Dyslexia Review

The Journal of The Dyslexia Guild
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In this issue

Dyslexia Action

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The Journal of the Dyslexia Guild

Editorial

What exciting times we live in! The eagerly awaited report from Sir Jim Rose on Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties has produced a flurry of activity and anticipation. Where will these 4000 new specialist teachers come from? How do you access the funding? Which courses qualify for the funding? Our training department has been trying to answer these questions, but as we go to press, not all have yet been clarified. If you have been thinking of becoming a trainer, now is the time – see our ad in this issue.

Dr Valerie Muter has written a useful guide to the key findings and recommendations of the Rose report which we publish in this issue. We will return to the report at our annual symposium on November 21st where 3 members of the Rose advisory group will be speaking. This is perhaps a once in a lifetime opportunity for people working in the dyslexia /SpLD field to 'make a real difference' and we owe it to the people we serve to get it right.

You will see that Dr Muter has been busy as she co-wrote another article on working with parents as well!
Our assessment CPD day in June was the first event we have held that was exclusive to Dyslexia Guild members and was oversubscribed – I had wanted to limit it to 120, but we ended up with 180. We will keep this as a feature in our Dyslexia Guild diary as a specific service to members who have the Practising Certificate – but which will be open to any Dyslexia Guild member as well.

We hear you when you say you would like an event in the north and we'll see what we can do!

Margaret Rooms

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Cover: A pupil from the Sheffield Dyslexia Action centre. *Photograph by* Tracey Welch

The Rose Report on Dyslexia: Key Findings and Recommendations

Dr Valerie Muter

The Government-commissioned report Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties, conducted by Sir Jim Rose, was published in June 2009 (accessible on-line as well as in hard-back version). The current Minister for Education, Ed Balls, has fully accepted and endorsed the findings and recommendations of the report. The present paper summarises the key points of the Rose Report.

Definition of Dyslexia/Literacy Impairment

The main features are as follows:

- A learning difficulty primarily affecting skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.
- The main characteristics are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- Dyslexia is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, having no clear cut-off points.

The Waves of Provision, Assessment and Monitoring

Wave 1 - Quality First Teaching - The majority of children achieve well through high quality classroom teaching. When children are being taught to read, Quality First Teaching provides high quality, systematic phonic work as part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skill and phonological awareness.

Wave 2 - Small Group and One-to-One Interventions - Some children require additional support to achieve well. This can be provided through small group (sometimes one to one), time limited intervention programmes delivered by a member of the school's classroom-based support team that will advance children's progress and help them achieve in line with their peers.

Wave 3 - Intensive Support - This is for children who require the personalised approach of a programme that is tailored to their specific, often severe, difficulties. It is usually taught as a one-to-one programme by a teacher or a member of the support staff who has undertaken some additional training for teaching children with reading difficulties.

Effective Wave 1 provision ensures that there are good monitoring arrangements within the context of high quality teaching. This should emphasise word recognition and language comprehension in keeping with the Simple Model of Reading i.e. the view that Reading Comprehension (the main goal of reading) is a product of Reading Accuracy (decoding) and Oral Language Proficiency.

Effective Wave 2 provision emphasises systematic phonic work and pre- and post-intervention phonemic awareness assessment.

Within the Waves of Provision, teaching needs to be systematic (i.e. structured, cumulative, sequential), multisensory based, and incorporating high quality phonics.

Levels of identification and assessment

Level 1 - Monitoring of progress by class teacher including observation of the individual child's response to Wave 1 teaching and the keeping of progress records.

Level 2 - Skills assessment by SENCO or specialist teacher which would include evidence of progress through a structured programme, examining the child's approach to learning, and use of standardised tests; this information is used to inform the decision as to whether or not the child needs Wave 2/3 provision.

Level 3 - Comprehensive assessment by a specialist teacher or Educational Psychologist which includes not just standardised testing but also information sought from parents and teachers; the Educational Psychologist will need to be involved for those children who have complex problems and who will, therefore, need long-term individualised programmes.

In exceptional cases, Statutory Assessment is needed when the child has long-standing, severe and complex learning difficulties which are proving intractable to intervention at Waves 1 through 3.

Emphasising Early Identification and Intervention

The importance of early identification

- Blanket screening is questionable because screening tests are not optimally reliable
- It is better to identify children at risk and to closely observe and assess their response to pre- and early-reading activities in comparison to their typically developing peers in reception and beyond
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is a major source of information available to Year 1 teachers to enable them to assemble a reliable picture of a child's language and literacy competencies; this

can also be linked into Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessing Pupil's Response (APP) procedures.

Two steps to early identification
- It is important to notice those children making slow progress in Wave 1 - this needs a good monitoring system to be set in place
- A slow response to Wave 1 teaching will mean Wave 2 and sometimes Wave 3 intervention is likely to be called for.

Key elements of early intervention
- phoneme awareness instruction (blending, segmenting and manipulating phonemes)
- phonics instruction
- spelling and writing instruction
- fluency instruction (strong emphasis on opportunity for practice)
- vocabulary instruction (understanding, meaning and application of new words)
- comprehension instruction (monitoring understanding while reading, linking what is read to previous learning and asking questions about reading material)

Teaching Children with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties

Effective intervention personalises learning by matching provision to meet the child's individual needs and to quicken the place of learning, so narrowing the attainment gap.

Evidence-based support programmes prioritise phonological skills. These programmes need to be structured, systematic, little and often, with much reinforcement and encouraging generalisation.

Key features of specialist teaching programmes:
- phonetic
- multisensory
- cumulative
- sequential
- progressive
- small steps
- logical
- overlearning (systematic, repetitive and revisiting but with an emphasis also on skill teaching and on metacognitive processes e.g. encouraging the child to think about strategies and approaches they use)
- building self-esteem

Short courses for teachers are recommended to help them select and apply appropriate intervention packages.

Three levels of teacher skill - There are core skills for all classroom teachers in all schools, advanced skills for some teachers (e.g. SENCOs) in all schools, and specialist skills for some teachers who may serve a number of schools. The Government has committed £10,000,000 to the training of 4,000 specialist literacy teachers, with approximately one teacher per 5 primary schools.

Dyslexia Action is involved in a partnership with schools that adopts an apprenticeship training period over 2 terms and a further consultation period for a 3rd term. Each school (there are 35 of them to date) nominates 2 members of staff to be trained and monitored by a specialist teacher from Dyslexia Action. The school selects children with literacy problems and the nominated teachers work with them in small groups under the guidance of the Dyslexia Action specialist. There are also parent meetings with the aim of developing a home support service.

Involving Parents

Strong emphasis on parents' concerns and their active involvement - Parents need assurance that they will be engaged in a positive dialogue with their child's school, that relevant information will be provided to them on the way schools operate in relation to management of their child's difficulty, and that such operation will be transparent. The Report emphasises the importance of schools and parents working together, focusing on constructive parent-teacher dialogue, parental engagement and information for parents.

Informing parents - parents need to be kept informed of the plans for, and progress, of children with literacy problems. Additionally, schools should publish the procedures they follow to identify and support children with literacy or dyslexic difficulties. The DCSF should continue to promote its SEN information booklet for parents, and to continue to fund a helpline that provides advice to parents and people working in schools on dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

Influencing Outcome

Factors associated with poor outcome:
- severity of phonological problems
- slow speed of processing
- lack of compensatory resources
- co-occurring learning difficulties
- late recognition and intervention
- poor teaching

Slow responders will require skilled, intensive and often one-to-one provision. Poor response to effective intervention is a valid indicator of a long-term reading disability; such children will need more comprehensive assessment and long-term one-to-one remedial intervention.

Long-term outcomes will often depend on the extent and quality of support provided by home as well as school.

Protective influences:
- high quality intervention
- strong oral language skills
- ability to maintain attention
- good family/carer support

Co-occurring Difficulties

Types of co-occurring difficulty:
- Related difficulties in language, maths etc because the core deficits in dyslexia can affect other skills beyond literacy
- Difficulties in different sets of cognitive or sensory systems that co-occur alongside dyslexia - like motor problems
- Difficulties that are a consequence of dyslexia - like poor organisation that in turn arises from the literacy problems and from inefficient short term memory processes

Recognising co-occurring difficulties - in providing fully for children with dyslexia, it is especially important to focus effort not just on teaching literacy but also on tackling co-occurring difficulties (while at the same time, recognising that co-occurring difficulties are not markers of dyslexia).

Managing co-occurring difficulties - children with these need not only focused skill teaching but also adjustments and accommodations in class such as:
- Posters on walls
- Writing down of instructions
- Choice of handwriting tools
- Use of technology e.g. word processors, recorders
- User-friendly dictionaries
- Use of highlighter pens
- Timetables
- Mind maps
- Colour coding to aid organisation

Behaviour and self-esteem need to be promoted to improve motivation and emotional well being and to reduce the likelihood of behavioural problems developing, through:
- positive reinforcement
- differentiating curriculum where needed
- developing alternative methods of presenting information
- promoting peer support
- encouraging alternative recording methods
- developing coping strategies

Finally

Annex 6 - Practical guidelines for teachers working with children with literacy difficulties in the classroom (p.180-6) - This contains lots of practical tips for teachers, particularly focusing on *Helping Children Understand Complex Instructions, Structuring Note Taking and Organising Writing.*

Glossary (p.189-201) - provides a very comprehensive list of literacy/dyslexia definitions, descriptions of terminology of provision and information about organisations involved in literacy provision - written in easily accessible plain English.

The Rose Report marks an important step forward in recognising and meeting the needs of children with dyslexia and literacy disorders in the UK. These clear and detailed recommendations comprehensively address the full range of problems (co-occurring as well as core difficulties) that affect these children from their earliest school days to the point where they enter the adult world. Bringing together the findings and recommendations of recognised experts in the field into the public domain - and having the report accepted at the highest government level - means that all children with literacy problems should now be provided with resources to help them overcome their difficulties before these blight their academic/vocational futures and their personal lives. To this end, the Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties Trust (see below) has now been established to take forward the implementation of the recommendations of the Rose Report.

Dr Valerie Muter

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The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust

The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust (DST) is a consortium of organisations (The British Dyslexia Association; Dyslexia Action; Helen Arkell; Spring Board for Children; PATOSS; Xtraordinary People) that was founded in 2009 and will continue to be funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The Secretary of State, Ed Balls, has asked the Trust to work with his department to help implement Jim Rose's recommendations. I feel honoured to have been asked to take on the role of Trust Director to help make sure that this happens and that the very promising blue print for action that is laid out in Sir Jim's report becomes a reality.

John Rack
Head of Research and Evaluation at Dyslexia Action and a member of Sir Jim Rose's Advisory group.

Empowering Parents to Support their Child with Dyslexia: Linking Theory and Practice

Dr Valerie Muter and Dr Helen Likierman

Introduction

Parents can play an effective part in both supporting their child with dyslexia and in promoting their learning skills - from pre-school right through to adolescence. As soon as the child starts school, there needs to be a close partnership between parents and teachers for the most positive outcome to be achieved. In this article, we show how findings from research can provide a theoretical foundation and framework from which practical implications for the involvement of parents follow naturally. We have drawn on the findings of a long-term longitudinal study of children at risk of dyslexia (Snowling, Muter and Carroll, 2007; Muter and Snowling, 2009) to provide this theoretical basis. The key findings of the at-risk study and the implications these have for how parents can support their child are each discussed in turn. We have also linked the research findings and their practical implications to the recommendations of the Rose Report on dyslexia (June, 2009). These are all summarised in Table 1.

The Longitudinal Study:

In this study, 56 children were drawn from volunteer families in whom a parent (or occasionally a sibling) was assessed as having dyslexia. At the same time, a control group of 34 children was recruited in which neither parent nor siblings had literacy problems. The children underwent extensive assessments of their cognitive and educational skills at ages 3y9m, 6 years, 8 years and 12-13 years (by the last phase of the study, the sample had

Table 1: Summary of the Links between Research Findings, Rose Report Recommendations and Practical Implications

Research Finding	Rose Report Recommendation	Practical Implication
The Early Years		
Dyslexia has a genetic (familial) basis	Early identification is important	Awareness helps parents look for early signs of dyslexia
Language delay a risk factor for dyslexia	Importance of targeting language in early intervention	Parents can counter risk by providing enriching language experiences
At-risk children show poor print awareness and letter knowledge	These are key elements of early intervention	Parents reading to children promotes print and letter awareness
At-risk children show poor phonological awareness	Another key element of early intervention	Parents playing 'sound' games promotes phonological skill
The Middle Years		
Family risk of dyslexia is continuous (continuum of severity)	Matching Wave of Provision with level of severity	Parents need to keep checking for other literacy (spelling, speed) problems even if reading accuracy is fine
Good oral language is a compensatory/ protective factor	Teach to oral language strength	Parents can help promote good vocabulary and listening comprehension
The Teenage Years		
Literacy difficulties persist	Need for continuous monitoring and intensive long-term support	Parents need to be involved early on and continuously
70% of at-risk poor readers have co-occurring learning difficulties	Need to treat and accommodate for co-occurring difficulties	Parents need to be vigilant about other types of learning problems
At-risk poor readers show reduced print exposure	Reading any printed matter develops reading comprehension	Parents need to encourage their teenagers to keep reading
At-risk poor readers have more emotional and attention problems	Need to promote emotional well-being and prevent behaviour problems	Parents can support improvements in motivation, homework and study skills
Significant association between poor reading and maternal health	Need to keep parents informed of plans and progress at school	Empowering parents to know what to do reduces their own stress levels
68% of parents of poor readers had been up to school with concerns	Need for constructive parent-teacher partnership	Parents need to develop communication links with teachers
At-risk poor readers have low self-esteem in relation to academic skills	Need to promote use of positive reinforcement, peer support and 'coping' strategies	Parents' understanding and support of their child's strengths builds self-esteem

reduced to 50 at-risk and 20 control children). When the children were aged 13-14 years, additional information was sought in relation to the children's behavioural adjustment, self-perception and reading experiences. For a full description of the methodology of the at-risk study, the reader is directed to Snowling et al., 2007. This 10-year study provided a wealth of data about the incidence of reading problems, the development of language and literacy skills and how they inter-relate over time, and the factors that influence outcome (including risk and protective factors and co-occurring difficulties).

From the Early Years Findings - How Parents Can Help

Dyslexia has a Genetic Basis: The prevalence rate of dyslexia in the at-risk study was approximately 40-50% i.e. nearly half the children from the at-risk group developed significant literacy problems. Parents being aware of close family members having dyslexia can enable them to look for early signs in their child, with early identification facilitating prompt intervention.

Language Delay is a Risk Factor for Dyslexia: At ages 3y9m and 6 years, the children in the at-risk goup were found to have mild delays in their language development. Their vocabularies and their awareness of sentence constructions and grammar were not as advanced as those of the children in the control group. Parents aware that their pre-school child is at risk for dyslexia are in a strong position to provide enriching language experiences within the home. Playing language-based games (such as Picture Lotto, 'How many animals can you think of?') and regularly reading story books to children helps develop vocabulary and awareness of grammar.

At-risk Children Showed Poor Print Awareness and Letter Knowledge: The children in the at-risk group showed delayed development of emergent literacy skills at 3y9m and at 6 years. This was especially evident in respect of their letter knowledge acquisition which was the best single predictor of reading skill at age 6. A particularly interesting finding was that the parents in the at-risk group, once aware that their child could develop literacy difficulties, engaged in more practice of letter-sound relationships than the parents in the control group. This showed that parents could play a role in preventing a late start in reading by ensuring their child starts school with at least partly developed sound to letter awareness. Alphabet books and friezes can be effective in developing letter-sound knowledge. Additionally, parents are able to enhance their child's print awareness (showing them 'how books work'); they can draw their child's attention to printed letters and words and show them how words form the story they are reading.

At-risk Children Showed Poor Phonological Awareness: Children in the at-risk group scored below the levels of the control groups on all measures of phonological awareness at both ages 3y9m and 6 years. Extensive research with typically-developing children and those with dyslexia has demonstrated a strong predictive relationship between early level of phonological skills and later ease of learning to read. Parents are in a unique position to foster their child's development of phonological skills through play activities that emphasise learning about speech sounds in words e.g. playing 'I Spy', thinking up words that rhyme, identifying initial and final sounds in words, thinking up words that all begin with the same sound.

The Rose Report has strongly emphasised the importance of identifying young children at risk of literacy failure and assessing their response to pre- and early-reading activities in Reception. Practical ideas for parents of pre-schoolers and Reception age children to help them promote their children's pre-literacy skills are given in our two earlier books 'Prepare Your Child for School' and 'Top Tips for Starting School'.

From the Middle Years Findings - How Parents Can Help

Family Risk of Dyslexia is Continuous: While around half the children in the at-risk group had severe reading and spelling problems at age 8 (designated *at-risk reading impaired*), the remaining children showed acceptable levels of reading accuracy but nonetheless had significant problems in spelling and speed of reading (*at-risk reading unimpaired*). This suggests that dyslexia is a developmental difficulty that occurs along a continuum of severity, with some children being more affected than others. Parents of a child with dyslexia need to be aware that even if he or she does not have marked reading problems there may still be other literacy difficulties (such as reading and/or writing fluency and spelling problems) that need to be recognised and that will warrant additional learning support.

Good Oral Language is a Compensatory/Protective Factor: Children in the at-risk reading unimpaired subgroup registered significantly higher Verbal IQs than those in the at-risk reading impaired group. This suggests that children with dyslexia who are verbally able may be able to draw on their good language skills, together with context cues in prose reading, to aid and support word identification and reading comprehension. Good language skills play a powerful compensatory or protective function in enabling these children to achieve acceptable levels of reading skill. Parents who promote their child's good oral language development (in particular their vocabulary knowledge and their 'listening comprehension') will help them develop this compensatory resource. This can be done by parents reading to their child and then asking him or her to 'tell the story back' and by encouraging their child to listen to story audiotapes. Parents can also help their child to develop the useful strategy of searching for context clues in stories when he or she comes across a word that cannot easily be read. For instance, in encountering a

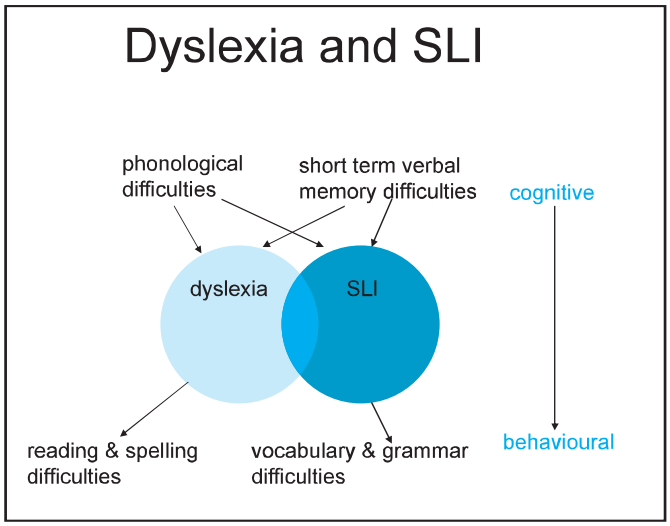
difficult irregular word like 'yacht' the child can be encouraged to decode it as far as possible - identifying the initial and final phonemes /y/ and /t/ is possible even for the child with severe dyslexia. If the story is about sailing, it is not too difficult for the child to then infer that the word is likely to be 'yacht'.

From the Teenage Years Findings - How Parents Can Help

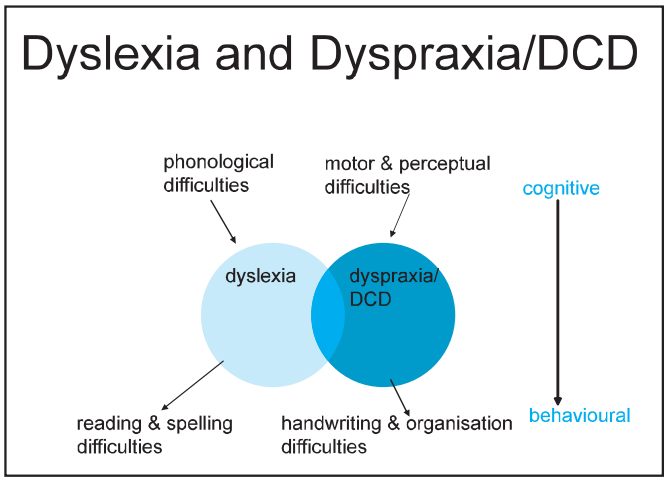
Literacy Difficulties Persist: The at-risk study showed that there was stability of reading skills between the ages of 8 and 14 years for all groups, with neither decline nor 'catching up' observed. So, children in the at-risk group who were experiencing severe reading difficulties at primary school continued to struggle at secondary school, while those who were showing compensatory strategies at primary school continued to perform reasonably well in their senior school years. Since patterns of reading skill tend to change relatively little after the age of 8 years, it is important that parents (and of course teachers) ensure that the child with dyslexia receives additional learning support as early as possible so that this can be maximally effective. Having said that, it is also important to recognise that, for most children, literacy intervention needs to be viewed as a long-term strategy, stretching well into the senior school years.

70% of At-risk Poor Readers have Co-occurring Learning Difficulties: The at-risk study showed that 70% of the children who were designated at-risk reading impaired had additional difficulties in language skill, attention control, nonverbal skills or arithmetic (and sometimes a combination of these). For example, dyslexia commonly co-occurs with oral language problems (Specific Language Impairment, SLI) because they share a common causation (including phonological processing and short term verbal memory deficits) - see Venn Diagram 1 below. Literacy difficulties may also exist alongside deficits in other sets of cognitive or sensory systems; for example, when dyslexia co-occurs alongside Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, DCD (dyspraxia) - see Venn Diagram 2 below. Parents and teachers need to be aware of, and vigilant about, the likelihood that any child with dyslexia could well have other learning problems too. The Rose Report strongly emphasises the importance of recognising and tackling co-occurring difficulties in their own right, with appropriate support set in place to address them (for instance, extra maths lessons, behavioural programmes for attention difficulties, speech and language therapy or occupational therapy). It is also important to set in place appropriate accommodations and adjustments within the classroom such as use of technology (word processors and recorders), highlighter pens, posters on walls.

At-risk Poor Readers Show Reduced Print Exposure: By age 14, the at-risk reading impaired children were tending to avoid reading books, with the result that their exposure to print was much reduced (this was measured in the study through questionnaires that looked at the children's familiarity with book titles and authors' names). Print exposure correlated very highly with reading ability in the at-risk poor readers. Given fewer opportunities to practise their reading skills and learn new vocabulary, the children's literacy problems were becoming compounded. Parents are in an ideal position to increase their child's print exposure by building in support and encouragement for him or her to read on a regular basis (choosing reading materials that appeal) and by possibly making use of incentive programmes that reward time spent reading.



Venn Diagram 1. Dyslexia and Specific Language Impairment (SLI)



Venn Diagram 2. Dyslexia and Dyspraxia/DCD

At-risk Poor Readers Have More Emotional and Attention Problems: Standardised questionnaires completed by the parents revealed that the at-risk poor readers were rated as having greater problems of attention control and more emotional difficulties than the children in the at-risk reading unimpaired and control groups. These findings suggest that by the age of 13 years, the chronic nature of the literacy difficulties experienced by these children had affected various aspects of their behaviour. Parents can support their child by praising and rewarding effort

and the reaching of goals, by giving reassurance that he or she is not alone ('I must have been dyslexic too!') which helps avoid self-blame that increases stress levels, and by giving practical help when the child needs it (especially at homework and study times).

There is a Significant Association between Poor Reading and Maternal Health: A General Health Questionnaire completed by the mothers showed a strong association between maternal health and the reading levels of the children. This suggests that having a poor adolescent reader in the family may raise stress levels of family members. We are of the view that empowering parents and actively involving them in managing their child's difficulties reduces feelings of helplessness and increases a sense of being in control - with resultant improved well-being for all the family.

68% of At-risk Parents Had Been Up to the School with Concerns About their Child's Progress:

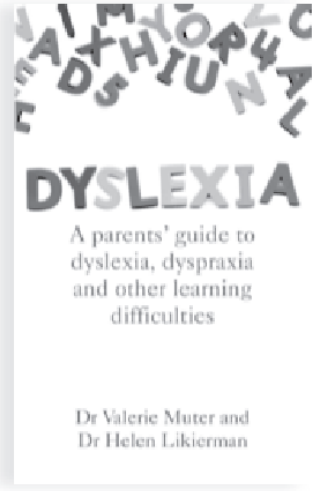
If parents are able to set up strong communication links with their child's teachers this can help to facilitate the initiation and maintenance of remedial action. Alerting teachers to the difficulties observed at home, asking for regular feedback about their child's progress at school, and using homework diaries to share information between home and school are good ways for parents to engage with teachers and to feel reassured that their child's special needs are being met. In this way, parents come to act as their child's advocate.

At-risk Poor Readers have Low Self-esteem in Relation to Academic Skills: Self-perception questionnaires were completed by the children when they were 12-13 years. These showed that the at-risk poor readers rated themselves as poorer scholastically than either the control or at-risk reading unimpaired children. However, there were no differences between the groups in respect of their self-perceived social or athletic competence. This suggests that poor readers are aware of, and sensitive about, their academic difficulties - but they do not have globally poor self-perception. Parents who understand both their child's strengths as well as their difficulties are in a strong position to build up self-esteem and confidence. This can be done by helping the child to uncover and to develop strengths and interests which may be in academic (like maths, design-technology) or non-academic areas (like drama, sport, art).

Empowering Parents to become Informed and Engaged:

For parents to become empowered to support their child effectively, they need to become knowledgeable. They need to know what dyslexia is - and isn't. They need to know what signs to look for and at what ages to look for them. They need to know that other learning difficulties such as dyspraxia, attention problems and maths difficulties commonly co-occur with dyslexia - and how to spot the signs for these. They need practical ideas of how to cope with each learning problem at each stage in their child's development. Parents also need to become informed about what school can do to help and, as the Rose Report recommends, to understand the terminology of provision such as Waves of Support and Levels of Identification and Assessment. Finally, they need to know how to promote good self-esteem, motivation and effective study habits in their child.

Recognising the need for parents to have an easily accessible source of information about dyslexia - and practical tips about what they can do to help their child - we have written a book 'Dyslexia: A Parent's Guide to Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Other Learning Difficulties'. We envisage that teachers might work with parents using this book as a home-based resource, backed up with their own homework suggestions and recommendations to parents. The interaction of what is done at home and what is done at school is critical to ensure that parents and teachers are working towards the same goal.

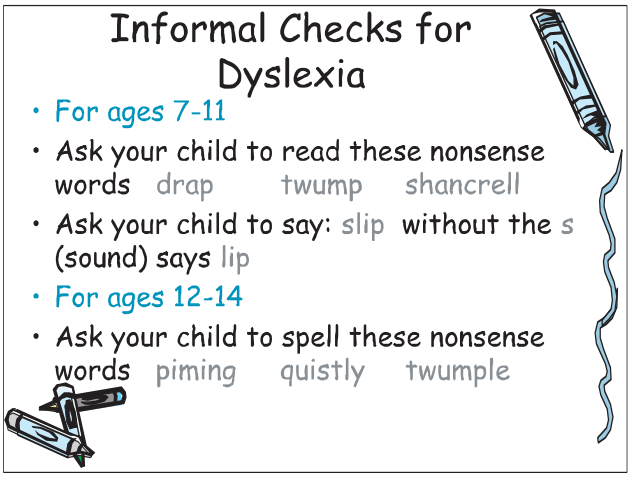


From the Dyslexia True or False Quiz

- You can tell children have dyslexia from the types of spelling errors they make True or False
- All children with dyslexia have exceptional talents True or False
- Dyslexia is more common among boys than girls True or False

From the Dyslexia Questionnaire

- Did your child show early signs of dyslexia?
- Did he/she have difficulty learning nursery rhymes? Yes definitely/Yes somewhat/No
- Was speech unclear & difficult for others to understand? Yes definitely Yes somewhat/No
- Did he/she have difficulty learning the alphabet? Yes definitely/Yes somewhat/No



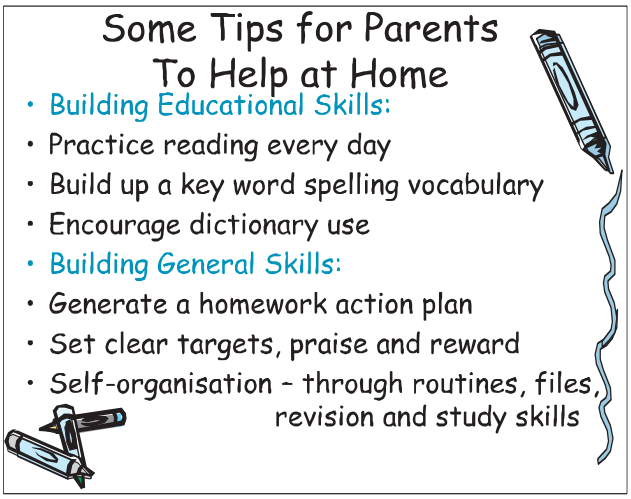


Table 2: Techniques for Engaging and Empowering Parents

The techniques we have used in our books to engage parents include quizzes, questionnaires, informal checks and top tips advice. To end our paper, we have given some examples of each of these techniques (see Table 2). For further information including tips for parents, visit our website: http://www.psykidz.co.uk.

Dr Valerie Muter and Dr Helen Likierman

Dr Valerie Muter and Dr Helen Likierman are Chartered Clinical Psychologists

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Interpreting the WRIT scores

Sue Lomas

The Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT) is a very useful test because it can be used by specialist teachers and it contains tests of both verbal and non-verbal ability. It is quick and easy to administer: detailed instructions are given in the manual, with abbreviated instructions on the easel and Examiner Form. The tests were standardised on a large sample in the US and the WRIT has a high level of reliability and validity. Age related norms are given in the form of standard scores for each of the four subtests. The Verbal IQ, Visual IQ and General IQ scores are given in the form of standard scores, with confidence intervals. The colour coded boxes on the Examiner Form make the scoring process straightforward and the tables for finding the standard scores are clearly set out.

What is not quite as straightforward is how to interpret these scores in terms of their statistical significance and rarity. I hope the following examples will shed some light on this process. But first of all a reminder about confidence intervals. We know that test scores are only an estimate of the 'true' score: there are all sorts of errors that can occur in testing. When a standard score is obtained from a test, it is unlikely that the true score is *exactly* that figure; it is more realistic to say that the score lies within a range. The test makers can work out these ranges from the reliability coefficients of the tests and they generally give them at two levels: 90% and 95%. If we use the 90% confidence interval we are saying that there is a 90% chance that the true score lies within this range.

Verbal IQ / Visual IQ discrepancy

Let's look first at the scores of Adam, a 10 year old:

Verbal IQ standard score	110
Visual IQ standard score	119

There is a nine point difference between these two scores and we might ask ourselves if this is significant. Is this a real difference, or has it just happened by chance? Remember these scores are just an estimate of the true scores. If we look at the 95% confidence intervals for each score we find that the confidence range for the Verbal IQ is 103 -116 and that for the Visual IQ score is 110 - 125. (from tables on pp 174 & 175 of the WRIT manual).

We can see now that there is an overlap between the confidence intervals and so this gives us a clue that the discrepancy in IQ scores might just have happened by chance: if we tested on another day we might have got different scores.

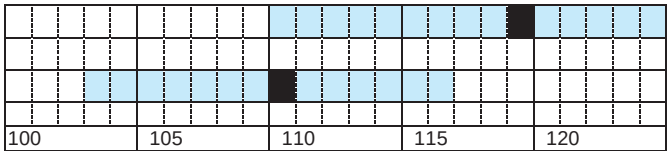


Figure 1.

However we do not have to just rely on looking at confidence intervals, the WRIT manual provides us with a table on p68: Significance of Verbal and Visual IQ Discrepancies. Our example above is for a 10 year old so we look at the rows for that age group:

AGE	LEVEL OF STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE	VERBAL/VISUAL
Elementary School 6 - 12 years	.05	11
	.01	15

Figure 2. Extract from Table 6.3

The figure in the Verbal/Visual column is the **minimum** score difference between the Verbal IQ and Visual IQ needed to reach statistical significance at either the 0.05 level or the 0.01 level. Our 10 year old has a score difference of 9, and we can see that this is not large enough to be significant at either level.

If however Adam's scores had been Verbal IQ 90 and Visual IQ 106, we would have a 16 point difference which would be significant at the 0.01 level.

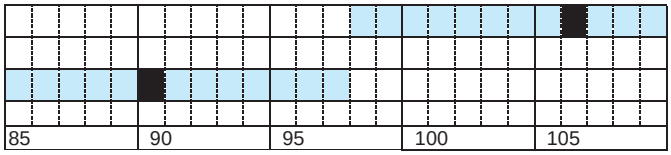


Figure 3.

But what do we mean by a difference being statistically significant at the 0.01 level? We mean that there is statistical evidence that there is a difference between the true scores. The 0.01 significance level means that there is only one chance in a hundred that this could have happened by coincidence. The 0.05 level tells you that it could have happened by chance 5 times in a hundred, that it has a 95% chance of being a real difference. The lower the significance level, the stronger the evidence that something is true, and that a gap hasn't occurred by chance, i.e. 0.01 is more significant than 0.05. The full notation is $p<0.01$, where 'p' stands for 'probability of occurrence by chance'.

Let's look now at Ben, a 15 year old. His scores are:

Verbal IQ standard score	95
Visual IQ standard score	114
General IQ score	106

The difference between his Verbal IQ and Visual IQ scores is 19. If we look at Table 6.3 on page 68 of the manual we see this for his age group:

AGE	LEVEL OF STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE	VERBAL/VISUAL
Secondary School 13-18 years	.05	13
	.01	**17**

Figure 4. Extract from Table 6.3

The score discrepancy of 19 is bigger than 17 so we can say that the difference is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. In other words we can be pretty sure it didn't just occur by chance. His Visual IQ score is higher than his Verbal IQ score. Note that even though the score difference of 19 is bigger than the 0.01 level of 17, we still say it is significant at the 0.01 level and don't extrapolate to say 0.009. It is customary in these tests to use just the two levels of significance: 0.05 and 0.01.

But, just because something is statistically significant, doesn't necessarily mean that it is important or rare; it just tells us that it is there. Statistical significance is something worked out by a mathematical formula using the standard error of measurement, the same measure that is used in calculating the confidence intervals. The more reliable the test is, the smaller the difference in scores that you need to show a statistically significant difference. The WRIT uses a large sample population and has a high reliability and so quite small differences in scores are statistically significant. What we might now ask is: is this size of score discrepancy very unusual? To find this out we look at Table 6.4 on page 70 of the manual: Cumulative Percentages Obtaining Various Verbal IQ - Visual IQ Discrepancies. Here we see that a discrepancy of 19 points occurs in 16% of the secondary school population.

AMOUNT OF DISCREPANCY	PRESCHOOL AGE 4-5	ELEMENTARY AGE 6-12	SECONDARY AGE 13 - 18	ADULT AGE 19 & UP
31	5	5	3	2
20	22	16	14	15
19	24	18	**16**	17
18	25	20	18	19

Figure 5. Extract from Table 6.4

So, we can say that Ben almost certainly has a higher Visual IQ score than Verbal IQ, but that this is not particularly rare: about 16% of people his age have a Visual IQ higher than their Verbal IQ. This does not mean that we have to disregard Ben's Verbal / Visual discrepancy; the prevalence rate just tells us more about the degree of the discrepancy.

What about Chris's scores: Age: 15

Verbal IQ standard score	120
Visual IQ standard score	89
General IQ score	106

Chris has a Verbal IQ / Visual IQ discrepancy of 31 (120 minus 89). If we look at Table 6.4 we see that this discrepancy occurs in only 3% of the secondary school population. So this difference is not only statistically significant, but very rare. We might also ask if it is sensible to quote the General IQ score when there is such a difference in scores.

Subtest scores

Quite often we get a wide range of subtest scores, or we might get one score that is greatly different from the others. As with the Verbal IQ/Visual IQ scores, we want to know if this difference is significant and unusual. There are 2 ways to approach this problem. The first is to see if the anomalous score is significantly different from the General IQ score.

Here are Dan's standard scores on WRIT:

Verbal Analogies	117	Matrices	118
Vocabulary	85	Diamonds	121
General IQ	114		

His Vocabulary score of 85 is 29 points lower than his General IQ score of 114. If we look at Table 6.5 on p75 of the WRIT manual, we see that this 29 points difference is greater than the minimum figure of 17 needed for it to be significant at the 0.01 level.

SUBTEST	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	
	.05	.01
VOCABULARY	14	**17**
VERBAL ANALOGIES	17	20
DIAMONDS	13	15
MATRICES	14	13

Figure 6. Extract from Table 6.5

So Dan's Vocabulary score is significantly lower than his other scores and this might be worth commenting on in his report.

Now let's look at Eve, who is also a secondary school pupil. Her subtest scores are uneven:

Verbal Analogies	87	Matrices	116
Vocabulary	108	Diamonds	91

We might want to know if there are any significant differences between pairs of scores. For example, is her Matrices score noticeably higher than her Vocabulary score? To do this we first look at the difference in scores of all the pairs, for example, the difference between the Verbal Analogies score of 87 and the Vocabulary score of 108 is 21.

Subtest scores	**Difference**
Verbal Analogies - Vocabulary	21
Matrices - Diamonds	25
Verbal Analogies - Matrices	29
Verbal Analogies - Diamonds	4
Matrices - Vocabulary	8
Vocabulary - Diamonds	17

To find out if these differences are statistically significant we need to look at Table 6.6 on p 76 of the manual. This table shows the **minimum** differences in scores needed for significance for every possible pair of subtest scores. A section of the table is shown below. The figures above the asterisks represent the amount of difference that is significant at the 0.05 level and the figures below the asterisks show values significant at the 0.01 level. So in the table shown below, the shaded cells are the minimum differences needed for 0.05 significance.

SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS 13 -18 YEARS				
	VOCABULARY	VERBAL ANALOGIES	DIAMONDS	MATRICES
VOCABULARY	*****	17	13	15
VERBAL ANALOGIES	23	*****	17	18
DIAMONDS	18	23	*****	15
MATRICES	20	24	19	*****

Figure 7. Extract from Table 5.5.

If we go back to Eve's scores, starting with the Verbal Analogies - Vocabulary difference: if we start with Verbal Analogies in the left hand column and go along the row until we are under the Vocabulary column, we see that we need a score difference of at least 23 for it to be significant at the 0.01 level. Eve's score difference of 21 is not therefore going to be significant at the 0.01 level. If however we look in the top half of the table and go along the row from Vocabulary on the left hand side to Verbal Analogies, we see that a score difference of 17 is significant at the 0.05 level so we can say that the difference between Eve's Vocabulary and Verbal Analogies scores is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Doing this for all the pairs, we could complete the table:

Subtest scores	**Difference**	**Level of significance**
Verbal Analogies - Vocabulary	21	.05
Matrices - Diamonds	25	.01
Verbal Analogies - Matrices	29	.01
Verbal Analogies - Diamonds	4	not significant (ns)
Matrices - Vocabulary	8	ns
Vocabulary - Diamonds	17	.05

From these figures we can see that Eve has a wide spread of subtest scores, ranging from a low of 87 to a high of 116. This is a difference in scores of 29 points. We might want to know if this is unusual. To find out we go to Table 6.7 on page 77 of the manual. There we find that a range of scores, or subtest scatter, of 29 points occurs in 25% of the secondary school population. So no, it is not that unusual.

Identifying IQ - Achievement discrepancy

One of the useful things about the WRIT is that it is co-normed with the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT). In other words we can compare directly the WRIT and WRAT scores and see if the differences are significant or unusual. Unfortunately WRIT was produced in the days of WRAT 3 and the publishers have no plans for re-norming it on WRAT 4. Luckily for us, Jacky Ridsdale has been in touch with the publishers and they say that the norms for WRAT 3 and WRAT 4 are so close that it is possible to use WRAT 4 results on the tables for WRAT 3 in WRIT. We just need to mention in our reports that it is an approximation.

Once again let us take some examples:

Fay:	WRIT IQ 104	WRAT reading 95
George:	WRIT IQ 119	WRAT reading 87

Table 7.1 on page 84 of the manual gives us the cut-offs between WRIT General IQ and WRAT 3 Achievement scores that are necessary for statistical significance. These are the relevant lines:

	STANDARD SCORES FROM THE WRAT 3					
	READING		ARITHMETIC		SPELLING	
	.05	.01	.05	.01	.05	.01
WRIT GENERAL IQ						
104	95	93	94	91	95	93
119	113	101	101	98	103	101

Figure 10 Extract from Table 7.1

First of all we have to look in the first column to find Fay's General IQ: 104. The figures in the row next to this give the standard scores from the three WRAT tests needed to reach statistical significance. Any WRAT score has to be **equal to or less than** the figure given for a statistically significant discrepancy to be present. From this we can see that Fay's Reading score is statistically significantly lower than her General IQ at the 0.05 level. If we do the same for George we see that his Reading score is statistically significantly lower at the 0.01 level. In both cases, we can be pretty sure it is a real difference and hasn't just occurred because of errors of measurements in the testing.

We might of course want to know the prevalence of such score differences: how often do they occur. For this we turn to Table 7.4 in the manual on page 91 which gives us three levels of unusual prevalence: 1%, 5% and 7%. If any of the WRAT scores in Reading, Spelling or Arithmetic is **equal to or lower than** the values given under these headings, then a rare or infrequently occurring IQ - Achievement discrepancy is present. The WRIT manual generally recommends the 5% prevalence rate to be used to confirm an unusual difference.

So, if we take Fay and George's scores, Table 7.4 will tell us if the discrepancies are unusual.

	STANDARD SCORES FROM THE WRAT								
	READING			ARITHMETIC			SPELLING		
	7%	5%	1%	7%	5%	1%	7%	5%	1%
WRIT GENERAL IQ									
104	83	81	72	82	80	71	83	80	72
119	91	89	80	90	88	79	90	88	79

Figure 11. Extract from Table 7.4

Fay's reading score of 95 (IQ 104) does not reach the

7% cut-off point of 83, but George's reading score of 88 (IQ119) is just below the 5% cut-off point. So we can say that in George's case, a significant IQ - Achievement discrepancy is present at a 5% prevalence rate in reading.

In the examples above we have used the General IQ score. There are also tables for significance and prevalence for the Verbal IQ - Achievement discrepancies and Visual IQ - Achievement discrepancies. You would use these tables if there was a significant difference between the Verbal and Visual IQ score or if there was a low prevalence. If you choose to use the Verbal IQ or Visual IQ score for IQ - Achievement discrepancy, then you should mention it in your report, giving your reasons.

A word of warning here: evidence of a significant or unusual difference between an IQ score and a WRAT 4 score is not a sufficient indicator to conclude that a person has dyslexia or other type of specific learning difficulty; other evidence is also required. All you can stay in your report is that there is some evidence that the person has a level of literacy or arithmetic significantly below that expected for certain levels of cognitive ability. However this is useful clinical information to aid your investigation.

Finally!

If you have got this far you have ploughed through a lot of figures and a lot of choices. You might wonder whether you need to do all these comparisons and which levels of significance you should use and whether you should use levels of significance or rates of prevalence. The answer lies in type of assessment you are doing and what questions you want answering. It is up to you to make that judgement. More details are given in the WRIT manual; I hope it makes a bit more sense to you now.

When writing the report it is not wise to say there is a significant difference between scores unless you have discovered a statistically significant difference. The prevalence rates should help you evaluate that difference. Remember that testing is just part of assessment: it is one piece of the jigsaw that along with your observations, information from questionnaires and interviews will help you complete the picture.

Sue Lomas

Sue Lomas is a tutor on the CCET course for Dyslexia Action.

References

Glutting J Adams W Sheslow D (2000)
WRIT – Wide Range Intelligence Test
PAR
Distributed by DI Trading

Partnership for Literacy

Jane Piggott

Partnership for Literacy (P4L) began life as a pilot project, operating in just 4 schools, in January 2006. The four Dyslexia Action centres chosen to deliver this first stage of the project were Nottingham, Coventry, Hull and London.

We have now worked in 35 primary schools across the country. The majority of the partnerships have been funded by generous private or corporate donations but, in January 2008, we were delighted to receive sufficient Government funding to run the project in 10 schools. We will work with a further 6 schools during 2009/10.

What does P4L aim to do?

The basic premises underlying the project are sustainability and the whole-school nature of the literacy intervention. We aim to work with partner schools to train staff (usually Teaching or Learning Support Assistants) in the use of our literacy resources (Active Literacy Kit and Units of Sound), using an apprenticeship model. These resources, plus testing materials, become the property of the partner school. Once Dyslexia Action withdraws, the school is left with an increased level of knowledge and expertise, which will ensure that pupils with weak literacy skills, in any year group, can be better supported.

These literacy resources were selected because they are not only effective in raising literacy levels, but they can also be used in groups rather than expensive 1:1 provision, and can be used successfully by any member of staff.

So what does a P4L project involve?

- Schools are invited to apply to become a partner school and are selected on the basis of commitment to literacy development, readiness to make staff available for training and 'apprenticeship' and a willingness to continue provision once Dyslexia Action withdraws.
- Pupils are screened using WRAT 4 reading and spelling tests and the Rosner Test of Auditory Analysis Skills.
- A teaching group is selected based on the scores achieved in these tests, in consultation with the school SENCo.
- A specialist Dyslexia Action teacher spends one day per week for 17 weeks in the school, training staff and modelling good practice to the apprentices who each teach small groups of pupils.
- At the end of this period (roughly two school terms), pupils are re-tested to measure progress.
- The intervention group is also retested a year later.
- A period of Consultancy follows, during which the specialist teacher is available to help the school achieve sustainability perhaps through further staff training or by helping with further screening of pupils.
- Although the P4L project does not aim to identify dyslexic pupils, a dyslexia awareness session is included in the project for all school staff. This is felt to be valuable because it is inevitable that some of the children selected through the screening will have a degree of dyslexia and also because it is now widely recognised that classroom practice which will help dyslexic pupils, will also be of benefit to many other non-dyslexics.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved throughout; there are two parent sessions held during the project, which aim to keep them informed and demonstrate how they can help their children at home. Schools are provided with copies of the DIY Readers' Support Pack for Parents which is made available on loan to parents.

What issues have arisen in schools?

One problem we have found is the availability of a suitable teaching space for the project. If the model suggested for P4L apprentice training is to be fully implemented, the apprentices should ideally be teaching in one large room so that the specialist Dyslexia Action teacher is able to model, monitor and comment on the teaching effectively throughout the sessions and where the children are taught in groups. In reality, many schools just do not have this amount of space available on a regular basis and apprentices have often had to work in different rooms, sometimes at a distance from each other and the specialist teacher. This, inevitably makes the mentoring process much more difficult. With the goodwill and determination on all sides that has been apparent in our partner schools, however, this has not proved to be an insurmountable problem.

We have found an enormous range of experience and literacy knowledge among the TA apprentices. Some have never had any involvement with literacy teaching before and therefore need a good deal of support before they can themselves begin to teach elements of the programme, such as 'pure' letter sounds, for example. Lack of experience has sometimes translated into a degree of rigidity in the use of the teaching resources; it is only as confidence grows that flexibility becomes a reality. The one thing that has been constant across all schools has been the enthusiasm shown by the apprentices for the teaching resources and training provided for the project. Many TAs have felt empowered

by their involvement and some have been encouraged to go on to further training. Many Heads too have recognised that involvement in P4L has brought about increased status and confidence in the project staff as they are 'the experts' within the school.

Another issue that has arisen in some schools has been regular availability of TAs. Logistically, it is impossible for the Dyslexia Action teacher to be in the school for more than one day each week and therefore most of the apprentice training/teaching has to take place on that day. This can cause problems for some schools when TAs are timetabled to work in particular classrooms rather than being employed to provide more general literacy (and other) support. Most schools have managed to work around this problem and overall the teaching staff not involved in the project have been positive and supportive about the intervention, especially as they have begun to see improvements in pupils' confidence, motivation and self esteem.

What has the project achieved?

The overwhelming majority of the partner schools have shown a great deal of enthusiasm for, and satisfaction with, the project and have benefited by having regular access both to our specialist teachers and two excellent teaching resources.

The project has been externally evaluated by the University of Durham's Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring. A report into the first two years' partnerships, which involved 21 primary schools, was published in March 2009. The report can be accessed via Dyslexia Action's website www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk.

In the report, figures show that those children in the lowest 20% of pupils for reading, made an average gain of 7 standard score points during the period of intervention. This means that the average reading score of the lowest 20% of children across a total of 21 primary schools improved significantly during 17 weeks (roughly 2 terms) of intervention.

Even more importantly, as far as Dyslexia Action is concerned, is the fact that the partner schools (35 up to the end of the academic year 2008/9) have been left with resources that can be used across the school and with staff who have been trained to a high level of competence to teach, using those resources. These schools are therefore prepared to support many future generations of children for whom literacy skills do not come easily.

Among the children taught, there has been a fairly high proportion with English as an additional language. The nature of the programmes makes them accessible to these pupils; the Active Literacy Kit assumes no literacy skills at all and allows these children to develop language alongside their literacy. The Units of Sound Programme gradually introduces pupils to letter patterns of increasing complexity for reading and spelling and gives them the opportunity to discover meanings of words through the check reading exercises, which form an integral part of the programme. In addition, the recording feature is an aid to pronunciation.

As well as the reading (and for some pupils, spelling) improvements seen in the pupils taught during the 17 week project, there have been other changes, much harder to measure and quantify, that have impressed teaching staff within the schools. We have heard of children whose behaviour has improved, children who for the first time ever are willing to really participate in class, pupils who are showing marked improvements in their concentration and attention and pupils who are beginning to make real efforts with their reading, spelling and writing (including handwriting). Improved confidence and self- esteem are the first benefits for these children, long before any measurable improvements are seen in their reading and spelling scores.

Where do we go from here?

At the time of writing we are making plans to begin projects in 6 schools from September 2009. Our partner schools will be based in the Nottingham, Coventry, Bath, Sheffield, London and Liverpool areas.

Dyslexia Action is hopeful that further funding will become available during the next few months so that we can continue to roll out this programme. A researcher from the Rose dyslexia review attended 2 of the P4L training days and the project is referred to in the final report.

Our original aim was to work in at least 50 schools. Having seen the successes that can be achieved in partner schools, we would now relish the opportunity to spread the net still wider so that many more schools and many more children can benefit.

Perhaps more importantly, we believe that we have established a model of good practice for literacy intervention that is cost-effective for any primary school to implement. We have recently produced a guide to different models of using the literacy materials within primary schools so that they are even more flexible and should fit into any school system. Rose has recommended 'little and often' for literacy intervention and we have demonstrated just how to do that with our P4L partners. Local authority Learning Support teams or Dyslexia Guild members could replicate this model in their own schools across the country quite easily. Dyslexia Action expertise could be bought in to oversee implementation and to provide training and advice where needed - but there are too many schools for us to reach them all on our own!

Jane Piggott

Jane Piggott is a specialist dyslexia teacher and assessor with Dyslexia Action and the national co-ordinator for P4L.

References

Rose J (Sir) (2009)
Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties
DCSF

Resources

Units of Sound (Bramley W and developed by Dyslexia Action)

The Active Literacy Kit (Bramley W published by LDA)

The DIY readers support pack for parents (Dyslexia Action)

- Are all available from DI Trading and subject to 10% discount for Dyslexia Guild members.

A Dyslexia Action Teacher's Perspective

January 2009

The school is a Catholic Primary School in a very deprived area of Liverpool, which has historically had low literacy levels and where many parents are unemployed. It has also become infamous for gangs, guns and drug culture. When we selected this school, I hoped that we could do something positive for the community and especially for the young people. The staff are very hard working and dedicated to their profession; they want to help each child achieve his/her potential. The children are brilliant, willing to learn and happy to work with me.

I have been working with the SENCo, the Literacy Coordinator and 4 Teaching Assistants. The pupils are organised into year groups and are receiving at least 1.5 hours' support each week; some are having up to 3 teaching sessions each week. The staff are all very committed and keen and always have lots of questions for me each time I go into the school. They have become confident in the use of the resources very quickly, although they didn't believe me when I predicted they would. They are so impressed with the resources and have already started to notice the progress the children are making; they are keen to share anecdotes about the children and the impact the project is having.

The children love the lessons. They are so excited to show off their new skills, how they can beat the target times on Active Literacy Kit or how quickly they can recite the whole alphabet. They love to use Units of Sound and have quickly become proficient in using the programme. The staff are astounded at their response because they expected pupils would quickly grow tired of the repetitive nature of the tasks. The growth in the children's self confidence is being remarked upon by staff across the school.

May 2009

We have now started the re-screening and it appears that some of the pupils have made good progress. I will be delivering Consultancy days as twilight sessions and the first, in June, will be an overview of the project for all staff. The remaining Consultancy days will take place in the Autumn term and will include some further practical Active Literacy Kit and Units of Sound training. I am also likely to be involved in more intensive training for other TAs in the hope that more children can access the programmes.

We had a visit from the Senior Officer for SEN in the Liverpool area, which went very well. She praised the project for its sustainability and even commented that it could 'save lives' for the children who took part.

It will be a real wrench for me to leave the school. I will miss the children especially; they have been fantastic. It has been a very interesting year for me and I have enjoyed it a great deal. It has impacted upon my teaching; I have learned a lot!

Chris Brownlow

A Headteacher's Perspective

When I trained as a teacher many years ago, the official line was that dyslexia didn't exist. However, when I entered headship, one of my first meetings was with a parent of a boy who had recently received a dyslexia diagnosis, asking me what the school were going to do to meet his needs. I was completely out of my depth, so rapidly made contact with Dyslexia Action for advice and support. This was the beginning of a solid and effective working relationship, which led to Five Lanes becoming involved in the Partnership for Literacy project.

The data speaks for itself, but it's the wider impact of the project, those intangibles that can't be so easily measured, that interest me.

The teaching assistants who were trained were initially very nervous, but with expert guidance and training they became more confident. They became our dyslexia experts, teachers often asking for their advice. This contributed to a cultural shift in school, with everyone confident to offer opinions. And of course, their job satisfaction increased enormously as they could see children they had worked with for years finally making progress.

As a new head, this was the first big project I had 'pushed' - it did my reputation (within school and within the local community) no harm that it actually worked! But mostly, the big benefit of the project was the impact on the children involved. Children who had written themselves off suddenly became articulate and positive, talking in glowing terms about what they wanted to do when they grew up.

The materials provided are still used heavily in school - many initiatives last for a year and then become sidelined as another initiative takes centre stage. This has certainly not been the case with P4L. The reason we use and will continue to use the P4L materials is simple - they work!

J Fiddes primary school headteacher in Leeds

A Parent's Perspective

My 8 year old son started Dyslexia Action's P4L in 2008. He has successfully completed all the exercises in the Active Literacy Kit. He has now progressed to Units of Sound Reading, Spelling, Memory and Dictation. My son will become engaged straightaway when working on the computer. He responds physically and verbally.

There is no longer confusion, panic or failure as he is feeling more confident and happier that he can achieve what his peers can do. He has become very proud of what he has already achieved and, hopefully, this can only grow.

I went one step further and purchased the home version of Units of Sound [Literacy that Fits]. When my son is struggling with his homework, he takes a break and works on Units of Sound for a while. When he has reached a satisfying breakthrough, he goes back to his homework with more confidence.

So, during 2009, he is happy and experiencing enjoyment and success. While speaking to my son about his life, I understand he doesn't want to be 'cured'; he just wants help fitting into school and having a meaningful life.

Tracey Clarke

Tracey is a parent of a dyslexic child selected for the P4L intervention at St Saviours Primary, London. Tracey is also a TA who was one of the apprentices at St Saviours.

Pupil's Perspectives

I like working on the ALK because I have an adult helping me - the blindfold exercise is my favourite! I enjoy Units of sound because I like working on the computer and it has helped me in class.

Charlie (9yrs)

Reading on the computer has helped me because it corrects me when I go wrong.

Kieran (9yrs)

LSA's Perspective

I have enjoyed seeing the children's progress and their pleasure when they reach the [ALK] target times. It has also been great to use the programme with other children in class.

Karen - Leigh on Sea

A Teacher's perspective

The course has been absolutely excellent so far. The trainers are efficient, approachable and very thorough. I hope to run this project indefinitely so that as many children as possible can benefit from it.

Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinator, London primary school

Specialist Teacher Training and CPD via Blended E-learning

Anne Sheddick

Those of us who work with and care about children and other learners who do not achieve as expected because of dyslexia or related SPLD are delighted that the Rose report emphasises the importance of training specialist teachers and outlines their role.

It is also encouraging that the report recommends that all teachers should be aware of the needs of learners with dyslexia and other SPLDs and understand the benefits and requirements of 'quality first teaching' at wave 1 in schools for all pupils though the Inclusion Development Programme. This is currently being implemented in all English LAs. This initiative underlies the importance of specialist CPD in this field for a larger body of teachers.

These proposals coupled with those set out in the White paper for 21st Century Schools published in July 2009 set a framework for CPD in this field to be made available to and taken up by all teachers with a target of 4000 specialist teachers trained by 2012.

This raises the question of how teachers will find the time to engage with this exciting agenda. The introduction of blended e-learning is a way forward as this allows CPD to be undertaken at both a time and place and level to suit the professional needs of the teacher. Dyslexia Action has offered its postgraduate training through this route for the last 2 years and the benefits of this approach are now clear. The programme is growing and increasingly popular with teachers and tutors.

The aim is to use the technology in the background to facilitate a rich learning environment whereby teachers and tutors can and do learn with and from each other. This means it is CPD for tutors too! Students and tutors log on at any time of the day or night to access course materials, raise questions and contribute to discussions with their peers and tutors at any time and usually receive a response within hours. All the course materials are available on line and can be added to and updated with ease by both tutors and students.

This approach means that students and tutors are not isolated and a professional community of learning and practice develops amongst each student group. Students can ask their peers to help them solve problems, suggest and share resources as well as discuss issues relating to the latest research, teaching interventions, use of tests and so on.

This approach has proved so valuable that students from each completing group have asked if they can continue to work together as a community of specialists even though the course has finished. Student comments also speak for themselves: 'the level of professional competence we encounter is of the best'. Masters level study is all about reflective and critical enquiry as well as sharing the excitement of acquiring new skills and ideas and becoming part of a professionally and intellectually vibrant group; and this benefit is of enduring value to the professional specialist teacher.

The other obvious benefits are that teachers on the course are not required to travel to a distant location at an inconvenient time as the Learning Environment is available on the desktop 24/7.

All students and tutors meet face to face at an intensive compulsory residential induction course at the start of the programme. This gives the essential grounding in practical skills; but crucially builds up the personal relationships that make working subsequently together on line an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The next intake is for October 2009, closing date 14th September 2009. Details are found on www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Anne Sheddick

Anne Sheddick is Head of Training at Dyslexia Action

A New Dyslexia Assessment Package for Teachers

Martin Turner

Introduction

When I arrived at the Dyslexia Institute as head of psychology in 1991, I had done little or no teacher training. Before too many days had passed, Harry Chasty, then co-director, asked me to take over a course on which he was the psychology tutor. In short, would I begin on Monday morning? Fine, I agreed. And what should I talk about? 'Why don't you tell them about metacognition,' said Harry sagely.

I was much too abashed to admit that I had no idea what metacognition might be, but I launched into the new experience with intrepid ignorance. Before long it was the midsummer ending of the course and, one Monday morning when I arrived, the tables were laden with cakes, fizzy drinks, crisps and (to distinguish it from a children's party) joyous dishes of fruit. As it happened, I became aware during the morning that the course participants had not covered testing at all. Grimly I launched into a high-speed aerial reconnaissance of sampling, item response theory, standard deviations, reliability, validity, profile analysis and report writing, while trainees glanced wistfully at the waiting tables or out of the window.

Gradually assessment became better grounded in a more articulated curriculum, which was ultimately validated by the University of York. But long before this I had been approached on numerous occasions by senior staff at the Institute to provide them with better, more up-to-date tests (they were limited to Burt, Raven and so on). The training of teachers became a stimulating and gratifying shared experience which was to continue for 12 years; the hunt for powerful, modern tests which teachers could use was a challenge which occupied me for the same length of time; necessary to both, the diffusion of general and specialist knowledge about testing over the same period was a major endeavour _ and of course where the Institute led, the rest of the country would follow.

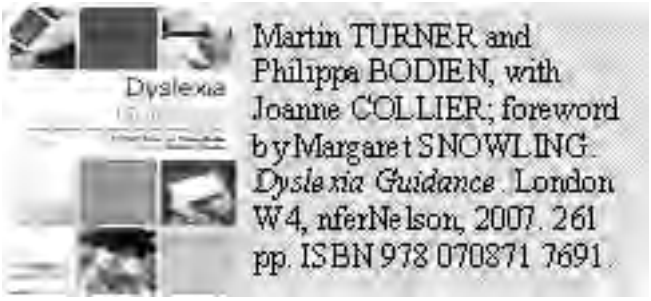
During all this time, we had to pick and choose among an ever-changing array of diagnostic tests, after solving the comparatively easier problems of ability and attainment testing. In came the WRAT, the BPVS, the MAT. Sue Gathercole gave us her (then unpublished) nonword repetition task; Robin Hedderly his free writing task; Peter Hatcher his Test of Phonological Awareness. By this time, British test publishers, encouraged by us, were bringing in new tests and procedures that took account of both experimental advances and new standards of clinical practice, led by the Institute. Where there were gaps, Jacky Ridsdale and I devised new tests of digit repetition, spoonerism and nonword reading.

These were exciting developments. Nevertheless, one area of disappointment was that diagnostic testing – or testing of processing difficulties – remained a hodgepodge and we were obliged to continue with an eclectic approach, adding to and dropping tests from a bulging repertoire.

The idea for the Dyslexia Portfolio

This was the context in which, with my publisher, I sat down to assess the needs of the large market for dyslexia professionals. Psychologists have always been spoiled rotten, but the predicament of specialist teachers continued to exercise me after I left the Institute in 2003. I had already produced, with Pauline Smith, the computing-administered **Dyslexia Screener**, described in these pages in 2004, and with Philippa Bodien the book **Dyslexia Guidance**, a kitchen rather than a menu, which puts into the hands of non-experts such as SENCos both the teaching materials and the relevant methods for addressing literacy-related problems, including for older pupils (the later chapters address senior school and university).

What was needed was a collection of well-favoured diagnostic and attainment tests all in one box. Over time it had become clear what such a collection would include: a satisfactory *phoneme deletion* task, for instance, had never been produced commercially.



The Development of the Portfolio

Happily, these ambitious ideas have all now come to fruition and the Dyslexia Portfolio was published in November 2008. Opinion in the wider world is perennially divided about IQ, but I remain a strong proponent of the

view that, true to their origin in special education, tests of general cognitive ability are valuable for providing the context in which other successes and failures may be evaluated.

Getting hold of IQ tests is no longer a problem for teachers. In addition to a new edition of the Raven's Coloured and Standard Progressive Matrices and the Matrix Analogies Test (MAT), there are now the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, the Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT), the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Scale and, indeed, two tests – of nonverbal reasoning (Missing Pieces) and verbal comprehension (Vocabulary) – in our Dyslexia Screener. Moreover, sometimes children appear who have had previous individual psychological assessments using one of the major batteries. As a consequence, we have devised the Portfolio without integral tests of cognitive ability but with the facility for the user to add an observed IQ from one of these sources, which is then taken into account in the calculation of a Dyslexia Index.
A new technological development is the ability for users to go online, without cumbersome security procedures, to enter a child's biodata and raw scores on the Portfolio and receive, not only fully calculated standard and cluster scores, but a narrative report with pleasant graphics. For those without convenient Internet access, norm and data tables are provided, not in the manual as traditionally, but on a CD.

The Structure of the Dyslexia Portfolio

The nature and rationale for the choice of tests in the Portfolio are extensively described in the Introduction. Here I will confine myself to comments likely to be relevant to my readers.

There are nine tests for pupils aged from five to 14. Scores from these collapse to give four higher level clusters. In administration order, these are as given in the chart below.

All test administration and scoring is conducted with the help of a Record Booklet of 24 pages. The pupil records his or her responses to three of the tests (Reading Speed, Spelling, Rate of Writing) in a second booklet of 12 pages.

Why timed tests?

It is a common finding that dyslexic pupils, even when extensively remediated, remain *inefficient*, that is, their successfully taught skills remain imperfectly automated. This is why compensatory strategies, many self-generated, are so important for older pupils who may have received sufficient alphabetic teaching.

Test	Description	Cluster	Items
Naming Speed	Common objects named during two minutes.	Processing speed	120
Reading Speed	Simple sentences read at speed during three minutes and deemed true or false.	Processing speed	95
Phoneme Deletion	Spoken real words and nonwords from which some segment must be eliminated.	Phonological	29
Nonword Reading	Made up words must be decoded and pronounced smoothly.	Phonological	45
Single Word Spelling Test	Dictated single words given in context must be correctly spelled.	Word literacy	45
Digits Forwards	Digit strings of increasing length must be accurately repeated.	Working memory	38
Digits Backwards	Digit strings of increasing length must be repeated accurately in reverse order.	Working memory	22
Single Word Reading Test	Single words must be recognised and pronounced correctly out of context.	Word literacy	60
Rate of Writing	Short sentences must be compared (over four minutes age 5-7) or freely added to (over five minutes ages seven to 14).	No cluster	30

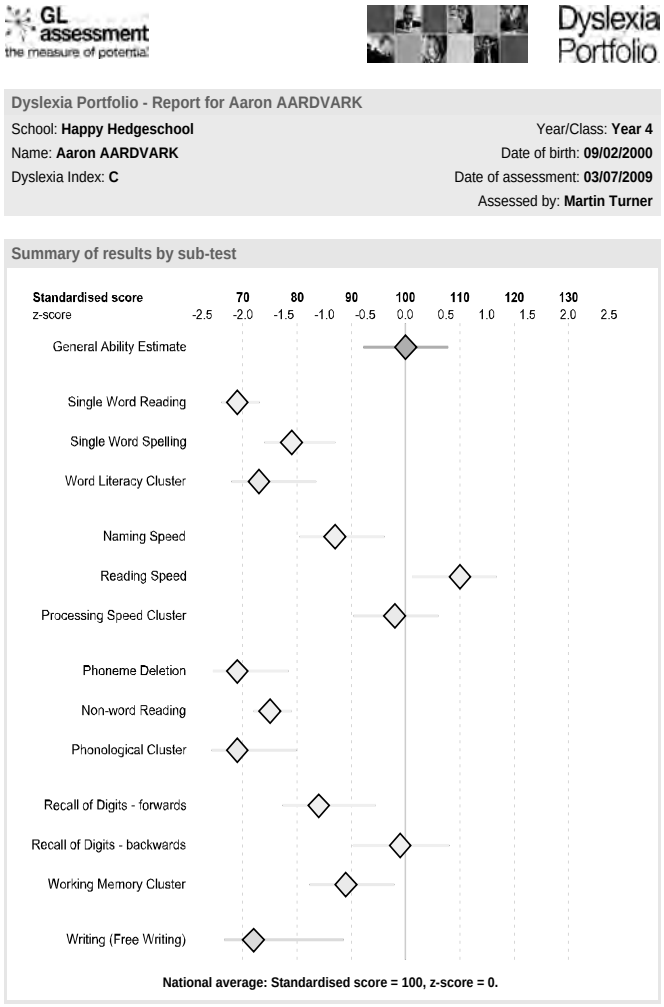
The phenomenon of speed of processing seems to be grounded in linguistic ability; at any rate, higher verbal ability seems to protect to some extent against slow performance. From the upper primary years onwards, speed is consciously encouraged at school by teachers who well understand the obstacle course of examinations that lies ahead. Even the slowest performers take a pride in increasing their speed, regardless of the poor quality and wretched handwriting that may result from such haste.

Slow processing is a problem that becomes more marked as dyslexic pupils grow older, because of the effortless automation of their non-dyslexic peers, and can create friction in the competitive classroom situation, frustrating to pupil and teacher alike. Sometimes a hasty, rushing style can be an over-compensation for underlying slowness of processing.

It is therefore important for us to evaluate the element of speed – in the younger pupil as a factor that hampers learning, in the older pupil as an adaptation that may be deleterious. In addition, speed of reading and speed of writing are two measures that are explicitly required by the exam boards as evidence for the need for extra time in exams.

As I have argued before in these pages (Turner M 2000), the request for a measure of reading speed is somewhat naïve, as the main component in reading speed is decoding efficiency – in other words the same alphabetic problem we started with. To get around this, the methodology adopted in the Portfolio is one where the level of difficulty of the sentences to be read remains low but the volume read in a limited time reflects the pupil's efficiency. Sure enough, we find that some children read more quickly or less quickly than would be expected from their word recognition score. A difference of half a standard deviation (7-8 points of standard score) may be interpreted. Unexpected rapidity usually means that greater accuracy will result from tuition that *slows the reader down*; unexpected slowness shows that word recognition difficulty is not the only cause of slowness of reading.
Similarly timed, Naming Speed is essentially a test of word-finding (retrieval - see German D for more information). There is still some discussion whether such tasks are once again about phonological (speech sound) processing or belong to an independent dimension of processing speed (Wolf M 2001). My own experience suggests that, while they inevitably partake of both, the results of Naming Speed tasks more often consort with other clerical and processing speed scores.

Just as speed of reading is often a function of automation of alphabetic processes, so writing speed is a measure that says nothing about quality of writing, merely productivity. Taken in isolation, writing productivity is of great interest to teachers, examination setters and markers and pupils themselves. Nevertheless, efficiency once again should not be prized at the expense of accuracy. There is often a trade-off between speed and accuracy, that is, the individual only performs more quickly at the cost of greater inaccuracy. Much slowness is the result of a conscious strategy to avoid inaccuracy by working slowly.



Writing is perhaps the most complex thing we learn to do. Teachers speak of *multi-tasking* (having to think about what to write and sentence structure, as well as spelling). The integration of incompletely automated skills is a difficulty in dyslexia. And while spelling remains the biggest roadblock to most pupils most of the time, it is important to keep syntax, handwriting and paragraphing in view also. Good writing is calm and many of the attributes of good writing go out of the window when a pupil is hurried. The free writing task in the Portfolio is designed to offer some scope, at least, for imaginative production.

Conclusion

So here is a new purpose-built battery of attainment and diagnostic tests which long experience of practical training of specialist teachers suggests are the ones most needed. The Dyslexia Portfolio is not a complete

assessment _ this will require the addition not only of measures of ability, new or recent, but tests of written calculation skills and reading comprehension also. (The WRAT-IV should supply the former need, the WIAT-IIUK for Teachers the latter.)

Because all the tests are literacy-related, their factorial independence is not to be looked for. When combined in cluster scores, their descriptive validity is likely to be greater. The present scoring procedure suggests that a 9 be used (in addition to 1 or 0) when a child fails to respond. This has been found confusing and will be dropped as the Portfolio is reprinted.

Users visiting the website http://rgt.testwise.net/DP_index.htm will find an easy-to-use facility which will compile, analyse, display and report on a current child and store previous assessments. There are no tiresome security hurdles to negotiate, but the data themselves are held securely - on your own computer. They may be preserved, deleted or examined, as Excel worksheets or as PDFs, at any time. The 'last date of assessment' does not refer to a previous assessment but to the present one and so is a mandatory field. See above for a graphical summary of one fictional assessment as produced at the GL Assessment website.

Martin Turner

Martin Turner is a Consulting Psychologist

Note: The Dyslexia portfolio tests are currently normed for school age children up to year 9. We are in the process of extending this to year 10.

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Free Technology to Support Reading

Alistair McNaught

In the last issue of Dyslexia Review Alistair McNaught from the JISC TechDis service gave an introduction to creating (and using) dyslexia friendly documents that could be easily navigated or exported to a mindmap. This article goes a stage further and looks at the range of ways in which on-screen reading can be supported using

- inbuilt tools in word processors
- free software installed on your PC
- free software that runs from a memory stick or across the Internet.

JISC TechDis classifies assistive technologies from a 'Tools for learning' approach, identifying different genres of support need (http://tinyurl.com/td-genres) which focus not on the disability but on the learning task - reading, writing, planning etc. Whilst excellent commercial packages exist, this article focuses on free software for supporting reading. Free software

- gives the user independence from budget constraints,
- provides simple, basic packages that can be quickly learned and
- allows users to try out alternatives.

Meeting reading needs

Reading is a key learning activity and there are a variety of ways of supporting it. Some of these depend on tutor practices or learner support intervention. Others are software dependent - as long as the right software is available the user can be supported.

Human dependent

At the tutor or learner support end, **audio narration** might be an effective support mechanism. Technically it is easy. Microsoft ® Word allows you to record an audio clip within a document. Alternatively free software such as Audacity can be used to create a separate sound file which can be hyperlinked to the document. However, this does require human input so can be expensive in terms of time and money.

Where a document has been structured properly (see last issue's article) both the **Document Map view and Outline view** offer ways of grasping the big picture without the details cluttering the landscape. However this still leaves the user dependent on the author - if the author hasn't structured the document properly effective outlining will be difficult to achieve.

Software dependent

Many dyslexic people can benefit in their reading speed and comprehension if they can get

- visual support - eg adjusting font colours / size or help tracking text
- audio support - text read by text to speech
- comprehension support - eg dictionary and thesaurus tools on hand.

Each of these is dealt with below. Some solutions are inbuilt to existing software, others are available as free third party programmes. This includes installable software and portable software that will run from a memory stick. The latter has the advantage of allowing the user to carry the software they need with them on a cheap pen drive and not worry about whether it is pre-installed on PCs.

Visual support

Why?

Some dyslexic people find it easier to read if the text size and colour are changed. This can reduce the shadowing, shimmering or 'rivers of white space' that some dyslexic users experience (see www.techdis.ac.uk/simdis for demonstrations). For people with poor scanning skills help with focusing on the relevant words or lines can be a real benefit.

How? - using inbuilt solutions

Font colour can be changed on most kinds of electronic documents.

- Word ® documents - Format menu > Font > Font colour.
- PDF documents - On Adobe Reader click Edit menu > Preferences > Accessibility > Replace document colours.
- Web pages (Internet Explorer 7 and above) - Tools > Internet Options > Colours. Some web designers specify the page colours in their code but this can be over-ridden by clicking Accessibility options and selecting the option to ignore colours specified on web pages.
- Web pages on Mozilla FireFox - Tools > Options > Content > Fonts and colours. Again, the option to ignore specified colours exists by unclicking the 'Allow pages to choose their own colours' option.

Font size can be changed using the zoom options but zoom on its own is useless if you end up having to scroll left and right to read the enlarged text. To make zoom useful, ensure you are setting some of the appropriate View options.

- Word ® documents - View > Web layout. Any subsequent zooming (View > Zoom) will reflow the text to fit the page.
- PDF documents - On Adobe Reader click View > Zoom > Reflow (older versions are just View >

Reflow). Any subsequent zooming (View > Zoom) will reflow text to fit the page. In most cases it will also turn multicolumn documents to a single column that fits the screen.
- Web pages - in most modern browsers [CTRL +] will enlarge the text and [CTRL -] shrink it. Web pages usually reflow text by default.

How? - using third party solutions

RapidSet is a free program that runs from a usb pen drive/memory stick. It allows you to set foreground and background colours for your system. These will apply to documents, presentations and many onscreen Windows but web pages and PDF documents may still need colours changed using the methods above.

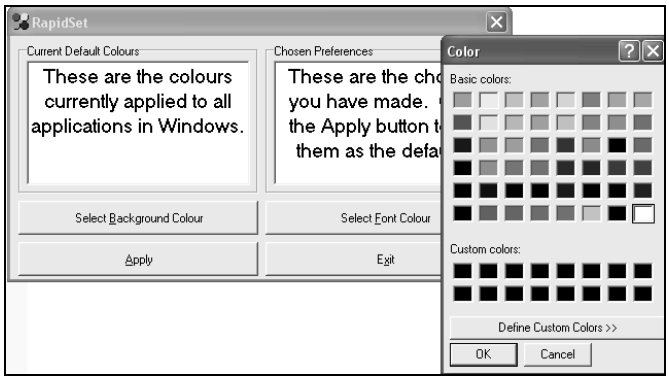

Figure 1. RapidSet changes the background and text colours through most of your system.

VuBar also runs from a usb pen drive and creates a personalised reading pane which can help focus the reader on the relevant text. The right click menu allows users to define window width, height, colour etc.

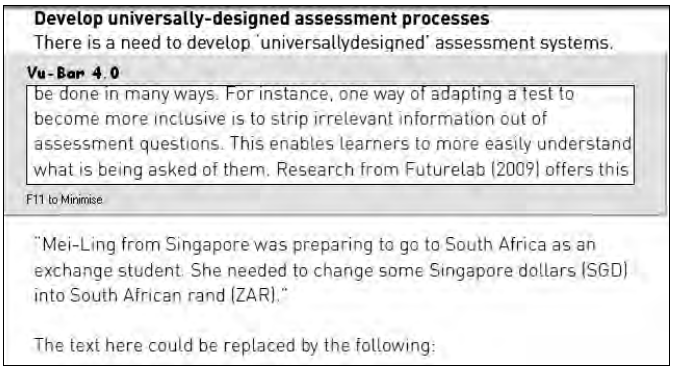

Figure 2. VuBar helps focus concentration on the text and reduces the tendency to skip lines or re-start the paragraph.

Both VuBar and RapidSet can be downloaded for free from the AccessApps part of the EduApps website - www.eduapps.org.

Having text read by text to speech

Why?

Many dyslexic people find reading laborious. This may be due to difficulties with scanning, decoding, visual appearance of text etc. As a result, comprehension suffers. Text to speech offers several benefits:
- Reading support (where the words being read are highlighted during reading)
- Reading alternative (where the user listens instead of reading)
- Portability - many programs can transform text to an audio file that the user can listen to on their personal media player or mobile phone.

Synthetic text to speech can take a bit of getting used to - it sounds like a machine speaking rather than a human - but it is well worth persevering because as soon as the ear tunes into the voice learning becomes effortless compared to the labour of visually decoding text.

How? - using third party solutions

Adobe Reader (free software used for viewing PDF documents) has inbuilt text to speech (View > Read out loud) but most software doesn't. However, several free solutions exist.
- Installable software such as WordTalk and PowerTalk can be excellent ways of making Microsoft ® Word documents and PowerPoints read out loud. Free versions of commercial packages (eg NaturalReader - www.naturalreader.com) will usually handle a wide variety of text sources.
- Web services - some web services provide free text to speech. Yakitome (www.yakitome.com) and Zanzar (www.zanzar.com) will convert from a range of text formats to MP3 audio formats. The robobraille service allows users to send a document by email (britspeech@robobraille.org). Conversion is automatic and a link to an audio version is usually emailed back within 5 - 10 minutes.
- Portable software - Dspeech runs from a memory stick and will read text, track the words being read and export the document to MP3 format. Dspeech is available from www.eduapps.org.

For a useful summary of text to speech with links to software see http://tinyurl.com/CALLtext2speech and www.techdis.ac.uk/getfreesoftware.

Comprehension support

Why?

Critical to developing a good working vocabulary is to come across new words and have them explained either by a human or by the context. Software can also support comprehension by defining new words, providing other sample contexts and even pronouncing them.

How? - using inbuilt solutions

If a user comes across an unfamiliar word in a Microsoft ®

Word document they can right-click on it to bring up a menu. Select Synonyms from the menu and a list of words with a similar meaning will appear. This is a quick and easy way to check the meaning of most non-technical words.

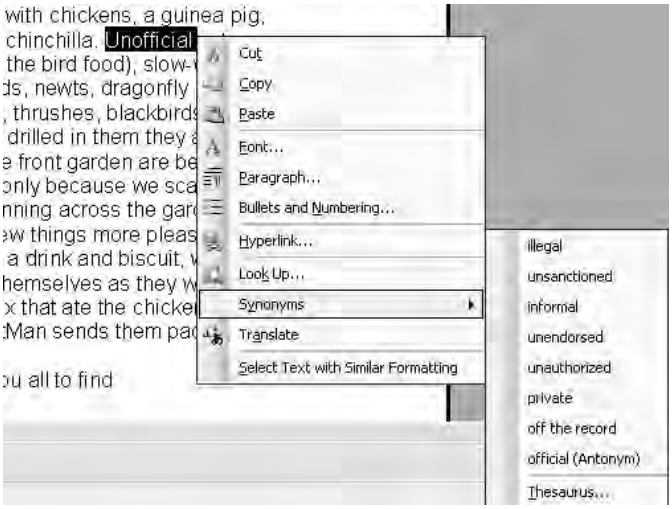

Figure 3. In this example, the word 'unofficial' has been highlighted. Using the right click menu we can check for synonyms of this word.

How? - using third party solutions

WordWeb5 is 'GreenWare' that is free to anyone who takes no more than one return flight a year. The paid for version is modestly priced for those who are wealthy enough to fly a lot.. Users can configure a 'hot key combination' so if they click the cursor on a word (eg on web page, document etc) and click their hot key combination a panel will come up displaying a definition, synonyms, antonyms, sample uses and homophones. It will even pronounce the word with synthetic speech.

If a user wanted portable dictionary software they might use The Sage which runs from a pen drive and can be downloaded from www.eduapps.org.

Conclusions

- Many dyslexic learners get excellent support in the classroom with highly featured packages like ClaroRead and TextHelp Read and Write Gold. However, this support is not often available in all classrooms and is usually completely unavailable at home, on a work placement, in a public library etc. Being aware of free software has many benefits including
- Giving learners more choices
- Giving learners the confidence to demand support (knowing it doesn't cost the institution beyond installation time)
- Making learners more sophisticated users who can know what features they would expect to pay for in a commercial package
- Allowing institutions to make more strategic purchasing decisions - for example having a mixed economy of free and commercial software.

For more information on free assistive technology tools see www.techdis.ac.uk/getfreesoftware.

Alistair McNaught

Alistair McNaught is Senior Advisor for JISC TechDis service.

Psych's Corner

In a rage over Average?
Finding yourself regressing?
Frequency a problem for you?
How can deviation be standard?

Send your questions to Mrs Jax de Action your Assessment Agony Aunt, who will solve all your problems.

Dear Mrs de Action. I am feeling a bit upset and have quite lost my confidence. I recently tested a child's IQ on the WRIT and, as I thought appropriately, gave the result as falling within the range 76~90. His mother was most upset however and said I was clearly not very good at my job because I could not give her a precise single figure, like the previous person who had tested him, AND the range of scores I gave meant that he fell in both the low average and the borderline range - and what the heck did 'borderline mean? AND How dare I refer to her son as 'borderline' anyway!

She was affronted and I felt very wrong footed. Help!

Mrs Ali Quiver

Dear Mrs Quiver
What a predicament! I do feel sorry for you! Your dilemma exemplifies the difficulty of maintaining scrupulous psychometric practice as is requried, for example for DSA reports, at the same time as conveying the results of testing in a meaningful way to the man in the street (or irate mother in the office in this case).

Let's see what the manual recommends, on page 65:

For any obtained score an upper and lower score limit is defined to express the range within which an individual's 'true' performance is likely to lie (given the various sources of error that influence test scores). So in your case the score 'would not be likely to vary above an IQ of 90, the upper limit, or below an IQ of 76 the lower limit, had it been possible to retest him many times on the WRIT while controlling for effects such as imperfect reliability, practice and fatigue'.

You are definitely right, but his upset mother has a point too! The best answer I think is a compromise position. Perhaps you should say that on the WRIT today he attained a score of 82 falling in the Low Average range, but, we can only be certain (95% certain) that if he were ever to be re-tested his 'true' score would fall in the range 76-90, i.e. it wouldn't necessarity be exactly 82 again. About 'borderline', yes, a most unfortunate term, but more commonplace in the USA than here, where it would mean statistically bordering on the special needs range. Probably best explained as just meaning 'well below average' in the body of your report—but use the proper term in your appendix

I continue to have every confidence in you (well, 95% anyway)
Jax

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'Tutorial support great!'
'I have learned such a lot on this course'

The course is offered in two modes – on-line and ***NEW!*** – by intensive contact, a four day residential course held in a comfortable spa hotel.

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NB if you hold ATS with the BDA and you successfully complete the CCET Level A you are then eligible for an Assessment Practising Certificate. For an application form, please look on the Dyslexia Action website at the link
http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Course Features

This course leads to the Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (Level A), and is accredited and verified by the British Psychological Society (visit BPS website). This qualification is rapidly becoming the "industry standard" for competence in using educational psychometric tests. The qualification is nationally accredited and internationally recognised. Those who hold the qualification can apply to be included on the National Register of Competence in Psychological Testing and are bound by the BPS code of conduct.

The Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (Level A) is open to those with a degree, teaching qualification or equivalent.

Online Course
£1300

The Online Course is highly accessible and makes full use of a combination of Real Training's Campus Online™ learning platform and Dyslexia Action's psychology department. This means you can learn and progress at a pace and time to suit you. This course is relevant to anyone who works in the education sector and who administers and/or wants to understand and interpret tests. It will develop your competence, provide career opportunities and enhance your confidence.
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gmarshall@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

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