

Supporting Learning in Mathematics

Session 3: Individual differences and needs of students

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- Thinking Styles
- Learning Styles
- Specific learning differences
- Councelling

Tips for overcoming maths anxiety

The following are some suggestions of ways in which you can help a student to overcome their maths anxiety:

- Concentrate on small successes in order to build confidence and self-belief;
- Fill knowledge gaps;
- Encourage the student to improve their test-taking strategies;
- There's no need to be a perfectionist;
- Practice without a clock and slowly build up to timed practice;
- Try making learning enjoyable, for example use maths gaming sites;
- Don't over prepare the night before a test.

Specific learning differences

- **Dyslexia** – Difficulty in processing the mechanical aspects of language; also related to visual stress
- **Dyscalculia** – An inability to connect with numbers and basic maths concepts
- **Dyspraxia** – Difficulty with motor skills and sequencing multiple step task
- **Autism** (including Asperger's syndrome) – Difficulty relating to the physical world socially, in communicating and behaviour – appears like 'watching a film'

Tips for tutoring students with specific learning differences

- Treat all students normally, with warmth and respect.
- Consider changing the environment:
 - Adjust the light and reduce background noise,
 - Offer to use coloured paper,
 - Cover up distracting information,
 - Leave gaps between lines / use short sentences (dyslexics).
- Don't be over offended by students' body language – they may not be aware of normal social rules (autistics).
- If in doubt, seek the advice of your Centre Manager.

Counselling

- Show empathy and unconditional positive regard.
- It is important to be aware of your own safety and professional boundaries in a drop-in centre.
- It may sometimes be appropriate for your Centre Manager to refer a student to another professional service, such as counselling, finance or mental health (most commonly for anxiety and depression). If in doubt, discuss this with your Manager.