Dyslexia in the Classroom: Accessing Support by Helen Ross, University of Bath

Introduction

Dyslexia is a common learning disability that can affect reading, writing, and spelling. In this chapter, we will explore the experiences of two students, Lotte and Sophia, as they navigate their learning journeys in a classroom setting.

Three case studies are discussed. Lotte, a young woman with dyslexia, struggles to understand reading and writing. Sophia, her fellow student, faces similar challenges but also possesses self-esteem and confidence, which help her cope with these difficulties.

Assessment processes

- **Self-esteem**: Once applied, the test is performed as prescribed by the test. Lotte feels confident and is able to complete it independently.
- **Dyslexia**: Methods and Effects of Identification and Support
- **Dyslexics**: Problems and Solutions

Accessing Learning

- **Technology**: Lotte uses assistive technology to help her read and write. Sophia uses a variety of techniques to support her learning.

Children's Voice

- **Use of effective measures**: Lotte describes how her teachers have helped her. She feels confident in her ability to learn and is grateful for their support.

Systemic Considerations

- **Dyslexia support is viewed as both problematic and successful by parents, teachers, and young people. They were each asked what problems and how provision could improve. Themes arising included the following:**

  1. **Lack of information**: In order to access the system, you have to have a degree of independence and confidence. Parents need more information about how to support their children.
  2. **Limited assessment**: Lotte noted that Hillview School was very good at supporting the implementation of support for her son, even from the start.
  3. **Moving goals**: Threshold levels at which support is granted were viewed as inconsistent by parents, resulting in changeable support for young people.

Conclusions

- **Parents felt that young accessing support for their children was dependent on knowledge of their dyslexia and whether they could pay for assessments in order to secure the "diagnosis" of dyslexia. Powerlessness was felt by them, as they did not necessarily have the cultural/familial capital to secure the symbolic capital (assessment for dyslexia) required to access support for their children (Bourdieu, 1991).**
- **Teachers were viewed as 'helpers' of the children's capacity to allocate official categories and whether they could pay for assessments in order to secure the "diagnosis" of dyslexia. Powerlessness was felt by them, as they did not necessarily have the cultural/familial capital to secure the symbolic capital (assessment for dyslexia) required to access support for their children (Bourdieu, 1991).**
- **Youth felt disempowered when unable to access the curriculum, embodying the habitus of the incomplete person, with both childhood and dyslexia contributing to this status (Smith, 2007; Wyness, 2012).**
- **National Government pupil progress expectations were applied at local level to young people with dyslexia. Their self-esteem was negatively impacted through unrealistic, normalised expectations; failure and disengagement with school perpetuates lower social status for lower academic achievement.**
- **Despite national-level constraints at local level, parents and children perceived Hillview School as removing barriers to learning, in particular with technology; thus young people were empowered, and less likely to adopt the role of 'acted upon.' Rather they became active participants within their setting (Pound, 2002).**

REFERENCES


Wyness, L. (2002). National Government pupil progress expectations were applied at local level to young people with dyslexia. Their self-esteem was negatively impacted through unrealistic, normalised expectations; failure and disengagement with school perpetuates lower social status for lower academic achievement.
