

FREQUENTLY OCCURRING DIFFICULTIES WITH WRITING AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Information for teachers

The following difficulties are common for learners with literacy difficulties but also learners who struggle with attention and stress or anxiety.

The Drive for Literacy programme advocates evidence based strategies that can be applied to a cohort rather than differentiating for certain learners. This not only makes it easier for the teacher it doesn't rely on singling out certain learners. Offering strategies such as the ones below improves the access to the curriculum and teaching for the learners that need it.

Potential difficulties

Discrepancy between oral ability and written output – has good vocabulary knowledge but will often avoid using this for fear of spelling errors

Planning and structuring essays

Illegible handwriting

Bizarre, unrecognisable spellings

Tires easily finding the physical act of writing difficult

Writes very slowly resulting in omissions

Gives very brief written responses that do not fully answer the question or show their true ability and subject knowledge

Using punctuation and correct grammar

Proof reading and redrafting

Planning should take as much time as the writing itself. Create good habits for future individual assessments.

Strategies

Planning

- Plan alternative ways to present information wherever possible e.g. mind maps, bullet points PowerPoint presentations.
- Provide writing frames with paragraph headings to help structure writing.

Teaching

- Give all learners placemats with key vocabulary, connectives and punctuation guidelines. These should be on the desk for all learners.
- Allow rest breaks.

ICT

- Utilise IT programmes which enable learners to develop extended writing skills.
- Encourage use of spell check and editing tools using Word.

Marking

- Read learners' work through with them to encourage spotting errors. This not only makes it easier for the teacher it also avoids singling out certain learners.
- Capture teaching points on a post – it for future reference.
- Use a highlighter to show learners where they have made errors.

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