



Assessing for strategies

Assessment of cognitive function can often reveal innovative coping strategies that students are already using, showing us how we can support them best.

A few years ago, I was assessing a 12-year-old student for dyslexia. I offered her the standardised reading text, and she started trying to read it out loud to me. After a minute of hesitant reading, sounding out almost every word, she looked up at me and asked 'Miss, can I turn it round?' I said that of course she could, and she turned the page round 180°, so that it was upside down for her.

What a transformation! This apparently insecure and reluctant reader suddenly became confident and accurate, even expressive. When she had finished, I asked her if she always turned the book round when she was reading, and she said, 'Only when the teachers aren't looking. They tell me off because they think I'm messing about.'

Unfortunately, we teachers can't always recognise our learners' creative solutions, especially if we don't know what barriers they are experiencing. Neurodiversity appears in all sorts of surprising ways, and assessment can help us to understand the unexpected behaviours that tell us when one of our students needs to learn in a different way.

If you would like to find out more about how to recognise dyslexia and other SpLDs, visit the [ELT well assessment page](#).

You could also take that next step and [book an assessment](#) for yourself or one of your learners.