

DYSLEXIA

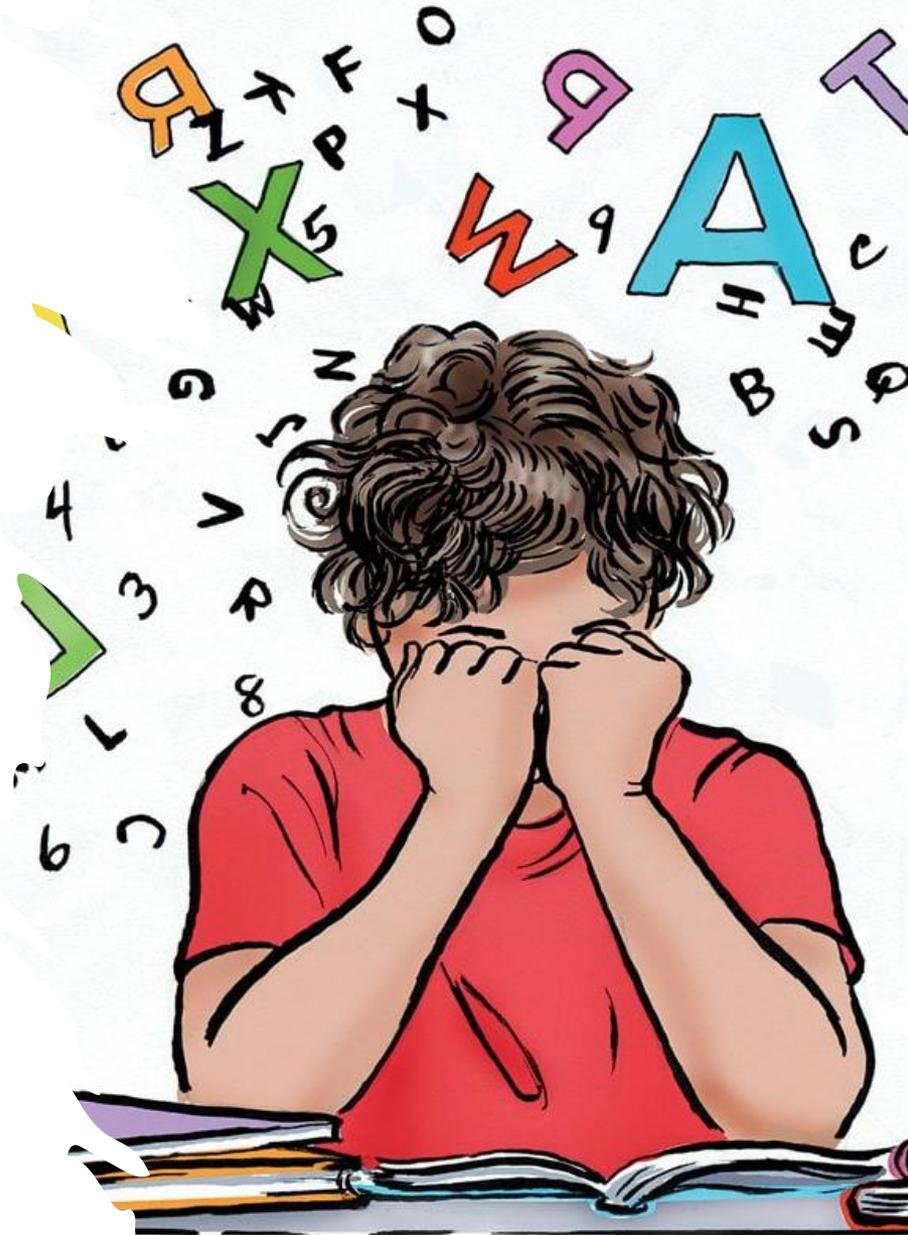


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# Aims

Today we will explore:

- What is dyslexia?
- What does Dyslexia feel like?
- What happens in Bexley regarding diagnosis?
- How can Dyslexia be supported in school?
- What aids can be used to support your child?
- Questions and answers





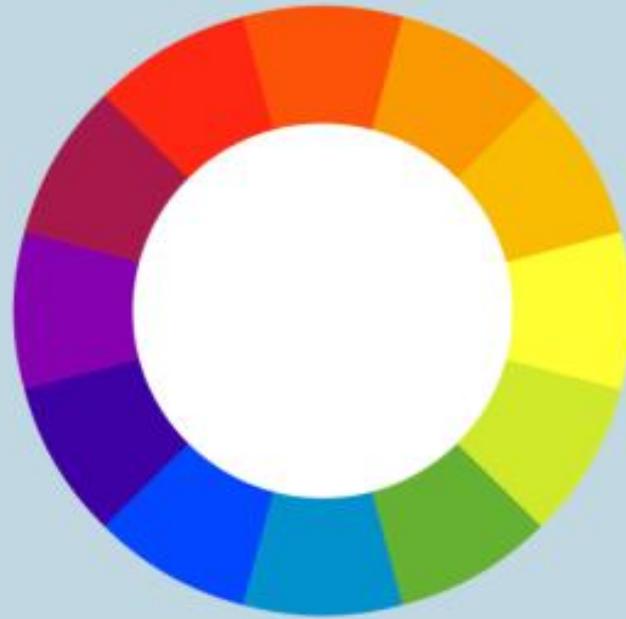
the british  
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# What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty.

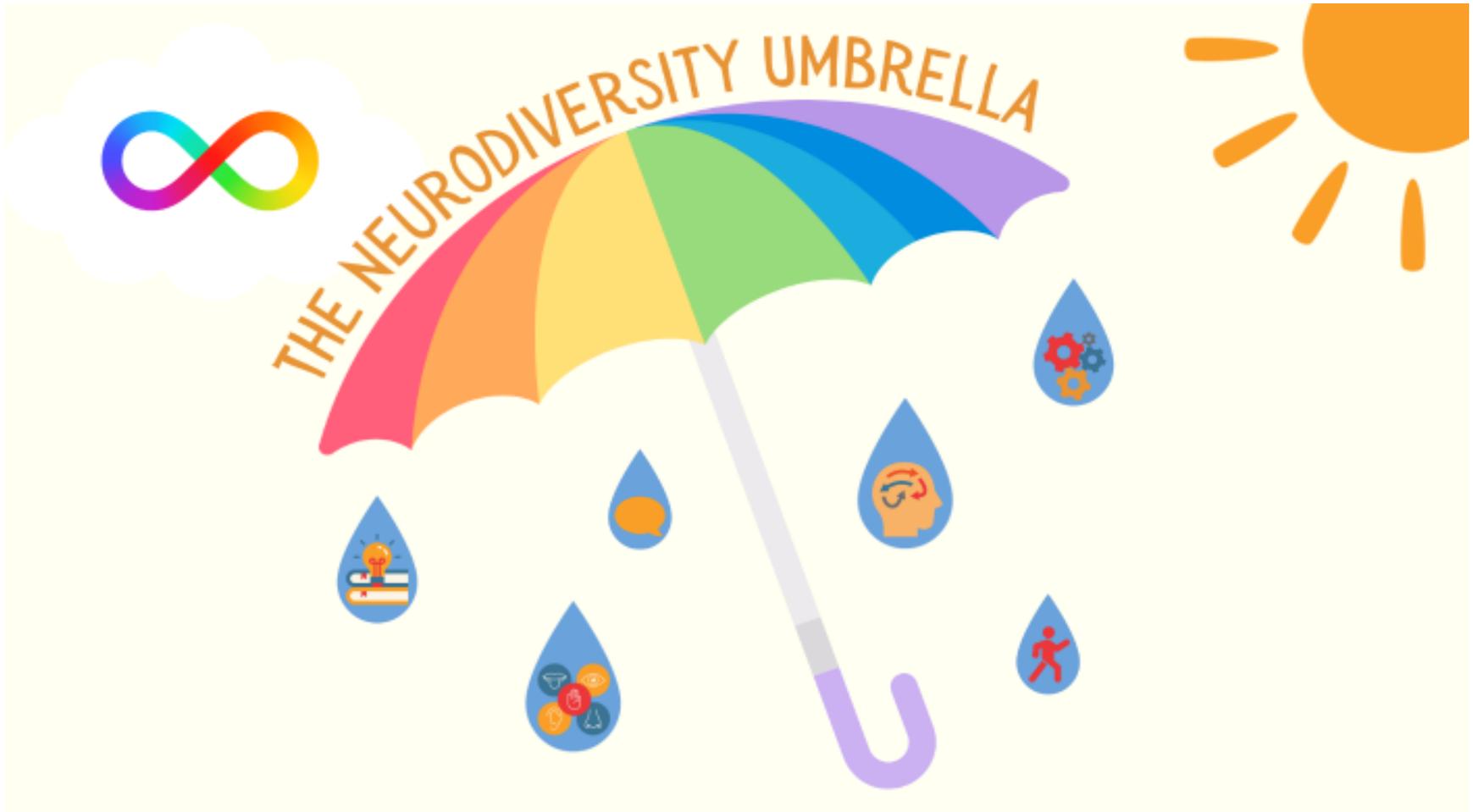
This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word' level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.





**Dyslexia is a Spectrum**





# What does dyslexia feel like?

*"I can't always read what I've written because of the way I've spelt it."*

*"I'm scared to read out loud and I read too fast because I'm nervous."*

*"Can't think how to spell words quickly, I have to take my time."*

*"Letters shift around and it hurts my eyes."*

*"I keep my head down to avoid eye contact. I'm embarrassed to tell people I have dyslexia..."*

# What is it like to have dyslexia?

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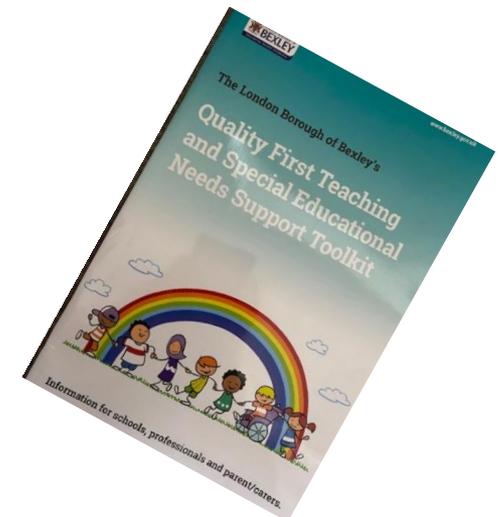
# What happens in Bexley regarding diagnosis?

## Assess

- Schools must explore a child's literacy skills using different assessment materials (e.g. phonics screening, dyslexia screening).

## Plan

- Schools must implement a plan to target the child's identified needs.
- Schools must implement quality first teaching for literacy.
- Support to develop a plan can be sought through the Early Intervention and Specialist Advice Service (EISAS)



# Dyslexia screeners

## Purpose of screener

- Early Identification
- Highlighting Risk
- Guiding Support
- Identifying Strengths and needs

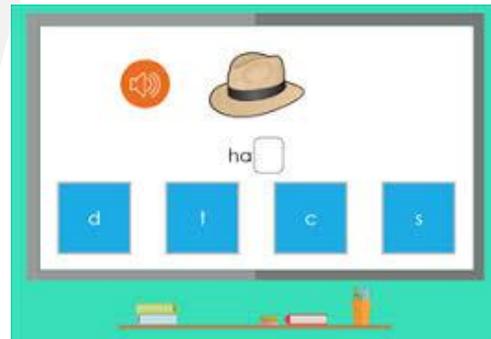
## Important Note

- Screeners are not diagnostic. They give an indication of strengths and areas of needs.

## Learning Profile & Indicators of Dyslexia

	Below Average	Low Average	AVERAGE	High Average	Above Average
Processing Skills					
Visual Skills					
Verbal Skills					
Vocabulary					
Memory					
Sequencing					

	None	Borderline	Mild	Moderate	Strong
Indicators of dyslexia					



# What happens in Bexley regarding diagnosis?

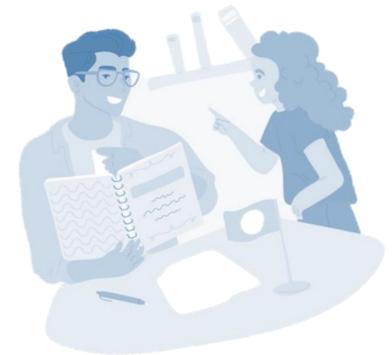
## Do

- Intervention is put into place – this must be evidence-based, with research proven to show it is effective. The support must be structured, cumulative and delivered regularly and frequently.
- Intervention needs to be overseen by a trained adult/SENCo.



## Review

- Clear dates for monitoring and reviewing are needed.
- There should be multiple cycles of the assess, plan, do review cycle (at least 2 terms). Data needs to be from pre and post intervention.
- Child should be discussed at the Early Intervention Team meeting.



# What happens in Bexley regarding diagnosis?

The school's EP may become involved if there is clear evidence that a child or young person has persistent literacy difficulties, despite good evidence of assess plan do review cycles over time, to try and meet the child's needs.

The EP would be interested in:

- Family history
- Medical history
- Speech and Language development
- Attendance
- Quality of teaching and intervention
- Child's strengths
- Literacy skills currently
- Confidence and self-esteem



# Assessment

## Phonological Skills

- Recognising letter sounds and names
- Blending sounds (e.g., *c-a-t*)
- Rhyming and syllable awareness
- Sound discrimination

## Memory and Processing

- Auditory and visual memory (e.g., repeating digits)
- Working memory
- Speed of processing (visual or auditory)

## Literacy Skills

- Word reading and decoding
- Spelling (single words and in context)
- Reading comprehension

## Reasoning Skills

- Vocabulary knowledge
- Visual problem-solving (e.g., matching shapes)





## Important to remember:

- There is no definitive 'dyslexia assessment'. Different professionals will use different assessments.
- Different professionals assess for Dyslexia (e.g EPs, Specialist Teachers). It is important that the assessor is appropriately qualified.
- Each school may have access to different professional teams.



# What else may literacy difficulties cause?

Difficulties becoming apparent when there is a key shift from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' typically in fourth year of formal education (Snow & Powell, 2012)

- Externalising behaviour
- Repeated questions
- Masking of difficulties
- Social-emotional difficulties
- Difficulties in other subjects



# Factors that may affect reading and spelling

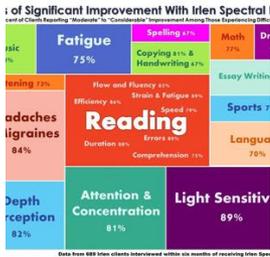


# Meares-Irlen Syndrome/Visual Stress



## Impact of Visual Stress

Visual stress can make reading challenging for people, causing discomfort and difficulty in seeing clear text.



## Common Symptoms

Symptoms include blurred text, headaches, and moving or distorted letters when reading, making reading tiring and frustrating.

is created without copying repeated shapes in a text is visual distortions (swirl-effect) that will maintain the readers d or frustrated. Diversity in t he fact that typography for a for education. Even so a nove This can be achieved in any l amount of words on a senten

## Assessment and testing

Assessment in Bexley can be accessed through **SENCO** referral to **SpLD Visual Clinic at Queen Mary's Hospital Sidcup**

Correct identification is crucial as visual stress may be mistaken for dyslexia (although it can co-occur with dyslexia).



## Possible Solutions

Using coloured overlays or lenses can increase reading comfort and fluency.



Supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties

**Ensure access to skills and experience of teachers**

Identify difficulties and provide support

**Allow enough time for pupils to process information**

Reading, writing or verbal response

**Differentiate reading demands**

Minimise copying tasks  
Provide printed/written task instructions  
Face the board  
Ensure time for overlearning & repetition

**Nurture**

Acknowledge strengths  
Praise effort  
Achievable target setting  
Avoid correcting spelling, instead mark content  
Tick what is right instead of crossing what is wrong

# Classroom Strategies and Reasonable Adjustments



Three factors are key to motivation:



Feeling in control of our actions and choices (autonomy)



Feeling we are able to do something (competence)



Feeling secure and well connected to those around us (relatedness)

# Motivation to read

# Classroom Strategies and Reasonable Adjustments

## Reduce distractions

- Coloured background can help tired eyes
- Provide coloured reading rulers for students who find words “jump around”
- Pen grips, seating cushions

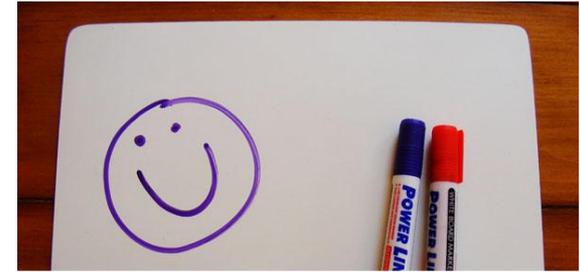


## Scaffold instructions & provide prompts

- Give a list key vocabulary
- One instruction at a time
- Key words only and visual reminders
- Checklists of what to remember (spelling and grammar rules, capital letters)



# Classroom Strategies and Reasonable Adjustments

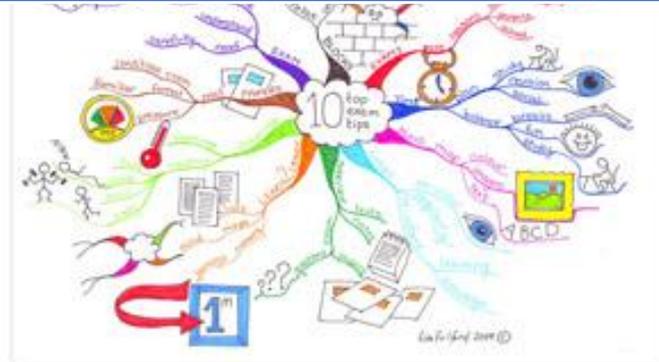


## Use multi-sensory methods

- Magnetic letters
- Practice spellings on whiteboards/technology such as ipads
- Make spellings meaningful (mnemonics, visual imagery)

## Present and encourage recording information in different ways rather than sentences

- Mind maps
- Spider diagrams
- Bullet points
- Tables
- Chunking
- New colour pen for each line



# Classroom Strategies and Reasonable Adjustments

## Technology aids

- Videos/pictures to record evidence of work
- Recordable pens
- iPads to transcribe thoughts
- Laptops and touch typing programmes

## Use accessible font (Rello & Baeza-Yates, 2013)

- Helvetica, Courier, Arial, Verdana, Computer Modern
- Minimum font size 12
- Avoid Italic and block capitals
- Double spacing can help children follow a line of text (computer and handwritten)
- Make text left justified, avoid fully justified

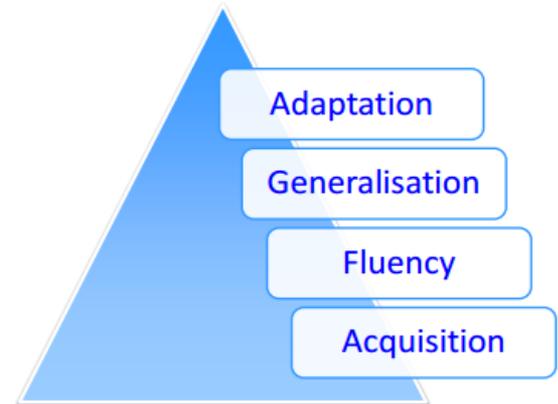


# Evidence-based Interventions

- The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust – List of evidence-based interventions.
- Jonathon Brooks (2016) – *‘What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties’* booklet.

- Precision Teaching (Haring and Eaton, 1978).
- Paired Reading (Topping, 2001).
- Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar, 1982).
- Cued Spelling (Topping, 1995, 2001).

The learning hierarchy



Haring & Eaton, 1978

# One way of supporting pupils involves promoting a growth mindset



- Praise pupils for the strategies they use and persistence they display.
- Growth mindset isn't just about effort – it's about teaching children to overcome challenges! Frame challenges as opportunities to learn and teach strategies to overcome them.
- Help students to track their progress over time.
- Add yet to the end of negative sentences. Then find strategies to achieve the 'yet'.
- Teach pupils that their brain grows and creates new connections all the time – intelligence isn't fixed!

# Strategies for Parents/Carers

Utilise strengths

(e.g. comic strips, art, design, sport,  
Lego)



Celebrate achievements



## *Self Esteem*



**Acknowledge efforts → highlight the process**

*“I’m stupid. I’m bad at reading.”*

- You’re not stupid (dismisses feelings)
- Everyone finds reading hard (minimises their experience)
- You just need to try harder (reinforces shame)
- But you’re so clever!” (can feel untrue in the moment)

# Strategies for Parents/Carers

- Daily or frequent structured reading activities

## Evidence-informed guidance

- Short, regular practice (5–15 minutes)
- Multisensory methods (say it, tap it, write it)



Utilise technology\*  
Audiobooks, Text-to-speech, Speech-to-text, TonieBox



## *Everyday Support*

### Environment matters



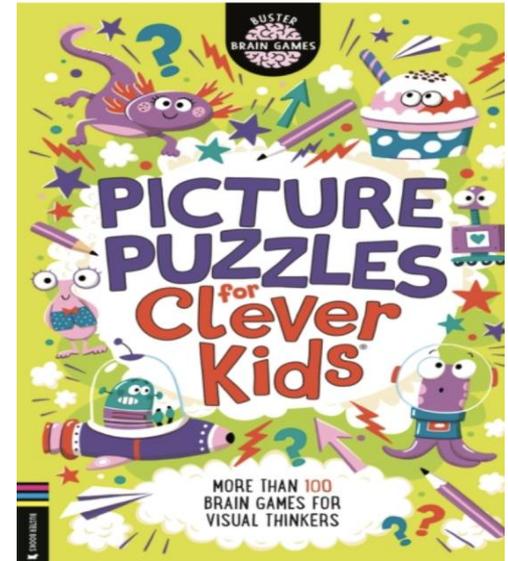
### Visual prompts



# Strategies for Parents/Carers



Reading, Writing  
and Spelling



# Strategies for Parents/Carers

## *3 Top Tips*

1. Prioritise promoting self-esteem
2. Consistency is key (realistic expectations)
3. Initially reduce the demands for writing/reading



# Local Help and Support



Educational setting (through EITS)



Bexley, Bromley,  
Greenwich and Lewisham





# Helpful links and resources

- Theories of literacy - [https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/92488/Theories-of-Literacy-Development/#vars!date=1931-05-10\\_07:04:16!](https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/92488/Theories-of-Literacy-Development/#vars!date=1931-05-10_07:04:16!)
- Growth Mindset animations for children (good for adults too!) - <https://ideas.classdojo.com/b/growth-mindset>
- Phonics - <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-site/expert-help/phonics-made-easy>
- Paired reading - <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/esw/research/resources/thinkingreadingwriting/> - resources
- [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/1015/Paired\\_reading\\_scheme\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/1015/Paired_reading_scheme_toolkit.pdf) - information on setting up peer paired reading
- Reciprocal reading - [http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reciprocal\\_teaching](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reciprocal_teaching)
- Useful website for various evidence-based strategies for reading - <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>
- Books about having Dyslexia - *'Can I tell you about Dyslexia?'* By Alan M Hultquist

