



LEARNING DIFFICULTIES:

Factsheet 4: What do we know about Dyscalculia?

A specific learning difficulty in Mathematics

Dyscalculia is an innate difficulty in learning or comprehending mathematics. Students with Dyscalculia have trouble understanding numbers, learning how to manipulate numbers, learning mathematical facts, and a number of other related difficulties.

Currently there is no single widely accepted specific definition of Dyscalculia, but a number of definitions exist.

One example appears below:

Dyscalculia is a condition that affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers, and have problems learning number facts and procedures. Even if they produce a correct answer or use a correct method, they may do so mechanically and without confidence.

The severity of mathematical impairment differs depending on the individual. Although it can be argued that many of the defining features of Dyscalculia can also be seen in students who do poorly in mathematics, it is the degree of these difficulties and the resistance to remedial intervention that set students with Dyscalculia apart from others with learning difficulties.

What you might see in the classroom

Lower Primary School	Upper Primary School	Secondary School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties organising objects and sets of items in a logical way Difficulties recognising printed numbers Poor counting skills and knowledge of counting strategies Difficulties using counting strategies (counting in 2's, 5's etc) Difficulties with mastering number knowledge (recognising how many items) make a set without counting) Delays in using effective counting strategies for addition (counting all instead of counting on) Difficulties decomposing numbers Difficulties remembering arithmetic facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counting skills mastered but continues to use ineffective strategies for calculation Difficulty telling the time and recalling times tables Delays in the retrieval of overlearned maths facts Difficulties with inattention to numerical operator (e.g. +, -, x, ÷, .) Delays in applying concepts of borrowing and carrying (place value) Difficulties with measurement and understanding spatial relationships Difficulties with multi-step calculation procedures Increased anxiety and negative attitude towards maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties learning maths concepts beyond basic number facts Difficulties with mental maths Difficulties finding more than one way to solve a maths problem Delays in learning and recognising maths vocabulary Difficulties in reading and interpreting graphs, charts and maps Poor perception of the passage of time and difficulties sticking to a schedule Poor budgeting skills Delays in spatial directions