

Dyslexia, the Practice and the Person

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INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research explored the topic of 'teachers with dyslexia in primary school education: the influences, challenges and strategies for the teacher as an educator'.

The overarching aim of this research was to explore the experience of a teacher with a learning difficulty, specifically dyslexia, and the teacher-pupil relationship in mainstream primary schools in Ireland.

REFERENCE LIST

Burns, E., & Bell, S. (2011). Narrative Construction of Professional Teacher Identity of Teachers with Dyslexia. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(5), 952-960. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2011.03.007

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2017). Circular 35 Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools from May 2017

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Changes in inclusive education are having a positive effect within higher education and on the professional workforce in terms of people with learning difficulties. Research has shown that early identification of learning disabilities (LD) and the supported learning of pupils, can have a major impact on their educational achievements. This research sought to investigate how being a teacher with dyslexia might influence the teacher-pupil relationships in primary classrooms.

There were three main objectives for this research: to define dyslexia and investigate its prevalence on a national and international level; to examine how positive and negative teacher-pupil relationships may influence the pupil's academic engagement and achievement levels and; to explore whether there are challenges facing teachers with dyslexia and the strategies they employ in practice to address these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Documentary research was used to conduct this research. According to Scott & Marshall (2015), Documentary Research is research that uses personal and official documents as a source material. The data in this research came from published works and was readily available.

Traditionally, documentary research can include documents like newspapers, diaries, stamps, directories, handbills, maps, government statistical publications, photographs, paintings, gramophone records, tapes, and computer files.

For the purpose of this research, I only used peer reviewed papers and case studies, ensuring they were reliable sources of information. Also, most sources were written within the last 10 years meaning they were relevant and most up-to-date in terms of inclusive practice in education.

FINDINGS

- Finding One: Teachers with dyslexia are marginally better at identifying learning difficulties in pupils.
- Finding Two: Supports and whole school acceptance is fundamental to teachers with dyslexia disclosing and managing their dyslexia in the class
- Finding Three: There has been a positive move towards the early diagnosis of learning difficulties, specifically dyslexia in primary and secondary schools.
- Finding Four: Inclusive education in primary and secondary schools is having a positive impact on the number of people with LD continuing to higher level education and creating an inclusive work force.

CONCLUSION

This research presented the characteristics and prevalence of dyslexia in education settings as delineated in literature. In recent years, the legislation and policies around this LD have vastly improved the standard of support available for children and adults. Inclusive education is an integral part of the modern classroom both nationally and internationally.

This research highlighted the importance of government bodies agreeing on one detailed definition of dyslexia, to ensure consistency in all policy and legislation. There is tangible evidence that factors such as frequent teacher education and professional development, early identification and a whole school approach to inclusive education have a fundamental influences on the educational success of pupils with LD, specifically dyslexia.

Additional research is needed on the experiences of teachers with dyslexia in Ireland. Research can be limited because participants would be required to disclose their disability which we know from research conducted by (Valle et al., 2004) is something still feared by teachers with dyslexia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be beneficial if schools could receive whole school training around supporting staff members with LD.
- It would be beneficial if Circular 35/17 was implemented to enable teachers to identify and diagnose dyslexia within their schools may help with early identification.
- Additional instruction on specific learning difficulties within in teacher education programmes would be beneficial for student teachers e.g. an optional elective on SLD diagnosis could be offered.

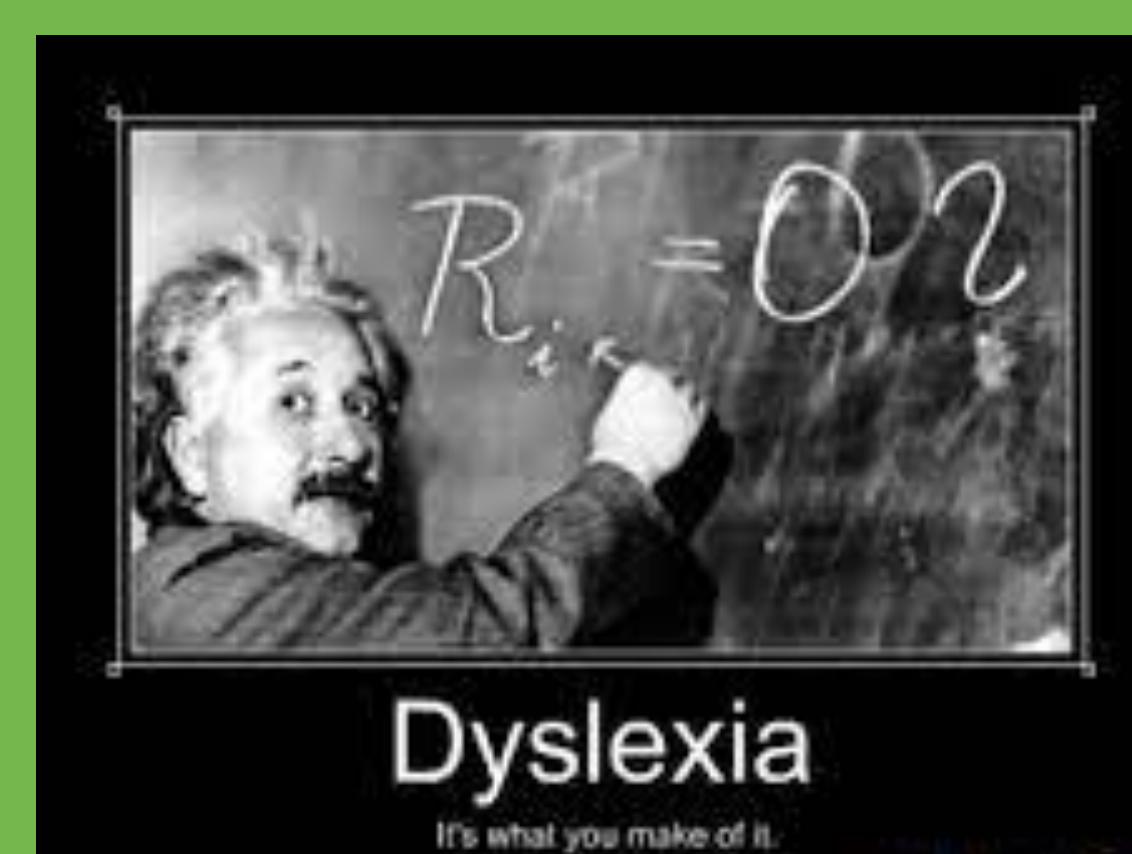


Figure 1. Albert Einstein has dyslexia.

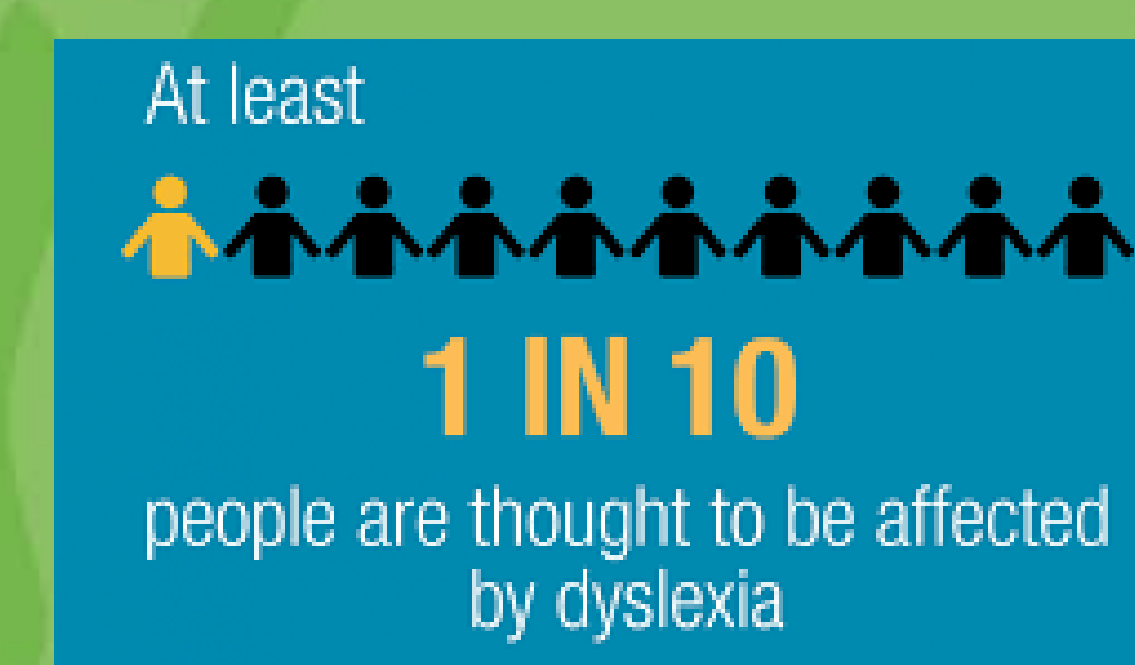


Figure 2. Prevalence of dyslexia

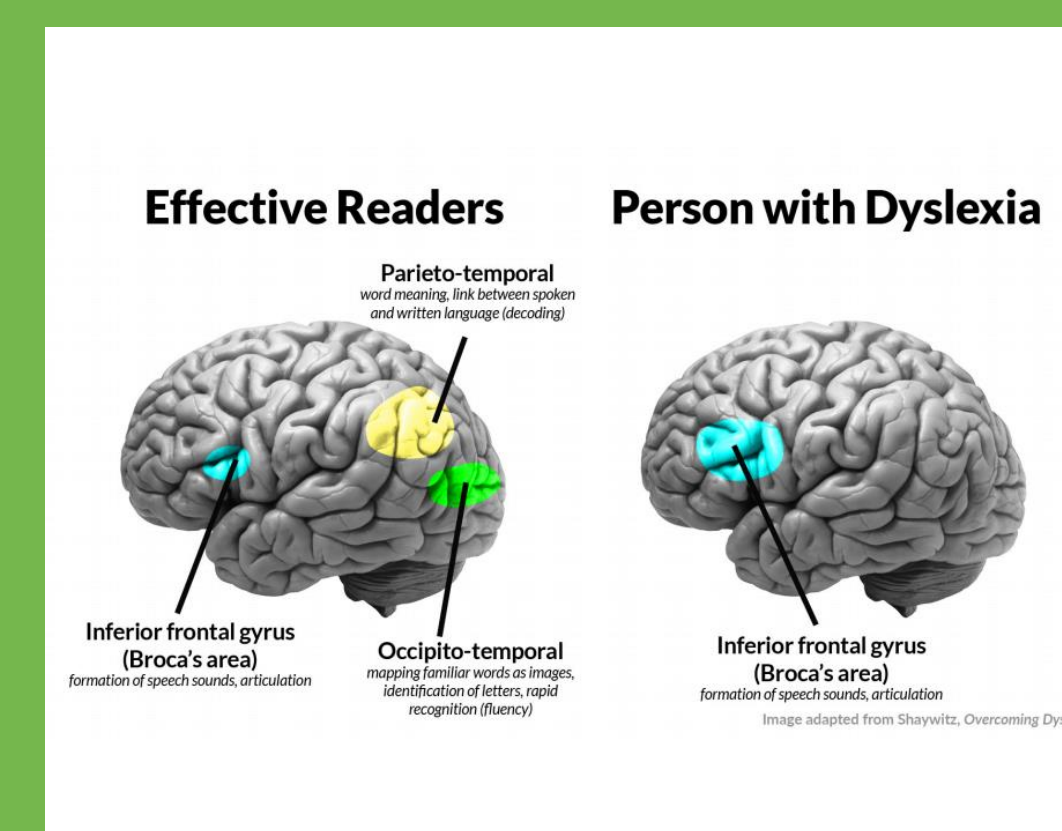
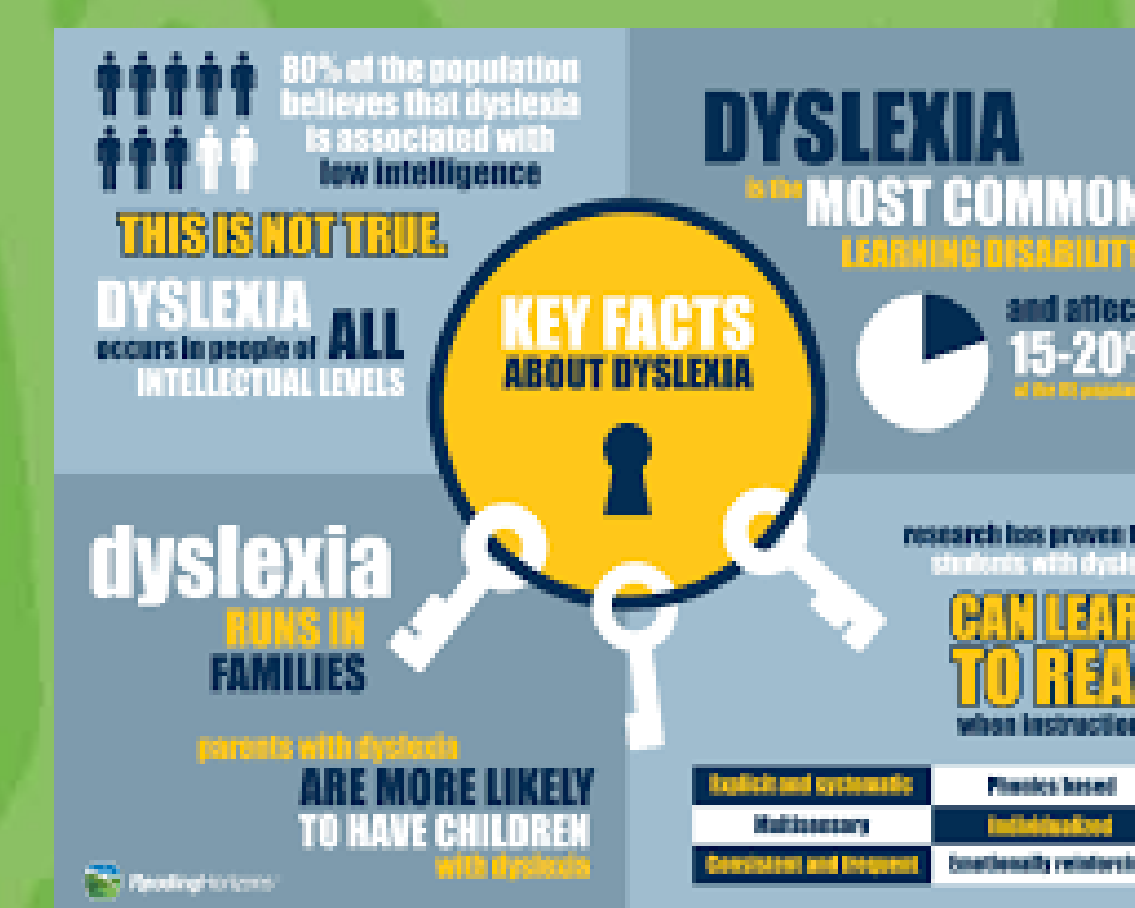


Chart 1. Brain composition.



Fact Sheet 1: Key facts about dyslexia