

# Optimizing English Teaching/Learning Techniques for Primary School Dyslexic Students

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## **Abstract**

Nowadays dyslexia seems to be an important reality in contemporary Polish foreign language education. The number of diagnosed dyslexic students increases still. Many teachers face the challenge of working with a mixed-ability class. The purpose of this paper is to show how classroom teachers can assist students with this learning disability during English lessons. It provides a close-up of the teaching techniques for dyslexic students during English lessons. It also contains a description of the problems of dyslexic children in the English classroom. My work contains a presentation of the variety of techniques used in teaching dyslexic students as well as providing conclusions from the observation of three English lessons. The main instruments in my work enabling the conducting of research were sheets of observational lessons and the analysis of documents. The observational lesson sheet was divided into eight parts, which corresponded with individual language areas. Observation was taken in five-minute intervals. Research has been carried out in the area of a primary school in Piastów among 12 year-old students. The results of my research show that almost 80% of the action taken by the teacher took into account the needs of students with dyslexia.

**Keywords:** Dyslexia, foreign language education, language areas, teaching techniques, observation of lessons

**Abstrakt**

Problem dysleksji to popularne zjawisko we współczesnych czasach. W polskiej szkole liczba dzieci z zaburzeniami w opanowaniu umiejętności czytania i pisania stale wzrasta. Trudności dziecka dyslektycznego wpływają nie tylko na efekty kształcenia podstawowych umiejętności w języku ojczystym, ale również odnoszą się do nauki języka obcego. Zatem, nauczyciel coraz częściej staje przed trudnym zadaniem, jakim jest praca w zróżnicowanej pod względem umiejętności i możliwości edukacyjnych grupie. Celem tego artykułu jest przedstawienie różnych, efektywnych sposobów pracy z dzieckiem dyslektycznym na lekcjach języka angielskiego. W pracy zostały zaprezentowane typowe dla dziecka dyslektycznego obszary problemowe w nauce języka angielskiego oraz techniki służące rozwijaniu tych obszarów. W części praktycznej skupiłam się na obserwacji lekcji prowadzonych w szóstej klasie szkoły podstawowej, zastosowanych technikach oraz ich analizie. Badania przeprowadziłam w szkole podstawowej w Piastowie na grupie 12-letnich dzieci. Obserwowałam trzy kolejne zajęcia języka angielskiego. Przygotowałam arkusz obserwacyjny, w którym w odstępach pięciominutowych notowałam zadania i techniki. Wyniki mojego badania pokazały, że niemal 80% z zastosowanych przez nauczyciela działań zakończonych zostało powodzeniem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Dysleksja, nauka języka obcego, obszary językowe, techniki nauczania, obserwacje lekcji

## 1. Teaching dyslexic students

Dyslexia is a term which comes from Greek (*dys* – poor, abnormal, impaired, *lexis* – word, language) and is used to describe a specific disturbance of reading, writing and spelling. Dyslexia is a problem faced by many students in today's educational system. The teacher's role is to recognize the characteristics, difficulties, and strengths of dyslexic learners. Students with dyslexia are typically of average or high intelligence but have tremendous difficulties reading, writing, or spelling on grade level. These difficulties are also connected with learning foreign languages. Dyslexic students may be slower to acquire and process language due to poor short-term memory capacities. They may

also have difficulty remembering isolated sounds in words when attempting to write or spell. Unfortunately, dyslexic students are very often recognized as lazy, unintelligent, or unmotivated learners. In this case, understanding how to support them seems to be the key to a better, effective teaching process.

## 1.1. Dyslexia and English language learning

Very often teachers of foreign languages ask the question: How does developmental dyslexia affect learning English or other foreign languages, and in which areas are these difficulties the most popular? For this purpose, Bogdanowicz carried out research on 114 learners with dyslexia (Bogdanowicz and Smoleń 2004, 100). The results of the research showed that dyslexic students have significantly more difficulties with learning English than those without any disorders. Moreover, eight times as many dyslexic students did not receive promotion to the next class when compared with others because of an unsatisfactory grade in Polish or English language. Research also shows that children with dyslexia share language difficulties: formulating written texts, reading apprehension, reading aloud, understanding oral texts, and remembering words.

### 1.1.1. Remembering and retrieving words

One specific symptom of learning difficulties in a foreign language is poor vocabulary acquisition, partly caused by deficits in memory. Therefore, the majority of dyslexic students have problems with learning, remembering and retrieving words and expressions from memory, which may result in a range of mistakes. One way to help dyslexic students to learn and remember vocabulary is to direct their attention to word structure and encourage them to take an active interest in words themselves. It can be done by discussing roots of words, prefixes, suffixes and compound words. Students can learn to approach new words strategically and analyse their parts to understand them better (Jurek 2008, 15).

There are some very helpful techniques, which can be used during an English lesson: **Magic blackboard** (Students look at the board with words for two minutes, after that they close their eyes and the teacher wipes off one of the words. Students open their eyes and have to say which word has disappeared); **I-spy game** (The teacher chooses the object in the classroom, then says “I spy with my little eye something beginning with...”

and gives the first letter of the name of the chosen object. The students' task is to guess what it is); **Object on desk** (The teacher brings 8 – 12 small and easily identifiable objects that have names with the same spelling pattern in them, eg. -age: page, cabbage, bandage. He puts them on a desk at the front of the class. Students are asked to look at the words and repeat them after the teacher. Next they are asked to look at the objects for one minute and memorize them. The teacher covers the articles. The students' task is to recollect and write down as many names of the objects as possible); **That makes me think of...** (This game is described as a kind of 'mind-stretching exercise'. The first player says any word which comes to his mind (e.g. flower). The second player says: That makes me think of a garden. The third player says: And that makes me think of a house. And so on); **Throwing and catching** (The teacher brings a ball or a soft mascot. He says the first word (e.g. number/month) and throws the ball to a student. After catching the ball the student is supposed to say the next word (e.g. number/month), and to throw the ball to another student).

### 1.1.2. The mechanics of successful reading

Developmental dyslexia is a condition resulting in poor reading. Children with dyslexia have difficulty learning to read due to one or more information processing problems, such as visual perceptual or auditory perceptual deficits. Many children with dyslexia have difficulty with reversals of numbers, letters or words (Internet source 1). Dyslexics may have a long-standing difficulty with reading fluency and accuracy as well as understanding the text. Unfortunately, some of them may never learn reading properly. However, even those students who have mastered the mechanics of reading successfully and seem not to differ from their peers as far as reading is concerned, often read at a slower pace than non-dyslexic students (Turner and Pughe 2003, 5). Turner and Pughe also point out that dyslexic students can have difficulty recognizing and adapting their reading style to the reading purpose: "They need to be taught explicitly the skill of choosing which reading method best suits a task and need to be able to identify the purpose and adapt their reading style to it" (6). The following suggestion may help a dyslexic student to develop reading skills: **Words puzzles** (The teacher writes each word of a sentence on a separate paper. Then he reads one word and students repeat it. Next he pins the word to the board. When all words are on the board, the students can see the whole sentence); **Pre-reading discussion** (The teacher shows students a picture related to the text which he is going to read. Then he asks the question: What can you see in the picture? Students try to de-

scribe the picture. Describing the picture causes students to concentrate on the topic and they want to know what the text will be about); **Creating a map of the text** (After reading students are supposed to amplify the map. It allows them to recall the text and the most important information. For example: characters, setting, name of the story); **Five questions** (After reading the text students are supposed to answer the five questions called the 5Ws: Who? What? When? Where? Why?); **Events sequences** (The teacher writes on the board events connected with the text. Students are asked to put them in the right order).

### 1.1.3. Writing: Use five words

Writing is one of the areas where dyslexic students may have a lot of problems. Dyslexics find that long pieces of written work are difficult to organise. They have problems with expression, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, sequencing and getting started. Additionally, their short-term working memory deficit and slow information processing speed add to the complexity of dealing with words (Internet source 2). When tackling written assignments, one of the most difficult tasks for a dyslexic is getting their initial thoughts down on paper. Dyslexics can also have a tendency to add or omit words or modify the meaning of words or sentences by imposing their own idiosyncratic spelling pattern (Internet source 3).

A dyslexic student may also have problems with the technical aspect of writing. Students suffering from dysgraphia are slow writers. What is more, their written work can contain irregular word spacing and poorly formed letters. Some dyslexics can also have difficulty gripping and controlling the pen (Pollock and Waller 2001, 15). As a result, their handwriting may be difficult or even impossible to read. The following strategies of teaching writing to dyslexic students may be helpful for the teacher as well as the student: **Ending** (Students are acquainted with a short text (e.g. postcard). Then they are asked to finish the text. Next they write a similar text); **Fill the gaps** (Students are asked to fill the gaps in the text. The teacher may give them necessary list of words); **Ordering the sentences** (Students receive sentences and they are asked to put them in right order); **Class questionnaire** (Students are asked to prepare class questionnaire. They ask friends, write the answers and then conclude them in a few sentences); **You write next!** (The teacher gives paper to one of the students and asks him to write one sentence. Then the student gives the paper to the second student and he has to write a next sentence which is connected with the first sentence. Then he gives the paper to the third student and so on. The exercise ends when all students write sentences).

#### 1.1.4. Encouraging students to develop listening skills

Listening is the next problem area in working with dyslexic students because it requires good concentration span and memory, auditory perception and processing. It is an essential part of the curriculum and is necessary for functioning well in any classroom. The ability to concentrate on the spoken word and to follow a list of instructions is crucial for high performance. However, many children lack these important skills (Bogdanowicz 2006, 24).

For dyslexic children, following a string of verbal instructions is typically very difficult. Many become frustrated when they cannot do what has been asked of them, and consequently feel anxious and embarrassed at school, and even at home. They often have problems with concentration, understanding long word statements, distinguishing similar words, and difficulties with focusing on the text. The teacher can help by limiting the number of instructions, speaking in simple, short sentences and by using different activities: **Words – keys** (The teacher writes five words on the board. Students read them and try to find the subject of the recording); **Word search** (Before playing the recording teacher reveals the main subject, e.g. food. Students are asked to give as many words connected with the subject as they can. Then they underline words which they think may be in the recording); **Drawing** (The teacher asks students to draw a picture during listening to the recording); **Pantomima** (During listening to the text students try to express by movement or gestures what they have just heard, e.g.: they march when speech is about walking or they pretend that they drink when they have just heard about food and drinking); **Drawing a picture from instructions** (One student describes a picture and others are supposed to draw it. This activity develops concentration, orientation in the space and optical-motor coordination).

#### 1.1.5. A positive attitude towards speaking

Dyslexic students are believed to be very good orally and, paradoxically, at the same time have difficulties writing down their ideas: “However, a closer examination of the quality of the language that they use can reveal imprecision, word-finding difficulties, spoonerisms and the ‘going-around-the-house’ approach. They will use many words instead of just one, as they cannot remember the exact word they want” (Ostler 2004, 93). As a result, their speech can have the following shortcomings: a lot of repetitions, lack of clarity and no logical progression of thought. Speaking may be difficult for dyslexics because of problems with automaticity, memory and constructing complex sentences. The following suggestions of activities may help dyslexic students to develop their speaking abilities: **Yes/No** (One student stands in the middle of the classroom and he

is thinking about one thing. Others are supposed to find what it is. They ask questions and the student can answer only yes or no); **Stem sentences** (The teacher gives students sentences. They are asked to finish them and they talk in pairs about the main tasks); **I like/I do not like** (Students write three activities they like and three they do not like. Then they talk in pairs. Then they are asked to find other students who like or do not like the same activities. To do this they need to go around the class and talk with others); **Role-play** (This activity can be used during different subjects, e.g. shopping. The teacher brings some products connected with shopping and asks students to play a role. One of them is a sales-person and a second is a customer); **Brainstorming** (The teacher writes on the blackboard a topic and students are asked to write their associations. Then they are asked to explain what they have written and why).

Taking the above presented activities into consideration, it seems that all of them take a multi-sensory approach, which gives dyslexic students the opportunity to make a very clear picture of what they are trying to say. They also allow time for students to retrieve vocabulary from long-term memory and to organize their thoughts.

To conclude this section, dyslexia is a problem that many students face and have great difficulty coping with in the school environment. Dyslexic students have difficulties in learning English and other foreign languages because of the fact that speech, reading and writing are compound actions which involve all language aspects: phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic, and all cognitive processes: note, perception, optical memory, aural, kinaesthetic, reflection, and imagination. As Krzyżak indicates:

... with the help and support of the teacher, using a variety of techniques, dyslexic students can become successful learners. The role of teachers is to make educational adjustments to facilitate learning and create a successful class environment. Therefore, it would be good if teachers collect as much information about a dyslexic, his family, friends and environment, as possible. Whenever a dyslexic child is positively sure that the teacher recognises and is aware of the nature of the learner's difficulties and helps him to overcome them, it may increase the dyslexic's motivation as well as make him willing to learn (Internet source 4).

There are many techniques which the teacher can implement to help a dyslexic student to do well and understand the different skill sets such as spelling, pronunciation, reading, writing and speaking. All of them help dyslexic students to develop their productive and receptive skills. In my opinion, they encourage learners to have a positive attitude towards English.

## 2. Area of research and participants

Research has been carried out in the area of a primary school in Piastów. It is a town which could be called “outer suburbia” of Warsaw. There are three primary schools there. In one of them I work as a teacher of Polish. There are over four hundred children so classes are differentiated with respect to the number of pupils. Usually students are divided into two groups during English lessons; however, it happens that some classes (up to twenty pupils) have lessons in one group, such as the class I have observed during my research.

There are ten boys and eleven girls. All of them are twelve years old. I know them well because, as I mentioned, I teach them Polish and I have been their form-master for three years. The pupils are at a similar educational level. It also can be said that they are a harmonious group. Moreover, most of them are on friendly terms with each other. Children are active and very often willingly participate in lessons. However, it happens that sometimes they are too energetic which leads to a reduction of concentration during lesson.

Among twenty one pupils there are six who have opinions about developmental dyslexia and among them there are three pupils – two boys and one girl – with evident symptoms of dyslexia.

### 2.1. Data collection and analysis

This part of my work includes a description of techniques used during observed lessons, their aims and estimate of their effectiveness. I will also take into consideration students' involvement in the activities, problems and additional teacher help. Finally, I will present an analysis and conclusions.

#### 2.1.1. Working with a dyslexic student at an English lesson – observation No.1

The first observed lesson was conducted on 7th May 2012, subject: ‘My timetable’. During this lesson students revised grammar and vocabulary.

The first activity which I noted in the fifth minute of my observation was checking homework. The teacher used the technique ‘Objects on a desk’ which develops learners' abilities in their range of vocabulary. The aim of this activity was to revise vocabulary from the previous lessons. All of the three observed students were engaged in the activ-



**Table 1. Analysis of the observation of the first lesson**

Language area and type of activity for dyslexic student	Presence	Student's involvement (from 1 to 5)	Problems	Additional teacher's help	Effectiveness of the activity (from 1 to 5)	Part of the lesson
<b>Spelling and pronunciation</b>						
<b>Orthography</b>						
<b>Vocabulary</b> ,Object on a desk'	N	5	–	–	5	5 min.
<b>Reading</b>						
<b>Writing</b> ,Fill the sentence'	v	3	v	v	3	10 min. / 15 min.
,Fill the sentence'		5	–	–	5	20 min.
<b>Listening</b>						
<b>Speaking</b> ,Jumbled sentences'	v	5	v	N	4	35 min./ 40 min.
<b>Other type of activity</b> Writing and reading – filling the gaps with appropriate verbs in a story	v	3	v	v	3	25 min.
Writing – writing the short answers to the questions		5	–	–	5	30 min.

Source: Prepared by the author.

ity. There were not any problems. This activity was very effective and useful for dyslexic students.

The teacher also used an activity for dyslexic students to develop writing skills. The activity ,Fill the sentence' was used twice in the tenth and the twentieth minutes of my observation. The aim of the activity was to elicit rules for both of the present tenses the students used in the task. Learners were asked to look at Rebecca's timetable and fill the sentence. The first letters of the verbs were given. Unfortunately, not all of observed students were engaged in the activity. Whereas Learner 1 worked as much as it was possible and her involvement was solid (5 points), Learners 2 and 3 had problems with this activity. I could observe that their difficulties resulted from a low level of concentration and difficulties with recognizing proper words. In that situation the teacher made some modifications – he wrote letters (in the wrong order) which were part of each word and

asked students to put them in the right order and next to complete the sentences. The second activity was much easier than the first one. Students had to complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. All of the observed students were engaged and did this exercise without any problems. In my opinion it was a very effective task.

During the lesson the teacher used the activity called 'Jumbled sentences' twice. The aim of the activity was to practice making questions and answering them. At the beginning students were asked to put the words in the correct order to make questions. Then they asked and answered the questions in pairs. Although dyslexic students were really engaged in this part of the lesson, I noted problems related to using native language and a lack of self-discipline in Learner 3. The boy very often used native language and he commented on the opinions of other students aloud. The teacher had to admonish him frequently.

To conclude, I think that the lesson was conducted successfully. The objectives for the particular tasks were achieved.

#### 2.1.2. Working with a dyslexic student on an English lesson – observation No.2

The second observed lesson was conducted on 11th May 2012, subject: 'Are you a keep fit fanatic?'. During this lesson students enriched their vocabulary and were acquainted with questionnaire.

The first activity which I noted in the fifth minute of my observation was 'Brainstorming'. The teacher used this activity to introduce students to the subject. This activity was very effective and useful not only for dyslexic students.

The next activity I noted in the tenth minute of the lesson was connected with the reading area. The aim of the activity was to read the questionnaire and complete it by students. All of the observed students were engaged in the activity. They worked as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

During the lesson the teacher used activities for developing listening skills twice. The first listening activity 'Word search' I noted in the fifteenth minute and then in the twentieth minute of the lesson. The teacher used this activity to prepare students for the listening task. Before playing the recording he said the main subject 'Sport's disciplines' and students were asked to give as many words connected with the subject as they could. Then they underlined words which they thought to find in the recording. This part of the lesson proceeded without any problems. In the next part of the activity I could observe difficulties which resulted from aural analyser disturbances. All of the observed students had problems with marking sports that the speaker spoke about. I also noticed

**Table 2. Analysis of the observation of the second lesson**

Language area and type of activity for dyslexic student	Presence	Student's involvement (from 1 to 5)	Problems	Additional teacher's help	Effectiveness of the activity (from 1 to 5)	Part of the lesson
<b>Spelling and pronunciation</b>						
<b>Orthography</b>						
<b>Vocabulary</b> ,Magic blackboard'	v	5	–	–	5	40 min.
<b>Reading</b> ,Reading questionnaire'	v	5	v	N	5	10 min.
<b>Writing</b>						
<b>Listening</b> ,Word search' ,Fill the gaps'	v	5 3	v v	– –	4 3	15 min./ 20 min. 25 min.
<b>Speaking</b> ,Brainstorming' ,Back to back'	N	5 5	– v	– –	5 4	5 min. 30 min./ 35 min.
<b>Other type of activity</b>						

Source: Prepared by the author.

that Learner 3 was disappointed with the fact he could not cope with the exercise and he seemed to lose motivation to work.

A similar situation was observed in the twenty-fifth minute of the lesson when the teacher used the activity ,Fill the gaps'. Students were asked to listen again to the recording and choose the best way to complete the sentences – multiple choice. Unfortunately, all of the dyslexic learners seemed to be lost and tired. I could also observe a lack of concentration and motivation to do this task, especially in the cases of Learner 2 and Learner 3.

In the second part of the lesson, in the thirtieth and thirty-fifth minute, I noted the activity called ,Back to back'. The aim of the activity was to develop speaking skills. Students were asked to prepare a short interview and find persons who like the same sports activities. They could walk around the class to do this task. Although all of the observed students were focused, Learner 3 often used his native language and he loudly commented on the opinions of other students. It could be seen that he treated this exercise as a way to have good fun.

During this lesson I also observed an activity that could be considered helpful for speaking purposes. So as to practise new vocabulary the teacher used the game ,Magic

blackboard'. Unfortunately, although students were really engaged, I noticed that Learner 1 had problems with memorizing and showing the missing word. To encourage the girl, the teacher once again wrote the missing word on the blackboard and gave her time to memorise words. The second test was successful. In my opinion this activity was effective, even if in some cases it required extra time to complete.

To conclude, I think that the lesson was well prepared. The objectives for the particular tasks were achieved. What is more, the whole lesson was based on teaching activities for dyslexic students which benefited both dyslexic and non-dyslexic students

### 2.1.3. Working with a dyslexic student in an English lesson – observation No.3

The third observed lesson was conducted on 14th May 2012, subject: 'Health'. During this lesson students enriched their vocabulary connected with illnesses and accidents.

**Table 3. Analysis of the observation of the third lesson**

Language area and type of activity for dyslexic student	Presence	Student's involvement (from 1 to 5)	Problems	Additional teacher's help	Effectiveness of the activity (from 1 to 5)	Part of the lesson
<b>Spelling and pronunciation</b> ,Identifying long and short vowels' ,Choral speaking'	N	5 5	– –	– –	5 5	15 min. 40 min.
<b>Orthography</b>						
<b>Vocabulary</b> ,Matching the expressions with the pictures' ,Pantomime'	v	3 5	v –	v –	3 5	25 min. 35 min.
<b>Reading</b> ,Reading role – play'	v	5	v	v	3	20 min.
<b>Writing</b>						
<b>Listening</b>						
<b>Speaking</b> ,Dialogue in pair'	v	5	–	–	5	30 min.
<b>Other type of activity</b> Speaking – about illnesses Reading – asking questions to the dialogue	v	4 4	v v	– v	1 2	5 min. 10 min.

Source: My own elaboration

The first activity which I observed in the fifth minute of my observation was the free conversation about illnesses. The teacher did not use any special activities for dyslexic students. Students were asked if they ever had been seriously ill. Dyslexic students tried to engage in the activity; however, they gave short answers such as: *Yes, I did* or *No, I didn't*. Difficulties resulted from the unfamiliarity of the proper vocabulary, so the effectiveness of the activity was weak. After twenty minutes the teacher returned to this activity and modified it. Students were asked to talk in pairs about accidents which happened to them. At the beginning the teacher gave an example of dialogue and encouraged students to speak. All of the observed dyslexic students were interested in the activity. They spoke willingly. I had the impression that in pairs they felt much more safe.

The next activity was reading a short dialogue and preparing questions. Unfortunately, this activity was not effective, either. All of the observed students read the dialogue but problems with understanding new vocabulary made this exercise impossible to do properly. I could observe that dyslexic learners were a little bit angry because they could not do the task. The teacher tried to give an additional explanation. This activity was not adapted to the needs and abilities of dyslexic students.

During this lesson the teacher used activities testing spelling and pronunciation skills twice. The aim of the first one was to identify long and short vowels /u:/ or /ʊ/. All of the observed students were focused on the activity. They did not have any problems with this task. The next activity developing pronunciation was 'Choral speaking'. I noticed it in the fortieth minute of the lesson. It was also connected with the pronunciation of vowels /u:/ and /ʊ/. Dyslexic students were engaged in the activity. I had the impression that Learner 2 wanted to show his acting talent. I did not observe any difficulties. Students were involved in the exercise and had fun with it.

I had also the possibility to observe activities connected with the acquisition of vocabulary and related to this area twice. The aim of the first activity was to enrich vocabulary through matching expressions with pictures. The level of students' involvement in the activity was varied. Whereas Learner 1 worked consistently, Learner 2 and Learner 3 were not focused enough. After the teacher's admonitions they started to work. As I noticed, dyslexic learners had some difficulties to do this task because of the fact they did not remember the meanings of some words. The teacher provided them with dictionaries. The next activity from the range of vocabulary acquisition I noted in the thirty-fifth minute of the lesson was pantomime. Students were asked to mime the illness or accident. While one learner mimed the illness others had to guess it. All the dyslexic students were really engaged.

In the twentieth minute of the lesson students once again returned to the dialogue from the first part and read it in groups of three. Although dyslexic learners were involved in the activity, I noticed that they had problems. Learner 1 read very slowly without any expression, Learner 2 and Learner 3 missed some words or some letters. The teacher corrected their reading errors and asked them to repeat and read them once again. The dyslexic students seemed to be a little bit tired after this task.

To sum up, I think that the lesson was successful. Although at the beginning I noticed a lot of problems, the second part of the lesson was more effective. The teacher used many activities for dyslexic students to develop spelling and pronunciation, acquisition of vocabulary, reading and speaking skills. However, not all activities were effective. Some of them pointed towards the problems of dyslexic learners and required modification. The level of students' involvement in the activities very often was high but sometimes I noted a lack of self-discipline from them.

#### 2.1.4. The results of my investigation

Taking into consideration all three observed lessons, I can claim that I had the opportunity to observe a wide range of activities developing the spelling and pronunciation, acquisition of vocabulary, reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of dyslexic students. Three analysed lessons showed that activities for dyslexic students are permanent components (80% of all observed activities). However, the level of their effectiveness and influence on students' involvement in the lesson might be differential.

My research also corroborated the hypothesis that teaching techniques for dyslexic students influence learners' participation in the lesson. I observed that dyslexic students participated much more willingly in activities which were well-considered, interesting for them and contained multi-sensory approach.

Furthermore, students' involvement in the lessons contributed to an increased level of language acquisition. However, it could be noted that involvement in the activities not only depended on the attractiveness of the tasks but also on problems which appeared during the realisation of these exercises. I divided these problems into two general groups: teaching problems which are related to educational difficulties, such as misunderstanding of the task, lack of necessary vocabulary to express thoughts, lack of familiarity with necessary grammar rules etc.; and individual students' problems, which are related to a learner's behaviour and his or her feelings. On the basis of this analysis, I distinguished four consistent problems: lack of concentration, lack of motivation, tiredness and lack of self-discipline.

## Conclusion

Children with dyslexia suffer from difficulties with different aspects of language as well as concentration and personal organisation. They have problems with visual or auditory processing, which affect the learning of a foreign language across a variety of areas.

The results of my research show that teachers are aware of the importance of their role in dyslexic students' education and they use special activities in working with dyslexics. What is more, they choose differential techniques, such as a puzzle, visual images, families of words, and games for developing differential language skills. Furthermore, techniques for dyslexic students influence the level of achievements in a range of speaking, pronunciation and spelling skills. For example, the acquisition of vocabulary, writing, reading and listening, influence students' motivation and their participation in lessons.

To sum up this reflection, it is worthy to take into consideration some facts about dyslexia. Dyslexia is not an illness, lack of intelligence or laziness. Dyslexic students are not all the same. Some of them, having experienced difficulties in learning their mother tongue, do not have many problems with a foreign language. Some students with dyslexia require minimal alterations to feel relatively comfortably in the educational system, while other learners with dyslexia might need a much more individualised approach. Children do not normally grow out of dyslexia. It is usually a problem for life. However the symptoms change with time and they are different at different life stages. At the end of my work I would like to present the statement posited by H. T. Chasty—consultant in learning abilities and difficulties—which in my opinion, shows the best rule on how to teach dyslexic students: “If the dyslexic child does not learn the way you teach, teach him the way he learns” (Internet source 5).

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