

Dyslexia – Thinking Differently

In the 9th century, King Alfred of Wessex wanted to send sealed orders to his nobles. He threatened them with the loss of their offices if they could not learn to read and write. Despite this, his most senior general could never read, even though he had considerable help. Alfred, however, kept him in his position for his phenomenal strategic capability and multi-dimensional thinking. We think now that this general was dyslexic.

Dyslexia does not preclude high IQ but is framed negatively. One in six Oxbridge students is neurodiverse, most have no prior assessment. As many as 85% of teachers say it is almost impossible to detect in students, and extremely difficult to adjust teaching methods to accommodate it. As a result, many neurodiverse people have co-occurring mental health issues caused by trying to cope with the current social and educational system. These students are six times more likely to drop out of school, with very low self-esteem and a self-perception that they have 'failed'. The symptomatic mental health issues then become the focus, rather than the underlying understanding of the way their minds work.

On the other hand, 40% of the UK's self-made millionaires are dyslexic. There is a range of difference: some with dyslexia are big-picture people, more able to produce original ideas than others who are more detail-orientated. People with dyslexia tend to be better at oral communication by default, and often better at delegating because it is necessary for them to fill the gaps in the skills they don't have. Their thinking is different too – more three-dimensional and non-linear.

These are some of the hidden skills waiting to be discovered in dyslexic children and they should be fostered, which is why I set up the Dyslexia Discovery Centre. It aims to support children with dyslexia and promote networks for parents. We are launching a wide range of services for children, parents and adults in the workplace with neurodiversity. We will offer online international seminars for different sectors as well as one-on-one sessions, and parent support groups in local areas. We begin with our forthcoming inaugural online event on May 17th 2023. If you would like to know more, click [here](#) for tickets and information or contact us at reception@rafanhouse.com.

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