Reviews of:

Dyslexia in the Workplace, an Introductory Guide (Second Edition)
Diana Bartlett and Sylvia Moody, with Katherine Kindersley
Wiley-Blackwell

1.
A first-class immensely readable book

This is a book that does not rely on theory alone although it is clearly based on sound theoretical knowledge. The authors have had years of practical experience in the field and they have produced a first-class book packed with workable solutions to genuine work issues. No vague generalisations here, leaving the reader frustratedly asking "Yes, but how--?" but specific suggestions, most of which cost little or nothing and would be easy to implement.

As an adult dyslexia specialist, often asked to carry out workplace skills assessments, I found the book invaluable in terms of both reassurance and new ideas, but it will be just as useful to employers, line managers and to dyslexic employees themselves.

It is an immensely readable book, partly because it uses a range of writing styles, including transcripts of conversations and case studies, but also because in each chapter there is a clear overview at the beginning, a useful summary to reinforce what has been learnt at the end, and each chapter is divided into logical, coherent sections.

The book is split into four main sections; identifying dyslexia, tackling dyslexia, managing dyslexia and judging dyslexia. Finally there are appendices which include valuable checklists for dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and visual stress.

I can only give a flavour of the book’s wealth of information in this review. For instance in Part A, Chapters 5 and 6, there is practical information on how to identify and remediate co-occurring disorders such as dyspraxia, ADHD and visual stress.
In Chapter 7 the authors portray, from the dyslexic employee’s point of view, the frustrations which can be experienced at work, the fear of assessment, the euphoria of finally knowing what is causing the problems, the subsequent rage and grief about lost opportunities, and finally the resolve to move forward. This is an important aspect of dyslexia and dyspraxia which can be overlooked by managers or other professionals.

Part B begins with chapters which contain advice on organising work. Chapter 12 deals with general writing skills and is packed with ideas to help dyslexic employees improve their planning, as well as their actual writing. Tips on how to clarify their ideas both to themselves and their readers are particularly useful. Chapter 14 addresses reading at work, and includes a range of down-to-earth strategies to help people remember what they have read. In Chapter 15, the case studies bring sharply into focus difficulties with oral interactions at work, and solutions are suggested: the technique, for instance, of "positive visualisation" prior to an interview will be particularly useful to interviewees.

In Part C, in the section on reasonable adjustments, the author helpfully categorises adjustments in terms of technology, workplace skills training, job adjustments and changes to environment, and then goes on to suggest adjustments that could be made throughout all stages of the job from recruitment to redundancy.

In Part D, Chapter 20 deals with dyslexia and the law. This chapter could have been extremely dry; however, it is presented as the transcript of a lively conversation with a lawyer who specialises in dyslexia and the DDA – and it is brilliant! It answers clearly and unambiguously questions many of us regularly ask – feeling sure we ought to know the answers but never being completely confident that we do. My poor long-suffering husband was repeatedly disturbed from his own reading as I enthusiastically read out interesting snippets!

This book is a must-read for all professionals who work with dyslexic employees as well as to dyslexic employees themselves. I strongly recommend it.

*Jenny Lee, Adult Dyslexia Consultant*
A very useful guide

Whereas *Dyslexia in the Workplace* can be read from cover to cover, the format also allows the reader to dip in and find the parts they want to refer to. It is very clearly set out and its accessibility and explanatory approach make it a reassuring read as well as an enlightening one. Each chapter ends with further reading in companion volumes for those who wish to find out more. The book is divided into four sections. Part A gives an overview of dyslexia and related syndromes such as dyspraxia and ADHD and explains how these can affect efficiency at work. Part B provides advice on improving work-related skills. Part C gives information about the general management of dyslexia in the workplace and about reasonable adjustments. Finally Part D deals with legal issues.

As a manager I found Part B immensely thought-provoking and a useful insight into the challenges faced in the workplace by people with dyslexia and related conditions. The section in Part C on reasonable adjustments included a very good discussion on the whole topic of adjustments for dyslexia. This whole section is an invaluable resource for those supporting and advising dyslexic employees.

There are three appendixes and a checklist for anyone concerned that they may have dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and/or visual stress.

A good book and one I would like to keep on the shelf and will certainly wish to refer to again and again.

*Editor, PATOSS Bulletin*

3.

A detailed and comprehensive guide.

This book describes how dyslexia and related specific learning difficulties affect dyslexic adults in the workplace. The prologue succinctly summarises the variety of difficulties that dyslexic people frequently encounter at work. Part A is particularly helpful for the insight it provides into such difficulties for both employers and dyslexic employees. There is also a useful section in the book on how to find a suitable assessor. A particular strength of the book is that it also highlights the positive side
of dyslexia – the imaginative and creative ways of doing things in response to challenges – and I have never seen this expressed better.

There is real understanding of how a dyslexic person thinks and feels and a vivid description of the emotions accompanying a person’s realisation, after an assessment, that they are dyslexic and that this is responsible for much of their frustration and anxiety in life. As one of Dr Moody’s clients is quoted as saying: “it was as if, after the assessment, somebody had given me the key that unlocked all the closed doors in my life”.

Part B provides information on ways of dealing with all the difficulties highlighted in Part A. It gives advice, for example, on the difference between speaking assertively, unassertively and aggressively. It also deals with the affects of stress and anxiety on performance and suggests several techniques to alleviate these emotions.

Part C looks at the skills dyslexic people need in order to succeed at work. The section on interviews is particularly helpful, as is the section about the decision whether or not to disclose dyslexia – both the advantages and disadvantages of this are discussed. Remembering instructions, meeting deadlines, and prioritising work tasks are just some of the topics discussed. There are also pointers to a wide range of computer software tools that can be helpful in alleviating difficulties.

Part D covers the Equality Act and how this can protect employers with a disability. An interview with John MacKenzie, an employment lawyer, is an invaluable chapter in this section.

In sum, *Dyslexia in the Workplace* is a detailed and comprehensive guide which is equally useful to employers, dyslexia professionals and dyslexic workers.

*Matthew Sasse, BDA Helpliner*