Prof Dr Joachim Höhn, partner of the firm E-Learning concepts

I met Paul, a young dyslexic entrepreneur, some months ago. He is the owner and the general manager of a small software firm in Vienna. The firm has 5 employees. He contacted me because he has visited our project website and wanted to know more about the project, the planned outcomes etc. We had a meeting with him and Paul told us about the difficulties he is faced with in his professional life and how he manages them successfully. The staff know that he is dyslexic and, therefore, automatically his colleagues provide support in daily business, eg. Paul's written communication like emails to customers undergo an internal check always.

Paul told us that during presentations in front of customers he becomes usually nervous. This results often in the inability to fill in the right login to the firm's intranet for calling up the latest presentations of the companies new software development, for example. He solved this problem by putting on his laptop desktop a post it with the right login in (very) big letters.

The difficulty in written communication or with the login could be easily solved, but the lack of auditory discrimination and auditory memory skills is Paul's main problem. He can not attend conferences, workshops or even meetings with customers because he cannot follow the presentations properly. Often he can not understand what the speech is about. Therefore, Paul colleagues attend such events and Paul is the mastermind behind the development of firm's software. During our meeting with him we often summarised the information to ensure our common understanding.

Note: A good example of "post its" with different language versions can be found at: <http://www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/download.html>





Dyslexia

Examples of good practices

13

## Website accessibility

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Many European initiatives have attempted to promote the accessibility of the web for those with disabilities. This is often dictated by the Web Accessibility Initiative, which has in the past been dominated by the deaf, blind and physically handicapped representatives. Consequently, little attention is paid to the needs of the dyslexic individual.

The principle needs are:

- Ability to increase font size
- Change the background colour
- Clear layout
- Change typeface

Fortunately browsers now include an option to change font size easily. (Simultaneously use Ctrl and +, and use Ctrl and – to reduce size.) Others allow the font size to be changes easily.

For changing the background, there are two main options:

- 1) Have a special "menu" (e.g. a drop down menu) to change the options
- 2) Suggest the individual goes to the browser control page  
(Alt + T, Alt + O, Content, Alt + C)



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**14**

## **Computer loans**

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

The University of Greenwich has over 500 dyslexic students registered in the disability services. Each of them is entitled to Disabled Students Allowance through an appropriate registering and testing system. However, the funding that allows them to buy the necessary materials (software and hardware) is often delayed for reasons of administration that is beyond the control of the student and the university.

This leaves a period that may stretch into months when the dyslexic individual has been identified, but is left unsupported (in contravention of both Human Rights and disability legislation).

Therefore the University have equipped the disability services centre with ten computers that contain most of the appropriate software, so that the students can try different systems as well as have the necessary support, at least on a temporary basis.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**15**

## **Screening of all persons**

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

The original idea of Wycombe Motor Project was to provide a diversionary project for offenders or those at risk of offending but before it even opened it was recognised that education and prevention was better than diversionary tactics. They therefore opened the doors to everyone in the community who wanted to learn about motor vehicles.

The project has a diversity of clients many of whom clearly have special educational needs. The Adystrain project worked with the Skidz team to produce a training protocol for the staff and tutors, as well as a regime for the identification and support of all their clients.

This provides a perfect example of best practice, since they worked in collaboration with specialists to ensure that their client group are now properly served through implementation of a full screening and support system.



## Provision of free assistive software

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Assistive software is the name of the software that can help the disabled individual access the printed word, either in printed or electronic format. However, for many students this is prohibitively expensive. But there is a solution – Freeware.

Freeware is used here to suggest all the software that can be used without paying anybody. This excludes Shareware, where you are supposed to send money after a given amount of time.

To help the dyslexic individual, Ibis Creative Consultants has created BATS – Basic Assistive Technology Suite. This includes a selection of freely available software that dyslexics can use. Furthermore, much of the software is available in different languages.

The Suite includes the following:

### Basic Office software (offline)

Open Office                      [www.openoffice.com](http://www.openoffice.com)

### Basic Office Software (online)

Google Docs                      <http://docs.google.com>

Zoho                                      [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com)

Thinkfree                              [www.thinkfree.com](http://www.thinkfree.com)

Buzzword                              [www.acrobat.com](http://www.acrobat.com)

### Text-to-speech (offline)

Readplease                              [www.readplease.com](http://www.readplease.com)

YeoSoft                                      [www.text-mp3.com](http://www.text-mp3.com)

Natural Reader                              [www.naturalreaders.com](http://www.naturalreaders.com)

SayzMe                                      [www.datafurnace.net.au/sayzme](http://www.datafurnace.net.au/sayzme)

Readpal                                      [www.readpal.com/one/screenreader.htm](http://www.readpal.com/one/screenreader.htm)

### Text-to-speech (online)

TTST                                      <http://text-to-speech-translator.paralink.com/>

### Concept mapping (offline)

Freemind                                      [http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

Compendium                                      <http://www.compendiuminstitute.org/>



## Dyslexia

### Examples of good practices

# 16

#### Concept mapping (online)

Mindomo	<a href="http://www.mindomo.com">www.mindomo.com</a>
Ekpenso	<a href="http://www.ekpenso.com">www.ekpenso.com</a>
Mindmeister	<a href="http://www.mindmeister.com">www.mindmeister.com</a> (Collaborative)

#### Sound recording

Audacity	<a href="http://www.audacity2008.com">www.audacity2008.com</a>
----------	--

#### Typing tutor (offline)

TypeFaster Typing Tutor	<a href="http://www.typingsoft.com/all_typing_tutors.htm">www.typingsoft.com/all_typing_tutors.htm</a>
Klavaro Touch Typing Tutor	<a href="http://www.typingsoft.com/all_typing_tutors.htm">www.typingsoft.com/all_typing_tutors.htm</a>

#### Typing tutor (online)

Online Keybr	<a href="http://www.keybr.com">www.keybr.com</a>
Digicurso	<a href="http://www.digicurso.com">www.digicurso.com</a>

#### Magnifiers

Magnifiers	<a href="http://www.magnifiers.org">www.magnifiers.org</a>
------------	--

#### Organisers (online)

Don't forget the milk	<a href="http://www.rememberthemilk.com">www.rememberthemilk.com</a>
-----------------------	--

This and other assistive technology is available through the Ibis Dyslexia and Technology blog: <http://technodys.blogspot.com/>



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**17**

## **Dyslexia friendly material on CD**

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Many organisations provide information on dyslexia. However, most provide this as printed text. The Welsh Dyslexia Project was one of the first organisations to develop material for parents of dyslexic children where the format was a CD with the text spoken, in both English and Welsh.

There is a strong genetic component of dyslexia, which means that the parents and siblings of dyslexic children may also be dyslexic. Put another way, there is a good chance that the father of a dyslexic child is also dyslexic. Therefore if you provide the information on paper, they cannot access it. By providing the information on the CD with a voiceover everybody has access to it.

Furthermore, rather than provide the CD to anybody that asked, they sent one to every school in Wales. By providing them to the school every parent would have access through to the CD as well as somewhere to use it.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**18**

## **Using coloured paper**

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Many dyslexic individuals have difficulty because the photocopy paper is too bright. It is a bit like when you take a photograph of somebody with the sun behind them – all the light seems to come around the side of the person, and break up the edges.

The modern photocopy papers have organic whiteners in them which turn the invisible light into visible light, making them too bright for many dyslexic individuals. For this reason many university lecturers provide their handouts on cream or pale blue paper.

Also, many university departments keep a stock of "off white" paper which is reserved for those known to be dyslexic. Unfortunately this is slightly more expensive than since it is not produced in such high numbers.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**19**

## **Leaving leaflets on dyslexia lying around including checklists**

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Some people are very embarrassed about their dyslexia. Others may have such severe difficulties that they will not even look at leaflets. However, a number of doctors surgeries are now making leaflets about dyslexia generally available for anybody.

Furthermore the wording is not aimed at dyslexic individuals, but at those who think they may know a dyslexic person. This has two advantages:

- a) If a dyslexic individual is picking up the leaflet, then can pretend it is for somebody
- b) Friends can provide it to those who they consider may be dyslexic, without the usual difficulties.





Dyslexia

Examples of good practices

20

## Appointment cards with a map on the back

by Dr Ian Smythe, Ibis Creative Consultants, UK

Many dyslexic individuals have problems with being in the right place at the right time. A number of organisations, ranging from dentists to prison probation services, have found a simple solution – The appointment card.

However, this appointment card has been developed specially for the dyslexic individual, but without highlighting their specific difficulty to the casual viewer.

On the front is the name, address, phone number and appointment time.

On the reverse side is the map of where to find the place.

The prison Probation Service found that many offenders were missing appointments, not out of disrespect but because nobody recognised their dyslexia or their specific memory problems.

The secret to the use of these cards is to ensure they are understood, and are immediately put into the wallet to ensure they do not get lost. The user is told that if they are unsure where to go, they should show the map to somebody who can point them to the correct place. Some services also use a follow-up system, phoning through the day before. This cut down on the number of missed appointments, and therefore offers a cheap solution to what can be an expensive drain on resources.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**21**

## **Learning Diary in English Studies**

by Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland

It is often difficult to learn foreign languages when you have dyslexia. A Finnish university student negotiated with her teacher that she could complete her English course independently, studying by herself, because she found it difficult to study in a group.

It was agreed that a learning diary would be used. The student started to write the journal in Finnish. She reflected on herself as a language learner and looked at the reasons why she found learning difficult. Clarifying issues around dyslexia and having been diagnosed as a dyslexic individual in her adult years helped her to understand her previous difficulties and had a positive effect on her self-esteem.

Later she started to write the journal in English. She took advantage of her interest in arts and collected English language leaflets, aimed at tourists, from art exhibitions. Reading the leaflets and writing about the exhibitions helped her to increase her vocabulary. She also strengthened her language skills by listening to the radio in English via the Internet.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**22**

## **Easy memo for a manager**

by Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland

It can be difficult to follow meetings and make notes when you have dyslexia. Working as a manager you have to keep up-to-date with many duties and timetables. Increasingly popular conference calls can also prove challenging for a dyslectic.

A woman manager developed for herself a useful tool using mind maps for making notes. At the centre of the page she writes the topic of a meeting or a specific task and the date. Each employee is represented by his or her own box. Agreed items and responsibilities are marked with lines connecting them with the right person.

Combining various colour codes the mind map makes it easier to prioritize and monitor tasks. For example, those marked in green do not require immediate action, whereas those in red need immediate attention.

The use of mind maps made visualization easier, which the manager thought was one of her strengths. The mind map also provides an overview of a given situation at a glance.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**23**

## **Support for self-advocacy**

by Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland

Dyslexia may be a difficult subject to talk about at a workplace, in training or, for example, with social services. People do not always have sufficient knowledge about dyslexia, know about good solutions to problems or they may find it hard to express their individual needs. Often they have bad experiences dating back to schooldays.

The presence of a support person in discussions with employer, trainer or an official may be very valuable. A trained support person has sufficient knowledge about dyslexia, knows how to take it into account and suggest different solutions.

The presence of a support person may give a dyslexic person self-confidence to bring his or her individual needs into the discussion. An outsider's presence can also have a positive influence on the attitude of the trainer, manager or the official.

In addition to having knowledge about learning difficulties the support person should be familiar with the organization's culture. In case it is not possible to arrange a joint meeting, it may be possible to practice talking about dyslexia with the support person. He or she should also be aware of support services available to dyslectics.

In educational institutions a suitable support person may be a tutor, school psychologist or another trainer, in workplaces it may be an occupational healthcare worker, shop steward or a colleague.



**Dyslexia**

**Examples of good practices**

**24**

## **Talking books as reading aids**

by Eija Prossor, Program Manager, TKK Dipoli, Finland

Talking books may open up a whole new world of reading. There are many ways of taking advantage of talking books:

Reading speed grows if you read and listen at the same time.

A good book is easy to listen to on a car trip or while driving a truck.

Talking books can also be useful when studying foreign languages. With the help of a reading program you can slow down the reading pace of the book. That makes it easier to separate words from each other.