

GUIDE

for e-book's accreditation

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission
cannot be held responsible for any use which may be
made of the information contained therein.

Introduction

E-Book "Tips for Parents of dyslexic child" is addressed to any parent who seeks answers to questions related to the difficulties, that his/her child meets everyday and in the learning process.

For about 10% of the population of Europe, these difficulties are due to the condition of dyslexia. This condition can be acquired or inherited.

Our book will be read from both parents normoleksitsi and from parents who might also have in some degree similar difficulties.

This requires it to be written with maximum ease of use. Its content must be presented in a simple and clear way, with brief explanations, accurate, clear, systematic and well-referenced information. Its use should not be difficult and there have to be guiding elements for detection of the searched information.

According to the idea of the project, we need to create 6 books in the languages of the partners and a summary paper in English for the citizens of Europe.

The accredited book will be in English.

Accreditation is an important final element of our work together, because it will give the clear sign of quality to everyone who read it.

The study of dyslexia has developed dynamically over the last 10-15 years, but there are no established norms and standards to be used in the creation of various materials-books, manuals, handbooks. Leading is the usefulness of the developed product.

At European level, leadership for us and our work can be the European Qualifications Framework.

We offer to you a summary of EQF, which relates to our activities, clarify some important terms, such as formal and informal learning, norms, standards and accreditation, offer a quick guide to the requirements developed materials for people with dyslexia and a table of self-checking.

For accreditation opinion we will seek the assistance and the opinion of two leading European organizations that train and develop materials in the field of dyslexia, namely EÖDL Erster Österreichischer Dachverband Legasthenie, Austria. DVLD Dachverband Legasthenie Deutschland, Germany. So for the accreditation of our book will be given evaluation from three organizations.

Contents

Section 1 - General information

Section 2- In-formal and non-formal education

Section 3- Validation of informal or non-formal learning

Section 4- Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Section 5- Determination of the level of e-book according EQF

Section 6- Achieve the levels of the EQF, according to the nature of the project

Section 7- Guidelines

Section 8-Self-checking table

Section 9- Conclusion

Section 1 - General information

The project "Tips for Parents of dyslexic child" is funded by the Lifelong learning sector Grundtvig learning partnership. One of the main objectives of the program is to provide adult learners opportunities to enhance their knowledge and competence.

The electronic book is a product of our project and it is aimed at a wide range of interested readers with the main objective to assist them in clarifying the situation and overcome dyslexia and its difficulties.

In essence, this book can be attributed to informal / self / learning.

The accreditation process will be lead, using the European Qualifications Framework as a basis.

The European reference framework is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together It has two principal...

aims:

- to promote citizens' mobility between countries and
- to facilitate their lifelong learning.

In the EQF a learning outcome is defined as a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

The EQF therefore emphasises the results of learning rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study. Learning outcomes are specified in three categories – as knowledge, skills and competence.

In the EQF a learning outcome is defined as a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. The EQF therefore emphasises the results of learning rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study. Learning outcomes are specified in three categories – as knowledge, skills and competence. This signals that qualifications – in different combinations – capture a broad scope of learning outcomes, including theoretical knowledge, practical and technical skills, and social competences where the ability to work with others will be crucial.

The EQF will support greater mobility of learners and workers.

-The EQF should benefit individuals by increasing access to, and participation in, lifelong learning.

-The EQF will support individual users as well as providers of education and training by increasing transparency of qualifications, awarded outside of the national systems,

-The EQF can support individuals with extensive experience from work or other fields of activity by facilitating validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Definitions

“knowledge” means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;

skills” means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);

“competence” means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Section 2- In-formal learning

From the brief information about the EQF is clear that it refers to formal and informal learning. Our project relates to the informal learning

In-formal learning- means:

Learning, resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure.

It is not organised or structured (in terms of objectives, time or learning support). Informal learning is in the most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.

Section 3- Validation, accreditation and standardization of informal or non-formal learning

The validation of non-formal and informal/self-dependent learning outcomes should be promoted in accordance with the Council conclusions on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning of 28 May 2004

Validation of informal learning

The process of assessing and recognising of a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities.

Accreditation

Definition

A process of accrediting an institution of vocational education or training, a programme of study, or a service, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative and professional authorities by having predetermined standards.

Standards

Definition

Standardization is a process of developing and implementing of rules and regulations with an aim to arrange the activity in an area for mutual benefit and by participation of all interested sides.

Section 4-Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.

		Knowledge
		In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
Level 1	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic general knowledge
Level 2	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study
Level 3	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study
Level 4	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study
Level 5*	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge
Level 6**	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles
Level 7***	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research • critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields
Level 8****	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields

Table 2. Additional information about each level according EQF

Level	Additional information that is typical and indicative for each level
1	<p>Learning context is simple, consistent and focused in a general study of basic skills.</p> <p>Learning is normally developed during compulsory education and contributes to general education but is also achieved by training programs for adults (including popular adult education), and by creating opportunities for formal and informal learning.</p> <p>When young people are taught, basic knowledge and skills are developed in a controlled environment through direct teaching methods. Learning is based in a school, college, training center, in training program out of the school or in an enterprise. Course content in most cases is well established and regulated. It must be remembered that the development of basic skills is also closely related to the context of informal learning in the workplace and community.</p> <p>Institutions controlling education and training systems, apply quality assurance of qualifications at level 1.</p> <p>The achievement of qualifications at level 1 gives further opportunities for training and access to unskilled employment that may contain an element of further education. This level is often the entrance to the lifetimes of people without qualifications.</p>
2	<p>Learning context is stable and is focused on the expansion of basic skills (including key competencies)</p> <p>Learning at this level is formally acquired during compulsory education and may include an introduction to the work.</p> <p>Learning is based in a school, college, training center, in training program out of the school or in an enterprise. Learning can be developed through informal means or through popular work-based learning for adults in the community.</p> <p>Knowledge and skills are taught formally in a supervised environment through direct teaching and coaching. Course content in most cases is well established and regulated. It must be remembered that the development of basic skills is also closely related to the context of informal learning in the workplace and community.</p> <p>Institutions controlling education and training, determine quality assurance of qualifications at level 2.</p> <p>The achievement of qualifications at level 2 provides further opportunities to intervene based on skills training and access to unskilled employment that may contain an element of further education. This degree can be an entrance to the lifelong pathway.</p>

Section 5- Determination of the level of e-book according EQF

Our book relates to level 1 or 2 according EQF.

Knowledge

In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

Level 1

The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are basic • general knowledge.

Level 2

The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are • basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study.

Skills

In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Level 1 basic skills required to carry out simple tasks.

Level 2 basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools.

Competence

In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy. work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

Section 6- Terms of achievement levels

To establish standard and to follow it in our work and our aims should be

accurate and clear knowledge of the condition dyslexia

Ability to recognize

competencies for parents, teachers and who is interested in ways for supporting and overcoming the difficulties in reading, writing, calculation, daily routine and organization of time adaptation of teaching material and leisure activities

Section 7- Guidelines

Paper based documents

A text of the appropriate size, font and colour on the appropriate paper will assist dyslexics in

reading. The main characteristics of text for dyslexia-friendly printed materials are: short lines, print

Arial, or perhaps Comic Sans fonts of size 12

pale yellow-coloured paper

legible, but not sharp-coloured letters.

These characteristics apply to all paper based writing, independently if they are books, notes, hand-outs, tests,

Questionnaires or other forms. Other “design” elements to consider include making sufficient space between columns to ensure the dyslexic does not simply jump from one column to the next as they read (a thin line between the columns can help) and to make the flow of text obvious. Left justification of text is better than fully justified as it creates fewer visual “rivers” (i.e. an apparent linking line between words down the page) in the page that dyslexic find very off putting.

Long words and long, grammatically complex sentences are difficult to follow. Dyslexics get lost among the various relationships and references within the sentence. It is therefore better for the text to be simpler and clearer. That does not mean the text cannot convey complex

messages. It just reminds us that communication is about the receiver needing to understand what

the provider is trying to say. Although attempts have been made to develop help such as Vagueness Indices, who can say what is vague and what is not since everybody has different

opinions. The best way to answer that is to ask if the recipient understands it. If not, then communication has failed.

Books

Despite the rise of the electronic format, books are still the traditional sources of information.

They cause a lot of difficulties for the dyslexics to the point where even in adulthood many fear going to a library. Although things are beginning to improve, many recently published textbooks still contain too much continuous text, segmentation is often indiscriminate, and the

relationship between randomly linked elements is not clear.

A book can be a friend of dyslexics if the structure and text do not pose an obstacle to reading. A good example for this is J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter, which turned many dyslexic children into readers throughout the world. What is its secret? Short, simple sentences, image-like representation, an easy-to follow structure and an interesting theme. Even though not all material can be rendered as interesting as Harry Potter (which is why not all textbooks will make a bestseller), the above characteristics will make any material more easily

accessible. The content and structure of books differ considerably according to their goals. In the case of scientific and engineering literature, the main requirement for its content is to be comprehensible and correct. It does not need to create the appearance of being scientific through the use of difficult words and over-complicated syntax.

A well-structured book should contain for each chapter:

an abstract

a table of contents

a summary

The texts should be structured and sequential, and comprehension should be assisted by pictures, figures and simple tables. Important pieces of information should be highlighted.

Notes and handouts

All that has been said about the appearance of books pertains to notes and handouts, as well. The function and the use of these written materials is, however, different. They usually carry

shorter and more concrete pieces of information. Abstracts and notes help dyslexics by providing

overviews and abbreviated perspectives. They often provide the confirmation of the structure of

the main content, whether it is a short overview of a material or a handout, A dyslexic school manager of a dyslexia-friendly school once said: "If something cannot be written down on one page, it is not worth writing down." Although this may be a little simplistic, one should

endeavour to present one theme per page. Even if this is not possible, it is important to have

coherent parts on each page, and preferably to start each new concept on a new page.

Wide margins are also useful since they provide an area for making notes. However, many students need to be encouraged to do this, as they are often reluctant to write on somebody

else's work, whether it is a book or a handout. There is no point being concerned about saving

paper, since if the message has not got across, then all the paper is wasted!

Tests and examinations

Tests are a real problem for dyslexics. This is not just because they do not know the material well enough (a problem for most exam takers!), but also because the questions have to be read and interpreted very accurately. Since many words, concepts and especially relational words can be vague, the subtle wording of tests can be a great obstacle. If the questions are on a different page

and answers have to be given on a separate form, dyslexics are faced with a further visual and

memory overload. They will miss and mix rows and columns, and forget what they were supposed to do. Furthermore, the content of what they write rarely reflects their knowledge since they are using so much brainpower for making the work neat and legible for an unseen reader that they have less brain power for answering the question, thereby compromising the content.

Instructions

One of the big problems of dyslexics is to follow long sequences with many components. Instructions are like this, be they given orally or in writing, at school and at work. What is more,

one also often has to follow longer, complex instructions in private life. It is usually needless to give instructions in complicated wording. Short and comprehensible assertions are understandable and can be easily executed. Shortened sentences need not to turn into short, impolite commands. It is sufficient for the wording to be more concise, and the stress does not need to be greater. If the instructions or the message cannot be given briefly, then it has to be cut into more chunks, segmented for the dyslexic. Written instructions will be more easily interpreted when itemized. Continuous text will not be clear cut, tasks and details will be lost and the whole instruction will lose its meaning. In the case of oral instructions, there is a further problem, namely, that the dyslexic individual may not only forget the message, but due to inattention, might not take in the message in the first place. Dyslexia is often accompanied by attention disorder. In that case the probability of the message not going through to the recipient increases. To ascertain whether the recipient received the message, it is worth asking back tactfully "So what exactly are you going to do?"

With this repetition the memory will sink in and the transfer of the message will be certain. We can ensure in advance to have the other's attention by establishing eye contact, perhaps touching them to make them turn to us.

Computer materials

Technical devices are very effective tools in the education and in the work. Giving course through internet is a new possibility for dyslexics to get a usable mediator.

E-learning

With the increased in e-learning widely available, greater attention is being focused on the ability of the end user to be able to learn effectively. The diversity of materials now in the marketplace range from stand alone CDs through to online courses where one studies alone and the lecture notes which are available on the web. Although some e-learning developers are aware of the issues involved, many of those who are responsible for developing course materials which will be used by dyslexic students do not appreciate all the components that should be considered. It encompasses multimedia CDs and the internet, but is also involves the use by assistive technology by disabled students. For example, dyslexic students often make use of text to speech software when reading from the computer and digital recorders when listening to instructions or wishing to make private memos when working through online materials.

The key areas to consider for e-learning are:

Accessibility

Usability

Readability

Learnability

Accessibility

Accessibility should be considered as the ability for the individual to acquire information from the

“page”. A learning component that is difficult to access will soon cause frustration and be a disincentive to learning. The more recent versions of Flash allow the supporting text to be embedded in the file, and read by some, but not all, screen readers. However, many developers

of e-learning would find it very time consuming to update the old material and include readable

files, making much of their content inaccessible. There are a number of principles of good practice that should be remembered when ensuring accessibility. These include the need to

ensure that the content can be accessed by all the major assistive technologies and to work with the client group.

Usability

Usability may be considered the ease of use of the materials and is affected by parameters such

as Typeface (Times, Arial or Comic Sans are the most popular) Font size Leading (line spacing)

and justification. Text and background colour are also important, and most importantly the content layout and navigation.

Font style

Typeface Times, Arial and Comic Sans are the most popular typefaces and are widely available.

As far as possible, the computer system used by dyslexic individuals should offer a minimum of

three choices – most offer many more, and this can also be confusing to the user. In the past it has been suggested that Times is the best for the dyslexic individual since the eye is led from one letter to the next. More recently there has been a trend towards more wide spread use of a ‘sans serif’ font such as Arial (or Helvetica on the Apple Mac).

However, research suggests that whatever you used last would tend to suggest what you will prefer next. The recent preference for these sans serif fonts is probably led by the use of computers. On a computer screen, the small detail of a font like Times, with its “curl feet”, may be lost.

Font size

With paper documents, it is possible to specify exactly the size of the text. Usually the dyslexic

will prefer a minimum size of 12pt. However, with the computer screen it is a little more complex,

since we can zoom in and out at leisure. Thus the “size” the text will depend on other factors,

such as Control of the font size can also be through the web browser. However, some designers override this function, meaning that the user has to suffer the designers (often too small) choice of font size. screen resolution as well as program setting.

Leading (line spacing) and justification

Most designers use the default settings for line spacing (20%, that is, when a 20pt font is used, the line spacing will be 24pt). However, many dyslexics find a greater spacing (e.g.30%) is preferable as it makes it easier to follow the line. However, if the spacing is too great, the ease of

reading will decrease. As with paper based material, text should be left justified with a chance for the dyslexic user to see a jagged pattern down the right side. Variable word spacing caused by text being fully justified text can also be very confusing.

Text and background colour

Increasingly websites are allowing the user to determine how they view their own learning environment by adjusting in particular the background colour and font. When designing the environment, the chosen default should be dyslexia friendly, such as Arial on a cream background.

Content layout and navigation

Layout is an important and frequently overlooked component. Consider a scenario where you have

on a single screen 62 clickable zones, including the browser itself (which happens with one

well known e-learning environment). Not only is this very confusing to the individual, but it also

leaves little space for the learning area. Clarity and simplicity should be more important than

“designer” looks. Navigation should be intuitive, and consistent across all parts of the learning environment.

Scrolling or paged content

Due consideration should be given to providing information on a page by page basis, like in a

book, or through scrolling, which may be more difficult for those with coordination problems.

Alternative navigation for scrolling should be considered, such as gradable scroll bars, arrows,

and key depressions. At all times horizontal scrolling should be avoided as this affects text scanning and on the whole it has been found that the ideal line length is around 60-80 characters although people tend to be able to read faster when there are only 30 -50 characters as in newspaper columns. But columns are not helpful on a web page as they require the user to scroll up and down on one screen so most good learning content developers have a short section of text that takes up the middle or right side of the screen.

Quirks

There are a number of quirks and idiosyncrasies that one should be aware of when developing

on-line learning materials for the dyslexic individual. For example, text-to-speech readers do

not like headers. If there is no full-stop at the end of a heading, the software will continue into the next sentence. To overcome this, some designers add a full stop at the end of a bullet point, statement, phrase or header. By making the punctuation mark very small (a lot less than the size of the header font), the visual effect is minimal.

Readability

One aspect frequently overlooked is the readability. That is, how easily the content can

be understood as a function of the vocabulary and grammar used. For example, many website are aimed at those who did not enter university but still use the vocabulary of those who can enter university. They fail to consider the ease with which the user group can read the content provided. That is, the learner may be denied access to the course because their reading skills, or disability, is being tested rather than the ability to learn the content. And this is before they get to the examinations. It is important that the text is age, culture and content appropriate. In a face to face situation it is much easier to choose appropriate text for the ability of the individual as they may be known personally. Furthermore, the material can be changed when it is realised that the student may not be learning. However, computer based learning tends to assume that all learners progress in a similar way, though at different speeds.

To ensure readability, the following guidelines will be useful:

Make the average sentence length 15 to 20 words

Be concise

Use bullet points wherever possible

Use simple, but not patronizing, vocabulary

Use the active voice rather than the passive

Introduce new ideas when others are consolidated

Avoid cross-references wherever possible

Use illustrations to help to provide clear meaning

Obtain feedback from the user group

The readability of a given text can be evaluated using a number of simple instruments (eg the FOG, SMOG and Flesch-Kincaid Indexes for English). There are a number of websites that offer statistics on "readability". One of the most comprehensive for English is to be found at <http://www.readability.info/>

Other web sites that offer guidance on writing include the following:

<http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/>

<http://www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/plainenglish/>

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/NPR/pe_toc.html

<http://www.e-gineer.com/articles/web-writing-for-many-interestlevels.Phtml>

<http://www.webstyleguide.com/>

<http://www.webstyleguide.com/>

For plain language guides, you may wish to consult: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/library/smpl1.htm>

Learnable

In the field of dyslexia there is much talk about the structure of learning needing to be structured sequential and multi sensory, with a logical progression tailored to individual needs, particularly for the dyslexic individual. There should be a framework based on well established pedagogic e-learning principles. Some of the traditional routes to learning (e.g. constructivism) may be problematic for dyslexics, and due care and attention should be paid with

respect to the dyslexic learner to ensure they are not excluded by the nature of their learning preferences.

Section 8-Self-checking table

Self-checking table		yes	no
Book's contents	clear and specific knowledge about the condition dyslexia – scientifically based		
	Skills for detecting dyslexia		
	skills for supporting child with dyslexia		
	competencies to overcome difficulties in reading, writing, numeracy		
	Practical tips for daily routine and organization of time		
	Practical tips for adaptation of teaching material		
	Practical tips for leisure time		
Paper documents	Short lines		
Layout	font Times, Arial или Comic Sans		
	Font size 12		
	legible, but not sharp-coloured letters.		
	enough space between text columns		
	Align left		
Books	Simple text, in active voice, not passive		
	Clear content		
	Imaginary performance		
	Easy to follow the structure		
	Interesting topic		
	content for every chapter-summary and conclusion		
	understanding must be supported with pictures, images, shapes, and simple tables.		
	Highlighting the important information		
	Presentation topic on one page. Whenever possible, each page can be located clear and understandable parts.		
Test	Questions and answers on separate sheets		
	To avoid double negation		
Instructions	Short and clear instructions		
	Long instructions or messages are divided into smaller parts and are segmented or divided into sections		
	Repeating the information and instruction What have to do?		
E-learning	Accessibility		
	Usability		
	Learnable/learnability		

Section 9- Conclusion

At least one in ten people suffer from some form of dyslexia. All these people have a job, family, children. Not all of them were diagnosed. Many more are those who do not even suspect the reason for their difficulties. Likelihood of children to inherit it from their parents is very high, which in turn leads to further problems in the family.

Is it especially important for parents to be able to collect information, rather than limiting them to be stumbled by unintelligible lyrics. All materials, made for the other must be also available for dyslexics.

This does not mean such a huge change - compliance with only some minor details for dyslexic would be equally useful for everybody.

Clarifying the problem of the child, is more likely the parent to find the reason for his/her own difficulties.

If our book is consistent with the small change needed to give clarity and ease of reading and easily find and use the book online for dyslexic we will have done very important work. Clarifying the problem of the child, we will help parents and the whole family.

All materials made for the other must be also available for dyslexics.

References

1. *Hulme, C. & Snowling, M.J.* (1997) (Eds) *Dyslexia, Biology and Cognition*. London: Whurr Publishers.
2. *Smythe, I and Draffan,* (2004)
3. *Eva Gyarmathy, Ian Smythe* (2006) (ADysTrain) Leonardo da Vinci, Project N° A/06/B/F/PP-158.327, *Preparing materials for the dyslexic learner, manual for trainers & lecturers*
4. *The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)*, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html