

Defining Dyslexia

One of the biggest challenges for a dyslexic learner is that they are defined by what they find difficult, rather than how they shine. In the 21st century, the only educational jewel society strives to hold is superiority in print literacy.

Those who achieve this with ease are praised and bathed in glory, while those who are equally as intelligent, struggle, hide, withdraw, act out, and generally begin believing they are failures.

Like Hercules, they struggle with their load. They are still required to comply and learn the code, parents battle for additional support, and recommended accommodations, designed to help provide a level playing field, are like distant mirages.....

Definition informing the Rose Report - 2009

- Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.
- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organization, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

Definition informing the Shorten Report - 2010

Dyslexia is a learning based disability of neurological origin. It primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word, reading and spelling. It is frequently associated with difficulties in phonological processing. It occurs across the range of intellectual abilities with no distinct cut-off points. It is viewed as a lifelong disability that often does not respond as expected to best-practice evidence-based classroom methods for teaching reading.

Note: In the early 80s Dr. Sally Shaywitz identified the neurological differences for Dyslexic Learners, yet her work was not acknowledged in the UK definition of 2009. In 2010 these neurological differences were noted in the Australian definition, as well as recognition that there is a difference between “Learning casualties” and dyslexic Learners. Both reports acknowledge that Dyslexic Learners “do not respond as expected to best-practice evidence-based classroom methods for teaching reading.”

Commentary & notes by Johanna Winchcomb.
Co-educational Director: Proudly Dyslexic/