

WHAT EVERY EDUCATOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DYSLEXIA

When Learners fare poorly in our classes, we often suspect the real problem is laziness or obstinacy. But recent research indicates that 10% of the population has dyslexia, a reading disorder that persists despite good schooling and normal or even above-average intelligence.

Children with dyslexia can see letters as well as anyone. They can tell you the letters' names. They can even tell you what sounds those letters make. But it often takes them a while to articulate the words those letters form. They may have no problem with longer words, like 'electricity', but have trouble with shorter words, like 'four' or 'year'. Let's begin by dispelling a few common myths about dyslexia.

MYTH # 1: People with dyslexia are brain-damaged.

IN FACT, Scans show that their cerebrums are perfectly normal. Dyslexics indeed seem to have a distinct advantage when it comes to thinking outside the box.

MYTH # 2: Dyslexia is all about flipping letters and writing them backward.

WRONG - Practically all children make mirror copies of letters as they learn to write, although admittedly dyslexics do it more.

MYTH # 3: More boys than girls are dyslexic.

BOYS tend to vent their frustration in unruly behaviour, making them more likely to be noticed, but the disorder affects both Sexes equally.

MYTH # 4: Dyslexia can be outgrown.

THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST DANGEROUS MYTH, because it leads parents to delay seeking help to keep their children from falling further behind. A diagnosis after age 9 will take twice as long to remediate.

What then are the common indicators of dyslexia? Here are ten possible symptoms of this learning disability to look for:

1. Confuse words that sound alike, such as 'tornado' for 'volcano', or 'lotion' for 'ocean',
2. Speak haltingly and overuse vague words such as 'stuff' or 'things'.
3. Have trouble memorizing dates, names and telephone numbers.
4. Have trouble reading small function words such as 'that', 'an' and 'in'.
5. Guess wildly when reading multisyllabic words instead of sounding them out.
6. Skip parts of words, reading 'conible' instead of 'convertible', for example.
7. When reading aloud, often substitute easy words for hard ones, such as 'car' for 'automobile'.
8. Spell terribly and have messy handwriting.
9. Have trouble completing homework or finishing tests on time.
10. Have a deep fear of reading aloud.