

My student's spelling is awful - is she dyslexic?

Problems with spelling are sometimes associated with dyslexia, but on their own do not necessarily indicate that the person has a specific learning difference. If the student seems to exhibit other indicators (such as poor short term memory, difficulties with organisation or surprising interpretations of instructions and tasks) then it might be worth investigating more closely. If spelling is the only problem, then it would be sensible to look for ways to tackle that first.

For example, many students who have a SpLD experience difficulties with short term and working memory and need to develop strategies to retain new information. There may be evidence of slower (and/or inaccurate) processing of visual and/or auditory input, and phonological processing may be less well developed than in their peers. On the other hand, sometimes dyslexic learners are able to see links and connections that their 'neuro-typical' classmates cannot, and this can be a strength in problem solving.