

Overview

SNAP-SpLD suggests dysgraphic and hand-eye coordination may be affecting Leanne's learning.

Interventions selected to help Leanne

Alternatives to writing

While it is sometimes strongly felt that younger pupils should continue to work on improving their handwriting, pen and paper will not be the primary means of writing over the longer term.

From quite an early age, pupils with dysgraphic difficulties should start to make use of a computer when appropriate and as much as is possible, at school and for homework. This is likely to be an important tool in years to come, so starting as early as possible is likely to be helpful for Leanne in staying engaged and in learning to express herself through the written word.

Voice recognition software is also becoming increasingly accessible and realistic, and some of the most promising may be found on smartphones and tablets.

How else can I help Leanne in the classroom?

Materials

- Avoid plain paper. Lines and squares will help Leanne organise the page and double-spacing may help improve legibility.

Processing

- Allow extra time, if appropriate, so that Leanne can take special care with layout and presentation.
- Be aware that writing can be tiring for Leanne. Try to break down writing tasks into small steps, with frequent breaks.

Presentation

- Encourage redrafting. It is sometimes helpful to use a double page: the left-hand page for first draft and the right-hand page for redrafting.
- At the appropriate point, encourage the development of keyboard skills – word processing with spellcheck is an invaluable life skill for all learners, but is especially important for dysgraphic pupils.
- A sloping board can be useful as a writing surface.
- A writing posture which is too close to the paper can be a pointer to visual binocular instability or convergence difficulties.
- Discuss writing-hand correction, that is the four Ss: slope, size, space, sitting on the line.

Facilitating effective learning

- Consider the use of voice recognition technology.

Motivation and self-esteem

- Reassure Leanne that lots of famous and successful people have similar difficulties.
- Let Leanne know you are aware of her difficulty and that you are sympathetic, but also that you have high expectations.
- Be especially generous with praise and cautious with criticism. Praise can be a natural motivator as long as Leanne feels the praise is genuine and deserved.

Useful websites

www.backinaction.co.uk markets a useful Posture Pack: a portable seat wedge that converts to a writing slope.

<http://dysgraphia.org.uk> is the website of the main UK dysgraphia organisation which includes many useful tips and explanations.

<http://day2dayparenting.com/dysgraphia-can-treated/> has a lot of useful advice and information aimed at parents/carers.

<http://www.idonline.org/article/12770> has a useful account of what dysgraphia is and ways of responding.

www.thrass.com – THRASS® stands for Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills, and is a popular and well-tried approach.

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/dysgraphia/understanding-dysgraphia> is a most useful and comprehensive account of all aspects of dysgraphia.

Further reading

Addy, L. (2004) *Speed Up! A Kinaesthetic Programme to Develop Fluent Handwriting (LDA)*. A tried-and-tested programme designed specifically for children aged 8–13, whose handwriting is slow, illegible or lacking in fluency.

Bennett, J. (2007) *The Handwriting Pocketbook (Teachers' Pocketbooks)*. Starting with the basics such as seating, posture, paper and writing implements, the book moves on to remedying problems (e.g. handwriting which is illegible, poorly formed, incorrectly or inconsistently joined, a mixture of upper and lower case, etc.).

Cavey, D. (2000) *Dysgraphia: Why Johnny Can't Write: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents, 3rd Edition (Pro Ed)*. An enduring and popular text.