

Dilemma:

“My dyslexia has suddenly become a problem”

Each group has a host.

This dilemma card is for the host and contains:

- A host guide
- A dilemma
- Fact boxes
- A question guide for dialogue one and dialogue two

Host guide

As a host, your role is to facilitate a good, constructive dialogue where everyone gets to speak. Your role is not to participate by sharing your own perspective, but you are welcome to put your perspective into play by phrasing it as a question (“What if they ...?”).

Try to be curious (“Why do you think that?”) and investigative (“What if they react differently than you assume?”).

Aim to make it safe for participants to say or share something vulnerable by making it clear that different perspectives are welcome and that everyone should be respectful.

The dialogue is divided into two parts.

The first part is about giving advice to the person who posed the dilemma, and the second part is about the theme of the dilemma from the perspective of the panellists and their experiences at DTU.

On pages 3 and 4, you will find questions and data, which you can use to qualify the dialogue.

After reading this guide and skimming the question guide, please read out the dilemma to the panel. Give them a moment to reflect on the dilemma. Then initiate dialogue one.

Dilemma:

This dilemma is about a DTU employee—we will call him Preben.

Preben writes:

“Dear DTU panel. I love my job, which I personally think I’m really good at.

I’m also very dyslexic.

When I send e-mails, I’m sure there are plenty of spelling errors. However, it’s not so bad that the meaning is lost.

This never used to be a problem, as my academic competency has nothing to do with my spelling. At least that’s what my old manager thought. Her view was that as long as it was readable, there was no issue. She saw my professional value.

But now I have a new manager, and he doesn’t see it that way. He wants things to look good in every way (meaning no spelling errors), and I have a feeling that he sees my spelling errors as sloppiness or maybe even incompetence. It feels a bit like the spelling errors are taking his focus away from my academic competences, which makes me feel insecure and vulnerable, both in my everyday work life and in terms of my employment. What should I do?”

Preben would like to hear what the panel thinks he should do. He is not going to stop being dyslexic, so he really only sees two options if he is to thrive again (and perform properly). Either he tries to change his manager’s opinion about his dyslexia (but how?) or he quits.

Dialogue one:

1 What advice does the panel give?

- [Start by hearing each panellist's thoughts on the dilemma so everyone gets the chance to speak from the start]
- "What could the underlying cause(s) for the dilemma be?"
- "How can you avoid that reading difficulties or dyslexia overshadows competency and talent?"
- "What do you think of the options stated by the person who posed the dilemma?"
- [Feel free to use the data from the boxes to boost the discussion]
- [Other investigative questions]
- "We have to come up with an answer, but you don't all have to agree. What does each of you think the person who posed the dilemma should do?"

It is estimated that about 7 per cent of Danes have reading difficulties. There are approx. 400,000 dyslexic people in Denmark.

The use of dyslexia testing has increased, and in the school year 2019/2020, 12 per cent of all elementary school pupils were tested. This is an increase from 5 per cent in the school year 2016/2017. It is believed that there is a significant unreported figure in the older generations, since there were no (free) dyslexia tests before 2014.

"Studies show that, on average, dyslexic people are better at communicating, solving complex issues, thinking innovatively, creatively, and visually, and making friends. [...] But too often the biases and lack of openness about dyslexia prevents their strengths from coming into play," says the Salling Group HR Director who won the Dyslexia Award (Ordblindeprisen) in 2022

2 Dialogue two:

What do you do, and what could you do?

This part of the dialogue focuses on the panellists' own experiences at DTU.

Start dialogue two by telling the panel that the focal point is still the theme of the dilemma, but now they should look at the conditions in their own unit as well as considering other solutions.

Please note that dialogue two may be a bit more sensitive. Aim to create a safe and respectful space for everyone. The goal is still not to agree on everything, but to learn more about each other's perspectives.

- "Do you recognize the dilemma or parts of it, either on a personal level or through observation?"
- "Do you know anyone in your unit who is dyslexic?" (without giving names)
- "Do you find that there is an openness about being dyslexic in your unit? How is this evident?"
- "Does your department do anything specific to help dyslexic colleagues such as providing assistive technology tools?"
- "Is there a part of the advice you gave that you practise in your unit? If yes, what? If no, would that be possible?"
- "What else could you do? At individual, group, and organizational level?"
- [Other investigative questions]
- "What will each of you take with you to your unit, either as a point of attention or as possible solutions related to the theme of the dilemma?"