

**Adopting e-Learning to Cater for  
Students with Special  
Educational Needs  
in the Junior Secondary English  
Classroom**

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# Objectives

- o To develop an awareness of different special educational needs (SEN) of students that teachers in the mainstream English classroom need to address and the role of e-learning in helping to address these needs;
- o To explore different e-learning resources and strategies that can be used to successfully develop the language skills of students with SEN in the mainstream classroom; and
- o To develop effective teaching strategies that facilitate the learning of students with SEN in the mainstream classroom with the use of e-learning resources

# Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- o The term 'special educational needs' is very broad and includes a wide range of needs, from mild forms of dyslexia to severe forms of autism (Hockly, 2016).
- o In groups, talk about your own experiences with SEN students in the classroom.

# Today we will look at three broad SEN groups

- o Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)
- o Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- o Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

# Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)

- Dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that affects the development of both decoding (written word pronunciation) and encoding (spelling).

# Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- o Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition that becomes apparent in some children in the preschool and early school years. It is hard for these children to control their behavior and/or pay attention.

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- o Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disorder that affects the brain's normal development. Children with ASD have difficulties with social communication and interaction. They also have narrow interests and repetitive behaviour, and might have sensory sensitivities.

# An inclusive classroom

- o finding out why students do not learn well and why some learn better than others;
- o using appropriate strategies to make each student learn better, including removing barriers to learning; and
- o not intended to even out abilities and performances, but to enable all students to learn and perform to the best of their abilities. (CDC, 2002)



# Equality vs Equity

- o **Equality** in the classroom – Everyone is treated the same regardless of background and abilities.
- o **Equity** in the classroom - Factors specific to persons or groups should not interfere with their potential for academic success.

# What could be the main benefits of using e-learning with SEN learners?

- o Discuss your ideas in groups
- o Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- o Type in the pin
- o And share your ideas

## The role of e-learning resources in helping SEN learners

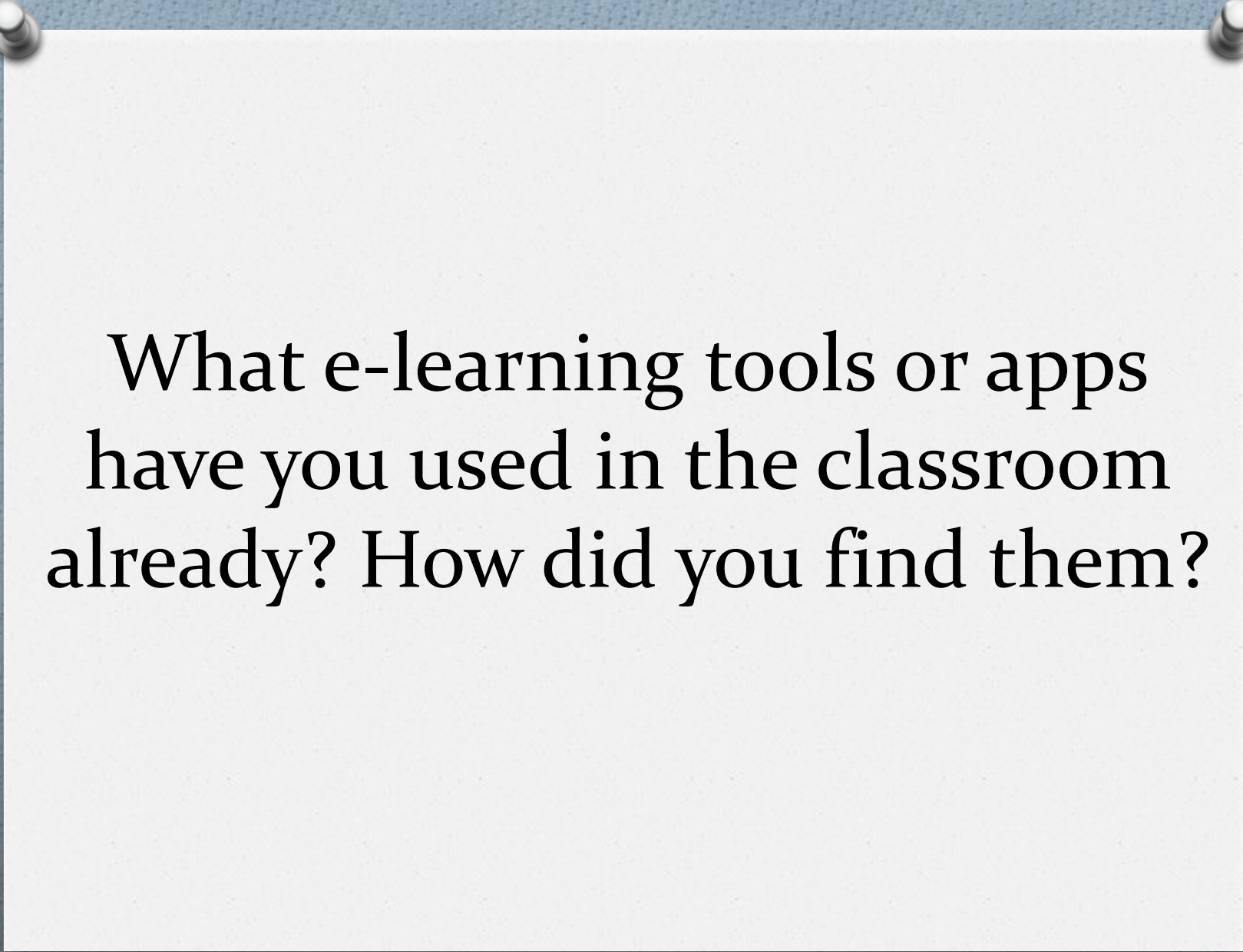
- o Technology can now allow learners to develop self-help and self-referencing skills.
- o Language can be delivered to learners at the point of need (Hockly, 2016).
- o Tablets and other devices have made it easier now to cater for diversity and can be engaging and interactive (Cumming & Rodriguez, 2013).
- o Tablets and other devices allow students to become more independent and engaged (Queensland Government, 2012).

# What are some of your considerations when you think about using e-learning in your classroom?

- o Discuss your ideas in groups
- o Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- o Type in the pin
- o And share your ideas

# Some considerations

- o the environment in which the e-learning resources will be used including school's technological infrastructure
- o our learning objectives
- o the type of special educational need
- o interests of the learners
- o age, ability and readiness of the learners
- o readiness of the teacher



What e-learning tools or apps have you used in the classroom already? How did you find them?

# The e-learning resources in the workshop today

- o support SEN students in producing digital multimodal texts that allow them to express themselves with different modes of representation
- o facilitate SEN students' collaborative learning in the development of language skills
- o maximise SEN students' engagement in learning through customising learning and teaching
- o enhance teachers' presentation of learning content through incorporating different media

# Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)

- Challenges
- General Strategies
- e-Learning Strategies



# Challenges

- o Learn to rhyme words
- o Learn the letter names and sounds of the alphabet
- o Confusion of letters and words (b/d, p/q and was and saw, dog and god)
- o Reversal of letter (persist past the age of 7 or 8)
- o Confusion with letters with similar sounds (/f/ or /v/)
- o Retain the visual representation of irregular words for reading and spelling (once)
- o Spell words differently on the same page (wuns, wunce for once)
- o Spell words the way they sound rather than their look (sed/said)
- o Slow word perception – reading rate and fluency

# General Strategies

- o Make English as transparent and structured as possible
- o Explicitly teach them the rules
- o Teach students various learning skills such as identifying salient points, getting to know key words, etc.
- o Get them interested in reading – road signs, menus, supermarket trips etc.
- o Help students develop the habit of self-review in order to reduce writing errors.
- o Provide tools, such as dictionaries and word banks to help learners.
- o Provide assessment accommodation; reduce the amount of materials for dictation, inform students of the marking scheme in advance, allow extra time for tests and examinations etc.
- o Administer homework accommodation, e.g. assign appropriate homework in accordance with the student's ability, reduce assignments which require a lot of copying, enlarge the writing grid

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Self-directed learning and referencing skills
  - o Online dictionaries and tablet dictionaries
    - o Merriam Webster's Learners dictionary
    - o Wolfram-alpha

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Support reading and writing
  - o Text to Speech / Speech to Text functions
    - o Safari, Google, iPad Speech Reader
    - o Look up functions on browsers and iPad
    - o Google search by voice

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Other useful referencing tools to help with reading
  - o Google images
  - o Voki Edu
  - o Tellagami Edu
  - o Book platforms with reading aloud function – Example (EPIC)

# Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

- Challenges
- General Strategies
- e-Learning Strategies

# Challenges

- o Concentrating for long periods of time
- o Focusing on tasks they don't find interesting or engaging
- o Staying still (They often fidget in chair or with hands and play with things)
- o Executive function: Disorganization / time management

# General Strategies

- o Fidget toys
- o Colour coded folders to separate homework books by subject / priority
- o Timetable – visual schedule (Respond better to visual cues)
- o Giving choice of task
- o Silent reminders (Make student aware of the sign)
- o Remind them to keep their desks tidy so as to minimize the source of distraction
- o May teach emotion management skills, e.g. teaching the students to take a deep breath when getting angry, count numbers in descending order, or stop and think, etc.;
- o May ask the students to run an errand so as to allow a break from remaining in seat for too long



# e-Learning Strategies

- o Engagement and interest
  - o Game like activities:
    - o Kahoot
    - o Videos – Youtube / Instructables
    - o Type up on iPad / computer (Word / Pages)

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Organization of thoughts and time management
  - o Tools for students – Graphic organisers  
(Other option – Read Write Think / Popplet)
  - o Timer – Make sure on track  
(<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>)
  - o Reminder on iPad

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Challenges
- General Strategies
- e-Learning Strategies

# Challenges

- o Highly complex special need
- o Often have difficulty in social interaction
- o Often have difficulty reading emotions
- o Often have difficulty in change and unexpected situations
- o Like logical and systematic presentations
- o Have difficulty following requirements and instructions
- o Have difficulty coming up with ideas and awareness of different genres (Can recount events but difficulty with fiction and imagination)

# General Strategies

- o Give one instruction at a time and enhance their understanding of the instructions with pictures and symbols
- o Provide predictable environments e.g. clearly posted timetables and preview any changes (teachers' sick leave, school events, substitute teachers, student teachers, observation)
- o Visual cues (Pictures on the desk, sign language, display on the blackboard)
- o Use graphic organisers and writing framework
- o Ask them to write in first person and talk about themselves
- o Explicit explanation or demonstration of what the task requires
- o Displays of synonyms

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Social interaction and reading emotions
  - o Whatsapp group for English
  - o Edmodo English class group
  - o Mentimeter (Poll everywhere / Zeeting)
  - o ESL robot

# e-Learning Strategies

- o Idea generation and emotions
  - o Emotionary – (iphone only)
  - o Online thesaurus and dictionaries
  - o Tools for students – Graphic organisers  
(Other option – Read Write Think / Popplet)

# General apps, tools and platforms that can help cater for learners with SEN

- o Puppet Pals 2
- o Shadow Puppet
- o Bitsboard



# Free Play!

- o Look on your tablet at the apps and tools I introduced today.
- o Play with them.
- o Think about a unit from your school-based curriculum. How could you integrate the apps and tools into your classroom and/or curriculum?
- o What do you need to make this happen?

# Key Points

- We need to teach learners strategies to help them so they can rely more on themselves and develop greater self awareness and confidence to tackle challenges in English
- We can provide learners with choice and this will increase their autonomy and independence

# Demonstration of learning activities

- o Providing a more predictable environment and routines for students
- o Arousing students' motivation in learning English
- o Facilitating students' creation of multimodal texts

# Providing a more predictable environment and routines

- o Provide a visual schedule for students to refer to from time to time
- ◆ e-Learning resource: [First Then Visual Schedule App](#)
  - Keep students on track
  - Facilitate transition between activities
  - Lower anxiety and increase independence

# Arousing students' motivation in learning English

- Guide students to create photos and write captions for the photos

- ◆ e-Learning resource: [PicMix](#)

- motivate kinesthetic learners

- engage students to use the language

# Designing engaging learning activities

## Procedures:

1. Learn the use of target grammar items in a text
2. Produce a photo with PicMix
3. Discuss if the photos are effective

# Facilitating students' creation of multimodal texts

o Guide students to produce a digital recipe

◆ e-Learning resource: [Book Creator](#)

→ Enable students to express in different modes of representation

→ Encourage collaborative learning of students

# Production of Multimodal Texts

## Procedures:

1. Evaluate the recipes produced by groupmates
2. Present the recipe collaboratively
3. Produce a digital recipe



# Some Useful Websites for SEN x ELT x e-Learning

- o Oxford University Press page on Dyslexia
  - o <https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2013/09/19/dyslexia-a-problem-or-a-gift/>
- o Oxford University Press on ADHD/ADD
  - o <https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2014/03/05/teaching-students-with-attention-concentration-and-hyperactivity-difficulties-how-to-stop-those-spinning-tops/>
- o Language without Limits
  - o <http://www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk>
- o Apps for autistic learners
  - o <https://thejournal.com/Articles/2011/12/05/Apps-for-Autistic-Learners.aspx?Page=6>

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