

Hidden Disabilities



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Introduction

Support for students can no longer be seen as an additional provision. All teachers are now support teachers. We need to deal with the diversity of needs within our classrooms on a day to day basis. We must know who we teach, the nature of any individual needs and the implications for both teaching and learning. Then we need to translate that knowledge into action. This book aims to help teachers and co-ordinators with these processes.

Hidden Disabilities: the Teaching Kit raises awareness of the implications of hidden disabilities for learning. It includes some of the most common hidden disabilities: Asperger's syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, dyspraxia/dysgraphia, diabetes, epilepsy, mental health disorders, low vision, hearing impairment and other 'hidden' medical conditions.

Each hidden disability is dealt with as a **Summary** and in more detail as a **Handbook**, in order to cater for the different levels of knowledge required. There are also photocopiable **Student Support Profile Sheets** for each hidden disability which can be used by the SENCO/Learning Support Co-ordinator or other relevant professional to provide individualised information to teaching staff.

The ideas contained here are rooted in good practice that will benefit all learners. Each is the result of first-hand experience in the classroom.

The **Good Practice Guides** provide additional information about specific areas of teaching and learning.

What do we mean by 'hidden disabilities'?

Hidden disabilities are not immediately obvious. For example, when we look at a student it is not immediately apparent that they have dyslexia, dyspraxia, epilepsy, diabetes, or mental health difficulties yet any of these disorders can affect their access to learning. For some the disability may have been recognised early in their education. For others, it may have been recognised more recently.

Each disability is not consistent: it will manifest in different ways according to the individual. The disability may be present in mild, middle range or severe form. Those with disabilities have good and bad days. There may be a combination of disabilities. Some disabilities may be controlled by medication which in itself may have implications for the learning process.

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The hidden disability will influence the student's approach to learning. It may give less choice of learning styles. Many will need special considerations for examinations and work placements. Hidden disabilities can affect some or indeed all of the following. The list is not definitive.

- maintaining concentration
- motivation
- processing information
- speaking
- reading
- writing legibly
- spelling and copying accurately
- personal organisation/
time management and keeping on task
- adapting to changes and new classroom routine
- motivation, self esteem/behaviour

Our attitude to disabilities will affect the way in which we adapt our teaching in order to facilitate learning for all. We should always name the disability and never label the student. A student is first and foremost a student. S/he may be a student with dyslexia and epilepsy but never 'a dyslexic' or 'an epileptic.'

The student must be central to the learning and teaching processes. We must treat learners as individuals, ask how they access learning, and listen to what they say. Learners must be helped to succeed in each lesson, not just in those where their needs are recognised. Their needs must be built into every teaching plan. Consistency in dealing with hidden disabilities is essential to effective learning.

It is hoped that this book will help teachers meet the individual needs of students with hidden disabilities.

Instructions

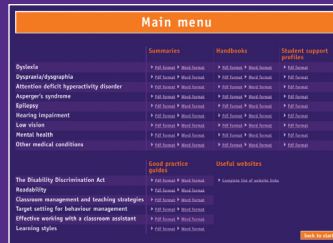
What's on this CD-ROM?

This CD-ROM contains the full text of *Hidden Disabilities: The Teaching Kit* in an easily-accessible format that can be viewed on screen, adapted to suit your individual needs, or saved to your school network or intranet to be accessed and printed at any time.

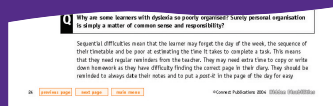
- The full text of *Hidden Disabilities: The Teaching Kit* is included in pdf (portable document format).
- Summaries, handbooks and good practice guides are also available in editable Word format.
- Student support profiles are set up as pdf forms to be completed on screen and printed off.
- A full list of website links gives direct access to further information from selected organisations.

Moving about the CD-ROM

The easy-to-use main menu makes it simple to locate and view all the pdfs and Word files on the disk.



When viewing the pdfs, use the buttons at the foot of each page to go forward, back or return to the main menu.



When viewing the Word files, simply closing each file will return you to the main menu at any time.