

# NEWSLETTER

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### Pradeep Thangappan - How I Navigated Dyslexia



## Post-School Readiness

A question that confronts children, parents and teachers in the last year of school is: What after school? Fourteen years have passed by and this question has to be urgently answered.

For children with dyslexia and similar conditions, this question poses even more challenges. There are multiple issues to be sorted out - if the option chosen is higher studies, colleges and institutions of higher education have to have a firm policy and intelligent concessions in place, which are both empathetic and respectful. Subjects and access are very important and have to be chosen carefully.

If it is a job, then employers have to be aware of what is involved - it cannot be left to chance, because everybody works best when they know what is expected of them and they are treated with dignity and courtesy and, for their part, young people with dyslexia must also be helped to make informed choices.

This issue of our Newsletter focuses on exactly this, with experts giving us the benefit of their knowledge through experience to help make this choice which has far-reaching consequences.

We hope that you will find this useful in the decision-making process that confronts every young adult at the end of school, so that they can take their rightful place in the world.

The Editors

# The Dyslexic Mind in Higher Education



**Reena Gupta**

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“If you have dyslexia, why are you even trying to be a doctor?” asked an assessor to one of my students, Raahi, a Grade 12 student back then. She had her reply ready. “Because I know how to work hard.” The assessor didn’t ask anything further and Raahi went ahead with her NEET exam. Today, she is a medical student at one of the most prestigious colleges in India.

In case you’re wondering if dyslexia is playing out in Raahi’s daily academics – yes, it surely is. Staying true to her reply to the assessor earlier, she is working her heart out to be a specialised doctor one day. She has a new challenge on hand though – explaining about her academic needs to her professors and the management. Why does she take longer to decode the complex medical terminologies? Why does she spell some words differently? Why does she need extra time in her exams?

## It’s exhausting for her.

Students with dyslexia do not outgrow their challenges with reading and writing and thus the support for them has to extend through their academic journey. The ones who receive this support during their school years need to continue with it when they transition to a college and others who go unidentified earlier should have the option of taking assessments later on, understand their own learning profiles even as an adult, and then seek support, if needed. The gap in the support system at the higher education level in India puts added strain on these students for increased academic performance, firstly to compete with their neurotypical peers at the stage of admission to colleges and then during their study years. It is only recently that a few colleges have started to address this concern and so there is hope that more of them will follow suit.

Another student of mine, Meher decided not to declare her diagnosis of dyslexia at the university where she is pursuing Psychology. She received full support from her parents and teachers during her school years, but for her higher education, she wanted to start ‘afresh with no labels.’ Meher is a confident problem solver and a critical thinker, yet she has struggled to keep her academic grades up at the university. She refuses to take any kind

of help from her professors in terms of academic accommodations for her assignments or for the examination. She contributes immensely to class discussions and shares her perspectives in the most ingenious ways. At the same time, taking notes in class, organising essays in a coherent manner, and expressing ideas in writing have been difficult for her, and that affects her grades in her assignments. It is quite clear – if Meher would make use of provisions she definitely qualifies for through her courses in each semester, she would be able to get the grades that she deserves. But she doesn’t want to, as yet.

Studying at university is completely different from being in a school system. With the amount of reading, fast-paced lectures and bombardment of activities outside classrooms, there is a lot students have to do to manoeuvre through their day. If they struggle with organisation and prioritisation, it is all the more challenging for them. Developing skills to not-let-one-self fall behind and to self-advocate are essential for college success for students with dyslexia. For example, informing the professors about the reason for their grammatically incorrect sentences can make the professors grade their papers differently, which in turn will mean the stark difference between doing well and struggling.

Kamal struggled with executive functioning skills during his undergraduate days as a computer

science student at a university that had no interest in understanding his invisible condition of dyslexia. Despite carrying a formal diagnostic report with him, he was told from day one, not to expect anyone to do anything about it. For Kamal, this was hardly news though. He hadn't received much help in his school years too. At college, he had never been able to complete his work on time, would always ask for extensions, and invariably got grade cuts because of late submissions. He also found it difficult to interact and socialise. On one hand, dyslexia affected his organisation skills and social relationships quite significantly and on the other, it also made him persevere and work with perfection even if that meant studying without sleeping for hours. He graduated with a high average cumulative grade score and is currently pursuing Masters overseas. He's still looking for ways to manage his anxiety around assignment submissions but one thing he has started to prioritize now – expanding his circle of friends.

Students with dyslexia or any other Specific Learning Disability, who may be pursuing their higher education even in well-informed and fairly inclusive universities may have significant difficulty

with executive functioning skills that involves planning, managing time, stay motivated, persevere and complete the task at hand. College years are specifically challenging if, in school years, these students were dependent on their families or educators to organise their day and curriculum.

All of the above puts the spotlight on higher education institutions in India to understand the real challenges students with dyslexia face in everyday academics. They need to ensure necessary provisions that enable these students pursue education seamlessly and chart out their unique path with a very realistic sense of their challenges and their strengths.

To all our Raahis, Mehers and Kamals out there in schools and colleges – you might want to know what Steven Spielberg had once said: “You will have dyslexia for the rest of your life, but you can dart between the raindrops to get where you want to go. It will not hold you back.”

I hope to see more students with dyslexia talk about themselves, shine in the field they choose and continue to innovate.

## Navigating the Transition from School to College



**Uthra Dorairajan**  
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School to college is a big transition in anyone's life. It is important parents engage in lot of discussions to get them ready to face this. In my experience, it is better to start this conversation from the time their ward completes high school. Thus, they have two years for deciding on what would be more suitable based on their interest, ability and scenario of job market. This is even more pertinent if they have difficulty in expression and communication. I would suggest watching videos on admission process, college day functions, sports day, open house or anything that is available on the internet to get an overall view about the colleges they plan to apply. This kind of familiarisation eases the discomfort about unknown and helps them gel with the environment sooner. In this phase, trusting their ward's choices, giving space and helping them cope up with anxiety is a skill that parents should develop, as they will be seen as a role model and a confidante by their children.

Some degree courses have English and language papers too. A parent has to sit with their ward to help them understand the overall structure of curriculum, compulsory papers, core electives, non-major electives, skill development courses along with the time frame of exams. With almost all colleges following the semester pattern and college admission getting delayed for some students, clarity on these will help them cross the first semester smoothly.

Unlike school, curriculum structure and assessment pattern may be intimidating to many students who need assistance. Parents and students can talk to their mentors or class teachers to seek clarity. Those who need extra time or exemption for language/overseeing spelling errors have to approach sooner. Delaying or waiting for teachers to call may worsen the situation. Students may have to approach the office more than once to ensure they get necessary accommodations. For this, the most important step is to submit all the relevant documents in the beginning of the year itself and not wait till the exam dates are announced. This is because colleges need to get special permission for these accommodations from the University they are affiliated to, and this may be time consuming. Being proactive as well as tracking the process will help avoid panicking before the exams.

Parents should also understand that all teachers/institutions may not be aware about the accommodation process. In such cases, students need to be their own advocates, and being connected to support groups will help in smooth sailing. The first semester being a crucial stage of transition, parents should not overstep while hand-holding their wards. Allowing space and time for letting their ward take big steps builds the confidence necessary for their growth.

To handle classes, extracurricular activities, sports/games/arts, preparing for PG entrance exams, skill building for employment, time management skill is the key. A plan to complete short term and long term assignments is necessary. College websites usually provide information on overall timeline of activities, exam dates, the criteria necessary to appear for the exam. In case a student feels shy or hesitant to ask the teacher, the parents can help them find these details. Digital calendar and apps for alerting help

them meet deadlines for submission and to handle various activities. Once they handle this process in the beginning, they get enough confidence to handle most of the things by themselves.

Students can become part of special needs equal opportunity cell/diversity cell because peer support groups help them apply for accommodations/special scholarships, take part in activities designed especially for them and know the bigger world. Accepting their challenges, trying to find others with similar challenges helps handling the challenges successfully. This builds their morale and boosts confidence.

Most of the teachers are understanding once the students explain their challenges. Students can be given assignment and assessments in the form of PPT, word files, making a video instead of a written exam. However, it is better they develop necessary skills during the internal assessment by opting for pen-paper method, if the student plans to take exams in that format. They can avail accommodations during internal assessments also. Changing the background colour while teachers use digital screen in the class or requesting the notes in soft form and taking special permission for using assistive technologies are possible. One needs to develop and evolve notes making skills - bullets, pictures, tables, infographics. Sharing and using a classmate's notes can save time. Taking part in competitions and cultural activities, be it theatre, short film making, poster making, dance or sports helps the student stand apart in the class. This will help them get positive attention when they have challenges in scoring marks through conventional exams. These activities can also be considered by colleges for the internal assessment.

Planning, prioritising and organising their homework, assignments, exam dates and personal outings is a big task for them. Having a calendar, marking deadlines, setting alarms for every deadline are very important. Time alerts before every weekend, say on Thursday itself, helps to get an idea on activities piled up for the weekend and the week ahead. Eventually, this will help them prioritise. Using colour codes - say, red for urgent, green for completed ones, brown for missed submissions and so on, this way a student can understand their learning and procrastination pattern.

Based on the academic capability and with the guidance from teachers, parents can help their ward choose the right kind of textbook that suits their needs, ability and aspirations. In the school system, the textbook is everything; but once a student enters a college, the prescribed syllabus becomes important. This shift makes many things convenient if planned smartly. List of textbooks, reference books, web links, online resource materials are usually given in the syllabus. There are a lot of audio/video lessons/short term online courses available for every topic these days. Neurodiversity can no more be an impediment, once they start learning by themselves using these tools. A slow learner can repeatedly use these digital resources to learn/test themselves or a dyslexic can watch videos till they master it. Trying different fonts, colours, size to suit their needs helps them to become aware and turn them into self-learners.

Volunteering, internships in inclusive environments, taking part in competitions, being a part of NSS/NCC/ Enviro club or other clubs helps them get a bigger picture, socialise and develop communication skills at their pace. Despite academics being a challenge, every student with SLD should be a part of these activities. Eventually, these activities help them overcome their inner fears and give them strength to survive.

Every student enters college with the prime aim of securing a degree. Exam strategies do help. For writing semester exams, one also needs physical stamina, core muscle strength and dexterity, which may require occupational therapy or other suitable activities. Most importantly, for those with learning difficulties, they should be aware of the question paper pattern, number of questions in each section, so they do not overlook a few pages/sections inadvertently. From the beginning, they need guidance and practice to categorise questions - if it is an objective yes/no type or short answer or an essay. Sometimes comprehending a question itself poses as a challenge for students with learning challenges. Peer group discussions and helping them with what is expected out of them gives clarity. They need to understand where they have to stop, not to spend long time on the answer they are familiar with, learn to prioritise the questions, not to fumble on the number of words or lines they have to use. They learn these through trial and error by trying many times.

With encouragement, support and the right strategies, every learner can navigate their college life as a successful graduate!

## Employing Individuals with Dyslexia: An Employer's Perspective



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This paper explores the employer's viewpoint on hiring individuals with dyslexia, highlighting the importance of striking a balance between empathy, inclusivity, and maintaining quality standards. It delves into considerations for accommodating individuals with dyslexia in the workplace, addressing modifications, sensitisation, and the current landscape of dyslexia employment in India.

Here are some common challenges that employers might face when hiring individuals with dyslexia:

1. **Communication Challenges:** Dyslexia can affect reading, writing, and spelling abilities, leading to difficulties in written communication. This might impact tasks that involve writing emails, reports, or other written documents. Clarity of communication could be compromised.

2. **Reading and Comprehension:** Individuals with dyslexia might take longer to read and comprehend written materials. This could affect their ability to quickly review documents, contracts, or other written instructions.
3. **Written Test and Assessments:** If assessments or tests are a part of the selection process, individuals with dyslexia might struggle due to their reading and writing difficulties. This could result in an inaccurate representation of their skills and abilities.
4. **Documentation and Paperwork:** Completing forms, reports, or other paperwork accurately might be challenging for individuals with dyslexia, potentially leading to errors or misunderstandings.
5. **Time Management:** Some individuals with dyslexia might require more time to complete tasks that involve reading and writing. This could impact their time management skills, especially if deadlines are tight.
6. **Presentations and Public Speaking:** Public speaking or presentations might be intimidating for individuals with dyslexia due to concerns about reading or pronouncing words correctly.
7. **Misunderstandings and Stigma:** Misunderstandings or misconceptions about dyslexia might lead to stigma, both from colleagues and supervisors. This could affect the individual's self-esteem and overall job satisfaction.
8. **Organisational Support:** Without appropriate accommodations and support, individuals with dyslexia might struggle to reach their full potential within the organisation. Lack of understanding or accommodations could lead to frustration and decreased performance.
9. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Some job roles might require rapid shifts in tasks or responsibilities. Individuals with dyslexia might need extra time to adapt to these changes because of their reading and writing challenges.
10. **Technology Use:** Depending on the nature of the job, technology might play a crucial role. Individuals with dyslexia might require training or assistance in using assistive technologies effectively.
11. **Training and Professional Development:** Organisations need to ensure that training materials and professional development opportunities are accessible and accommodating for employees with dyslexia.

12. **Social Interaction:** Dyslexia can also affect social interactions, and individuals might experience challenges in group discussions or meetings, especially if tasks involve taking notes or following complex verbal instructions.

While these challenges exist, it is important to note that many of them can be mitigated through understanding, reasonable accommodations, and a supportive work environment. Employers who are willing to make necessary adjustments and provide support can help individuals with dyslexia excel in their roles and contribute effectively to the organisation.

Employing individuals with dyslexia contributes to workplace diversity and innovation. Employers should recognise the unique strengths these individuals bring and implement strategies that foster an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Some of the points that need to be kept in mind are:

**Setting Reasonable Expectations:** Employers must consider the following factors when setting expectations for employees with dyslexia:

- **Tailored adjustments:** Recognise that a one-size-fits-all approach may not work. Individualised accommodations are necessary based on the nature of the job and the individual's needs.
- **Performance standards:** Maintain consistent performance standards while being open to flexible methods of achieving them.

**Balancing Empathy and Quality:** Striking the right balance between empathy and quality standards:

- **Clear communication:** Clearly communicate job roles, responsibilities, and performance criteria to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Accommodations without compromise:** Ensure that accommodations don't compromise the quality of work or put undue pressure on other team members.
- **Regular feedback:** Provide constructive feedback and evaluate job performance based on agreed-upon criteria.

**Sensitizing the Workforce:** Sensitizing the workforce about dyslexia is crucial:

- Awareness programs: Conduct workshops to educate employees about dyslexia, its challenges, and the importance of inclusivity.
- Promote understanding: Encourage open conversations to address any concerns and misconceptions among colleagues.
- Foster teamwork: Emphasise that an inclusive environment benefits everyone and promotes teamwork.

### **Workplace Modifications and Allowances:**

Determining appropriate workplace Modifications:

- Assistive technology: Provide access to assistive technologies such as speech-to-text or text-to-speech software to enhance efficiency.
- Flexible work arrangements: Allow flexible work hours or remote work options to accommodate productivity variations.
- Designated support: Assign mentors or support personnel to help employees navigate challenges.

**Current Landscape in India:** The status of dyslexia employment in India:

- Emerging trend: A growing number of organisations are recognising the potential of individuals with dyslexia and creating opportunities for them.
- Advocacy and support: Collaborate with dyslexia support organisations that facilitate training, placement, and ongoing support.

Employing individuals with dyslexia requires a balanced approach that considers their unique needs while upholding quality standards. By fostering awareness, providing reasonable accommodations, and maintaining open communication, employers can create an inclusive workplace that harnesses the potential of individuals with dyslexia.

Hiring someone with dyslexia can bring numerous benefits to an organization, but it's important to be aware of the potential challenges that may arise.

### **The on-boarding process**

Modifying the interview process to be more inclusive for individuals with dyslexia requires a thoughtful approach. The goal is to create an environment that allows candidates to showcase their skills and abilities without being hindered by their dyslexia-related challenges.

#### **Some strategies to consider:**

1. Provide Questions in Advance: Give candidates the interview questions or topics in advance. This allows individuals with dyslexia to prepare and formulate their responses without feeling rushed.
2. Focus on Strengths: Structure the interview to highlight the candidate's strengths and relevant experiences rather than placing heavy emphasis on reading or writing skills.
3. Use Different Assessment Methods: Consider using alternative assessment methods that align with the candidate's strengths, such as:
  - i. Presentation: Request a presentation on a relevant topic. This can showcase the candidate's verbal communication and subject knowledge.
  - ii. Practical Exercises: Assign a task related to the job role that assesses problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and practical skills.
  - iii. Role Play: Utilise role-playing scenarios that simulate real work situations to evaluate the candidate's interpersonal skills and decision-making.
  - iv. Provide Verbal Options: Allow candidates to provide verbal responses to questions, especially if the role involves a lot of written communication. This can help candidates with dyslexia articulate their thoughts more effectively.
  - v. Flexible Time Limits: Extend the time limits for responses if necessary, understanding that individuals with dyslexia might need more time to process and formulate their answers.
  - vi. Avoid Complex Language: Use clear and simple language in your questions to minimise confusion or misunderstandings.
4. Non-Disclosure Option: Give candidates the option to disclose their dyslexia if they're comfortable doing so. This can help you better understand their needs and provide appropriate accommodations.

5. **Conduct Structured Interviews:** Structured interviews with standardised questions ensure a consistent assessment of all candidates, while also providing a controlled environment for individuals with dyslexia.
6. **Demonstrate Accommodations:** Incorporate elements of your commitment to inclusivity into the interview process. For instance, provide interview materials in accessible formats, such as large print or electronic documents compatible with assistive technologies.
7. **Gauge Problem-Solving and Adaptability:** Include questions that assess how well candidates handle challenges and adapt to new situations. This can help evaluate their ability to manage their dyslexia-related difficulties in the workplace.
8. **Use Assistive Technology:** If appropriate, provide access to assistive technologies during the interview, such as speech-to-text software for written components.
9. **Emphasise Soft Skills:** Focus on soft skills like teamwork, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. These skills are often unaffected by dyslexia and are highly valuable in many roles.

The key is to create an environment that allows candidates to demonstrate their true potential, irrespective of their dyslexia. By making adjustments that cater to their strengths and minimizing the impact of their challenges, you can ensure a fair and effective interview process that promotes diversity and inclusivity.

Onboarding an individual with dyslexia involves creating a welcoming and supportive environment that addresses their unique needs while ensuring a smooth integration into the organization.

### **Steps to effectively onboard someone with dyslexia:**

1. **Preparation and Planning:** Before the employee's first day, gather information about their specific needs and preferences through discussions and any documentation they provide. Coordinate with relevant teams, such as HR, IT, and the immediate supervisor, to ensure a coordinated onboarding process.
2. **Clear Communication:** Provide all necessary information, instructions, and materials in accessible formats. This might include verbal explanations, visual aids, or electronic documents compatible with assistive technologies.
3. **Assigned Mentor or Buddy:** Assign a mentor or buddy to the new employee. This person can offer guidance, answer questions, and provide ongoing support during the onboarding process.
4. **Introduction to Tools and Technology:** Familiarize the employee with any software, tools, or assistive technologies that they will be using. Offer training sessions or tutorials to ensure they are comfortable using these resources.
5. **Training Sessions:** Conduct training sessions that are tailored to the employee's learning style. Mix verbal explanations with visual aids, demonstrations, and hands-on practice. Provide training materials in accessible formats.
6. **Accessible Documentation:** Ensure that all documents, including policies, guidelines, and training materials, are available in formats that the employee can easily access and understand.
7. **Flexible Scheduling:** If possible, offer flexible work hours during the onboarding period to accommodate any potential adjustments needed by the employee.
8. **One-on-One Sessions:** Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with the employee to discuss their progress, address any concerns, and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions.
9. **Introduce Accommodations:** Review and introduce any accommodations or modifications that have been discussed with the employee. This might include access to assistive technologies or flexible work arrangements.
10. **Encourage Questions:** Create an environment where the employee feels comfortable asking questions and seeking clarification. Address any concerns promptly.
11. **Team Introduction:** Facilitate introductions to colleagues and team members. This can be done through informal meet-and-greet sessions or team-building activities.
12. **Clear Job Expectations:** Clearly outline the employee's roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations. Emphasise their strengths and how they can contribute effectively.
13. **Regular Check-Ins:** Continue to have regular check-in meetings beyond the onboarding period. This helps to ensure that the employee is settling in well and any necessary adjustments are made.
14. **Feedback Loop:** Encourage the employee to



provide feedback on their onboarding experience. Use their input to refine your onboarding process for future hires with dyslexia.

15. **Inclusive Culture:** Promote an inclusive culture throughout the organisation. Emphasise the importance of diversity and how it enhances the team's capabilities.

### Collaborating with Experts

Having a specialist consultant when hiring individuals with dyslexia can be extremely beneficial, but its importance can depend on the organisation's existing knowledge, resources, and commitment to inclusivity.

#### Some reasons why a specialist consultant can play a crucial role:

1. **Expertise:** A specialist consultant brings in-depth knowledge about dyslexia, including its challenges, strengths, and appropriate accommodations. They can offer insights that might not be readily available within your organization.
2. **Tailored Strategies:** Consultants can help tailor your recruitment, onboarding, and workplace practices specifically for individuals with dyslexia. This ensures that the strategies you implement are effective and aligned with best practices.
3. **Legal Compliance:** Depending on the organisation and the country it is based in and the laws and regulations, there might be legal requirements related to accommodations and inclusive hiring practices. A specialist consultant can help you navigate these regulations to avoid any legal issues.
4. **Access to Resources:** Consultants often have access to a wide range of resources, such as assistive technologies, training materials, and research, which can be valuable for creating an inclusive environment.
5. **Building Awareness:** Consultants can conduct workshops and training sessions to raise awareness and educate your workforce about dyslexia. This promotes understanding and empathy among your employees.
6. **Creating Inclusive Policies:** A consultant can assist in developing policies and guidelines that foster inclusivity not only for individuals with dyslexia but for all employees with diverse needs.
7. **Continuous Support:** Dyslexia is a lifelong condition, and having a consultant on board ensures that you can provide ongoing support as employees' needs evolve.

8. **Networking:** Consultants often have connections with dyslexia organizations, advocacy groups, and professionals. This network can provide valuable insights and connections for your organisation.
9. **Minimising Bias:** Consultants can help design interview processes that minimize bias and ensure that candidates with dyslexia are evaluated fairly.
10. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Different individuals with dyslexia might have varying needs and preferences. A consultant can guide you in understanding and respecting these individual differences.

Whether through a consultant or internal efforts, ensuring that your hiring process, workplace, and support mechanisms are inclusive can lead to a more diverse and innovative organization.

### Balance between accommodations and modifications

Striking the right balance between providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with dyslexia and avoiding excessive modifications is crucial for fostering an inclusive workplace.

#### Steps to ensure you're making appropriate adjustments:

1. **Understand Individual Needs:** Recognise that the needs of individuals with dyslexia can vary widely. Engage in open conversations with the employee to understand their specific challenges and preferences. Avoid assumptions and take their input seriously.
2. **Focus on Essential Functions:** Identify the core tasks and responsibilities of the job. Ensure that accommodations are primarily tailored to facilitate the employee's performance in these essential functions.
3. **Consult Experts:** Consult with specialists, disability organisations, or experts in dyslexia to gain insights into effective accommodations. They can provide guidance on what is considered reasonable and effective.
4. **Interactive Process:** Engage in an ongoing dialogue with the employee. Regularly check in to assess the effectiveness of accommodations and make adjustments as needed.
5. **Provide Choices:** Offer a range of accommodations and allow the employee to choose the ones that work best for them. This empowers them to take an active role in their own support.

6. **Maintain Performance Standards:** While accommodations are meant to level the playing field, they should not compromise the quality of work or set different performance standards for employees with dyslexia.
7. **Avoid Special Treatment:** Strive for equity by ensuring that accommodations are not overly preferential. They should provide equal access and opportunity without granting advantages over other employees.
8. **Regular Training:** Educate managers, supervisors, and colleagues about dyslexia and the accommodations in place. This ensures a supportive environment and prevents misunderstandings.
9. **Monitor Impact:** Regularly assess the impact of accommodations on the employee's performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Adjustments may be needed based on their feedback.
10. **Engage the Employee:** Involve the employee in the decision-making process regarding accommodations. They often have valuable insights into what works best for them.
11. **Maintain Flexibility:** Be prepared to make changes as the employee's needs evolve. What works initially might need adjustments over time.
12. **Document Accommodations:** Maintain clear records of the accommodations provided and the rationale behind them. This documentation can be useful for future reference or if there are any concerns raised.
13. **Seek Feedback from Employee:** Regularly ask the employees for their feedback on the accommodations. Are they effective? Are there any new challenges? Their input can guide adjustments.
14. **Avoid Isolation:** Ensure that the accommodations do not isolate the employee from their team or hinder collaboration. Strive for an inclusive work environment.

Remember that the goal is to create an environment where individuals with dyslexia can perform to the best of their abilities while maintaining fairness and equity for all employees. Open communication, flexibility, and a commitment to inclusivity will help you strike the right balance between reasonable modifications and going overboard.

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# Madras Dyslexia Association's First Small Steps in Bangalore



**Lakshmi Hariharan**  
Head, Resource Room  
Madras Dyslexia Association



**Lata Vasantkumar**  
Head, Training  
Madras Dyslexia Association

We are happy to share with you that Madras Dyslexia Association (MDA) has taken the first steps in working with schools and teachers in Bangalore. We thank Vidyaniketan Public School for sowing the seeds for enabling this advancement. They approached MDA for establishing a Resource Room. As the school management saw merit in the procedure and structure of the initiative, they were keen to associate themselves with MDA to provide meaningful and effective remedial support to their students struggling due to dyslexia.

Bangalore is one of the top cities which is leading in terms of education. Affiliations to different boards is undertaken here in an inclusive environment. However, an analysis of the schools showed that the awareness on dyslexia amongst the schools was low. This impelled us to embark on the journey to spread awareness to the school management and to the teachers.

#### **Awareness sessions were done at:**

1. NPS School, Rajaji Nagar
2. NAFL and NAFL North (unit of NPS)
3. NPS, HSR Layout
4. NPS, Koramangala
5. JSS Public School, BSK II stage
6. Endeavour Academy, Jigani

The next step was to have sessions to provide a deeper insight into dyslexia, its features and details of remedial methods. A 6-day training program for primary school teachers was done at:

1. Presidency School, Banashankari
2. St. Pauls School
3. Presidency School, RT Nagar
4. Presidency School, Mangalore
5. Presidency School, North
6. Presidency School, East
7. Tapovan School

Furthermore, in addition to setting up of Resource Room in Vidyaniketan Public School, Ullal Nagar, the school management was keen to equip their pre-primary and middle school teachers.

Special educators are essential members of the team providing support to a child with dyslexia. MDA conducts Intensive Teacher Training Course to enable an individual to become a special educator for children with dyslexia. We are currently conducting a course with enrolments from private candidates and teachers from a few schools based in Bangalore and neighbouring towns.

# Happenings in MDA

Our training department organised the following programmes for mainstream teachers spanning across Pre-primary classes to Secondary school.

## Awareness programmes

- Silicon Valley
- Campus K
- Athena Global, Chidambaram
- Assissi Matric Hr. Sec. School
- NPS , HSR Layout Bangalore
- NPS, Koramangala, Bangalore
- Athena Global, Chennai

## Training programmes

### 1. ITTC

- a. Early intervention ITTC
- b. ITTC at Bangalore

### 2. 6-day programme

- a. Sri Bala Vidyalaya School, Perumbur
- b. Bangalore Presidency School
- c. Dr.Vimala Convent Matric Higher Secondary School
- d. Sri Vimala Vidyalaya Senior Secondary School
- e. Sudarshanam Vidyaashram
- f. Mount Safa Nursery and Primary School
- g. Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar
- h. Reserve Bank Staff Quarters School
- i. Guru Shree Shantivijai Jain School
- j. Madras Christian College School
- k. Sri Venugopal Vidyalaya Matric Higher Secondary School
- l. Padma Seenivasan Memorial Vidyalaya Matric School

- m. Bosco Academy Matric Higher Secondary School
- n. Knowledge Academy
- o. Sujay Public School
- p. Sri Dharamchand Jain Senior Secondary School
- q. DAV Gurushikshanam Programme

### 3. ELP

- a. Chennai High School
- b. A V Meiyappan Matriculation Higher Secondary School
- c. Jaigopal Garodia Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Peravalur
- d. Sevalaya School (Tamil)
- e. Sri Venugopal Vidyalaya Matric Higher Secondary School

### 4. Early Intervention

- a. Sharada Vidyalaya
- b. PSBB, KK Nagar
- c. Sudarshanam Vidyaashram
- d. NSN Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chromepet
5. TVP
  - a. Sevalaya School
  6. Wonder Exercise
    - a. SRF VidyalayaManali
    - b. SGBC Vivekananda Vidyalaya Higher Secondary School,, Minjur
    - c. Anitha Methodist School



### Resource Room

The following schools have joined hands with MDA to enable support within the school ambience for children with dyslexia.

1. Isha school
2. VES group of schools – 13 schools
3. Anitha Methodist School
4. TI School
5. Saradha Vidyalaya, Usman Road

### Early Intervention

1. Veranda

### Ananya

This was a period of celebrations for opportunities to provide skill building through cultural activities.

1. Independence Day
2. Teacher's Day
3. Onam

### Conferences and webinars

1. Harini Mohan was the speaker in the webinar –Impact of Dyslexia on Learning and Schooling. This was organised by Suriyafaz Dyslexia, BD, a Bangladesh based dyslexia support group.
2. Harini Mohan was a speaker in a conference 'Karecon 2023' organised by Kare Therapy Centre.
3. Madras Dyslexia Association had the opportunity to showcase its contribution towards enabling dyslexia-sensitive society in its stall in Empower 2023 organised by at IIT Madras Research Park. Visitors got an opportunity to understand dyslexia, its impact on children and how our assistive reading app MDA Avaz Reader can help a struggling reader become an independent reader.

**The children participated in the event 'Soroptomist', and won many prizes.**



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