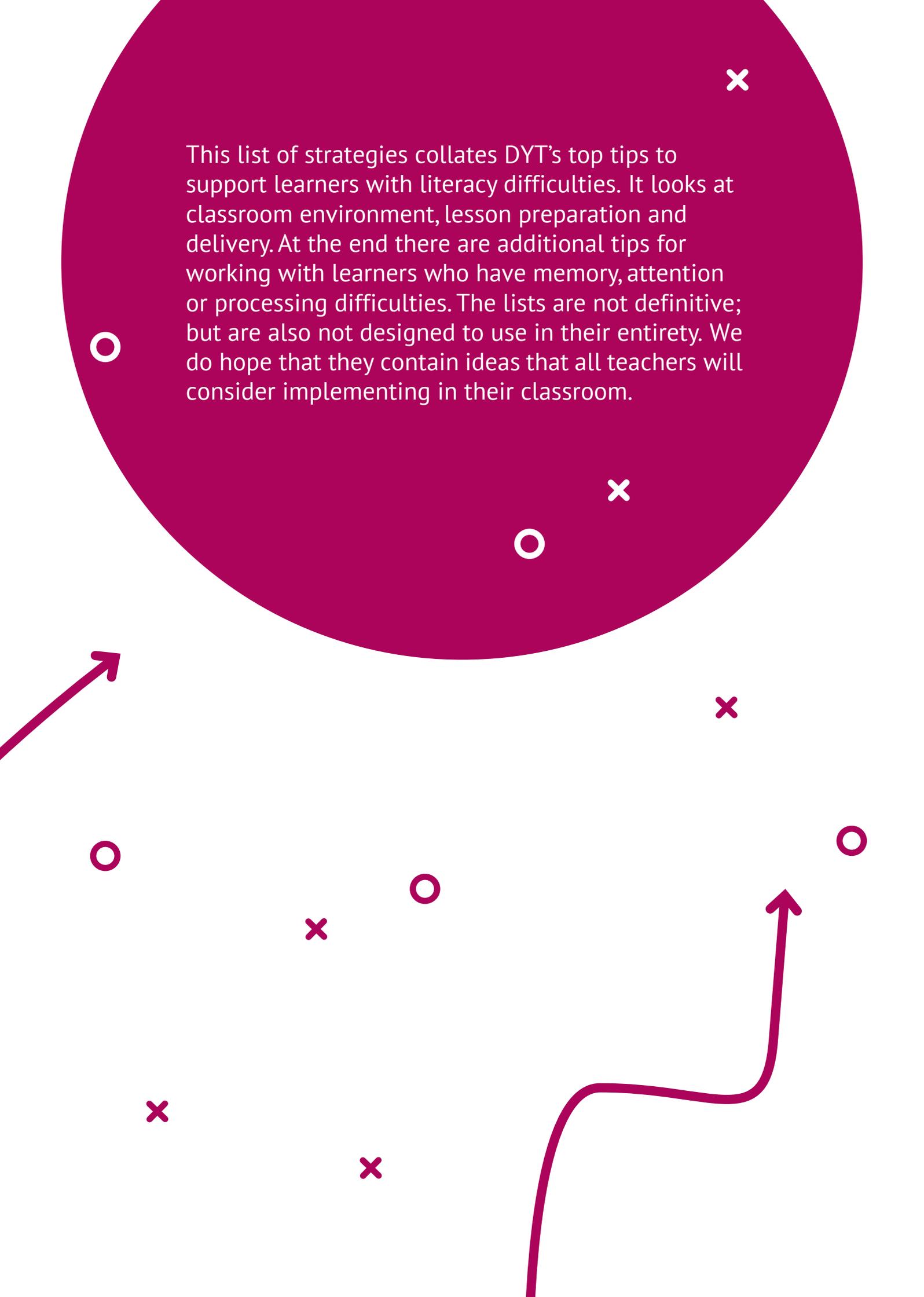


Classroom strategies to support learners with literacy difficulties

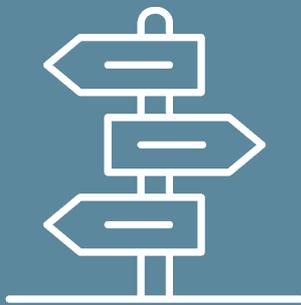
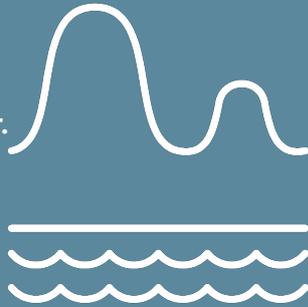


This list of strategies collates DYT's top tips to support learners with literacy difficulties. It looks at classroom environment, lesson preparation and delivery. At the end there are additional tips for working with learners who have memory, attention or processing difficulties. The lists are not definitive; but are also not designed to use in their entirety. We do hope that they contain ideas that all teachers will consider implementing in their classroom.

CLASSROOM STRATEGY 1

Classroom environment

Considering whether the environment itself is supporting learners to engage in lessons or whether it acts as a barrier.



CLASSROOM STRATEGY 2

Preparation before the lesson

Considerations before the learners even enter the classroom.



The best position for learners with literacy difficulties is front and centre with a good view of the board

.....
Ensure pathways to resources are clear

.....
There are clearly labelled and organised equipment and resources

.....
Be mindful of the space needed to work if learners are left-handed or use assistive technology

.....
Key words/vocabulary are placed strategically around the classroom using a font size that learners can read from their seats

.....
Displays are not cluttered or 'overly busy' to avoid sensory overload

.....
Visuals have been added to displays to aid retention

.....
Desk-top aids are available to all learners with guidance on how to make best use of them.



.....
New/key vocabulary is highlighted with clear explanations for the learners so that they can link it with prior learning

.....
Opportunities for revisiting key information are planned throughout the lesson

.....
Teacher notes/handouts that contain the learning points are available for learners

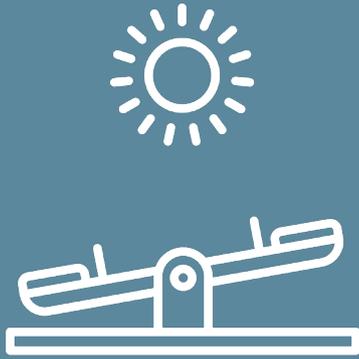
.....
Explicit teaching of planning skills features in lessons so learners understand the steps they need to take in order to effectively plan out their work

.....
Worksheets and resources have enough space for learners to write on them clearly. Key information is boxed or features as bullet points to chunk presentation

.....
Key words are collated along with descriptions so that learners can understand what they mean in a given context

Teaching delivery

Consideration of how new information is presented during the lesson to maximise understanding, retention and retrieval.



3.1
Introducing
the lesson

3.2
During the
lesson





INTRODUCING THE LESSON



At the start of a topic, key words are discussed along with the overview for the term (big picture). This overview is revisited regularly to build and link key information whilst addressing the key points for each lesson.



Clear objectives are stated at the start of the lesson (the big picture is given) so that learners can see how this lesson and its contents fit into their overall learning.



DURING THE LESSON



Links to other learning are highlighted and connections are made to reinforce prior and new learning. Learners need to realise they are starting from a secure point.



There is a recap of the objectives and key learning points throughout the lesson as well as at the end.

There is careful consideration as to the amount of information given at any one time to avoid overloading learners cognitively. Information that is shared is presented in a variety of ways: visual, written, explanation, discussion.

All learners are actively encouraged to take part in discussions. Clear roles and rules are in place to support discussion. The teacher models what is expected during group discussions so learners clearly understand how they should interact and contribute at such times



Instructions and information are broken down into small steps. Checks of understanding are made after each step to make sure learners are still on track and engaged



Key words are introduced using a context that learners are familiar with to aid their understanding (making it relevant to their circumstances and understanding so far)



Learners are encouraged to record information in a variety of ways e.g. mind maps, diagrams, bullet points, pictures, Clicker 7, access to a scribe



Open and closed questions are used to check understanding frequently with processing time given for learners to respond



Collaborative working is encouraged e.g. group work, the sharing of notes, learning buddies/paired work. Expectations are made clear and modelled by the class teacher



Time is given for learners to prepare for reading out loud or for delivering presentations



Reminders, such as notebooks, personal checklists, are used to help learners remember specific items/equipment

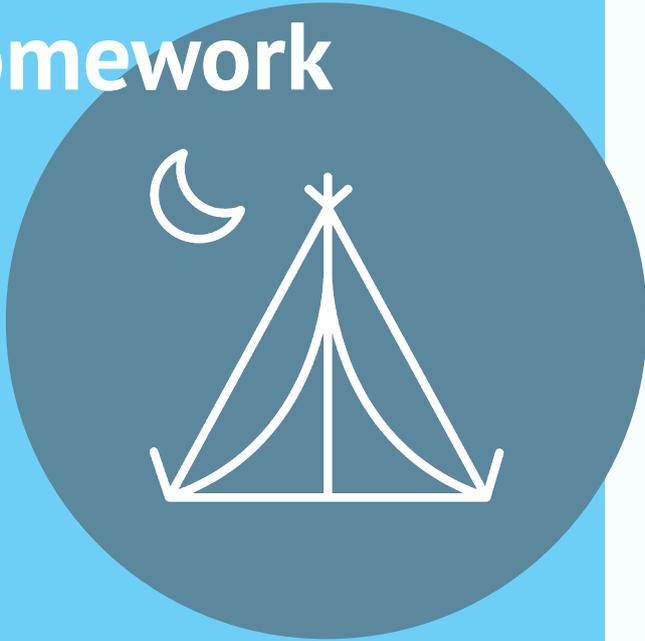


Praise the skill being demonstrated/developed rather than the person.

A range of features on the interactive whiteboard are used e.g. zoom facility to reduce the amount of text learners have to read at any one time, highlighters to make text stand out, timers to build increments in focus time



Homework



Homework is not set in the last few minutes of the session when it is a rush to get everything written down!

Homework tasks are clear, and instructions are written down for learners, so they are fully aware of what they need to do

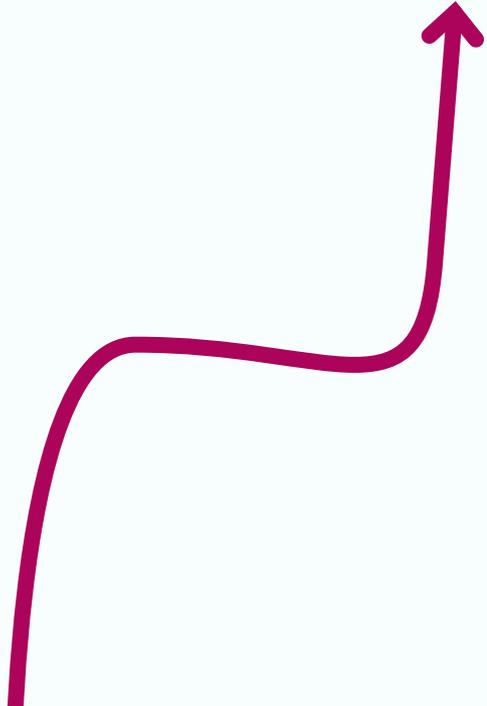
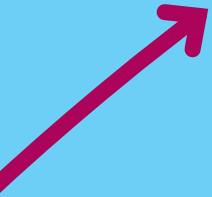
Homework set is appropriate and where necessary differentiated

Clear and realistic deadlines for the submission of homework should be set, communicated and confirmed with the learner which are clearly recorded

Learners are allowed to use a variety of mediums in order to complete their homework e.g. word process, mind map, oral presentation, use of media

Learners know how to access support with homework if required

Guidance is given on the length of time learners should spend on completing homework tasks. Parents can indicate how long it has taken to complete/partially complete the homework by marking the time in the margin.





Working memory

Working memory relates to how the brain functions and its ability to take on and store (temporarily) new information. Information held in the working memory can easily be lost through distractions or overload. You may see learners 'zoning out' this may well be a result of too much information which effectively squeezes out other information. Where this overloading of information occurs, the learners lose the ability to focus on the initial task they have been given it is often perceived as inattention rather than memory problems.

- If an individual has problems with their working memory, then they are likely to struggle to retain or remember information even if they are working on a task
- This is where prompting and questioning can come into play. As learners are working it is helpful to have a mini-plenary or a Q&A to refresh memories, gauge the level of understanding and then let learners continue with topic knowledge refreshed in their minds
- Chunk information so that learners are more able to process smaller amounts before progressing to the next stage of the lesson
- Issues may well arise when several instructions are given at once, the first instruction may temporarily register and be acted on, but the subsequent instructions are lost
- The same is true for working through tasks, if there is no list to refer back to, then a learner will struggle to progress beyond the first task
- Don't expect learners to be able to multi-task e.g. listen and take notes at the same time.

Attention

Attention focuses on the ability to select key information throughout a lesson / task. What are learners supposed to be looking out for? Without attention then they are unlikely to be able to recognise whether something is relevant to their learning or not. Attention helps select key information which is then encoded and transferred to the working memory so without attention, information is unlikely to be located or retained.

- Be aware that long periods of teacher talk are likely to result in learners losing focus
- Present information in chunks so that learners are able to pick up on key points without going off task
- Allow for movement and rest breaks so that learners can take a break which is likely to refresh their ability to focus
- Use non-verbal communication to get learners to re-focus on the task in hand
- Cue learners in when further key information is going to be shared
- Highlight what good listening skills will involve
- Locate learners close to the front of the class with direct sight of the teacher and board. Ensure they are away from potential distractions e.g. humming computer, window when activities are on outside
- Use visuals alongside text to help maintain focus, learners can see the visual without having to read text over and over again
- Give genuine praise when learners have managed to remain focused for a sustained period of time.

Processing

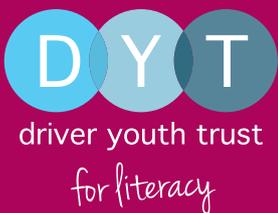
Processing relates to how the mind collects and then uses information. Information collection will involve the mind gathering, analysing and then storing information. Information use then involves the mind making use of what is stored to respond to a request (task, question). Processing issues can derive from visual or auditory difficulties. Visual processing issues relates to how a learner makes sense of what they see, auditory processing issues relate to how a learner makes sense of what they hear.

Visual

- Offer a reading ruler to help them track what is on a page without losing their place and put information that is on the board next to them so they can refer to it
- Consider wider spaced lines so that it is easier to write on the page
- Back up written instructions with oral instructions, using this as an opportunity to check understanding of next steps
- Accompany long passages of text with visuals
- Consider supplying learners with audio of key information so they can listen back to it

Auditory

- The pace of the lessons reflects the needs of the learner with time built in for thinking and brain breaks - additional time is allowed where appropriate
- Write down oral instructions so learners can refer back to them
- Repeat instructions and information throughout so they remember what is being asked of them and what they should be focusing on.



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