

## **Key Observable Behaviours Indicating Dyslexia**

*Significant difficulty integrating the cueing systems for reading and writing including:*

1. Difficulties in phonological processing - blending, segmenting and manipulating sounds and syllables - and pronouncing words accurately;
2. difficulties with sound/symbol matching and sequencing ;
3. difficulties in decoding not related to lack of focus nor practice ;
4. extreme delay and confusion in learning sight words, especially those that are visually similar;
5. limited sight word knowledge and lack of transfer of sight words to real reading tasks; and
6. considerable difference between listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

*Compromised written communication including:*

1. strong ideation, but poor written production and reluctance or hesitancy to write;
2. spelling difficulties despite developmentally appropriate instruction including difficulties with sound/symbol matching and sequencing;
3. difficulties with letter formation and grapho-motor organization at the word and page level; and
4. difficulties with the conventions of oral and written communication.

We recognize that true dyslexia is a significant reading and writing difficulty, but with appropriate assessment, programming and instruction tailored to the individual's needs, students with dyslexia become successful literacy learners.

## READING

### **1. Difficulties in phonological processing: blending, segmenting, manipulating sounds and syllables, and pronouncing words accurately ( manipulation of sounds)**

#### ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES

##### A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

- Medical history (ear infections, Speech and Language Assessments, hearing)
- Marie Clay's *Hearing Sounds in Words*
- *Profile of Phonological Awareness* – Saskatchewan Document – page 109

##### B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT – Please refer to examiner's manual for necessary training and education background

- *Test of Auditory Processing (TAPS-III)* areas of discrimination, blending and elision
- Hearing screening for acuity/CAP screening
- *CTOPP (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*– rapid naming of digits/letters, memory, phonological awareness
- *Test of Phonological Awareness (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)* Grades K – 4
- *The Phonological Awareness and Reading Profile – Intermediate: Grades 3 - 9*
- *PAST-R (K-1)*
- *Woodcock Reading Mastery* – subtests for phonological processing – K-2
- *Woodcock Johnson III* – phonological processes, blending words, generating rhyme
- *WIAT*

#### **Recommendations and Strategies**

- Earobics
- Florida Reading Research Center website -- games

- Word study ( *Words their Way*, Tyner, Gentry, Ganske)
- Explicit multi-modal instruction in rhyming
- Sequenced Instruction – Hoyt and Tyner (further information in appendix)
- Elkonin Boxes-Block-a-sound
- Whisper phone, Tube-a-loo
- Word ladders – sounds in many positions

## **2. Difficulties with sound-symbol matching and sequencing – grapho-phonetic relationships**

### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

#### **A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT**

- Fountas and Pinnell Screening (Benchmark Kit)
- Analysis of spelling from a) *Words Their Way* or *DSA Word Journeys*
- *ERSI* (Dictation of Words from Tyner) – Kindergarten - Grade 1
- *Intervention Reader* (Tyner) – Grades 3 - 8
- Writing of the alphabet (lower case, upper case, (no erase, use brackets)
- Dictation of random phonemes (DLC Rapid Write)
- Marie Clay (*Hearing Sounds in Words*) – Observation survey
- Non-word repetition (Reading)
- Orthographic assessment – authentic writing samples
- Names Test
- Diagnostic use of Elkonin Boxes
- Saskatchewan Document – pages 109 – 115 (further information in appendix)

#### **B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT – Please refer to examiner’s manual for necessary training and education background**

- *CTOPP- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing*
- *Test of Phonological Awareness*
- *TAPS 2- subtest 3 – Test of Auditory Processing Skills*
- *PAST-R*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Elkonin Sound Boxes /block-a-sound with letters
- Primary and Intermediate Phonological Awareness Kits
- Making words/Making and breaking words
- Earobics-moving to letters
- Tyner and Fountas and Pinnell activities for grapho-phonetic relationships
- *Words Their Way*
- *Word Journeys*
- Megan Milani strategies – chanting alphabet, blends and digraphs (see appendix)
- Polysyllabic word study –Cunningham and DLC (see appendix)
- Repeated reading – singing, Big books, stories, poems, rhythm, smart board, Rhyme Magic (Sharon Zinke)
- Word families – word walls
- Glass Analysis (further information in appendix)
- Decodable text for an initial but limited period of time
- VAKT
- Gentry hand spelling
- Hands on letter manipulation or production
- Songs, stories, characters for letter recognition, sound awareness, handwriting.

### **3. Difficulties in decoding beyond and not related to lack of focus or practice/difficulties with working memory**

#### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

##### **A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT**

- Observations: of body behaviour, anxiety, stress, fatigue, maintaining topic, tracking print, consistent use of strategies
- Interviews with parent(s), teacher(s), student
- Cum file review- academic case history
- Response to diagnostic teaching
- Time on task analysis in classroom

##### **B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT - Please refer to examiner's manual for necessary training and education background**

- Woodcock Johnson III subtests (4)

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Self – regulation (i.e. fidget toys, etc.)
- High interest and short texts
- Self-reflection logs- What was easy/hard? What did I learn? What would I do differently?
- Set goals – manageable targets
- Chunk work periods, tasks
- Repeated reading, Readers Theatre, Audio Books, Playaways- adjusting speed
- Interest inventories
- Specific explicit strategy instruction
- Predictable routines

## **4. Extreme delay and confusion in learning sight words, especially those that are visually similar**

### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

#### **A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS**

- Graded Word Lists: IRI Word Lists , Slosson,
- High Frequency Words Lists: Fry, Dolch, Fountas and Pinnell, Tyner
- Running records –VSM
- Fluency /automaticity of basic sight words
- Vision assessments

#### **B. FORMAL ASSESSMENTS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Compare and contrast visually similar words-What is the same? What is different?
- Teach in multi-sensory modes (never sound out sight words as sight words are visual. Don't confuse with regular pattern words).
- Games: Sight word Bingo, Go-Fish,
- IPAD with various apps, Kindle, e-readers
- Letter manipulations- compare sequence of letters
- Sight word Quick Write
- Practice reading sight word wall in class (further information in appendix)
- Sight words in desk for writing-reading (further information in appendix)
- Milani resources (further information in appendix)
- Exploring fonts – Open Dyslexia Font (further information in appendix)

- Increase verbal rehearsal
- Mrs. Perkin's website (see appendix)
- Repeated readings
- Repeated writing of known sight words
- Prior to bedtime practice
- Student interview – looking for metacognitive awareness

## **5. Limited sight word (or high frequency word) knowledge and lack of transfer of sight words to reading tasks**

### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

#### **A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT**

- High frequency word lists (Fry, Fountas and Pinnell, Tyner)
- Authentic reading tasks
- IRI sight word assessment/transfer into passages
- Observations of reading sight words in isolation and the same words in connected text
- Observation of rate and accuracy

#### **B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Use the Fernald method - focus on letter names (further information in appendix)
- Use of multiple modalities
- Use a variety of strategies for memory (visualizing, create mnemonics, tactile cues, pictures cues, actions, rebus,)
- Use lists of sight words and activities (Mrs. Perkin's website)(further information in appendix)
- Use high frequency sight words and sight word phrases on power point slides to increase automaticity
- Connect sight word vocabulary to authentic text using physical cues - Megan Milani's strategies (further information in appendix)
- Use of decodable texts with lots of high frequency words (Reading A-Z)
- Repeated reading of sight words and of independent level short passages (further information in appendix)
- Use reinforcement and self-awareness of increasing competence (graphs and charts, etc.)
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## 6. Considerable difference between listening comprehension and reading

### ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES

- A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT (completed interactively with the student)
- Informal Reading Inventory – narrative/expository
  - Interactive strategies to discover tracking difficulties (use of a moveable line guide)
  - Oral retelling – prompted and unprompted –use taping to assess student expressive language and explanation abilities
  - Oral cloze
  - Classroom teacher interview
  - Student interview –his/her observations about the comprehension process
- B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT – Please refer to examiner’s manual for necessary training and education background
- *Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills (TAPS-3/subtests for auditory comprehension-final 2 subtests)*
  - *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT) to assess receptive and expressive vocabulary*
  - *Woodcock-Johnson Achievement – selected subtests*

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

- Pre-teaching and linking background knowledge and written vocabulary
- Repeated readings for comprehension –(3 times: for accuracy, for fluency, for understanding)
- Chunking reading – breaking down the amount, working in small segments
- Annotating the text (talking to the text,)leaving margin notes, creating a mind map, using sticky notes to track events, creating vocab definitions, using acetates to monitor thinking).
- Teacher modeling “Think –aloud”/ Think-aloud on tape?

- Informal tools and templates ( graphic organizers, story grammars, Building GIST, summarizing text)
- Teach strategies for visualizing (further information in appendix)
- Self-monitoring strategies

#### COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES

- Books on tape
- Peer readers
- Visual dictionaries
- Video clips

## **WRITING**

# 1. STRONG IDEATION, BUT POOR WRITTEN PRODUCTION AND RELUCTANCE OR HESITATION TO WRITE

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES

### A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

- Interviews: Teacher Interview  
Student Interview (survey, motivation)
- Analysis of Writing Samples: Classroom based  
Assessment based (with Reading Clinician)  
Rubrics – Frey, Bonnie Campbell-Hill, 6+1 Traits
- Analysis of Pre-writing Activities: Prewriting web – mapping
- Diagnostic Teaching: writing prompts, sentence frames, mentor texts. Observe for memory and confidence.

### B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT - Please refer to examiner's manual for necessary training and education background

- Marie Clay's Observation Survey: Hearing Sounds in Words  
Writing Vocabulary
- WJ-111 Achievement: Sentence Fluency  
Writing Samples
- Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

### A. Writing Process:

Pre-writing: Graphic Organizer  
Story map  
Post-it notes  
Teach/student 1-1 peer conference  
Conversation

Composing: Writing model, mentor texts

Cloze

Sentence frames/lists

Writing frames

Processes for using key words/ transition words

Tools such as high frequency word lists, personal word wall/dictionary

Shared writing: language experience technique moving to “share the pen”

When a student is ready to move beyond beginning writing, Gallagher Technique (questioning the student’s text) may be appropriate.

B. Technology Based Supports: iPad

Word Processing

Dragon Dictation

Co-Writer

Inspiration (mapping tool)

On-line book creation

Apps – Poppet, Dragon Dictation

Siri –voice to text program plus speak

Franklin Spelling (electronic dictionary which accepts phonetic spellings)

C. Accommodations/Adaptations: choice of paper (lines, size, colour, post-it notes)

Offer a variety of writing tools (markers, pencil grip, pencil, pen)

Use tactile feedback: rice, sand, plasticine, erasable white board crayons, raised letters, cut-out sponge letters, various pencil leads, grease pencils etc

Consider use of slant boards

Test formats

Scribing

Less output

## **2. Spelling difficulties despite developmentally appropriate Instruction and including difficulties with sound/symbol matching and sequencing**

### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

#### **A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENT**

- *Diagnostic Spelling Assessment* – Ganske

- *Words Their Way*
- Monster Test – Gentry
- Analyze writing samples: note transpositions, substitutions, missed sounds
- *Hearing and Recording Sounds* – Clay

## **B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Effective use of spell check strategies
- VAKT (multi-modal)
- Word sorting
- Look, Say, Check
- Visualization
- Mini word wall for spelling reference
- Cue cards
- Overlearning—intensive practice
- Direct teaching of patterns
- Co-Writer/Write Outloud
- Spellingcity.com
- Manipulatives ( letter tiles, sand boxes, rice, trays,)
- Songs, rhymes for rules, chants, Morning Message
- Tyner activities – making words and word scrambles
- Collaborative Writing/shared and Interactive writing
- Picture cues for letters sounds
- Elkonin Boxes
- Bingo Chip Spelling and finger spelling

- Picture and Letter sorts/sound sorts
- Morphology: syllabication, word origins, prefixes, suffixes, roots

### **3. Difficulties with Letter Formation and Grapho-Motor Organization at the Word/ Page Level.**

#### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

##### A. INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Writing samples in testing situation and from the classroom

*Diagnostic Spelling Assessment* –Ganske as a part of active observation

*Early Reading Screening Instrument* – Tyner

Observations of grip, formation, handedness, speed, and motor memory

##### B. FORMAL ASSESSMENT - Please refer to examiner’s manual for necessary training and education background

*Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

- Practicing formation in sand, hair-gel in zip-lock bag, plasticine, Lego, Scrabble tiles, foam letters, beading, paintbrush & water on chalkboard, VAKT – use glue, rice
- Use a variety of writing tools: Pencil grippers, pen sizes, mini marker, stylus.
- Use strengthening tools: springed chopsticks, tweezers, etc.
- Use tools to help with spacing
- Adjust body and paper position, consider slant boards, midline cues
- Use printing and handwriting programs: Fountas & Pinnell verbal pathways, *Handwriting Without Tears/* Apps on iPad, Draw Board, *Loops and Groups* (cursive)
- Use various papers: lined, raised lined, shaded lined, graph
- Dots in margin
- Keyboarding
- “Dragon Dictation”

### **4. Difficulties with the conventions of written communication**

#### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES**

##### INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

- Observation of writing samples from classroom

- Engage in diagnostic writing process, analysis and conferencing with the student in 1-1 setting
- Descriptors for writing analysis including sentence structure, paragraph structure, and grammar may be found in writing continua: (Winnipeg School Division, Bonnie Campbell-Hill, Fountas and Pinnell, 6 + 1 traits, rubrics, checklists and exemplars).
- For adolescent writing:
  - Analysis criteria may be found in *Analytic Writing Analysis Tool* - Nancy Frey and Doug Fisher. (further information in appendix)
  - Analysis of student's oral language: vocabulary, sentence grammar, sequencing of ideas, retrieval
  - Developmental Spelling analysis: (Words Their Way, Ganske, Gentry)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

### A. Sentence Structure:

Auditory feedback: rereading written work aloud, whisper phone, audacity (computer)  
 Reread after time separation  
 Multi-modal supports for "stuck" writers: colour code parts of speech or parts of sentence, reorganizing a cut up sentence, unpacking a stimulus question to formulate the stem of a complete sentence, DLC Question Strip (Who, what Where, When, Why), question and answer relationships.  
 Key Word List  
 Story Impressions (BLM curr.)  
 Quick Writes/Power Writes

### B. Paragraph Structure and Longer Writing

Graphic organizers [www.graphicorganizers.org](http://www.graphicorganizers.org)  
 Story Impressions  
 6 Traits: structure/organization/word choice  
 Sentence Combining at a basic level  
 Reading and analyzing non-fiction text  
 Use mentor texts as models (create awareness of speech vs writing styles with cultural sensitivity) Kelly Gallagher  
 Signal words for each text structure, transition words  
 Text structure –Dillabough (further information in appendix)  
 Colour-coded paragraph - DLC

### B. Mechanics: Mnemonic Strategies for editing:

C.O.P.S. (Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation, Sense)  
 M.C.P.S.N. (Meaning, Capitalization, Punctuation, Spelling, Neatness)  
 Triple Take (Meaning, Punctuation, Spelling)

Modeling correct grammatical forms in 1-1 setting  
Daily edits based on student writing  
Creating a personal spelling dictionary

- C. Resources
- Sentence combining – William Strong
  - Research strategy – reading and analyzing non-fiction text – Tony Stead
  - Writing style- Kelly Gallagher
  - Text structure – D. Dillabough/ Doug Buehl
  - Nancy Atwell binder
  - [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)
  - Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School* - Steve Graham and Dolores Perin
  - <http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/writingnext.pdf>

## **FURTHER RESOURCES and REFERENCES**

**Dillabough, Diane (2008). Teaching Text Structures: Teaching Patterns in Reading and Writing.**

**Nancy Frey & Doug Fisher. Analytic Writing Analysis Tool**

**Steve Graham and Dolores Perin. Writing Next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high school**  
**(<http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/writingnext.pdf>)**

**Milani, Megan (2009). The 3 Habits of Highly Successful Reading Teachers. Pembroke Publishers**

**Saskatchewan Learning Document (2004). Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties and Disabilities: A Guide for Educators (<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/reading-difficulties-disabilities>)**

**GLASS ANALYSIS – [www.getthinkingworks.com/glassDetails.html](http://www.getthinkingworks.com/glassDetails.html)**

**Ganske, Kathy. (2013) Word Journeys, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: Assessment – Guided Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary Instruction. Guilford Press**

**Linda Hoyt – Excellence in Literacy Instruction – Tips and Tools**  
**([www.lindahoyt.com/tips.html](http://www.lindahoyt.com/tips.html))**



**Scanlon, Donna; Anderson, Kimberly; Sweeny, Joan. (2010). Early Intervention for Reading Difficulties: The Interactive Strategies Approach. Guilford Press**

**Open Dyslexic Font - (free download) - [www.dafont.com/open-dyslexic.font](http://www.dafont.com/open-dyslexic.font)**

**[www.mrsperkins.com](http://www.mrsperkins.com)**

**Strong, William. (1994). Sentence Combining: A Composing Book. McGraw Hill Education**

**Buehl, Doug - Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning (2013) and Developing Readings in the Academic Disciplines (2011).**

**Polysyllabic Word Study - Fully Analyzed - Diagnostic Learning Centre, Winnipeg School Division (<http://blogs.wsd1.org/dlc>)**