LPK READING LITERACY

DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION GUIDE

For Educators, Reading Interventionists, and Psychologists

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Evaluating key areas (cognitive, linguistic, and emotional profile) of Dyslexia: **Cognitive Processing, Phonological Awareness, and Psychological Impact.**

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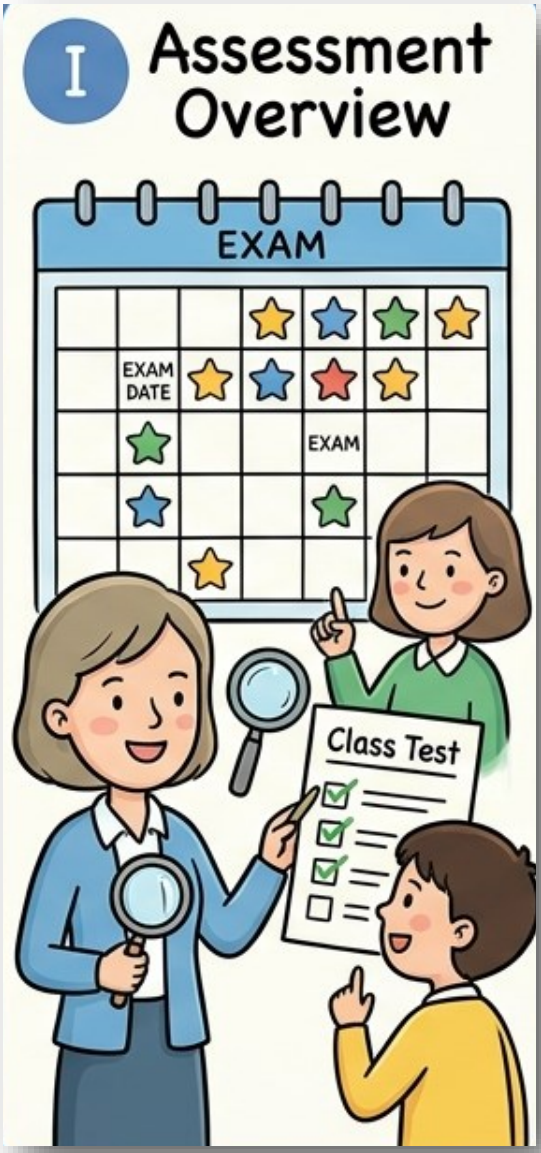
I. Assessment Overview

This assessment is designed to evaluate key areas (cognitive, linguistic, and emotional profile) of Dyslexia: **Cognitive Processing, Phonological Awareness, and Psychological Impact.**



Rather than relying solely on a single diagnostic score, this multi-dimensional approach provides a holistic view of the learner's reading profile, pinpointing specific barriers to literacy to directly inform targeted intervention strategies.

Understanding Semi-Formal Classroom Observation

For educators, specialists, and parents, waiting for a formal, clinical diagnosis of dyslexia can sometimes delay critical, time-sensitive support. Fortunately, an official evaluation is not a prerequisite for gathering actionable, diagnostic data.

You the professional who want to build on your knowledge and classroom practice, can utilize structured, observational frameworks in the everyday learning environment, you can conduct semi-formal observational assessments.

The Central Objective:

The goal of this approach is not to medically label a student, but to practically identify specific cognitive bottlenecks. Recognizing exactly where a student's processing falters, you can immediately implement targeted classroom accommodations and provide evaluation teams with concrete, longitudinal behavioral data.

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II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

Observational Focus Areas: Potential Signs of Dyslexia in the Classroom

Dyslexia frequently impacts underlying cognitive mechanisms, particularly Working Memory and Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN). Observation in this area focuses on how efficiently a student retrieves known words, retains multi-step verbal instructions, and processes visual-linguistic information under time constraints.

Utilizing the diagnostic concepts from the structured resources already at your disposal, you can conduct semi-formal observational assessments.

The goal of this approach is not to medically label a student, but to practically identify specific cognitive bottlenecks. recognizing where a student's processing falters, you can immediately implement targeted classroom interventions and share concrete behavioral data with parents and evaluation teams.

Purpose: Measures processing speed, working memory, and executive functioning, which influence reading efficiency.

Assessment Tasks:

1. **Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN):** Timed task where students name familiar objects, letters, or numbers as quickly as possible.
2. **Working Memory Recall:** Present students with a short sequence of letters/numbers and ask them to recall them in order.
3. **Visual-Spatial Sequencing:** Identify patterns in letter or symbol arrangements.
4. **Processing Speed Test:** Timed symbol-matching or simple word identification tasks.

Here is how to guide, conduct, and measure four foundational informal indicators of dyslexia using daily classroom materials.

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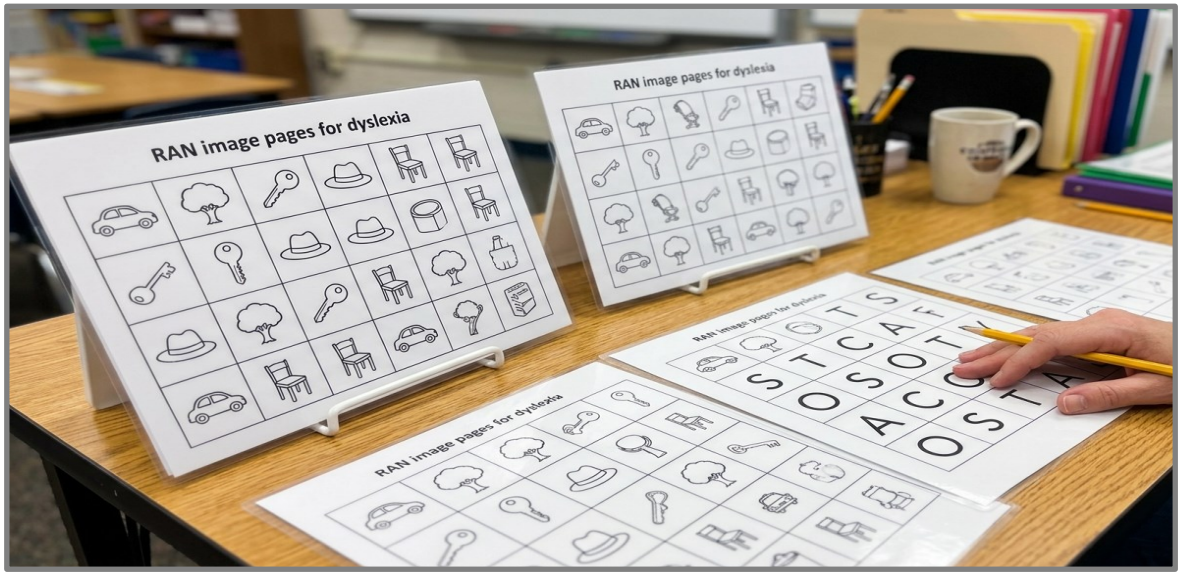
II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

1. Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)



RAN measures a student's ability to quickly recognize a visual symbol (like a letter or color) and retrieve its spoken name from long-term memory. A deficit in this area is one of the most reliable indicators of reading difficulties.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Use a simple page containing rows of highly familiar items—such as basic sight letters (a, o, s, d, p), single-digit numbers, or common colors. Ensure the student knows the names of the items before starting. Ask them to name the items from left to right, line by line, as fast as they can without making mistakes.

What to Measure & Observe:

- ⇒ ***Speed and Pauses:*** Use a stopwatch to note how long it takes them to complete the page. Watch for long, heavy pauses between words or at the start of a new line.
- ⇒ ***Error Tracking:*** Note if they misname an object or frequently substitute letters that look similar.

Practical Intervention

If a student struggles with RAN, give them daily, brief flashcard drills of 3–5 high-frequency words or letters to build automatic retrieval. Reduce the visual clutter on their worksheets so their eyes can track from left to right more easily.

II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

2. Working Memory Recall

Working memory is the mental "sticky note" used to hold and manipulate auditory information for short periods. Students with dyslexia often have a constrained working memory capacity, making it difficult to remember multi-step instructions or blend sounds into words.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Orally present the student with a short sequence of random numbers or letters (e.g., "7 - 3 - 9"). Ask them to repeat the sequence exactly as they heard it. To check for deeper manipulation skills, ask them to say a short sequence *backward*.

What to Measure & Observe

⇒ ***Capacity Threshold:*** Note the exact sequence length where the student's recall breaks down (e.g., they can easily recall 3 units, but consistently fail at 4 or 5).

⇒ ***Transposition:*** Watch for switching the order of the items (hearing "B-K-R" but saying "B-R-K").

Practical Intervention

For a student with working memory challenges, always break verbal instructions down into single, actionable steps. Provide visual checklists on their desk and encourage them to use sub-vocal rehearsal (whispering the steps to themselves) while they work.

II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

3. Visual-Spatial Sequencing

Dyslexia often impacts how the brain processes and sequences visual information. Students may struggle to recognize the correct spatial orientation of letters or the chronological sequence of symbols across a page.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Provide the student with a pattern tracking task. This could involve finding the "odd one out" in a series of similar symbols (e.g., 5 shapes where one is flipped) or asking them to reproduce a sequence of multicolored blocks or written letter patterns (like *b-d-b-b-d*).

What to Measure & Observe:

⇒ ***Orientation Confusion:*** Look for consistent trouble distinguishing between mirrors of letters (b vs d, p vs q) or numbers (6 vs 9).

⇒ ***Tracking Loss:*** Watch to see if the student skips lines, jumps over symbols, or reads a pattern from right to left instead of left to right.

Practical Intervention

Utilize physical tracking tools like reading colored overlays, finger-pointing guides, or "tracking windows" (a card with a small slit cut out to reveal only one line of text at a time). Use tactile materials like sandpaper letters to anchor the correct spatial orientation through touch.

II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

4. Processing Speed Test

Processing speed dictates how quickly a student can take in visual information, make a decision about it, and execute a response. A slow processing speed means a student must expend massive energy just to parse basic classroom tasks.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Give the student a simple symbol-matching paper. For example, a worksheet where a target shape or word is on the left, and they have 60 seconds to find and circle as many matching shapes or words across the row as possible.

What to Measure & Observe:

- ⇒ ***Output volume vs. Time:*** Count how many matches they successfully completed within the time limit. Compare this to average peer performance on similar matching tasks.
- ⇒ ***Physical Fatigue:*** Observe if the student shows immediate signs of stress, physical fatigue, head-holding, or extreme tension during short, timed tasks.

Practical Intervention

Explicitly remove the barrier of time. Provide these students with extended time on tasks, reduce the total volume of problems on a page (e.g., assign every other math problem rather than the whole page), and prioritize accuracy over speed.

II. Assessment Components

Cognitive Processing Speed & Memory

Cognitive Evaluation

The Collaborative Outcome

Gathering these informal data points, teachers and parents can speak the same language. Instead of a vague observation like *"They are struggling with reading,"* you can confidently state, *"I've noticed they have strong working memory but struggle significantly with Rapid Automatized Naming and visual tracking."*

This semi-formal observation honors the resources you already have in your classroom, bridges the gap while waiting for formal testing, and ensures the student receives immediate, tailored interventions right when they need them most.

All-purpose Interpretation & Recommendations:

- **Low Scores:** Suggest difficulty with speed of retrieval and memory (linked to slow reading fluency). **Intervention:** Use structured **word-mapping activities**, **chunking strategies**, and **timed drills** to improve speed and accuracy.
- **Average Scores:** Recommend continued development with **guided fluency practice**.
- **Above Average Scores:** Focus on **higher-level comprehension and vocabulary development**.

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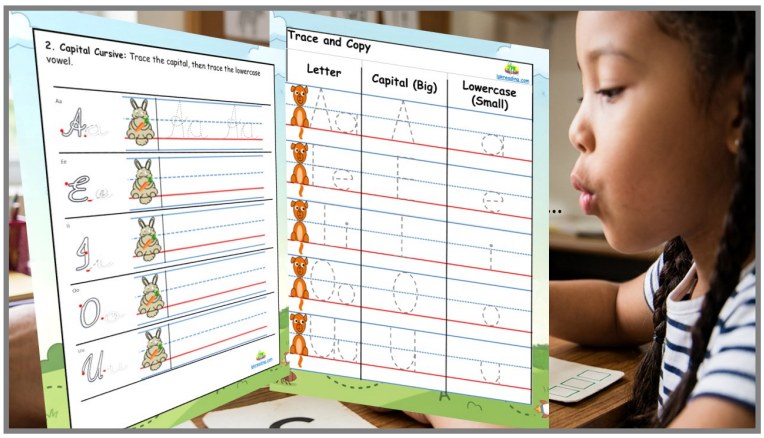
II. Assessment Components

Phonological Awareness and Decoding Signs of Dyslexia

Phonological Awareness Evaluation

Observational Focus Areas

Phonological awareness—the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of sentences and words (such as syllables, onsets, and rimes)—is the absolute foundation of literacy. Deficits in phonological processing represent the primary core neurological feature of dyslexia.



Through targeted, semi-formal observations, educators and parents can isolate whether a student's reading difficulty stems from an inability to hear, manipulate, or map individual sounds (phonemes) to printed letters (graphemes

Purpose: Measures a student's ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds in words, a core deficit in dyslexia.

<u>Assessment Tasks:</u>

⇒ **Phoneme Segmentation:** Ask students to break words into individual sounds (e.g., “cat” → /c/ /a/ /t/).

⇒ **Phoneme Blending:** Provide sounds and ask students to blend them into a word (e.g., /s/ /u/ /n/ → “sun”).

⇒ **Rhyming Awareness:** Ask students to generate words that rhyme with a given word.

⇒ **Nonsense Word Decoding:** Have students read pseudo-words (e.g., “mip,” “zat”) to assess decoding ability.

Here is how to conduct, measure, and intervene for these four critical phonological skills using routine classroom interactions.

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Phonological Awareness Evaluation

1. Phoneme Segmentation

Phoneme segmentation is the ability to break a spoken word down into its individual component sounds (phonemes). It is a vital precursor to spelling, as a student must hear each sound before they can map it to a letter.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Orally present a simple, short word to the student (e.g., "flat" or "dog"). Ask them to stretch or break the word apart into its individual sounds, tapping a finger or moving a counter for each sound they make (e.g., "flat" = /f/ /l/ /a/ /t/). Do not show them the written word.

What to Measure & Observe

⇒ ***Sound Omission or Blending:*** Note if the student completely drops sounds, particularly in consonant blends (e.g., segmenting "flat" as /f/ /a/ /t/, missing the /l/).

⇒ ***Chunking:*** Watch to see if they can only break words into larger chunks like syllables or onset-rime (e.g., saying /f/ /lat/ or /fl/ /at/ instead of isolating each sound).

Practical Intervention

Use physical manipulatives like Elkonin boxes (sound boxes). Give the student a grid and tokens, pushing one token into a box for every individual sound they hear. This visual and tactile anchor helps them physically separate phonemes.

Phonological Awareness Evaluation

2. Phoneme Blending

Phoneme blending is the exact reverse of segmentation. It requires a student to take a string of isolated sounds spoken by someone else and mentally glue them together to form a recognizable word. This skill is directly tied to decoding unfamiliar words while reading.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Speak a word to the student broken up sound-by-sound, pausing briefly between each phoneme (e.g., /s/ /u/ /n/ or /c/ /a/ /k/). Ask the student: *"What word do these sounds make when you put them together?"*

What to Measure & Observe:

- ⇒ ***Sound Drop-off:*** Note if the student forgets the first sound by the time they reach the last sound (e.g., hearing /s/ /u/ /n/ but guessing "in" or "un").
- ⇒ ***Wild Guessing:*** Watch for students who listen to the sounds but guess an entirely unrelated word based purely on the final sound or context clues.

Practical Intervention

Model "continuous blending" by stretching the sounds together without stopping the breath between them (e.g., producing /ssssuuuunnnn/ instead of staccato pauses). Have the student use a physical motion, like sliding a toy car across a track or running their finger down an arm, to represent smoothing the sounds together.

Phonological Awareness Evaluation

3. Rhyming Awareness

Rhyming requires a student to identify or produce words that share the same rime (ending sound). A lack of rhyming awareness is often one of the earliest preschool or kindergarten red flags for potential dyslexia, as it signals that the child is struggling to notice the acoustic patterns within language.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Give the student a target word, such as "cat" or "hop." Ask them to generate two or three real or silly words that rhyme with it. Alternatively, give them a choice of three words (e.g., "Which word rhymes with *pig*: *hat, big,* or *sun*?") to check for recognition if production is too difficult.

What to Measure & Observe:

⇒ *Alliteration Confusion:* Note if the student provides a word that starts with the same sound rather than ends with the same sound (e.g., pairing "cat" with "car" or "cup" instead of "hat").

⇒ *Inability to Track Rime:* Observe if the student changes both the beginning and ending sounds entirely, demonstrating a fundamental disconnect from the rhythm of the word.

Practical Intervention

Read nursery rhymes and rhythmic poetry daily, pausing before the rhyming word to let the student chime in. Use picture sorting cards where the student groups items that rhyme (e.g., pairing a picture of a *log* with a *dog*) to build acoustic familiarity without relying on text.

Phonological Awareness Evaluation

4. Nonsense Word Decoding

Nonsense word decoding involves having a student read pseudo-words (fake words that follow regular phonetic rules, like "mip," "zat," or "glesh"). Because the student has never seen these words before, they cannot rely on visual memory or context clues to guess them. It isolates and tests their pure phonetic decoding ability.

How to Instructionally Conduct It: Present the student with a short list of printed nonsense words appropriate for their expected phonics level (e.g., CVC words like "vob" or words with blends like "thrimp"). Ask them to read the words aloud across the row.

What to Measure & Observe:

⇒ ***Real-Word Substitution:*** Watch for "lexicalization"—when the student automatically twists the fake word into a familiar real word (e.g., reading "mip" as "map," or "zat" as "cat").

⇒ ***Laborious Sound-by-Sounding:*** Note if they must decode every single letter individually without ever successfully sweeping them into a whole word, indicating a lack of orthographic mapping.

Practical Intervention

Teach the student to explicitly identify the vowel sound first in any unknown word, as the vowel anchors the syllable. Use "silly monster words" in small group games, framing the reading of nonsense words as decoding an alien language to remove the stress of "not knowing" the word, reinforcing that they have the phonetic tools to read *any* combination of letters.

If the Student Struggles With...	It Directly Impacts Their Ability To...	Primary Home & School Focus
Phoneme Segmentation	Spell words accurately phonetically.	Mapping speech-to-print using physical counters.
Phoneme Blending	Sound out words while reading lines of text.	Continuous vocal stretching and modeling.
Rhyming Awareness	Recognize common word families and patterns.	Auditory rhyming games and poetry immersion.
Nonsense Word Decoding	Read unfamiliar or multisyllabic words without guessing.	Systematic, explicit phonics rules and vowel tracking.

When educators document these specific breakdowns, the data transforms parent-teacher conferences and academic intervention meetings. Rather than waiting for a formal diagnosis to treat the overall symptom of "poor reading," this observation allow teams to immediately target the underlying phonological gears that need alignment.

All-purpose Interpretation & Recommendations:

- **Low Scores:** Indicates phonemic deficits (common in dyslexic readers). **Intervention:** Structured literacy **(Orton-Gillingham, Lindamood-Bell, Wilson Reading System, The Reading Approach)**, **multisensory phonics** (tactile, visual, auditory cues), and **segmenting/blending games**.
- **Average Scores:** Support decoding skills with **controlled phonics-based readers**.
- **Above Average Scores:** Expand to **morphological awareness and fluency-building exercises**.

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II. Assessment Components

Psychological & Emotional Well-being

Psychological and Emotional Well-being Evaluation

Observational Focus Areas: **Psychological & Emotional Well-being**

The persistent frustration of going through a severe reading deficit takes a heavy toll on a student's mental health. This component evaluates secondary emotional impacts—such as heightened academic anxiety, low self-esteem, task avoidance, and learned helplessness—ensuring that emotional support is integrated directly into the student's intervention plan.

Purpose: To assess the emotional impact of dyslexia on a student, specifically focusing on self-esteem, reading-related anxiety, and academic motivation.

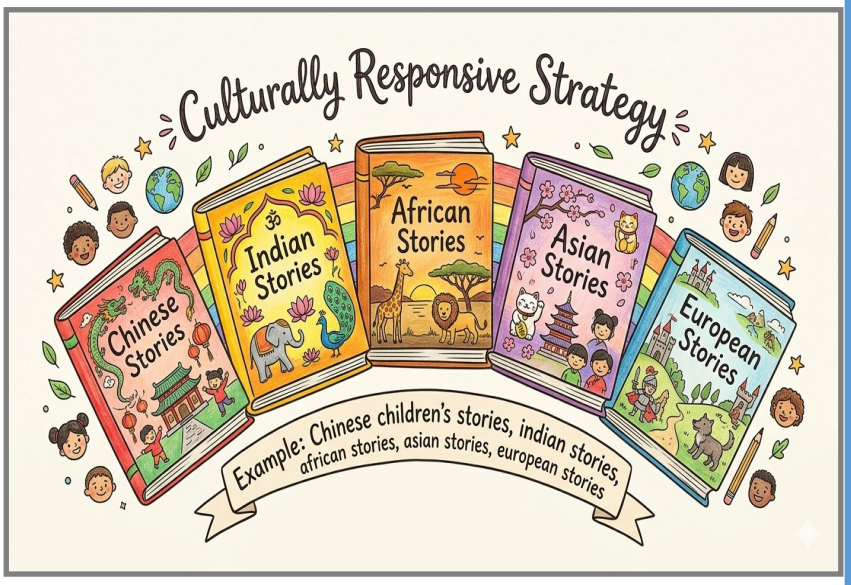
Assessment Tasks:

•Self-Perception Inventory:

Ask students to rate statements like "I am a good reader" on a scale (1–5).

•Reading Anxiety Checklist:

Observe emotional responses during reading tasks (e.g., frustration, avoidance).



•Student Interview:

Ask open-ended questions about how they feel about reading, writing, and school.

Here is a structured assessment tool designed for educators, specialists, or clinicians to evaluate the psychological and emotional well-being of students with dyslexia.

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Psychological and Emotional Well-being Evaluation

Part 1: Self-Perception Inventory

⇒ ***Directions:*** *Read each statement to the student. Have them circle or point to the number that best describes how they feel. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Strongly Agree).*

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am a good reader.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel smart when I am at school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can learn hard things if I try.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I like showing people what I can write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My mistakes help me learn.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring Note: Lower total scores (especially on items 1, 2, and 4) may indicate compromised academic self-esteem and a need for targeted emotional support or confidence-building interventions.

Psychological and Emotional Well-being Evaluation

Part 2: Reading Anxiety Checklist

⇒ ***Directions:*** *To be completed by the evaluator/educator during or immediately following a reading task. Check all behaviors that apply.*

Physical Indicators of Stress

- [ ] Fidgeting, squirming, or shifting heavily in the chair.
- [ ] Increased tension (e.g., clenched fists, tight shoulders, jaw clenching).
- [ ] Shallow breathing, heavy sighing, or holding breath.

Behavioral & Avoidance Tactics

- [ ] Asking to use the restroom, get water, or change tasks when asked to read.
- [ ] Frequent distractions (e.g., dropping a pencil, sharpening a pencil, looking around the room).
- [ ] Flipping through pages rapidly or closing the book prematurely.

Emotional & Verbal Responses

- [ ] Self-deprecating remarks (e.g., "I'm stupid," "I can't do this," "This is too hard").
- [ ] Clear signs of frustration (e.g., crying, throwing hands up, refusing to continue).
- [ ] Whispering, mumbling, or speaking in an unusually quiet voice during oral reading.

Psychological and Emotional Well-being Evaluation

Part 3: Student Interview

⇒ ***Directions:*** *Conduct this interview in a quiet, low-stakes environment. Use a gentle, conversational tone. Record the student's responses verbatim where possible.*

1. **"How do you feel inside when your teacher asks you to read out loud in front of the class?"**

Notes/Response:

2. **"If you could change one thing about reading or writing to make it easier or more fun, what would it be?"**

Notes/Response:

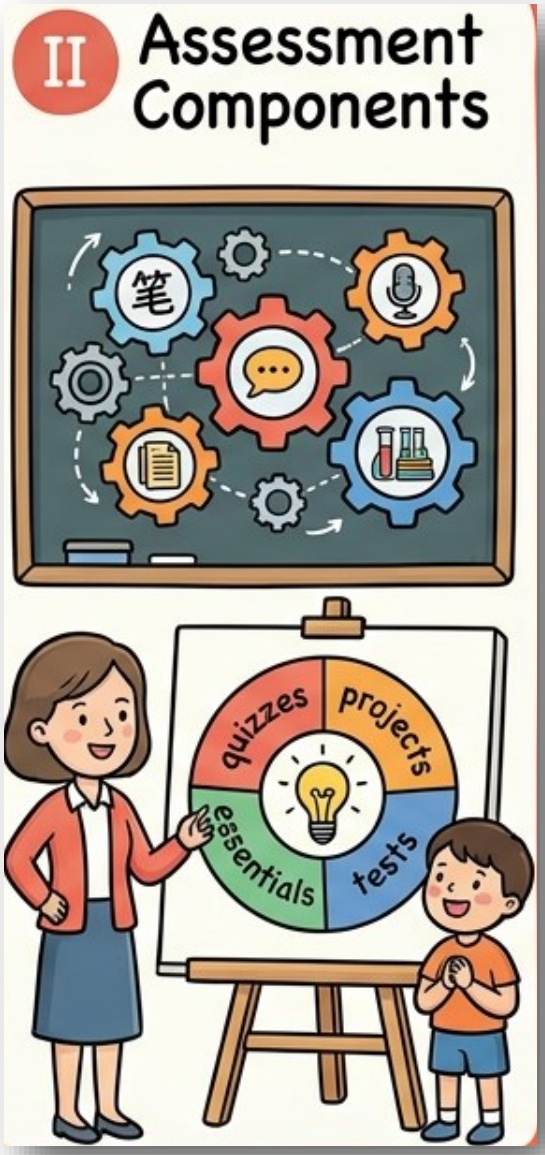
3. **"What is your favorite part of the school day? What is the hardest part?"**

Notes/Response:

4. **"When you get stuck on a word or a difficult assignment, what do you usually do? How does that make you feel?"**

Notes/Response:

Psychological and Emotional



Summary & Action Plan

To be filled out by the evaluator after completing Parts 1–3.

⇒ **Primary Areas of Concern Identified:** (e.g., high public reading anxiety, low academic self-worth, strong avoidant behaviors)

⇒ **Observed Strengths/Resilience:** (e.g., student is willing to ask for help, maintains a positive attitude toward non-reading subjects)

⇒ **Recommended Next Steps:** (e.g., implementing text-to-speech accommodations, eliminating unannounced cold-calling, providing emotional check-ins prior to reading tests)

<u>All-purpose Interpretation & Recommendations:</u>

- **High Anxiety/Low Confidence:** Suggests emotional distress affecting learning. **Intervention:** Provide **positive reinforcement, growth mindset activities, and personalized success tracking.**
- **Avoidance Behavior:** Indicates frustration with reading.

Intervention: Use **high-interest, low-level texts**, **reader's theater**, and **cooperative learning groups**.

- **Positive Attitude but Struggles:** Reinforce structured **fluency and comprehension-building exercises**.

III. Intervention Strategies

Supporting a dyslexic learner is never about working "harder"—it's about working *differently*. Because the dyslexic brain processes written language in a unique way, traditional reading and writing methods can often feel like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

To help these bright, capable minds thrive, we need a unified approach that spans the classroom, the home, and targeted small-group settings. By focusing on structured, multisensory, and explicit learning, we can bypass traditional barriers and build genuine reading confidence.

The guide below outlines practical, evidence-based strategies divided into three core pillars of support: **classroom accommodations**, **at-home parent practices**, and **focused small-group interventions**. Together, these environments form a complete safety net that celebrates progress and unlocks a learner's true potential.

A. Classroom Activities for Dyslexic Learners

- **Multisensory Phonics (Structured Literacy):** Engage multiple senses simultaneously. Use tactile sandpaper letters, "skywriting" letters in the air using whole-arm movements, or physically tapping out individual phonemes (sounds) on fingers or desks.

- **Guided Repeated Reading:** Have learners reread familiar passages multiple times. This repetition builds word recognition, improves oral reading fluency, and boosts overall reading confidence.

- **Paired Reading with a Fluent Reader:** Pair the student with a peer, tutor, or teacher. Reading aloud together provides immediate modeling of proper pronunciation, pacing, and expression while supporting comprehension.

III. Intervention Strategies

- **Decodable Texts & Audiobooks:** Use books that only contain phonics patterns the student has already learned. Pairing these with audiobooks reduces cognitive fatigue and allows them to focus on comprehension without getting stuck on decoding.

- **Explicit Morphological Instruction:** Directly teach the "building blocks" of words—root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Understanding how words are structured makes it much easier to decode unfamiliar, complex vocabulary.

B. Parent Support Activities

- **Reading Buddy System:** Establish a daily routine of shared reading at home. You read a page, they read a page, or read together in unison to keep the activity low-stress and highly collaborative.

- **Daily Sight Word & Phonics Games:** Keep practice light and engaging. Use flashcards for quick review, play memory match games with target words, or use letter tiles for hands-on word-building exercises.

- **Storytelling & Oral Language Development:** Don't underestimate the power of talking. Encourage your child to verbally retell stories, make up their own tales, or summarize their day to build strong narrative and comprehension skills.

III. Intervention Strategies

- **Technology Support:** Leverage digital tools to level the playing field. Introduce audiobooks, turn on text-to-speech software for schoolwork, and adjust digital devices to use dyslexia-friendly fonts (like OpenDyslexic).

- **Encouragement & Praise:** Keep the emotional battery charged. Explicitly celebrate effort, stamina, and incremental progress rather than focusing solely on perfect accuracy.

C. Small Group Reading Interventions

- **Phonological Awareness Drills:** Dedicate quick sessions to the foundational sounds of language. Use rhyming games, clap out word syllables, and practice blending individual sounds together to form words.

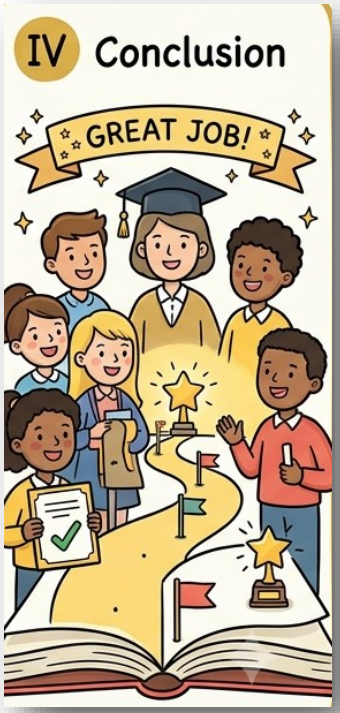
- **Fluency & Automaticity Drills:** Run brief, timed readings of targeted word lists, common phrases, or high-frequency words to help students transition from slow decoding to rapid, automatic recognition.

- **Comprehension Strategies:** Ensure decoding struggles don't block understanding. Use visual story maps, teach active summarization techniques, and hold structured Q&A discussions about the text.

- **Confidence-Building Reading Clubs:** Create small, low-pressure book clubs specifically for struggling readers. Grouping them with peers facing similar challenges fosters a safe, supportive space to discover a genuine love for stories.

IV Conclusion

Assessing and supporting students with dyslexia requires **a structured, multisensory, and evidence-based approach**. When a professional is able to address the cognitive processing, phonological awareness, and emotional well-being, they can create **an inclusive literacy environment that empowers struggling readers**. Collaboration among teachers, interventionists, and parents ensures **that dyslexic learners receive targeted, meaningful, and engaging instruction for long-term success.**



Dyslexia Observation & Informal Screening Matrix

The following matrix outlines the specific, observable behaviors associated with each diagnostic domain, translating clinical markers into actionable classroom checkpoints:

Diagnostic Domain	Core Component	Observable Classroom Signs / Bottlenecks
Phonological Awareness	*Sound Manipulation*	• Struggles to isolate initial, medial, or ending sounds. • Difficulty blending sounds to form words or segmenting words into syllables. • Inability to recognize or generate rhyming words.
Decoding & Phonics	*Grapheme-to-Phoneme Mapping*	• Frequent guessing at words based purely on the first letter or visual shape. • Omission, substitution, or inversion of letters (e.g., reading *b* as *d*, *was* as *saw*). • Difficulty sounding out unfamiliar phonetically regular words.
Cognitive Processing	*Working Memory & RAN*	• Inability to retain multi-step verbal instructions. • Slow, labored naming of familiar objects, colors, or letters (low automaticity). • Rapidly losing place while reading or skipping entire lines of text.
Psychological Impact	*Emotional Well-being*	• Physical signs of stress during reading tasks (sweating, heavy sighing, clenched jaw). • Frequent avoidance tactics (asking to leave the room, losing materials). • Negative self-talk (e.g., "I'm stupid," "I can't do this").

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