



## A dyslexic teacher – are you joking?

Have you ever heard people expressing surprise that dyslexic people can become teachers, and - yes - even English teachers?

I heard it all the time while I was working in universities, but I always just put it down to ignorance.

I have worked with a lot of trainee teachers in various roles, including as a dyslexia support tutor, helping them to plan their essays and keep on top of their workload. These students often felt that they had to work extra hard to prove themselves, and not fall into the traps that are set for them by our education system. One of the most able and creative trainees I worked with went on to become Head of English in her school within a few years of qualifying. She had earned it, and I'm sure she did a superb job.

More recently, I have had colleagues who demonstrated that teaching is definitely not off-limits for people with dyslexia and other SpLDs. With Anastasia Metallinou I created the [English Sounds Fun](#) programme, which offers neurodiverse learners a structured and gentle introduction to English literacy, and last Saturday I heard the most amazing talk from Šarka Dohalova, as part of the IATEFL Inclusive Practices & SEN SIG / Learning Technology SIG joint event '[Inclusion through technology](#)'.

Both of these amazing women are happy to talk about their experiences of being dyslexic, and in fact it is a strength in their work, because they understand and relate to the difficulties that some of their learners are experiencing. I always used to think that my Maths teachers didn't get me, because he'd never had any difficulties with Maths himself: it's hard to imagine challenges that we've never felt ourselves.

Rather than dismissing our dyslexic students who aspire to become teachers, we should do everything we can to encourage them. They may still face a lot of stigma and have more hurdles to overcome than their peers, but the contribution they could make to education is immense. I'm not even joking.