

In Search of Benchmarking and an Evidence Base.

What do we know already?

- Approximately 3000 clients per year are referred through Access to Work for support with dyslexia (DWP figures published online in 2011).
- Strategy coaching is often recommended to support issues like time management, organisational skills and memory strategies.
- Dialectic, client led coaching styles have a better result for developing higher thinking skills, whereas instructional tuition works well for literacy development (Swanson, 2012¹).
- Dyslexics have a much higher rate of stress than the population averages.



67% of dyslexics request support for stress at work
54% request support with reading

52% reported significant sleep difficulties

23% reported some insomnia and 25% reported none

This is significantly different to the UK population norms of 37% experiencing insomnia (Morphy, 2007) [X2(1)=7.67, p= .006]

37% had been to their GP for help with stress, anxiety or depression in the past year

82 clients responded to an online survey by the Division of Occupational Psychology's working group on Enabling in the Workplace, 2014.

What do we need to know?

What are the learning priorities of employees with dyslexia? Does coaching work? Is it a reliable form of support? What happens in a coaching session to make it work? Does it represent value for investment?

There is a lack of good research in our field and so we have begun compiling effective evaluations to bridge the gap.

The following study was carried out in 2012-2013 and will be published later this year (Doyle, 2014²).



Methodology:

93 clients and 41 managers, wide range of public/private/entry level/senior and age range 23 - 55.
The topics to cover in the sessions were chosen at the start, using feedback from the WNA (if available) coachee and manager priorities. Both the manager and coachee were asked to rate out of 10 the current performance of the coachee for each topic.
An independent researcher called 2 months after the coaching was finished to compare before and after ratings. The original ratings were not divulged until the end of the call.
The results were analysed using SPSS and, having met parametric assumptions, we conducted paired sample t-tests.

What did our clients want to cover?

The following graph on the right shows the percentage of coaching programmes featuring support on each topic area:

As you can see, 'memory' is by far the most common topic requested by our clients and adds weight to the body of research showing that literacy difficulties are not the only defining feature of dyslexia. We also find it interesting that 'stress management' ranks higher than reading.



Does coaching have an impact? The clients' perspective:

Topic	Average Before (SD)	Average After (SD)	% Improve	Statistic
Overall	3.97 (SD=1.02)	6.30 (SD=1.98)	59%	t (92)=19.35, p <.001, d = 1.94
Memory	3.37 (SD=1.77)	5.43 (SD=1.98)	61%	t (79)=8.76, p <.001, d = 1.04
Organisation	4.43 (SD=1.82)	6.96 (SD=1.58)	57%	t (67)=10.03, p <.001, d = 1.39
Time	4.46 (SD=2.08)	6.74 (SD=1.95)	51%	t (53)=8.16, p <.001, d = 1.1
Spelling	3.73 (SD=1.56)	5.77 (SD=1.75)	55%	t (58)=10.43, p <.001, d = 0.94
Stress Mgmt	3.71 (SD=2.00)	6.36 (SD=1.75)	71%	t (50)=7.67, p <.001, d = 1.11

These results show highly significant shifts in ability to manage performance and productivity from the client's perspective. A large effect (value d) is considered to 0.5 or above, so as you can see our results show a high impact and good evidence that coaching is indeed effective for people with dyslexia at work.

Does coaching have an impact? The managers' perspective:

Topic	Average Before (SD)	Average After (SD)	% Improve	Statistic
Overall	4.91 (SD=1.65)	6.31 (SD=1.12)	29%	t (40)=10.72, p <.001, d = 0.85
Memory	4.94 (SD=1.86)	6.24 (SD=1.06)	26%	t (30)=5.17, p <.001, d = 0.7
Organisation	4.79 (SD=2.15)	6.73 (SD=1.28)	41%	t (27)=6.09, p <.001, d = 0.9
Time	5.50 (SD=1.61)	7.02 (SD=1.17)	28%	t (25)=7.56, p <.001, d = 0.94
Spelling	4.36 (SD=2.38)	5.60 (SD=1.61)	28%	t (24)=2.97, p <.001, d = 0.51
Stress Mgmt	4.92 (SD=2.38)	6.40 (SD=1.78)	30%	t (23)=4.98, p <.001, d = 0.62

Again, all the effect sizes were over 0.5 and we can add support to our theory that the dyslexia coaching has had a noticeable impact on the work performance of people with dyslexia. The main difference between the managers and clients' perspectives comes from the difference before not the difference afterwards. Why might this be? We wonder if the clients before scores reflect a lack of appreciation for their own abilities.

Dyslexic adults lacking in self esteem? Who'd have thunk it! ;)

The coachees' average 'before' scores were significantly lower [M=3.96, SD=1.02] than their managers' [M=4.91, SD=1.65]. [t (57) = -3.84, p <.001]

However after the coaching, there was no difference between the two, demonstrating that coachee [M=6.30, SD=1.20] and manager [M=6.31, SD=1.12] were on the same page about performance levels [t (38) = -0.047, p = .96].

So by the end of the coaching, the manager and coachees are reporting similar levels of ability on each area and good improvements all round. We are interested in the lower before scores on the coachees' part and we are investigating this further in our current research.

So what do we know now?

- We know that coaching can have a tangible impact on performance in key areas.
- We know that the less well known areas of dyslexia are often more important in a workplace than literacy issues.



But we don't know

- How the coaching works.
- How this coaching compares to other reasonable adjustments.
- How much of the coaching is a 'placebo effect'.
- Whether ALL coaching works or if some styles are better than others.

In an ideal world.....

... we would be able to assure quality of learning outcomes for all dyslexics receiving support.

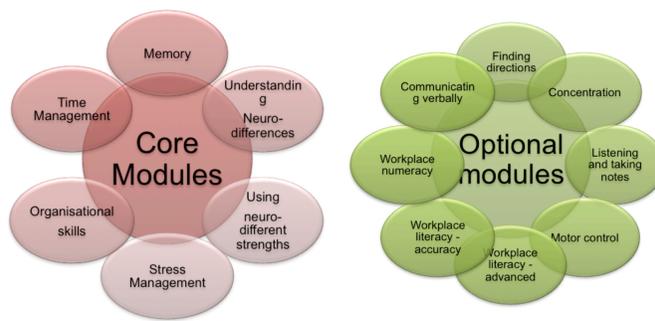
... we would be able to demonstrate return on investment for employers and schools.

... we would be able to deliver this learning in multiple ways, so that people could do as much or as little as they wanted.



First stop! Benchmarking.

The dyslexia coaching programmes are a bit like a 'black box' - clients go into them not knowing what they are going to get out the other side! We've worked with the Institute of Leadership and Management to create an Endorsed Programme for adults with dyslexia. This means that we can promise a well-researched, consistent level of delivery to reassure clients and their employers. It works on modules - you do the ones you need with 6 of any as a minimum. The modules (to the right) look like this. Our modules don't guarantee success for everyone, but the coaching reports are internally and externally verified for everyone going through the programme. We check that the strategies make sense and that they are being used at work. Best of all, there's no extra work involved for our dyslexic clients!



Second Stop! Collaborative research.

To build an evidence base we need a wide range of studies and explorations, which includes qualitative and quantitative methods. We need to work from the interview level to the randomised control level.

The British Psychological Society's Occupational Psychology Division has a working group called 'Enabling in the Workplace'. We are working on bringing together a wider range of evidence and starting off new projects. Please contact Nancy Doyle, post graduate researcher, at n.e.doyle@surrey.ac.uk if you would like to be part of our current research or have any ideas on our next steps.

A Final Thought:

There's a lot of excellent practice in the dyslexia field and we have made leaps and bounds. By benchmarking and evidencing it, we're leaving an excellent trail for those who come after us.