

Legibility and Readability

Guidelines for writing *dyslexia-friendly texts*

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

PSQL Area - LIFE Service - Special Needs Unit, May 2020



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Dear Colleague,

In this short document, we have tried to summarize some suggestions for writing “dyslexia-friendly” texts.

You may have noticed that the number of students with Specific Learning Disorders is constantly growing, so it is appropriate to promote more inclusive policies.

To this end, we have put together some simple guidelines to help you write more inclusively.

The issue of inclusiveness is becoming of increasing importance in current society; At the end of this document we have included a list of sites where you can delve deeper into the subject. The list of online resources is limitless so we have made a selection.

If you have any questions please contact the Special Needs Unit (life.specialneeds@polito.it).

Best regards,

Daniela Bosia

Rector's Advisor for Social Assistance, Social Integration and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Preface



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Foreword



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When you write a digital or paper text, make sure you follow these good practices:

- **legibility** (everything related to the graphics and layout criteria)
- **readability** (text organization, contents and vocabulary),

this will make the text easier to **read**.

Reading (i.e. **decoding** and **understanding** written texts) is not a natural ability and is not developed by all readers in the same way.

People with Specific Learning Disorders (SpLD) often share difficulties with reading. They need **more time to study** and **get tired more easily** than their peers.

Below are some tips for writing texts, quizzes and tests **dyslexia friendly**. This will be the first step towards making teaching materials part of an inclusive policy.

Teaching materials of this type are not only useful for **dyslexic learners** but can also be helpful for all students.

Inclusion is a universal value that has universal value



STYLE recommendations - READABLE FONTS and STRUCTURE:

- use "sans-serif" **fonts** (Biancoenero, OpenDyslexia, Verdana, Arial);
- **font size** should be 12-14-16;
- **line spacing** 1.5/2 improves readability;
- **expanded spacing** is suggested;
- **unjustified** text;
- normal (or **round**) letter format should be used as the main style of the font;
- **UPPERCASE** format should be used only for short texts or to emphasize some words;
- use **bolds** for emphasis in titles;
- use **colors** to highlight key words;
- Use **underlined** format only for hyperlinks;

The text should be clear and **uncluttered**.

Legibility

Graphics and page layout



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BACKGROUND recommendations:

- Avoid a bright white background;
- use a **black** (or dark) **font on a light-grey**, cream or pastel color **background**;
- for handouts choose **matte paper**.



WRITING STYLE recommendations:

- use a **simple vocabulary**;
- write short sentences;
- use **active** rather than passive verb forms;
- use **indicative** verb forms;
- group information in **categories**;
- follow **chronological order**;

Avoid:

- **double negatives**;
- **subordinates**;
- **long sentences.**

Readability

Organization and
content



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Students with SpLD and students with visual difficulties often use a **reading software** (voice reader), so documents in **.doc** or **.pdf** (open) format are preferable.

To ensure that the voice reader can read easily:

- use periods (.) after titles and headings (to allow the voice reader to pause while reading);
- use colons (:) semicolons (;) virgo (,) or periods (.) after each item in a bulleted or numbered list;
- avoid texts on images (unreadable by the voice reader);

If the text has many parts that cannot be read by the voice reader (images, formulas), we suggest you add the **audio track** of the text



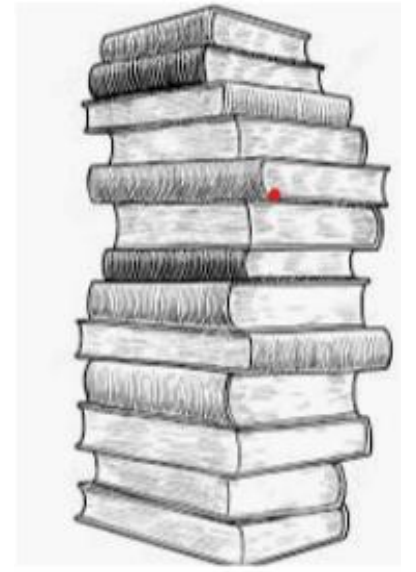
Quizzes and tests, Organization



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Tips for *creating dyslexia-friendly tests/quizzes*:

- Avoid too many multiple-choice options (**max. 3 options**, very different from each other);
- Avoid **trick questions**;
- Write questions in a clear and simple way;
- **Avoid** sentences with **double negatives** or other complex structures;
- **Avoid** questions based **only on memorized data** (for this type of questions students with SpLD must be given special arrangements, such as formulas and concept maps).



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- **Avoid true/false** (it is more complicated for a student with SpLD to answer correctly if the correct answer is FALSE);
- **Avoid** less common vocabulary, **negative forms**, synonyms or ambiguous and redundant terms;
- Answers should **require a reasoning process** rather than a calculation;
- Questions should be accompanied by the **audio track** if the voice reader cannot read formulas.



It is important that you provide **feedback**.

List of sites



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- <https://www.aiditalia.org/>
- <https://www.miur.gov.it/disturbi-specifici-dell-apprendimento-dsa->
- <https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/istruzione-formazione-lavoro/istruzione/inclusione-scolastica/dsa-noproblem>
- <https://www.cespd.unifi.it/upload/sub/studenti-con-dsa-linee-guida-docenti-1.pdf>
- https://www.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/field_file_allegati/disabili_dsa15.01_lineeguidadocenti.pdf



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