

# Supporting Students with Special Needs: Learning Disability

A learning disability is a neurological disorder. In simple terms, a learning disability results from a difference in the way a person's brain is "wired."

Individuals with learning disabilities are as smart or smarter than their peers. However they may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling and/or organizing information if left to figure things out by themselves or if taught in conventional ways.

A learning disability can't be cured or fixed. It is a lifelong challenge. With the right support and intervention, however, individuals with learning disabilities can succeed in school and go on to successful, often distinguished careers later in life.



## Dyslexia

4 Strategies When Lecturing



### 1. Use colour coded sentences

Use colour coded sentences in the PowerPoint slides. Avoid using font colour to be only in black.

#### Not Recommended ❌

Physical handwriting is torture for most people with dyslexia. Word processors make life much easier. Allow them to use the Spell Checker and help with grammar and punctuation so that you can see the quality of the content.



#### Recommended ✅

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### 2. Do not ask them to read aloud

Do not ask a student with dyslexia to read aloud. Words are likely to be misread or skipped, causing embarrassment to the student.



### 3. Do not ask them to copy text from board

Do not ask a student with dyslexia to copy text from a board. It is very difficult for him or her to do that.



### 4. Provide them opportunities to answer questions orally

Give the student with dyslexia opportunities to answer questions orally. Many students with dyslexia can demonstrate their understanding with a spoken answer but are unable to put those ideas in written form.

## Autism (Asperger's)

5 Strategies When Lecturing



### 1. Keep classroom routines clear & consistent

Keep routines in the classroom clear and consistent. Provide students with autism additional guidance during more unstructured times and transitions. Give as much advanced notice as possible when you are aware of a change or disruption in the class schedule.



### 2. Do not assume

Do not assume that your student is not listening or paying attention to you if they avoid eye contact. Individuals with autism often have an easier time concentrating when they are not making eye contact and forcing them to look at you may actually break their concentration.



### 3. Be explicit and direct

Be explicit and direct when explaining your own thoughts and feelings. Many individuals with AS have trouble taking the perspectives of others.

Always use specific language when giving instructions. For example, 'please stand in front of the table' instead of 'go there.'

Also use concrete language rather than analogies, idioms, metaphors, and sarcasm. For example, say "It is raining very heavily now." Do not say, "It is raining cats and dogs now."



### 4. Establish a safe place

Establish a safe place where the student can go to calm down if she/he becomes overstimulated. For example, tell the student that he can go for a quiet walk outside the classroom.

### 5. Provide visual for learning

Students with autism are visual learners and they learn best via this method. Less talk.

For queries relating to Special Education Needs (SEN), please email to [SENsupport@suss.edu.sg](mailto:SENsupport@suss.edu.sg)