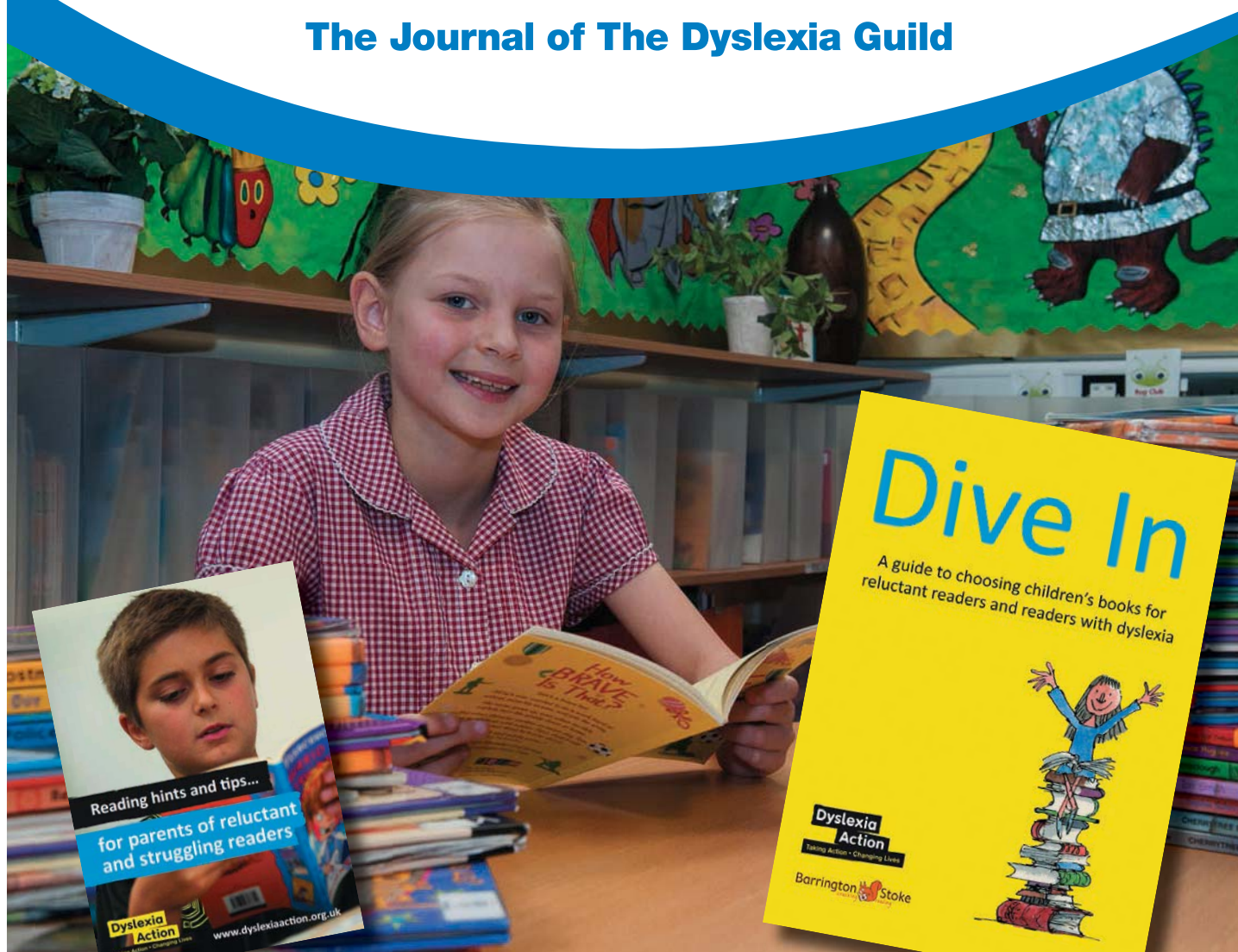


# Dyslexia REVIEW

The Journal of The Dyslexia Guild



## In this issue:

Infant  
Language Skills

Reading in Transition

Language  
Learnability

**Dyslexia  
Action**

Taking Action • Changing Lives

Volume 26 Number 1  
[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk) | Spring 2015

# JOIN THE DYSLEXIA GUILD!

**Dyslexia  
Action**

**Taking Action • Changing Lives**

## The Professional Body of Dyslexia Action

### Who is it for?

For anyone with a general or professional interest in dyslexia. Members include teachers, SENCos, teaching assistants, FE and HE tutors, parents, assessors, and other advisory specialists.

### The Aim

We aim to promote discussion, information and research as well as keeping members informed of developments in the field through publication and distribution.

### Benefits

- Membership of our specialist library with access to online books and journals
- Dyslexia Review three times a year
- Conferences and events at reduced rates
- Guild Gallery electronic newsletter
- Preferential discounts on courses, suppliers and CPD events
- Assessment Practising Certificate
- Professional Indemnity Insurance at preferential rates for APC



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is also available to  
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**For more information see our web page**

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# Editorial

This issue features the Guild Summer Conference details. Our annual event returns to London this year with an agenda focussing on the wider context of specialist assessment, current research and the specific challenges relating to the development of assessment tests. We hope you will join us in London and enjoy the opportunity to network and meet with other like-minded practitioners.

In this Review, we are pleased to feature a research report from Dr Kate Nation, Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford, and her team examining infant vocabulary skills and their relationship to reading outcomes. While Alison Keeley, Southern Region Manager for Dyslexia Action reflects on reading at the age of transition into secondary school and provides resources and sources of information to assist practitioners in their work with older learners.

Heralding the conference discussions to come on assessment, Beverley Williams from the Helen Arkell Centre and Dineke Austin from Dyslexia Action review the second edition of the Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB2) as a tool to assess the phonological abilities of primary age children. To note as well that there will be a panel discussion at the Guild Conference this year that we hope will bring to the fore member questions on assessment tools and practice. Remember also that the Guild Member's website has a Forum where questions on assessments and other practitioner queries can be posted and answered by our resident specialists.



Continuing her exploration of the European context for dyslexia/SpLD, Gill Cochrane focusses on language learnability and the teaching context, in conversation with Dr Michela Bettinelli from Cremona in Italy. Gill explores the academic context of some of the challenges faced by the practitioner and discusses with Michela how these are currently addressed in Italy. For those who would like to undertake further reading, there are a number of Guild discount book offers in this issue and a reminder to investigate the online library for even more reading both online and in hard copy.

**Kathryn Benzine**  
Editor

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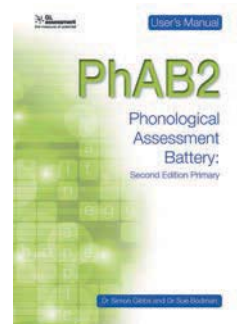
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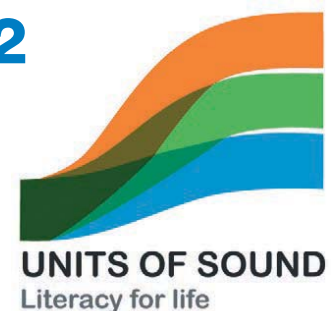
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**Creative Dyslexic Thinking**



# Membership News

**Jan Seabourne** reports on news and events for Guild members.

## Webinar Recordings

I do hope you had the chance to attend our updating webinar titled **What's New in Exam Access Arrangements** in November and the recent **Choosing e-Reader devices**. If you could not attend, do not worry as we do give access via the Guild Members Portal. Go to <https://training.dyslexiaaction.org.uk> and click the Guild Login button, once logged in select Member Events and then Webinar Recordings.

## NASEN Journals

As an additional Guild member benefits we have arranged access to the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) journals. These include:

**British Journal of Special Education (BJSE)**

**Support for Learning (SfL)**

**Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs (JORSEN).**

If you would like details of how to access these and other journal titles, please contact the Guild Administrator or email [library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

## Book for the Guild Conference! Thursday 18 June 2015

The Guild Summer conference will be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the Brunei Gallery suite. You can book now on our website at: [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild-annual-summer-conference-2015](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild-annual-summer-conference-2015)

## Do you hold an Assessment Practising Certificate?

Then you should attend the first SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) conference on 10th June at Kings College, London 2pm to 4.30pm.

It should be an interesting afternoon with talks about DSA Modernisation by Anwen Jones and Elaine Shilcock and a talk about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Adulthood by Professor Phil Asherson.

SASC is the regulatory body for Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) and enforce all regulations regarding the issuing of APC by Dyslexia Guild, PATOSS and the BDA. We would strongly encourage you to attend the AGM and put your views forward.

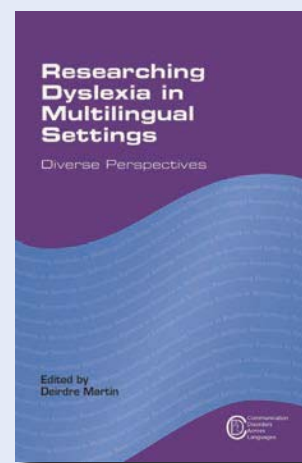
The SASC AGM will precede the conference, 1.30 to 2pm.

Places are limited so book by email to Claire Jamieson: [c.jamieson@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.jamieson@ucl.ac.uk)

Have a look at the SASC website for more details: <http://www.sasc.org.uk/NewsItem.aspx?id=45>

## A special offer from Multilingual Matters

We are pleased to offer the readers of Dyslexia Review a special 50% discount on Deirdre Martin's book **Researching Dyslexia in Multilingual Settings**. Just enter the code DYSLEX2015 at the checkout on our website [www.multilingual-matters.com](http://www.multilingual-matters.com). The discount is available on both the print and e-book edition. Offer ends: 31 July 2015.



## Dyslexia Action

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- Study Skills

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# Annual Summer Conference

**Dyslexia  
Action**

**Taking Action • Changing Lives**

**Join us at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London for our Annual Guild Conference.**



**SpLD assessment in context**  
**Thursday 18 June 2015**

## Key speakers:

- **Professor Amanda Kirby, University of South Wales**, Dyspraxia (DCD) through the ages – from child to adulthood
- **Professor Julie Dockrell, UCL Institute of Education**, Assessing Language Skills in Young Children
- **Dr Meesha Warmington, University of York**, Bilingual Language Assessment
- **Mary Daly, the Dyslexia SpLD Trust**, The Local Offer and the place of Diagnostic Assessment in School

A buffet lunch will be provided, with an opportunity to network and visit the exhibition.

**Book online now: [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)**  
Early bird and Guild Member discounts available.

# Annual Summer Conference Agenda

Time	Room	Subject/Activity
9.30am - 10.15am	Brunei Suite, Ground Floor, Entrance level	<b>Arrival, registration and refreshments</b>
10.15am - 10.30am	Lecture Theatre, Lower Ground Floor	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Kevin Geeson, Chief Executive of Dyslexia Action</b>
10.30am - 11.30am	Lecture Theatre, Lower Ground Floor	<b>Keynote speaker</b> <b>Professor Amanda Kirby, University of South Wales</b> DCD (Dyspraxia) through the ages - from child to adulthood: Perspectives learnt from personal, professional and research experience and how to apply them in assessment and practice.
11.30am - 12 noon	Ground Floor	<b>Refreshments and exhibition</b>
12 noon - 1.00pm	Lecture Theatre, Lower Ground Floor	<b>Speaker 2</b> <b>Dr Meesha Warmington, University of York</b> Bilingual Language Assessment
<b>OR</b>	Seminar Room B202, Second Floor	<b>Speaker 3</b> <b>Mary Daly, The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust</b> The Local Offer and the place of Diagnostic Assessment in School
1.00pm - 1.45pm	Ground Floor	<b>Lunch</b> A buffet lunch will be served. The exhibition will be open to browse and research students from the UCL Institute of Education will present research posters on the Lower Ground floor.
1.45pm - 2.45pm	Lecture Theatre, Lower Ground Floor	<b>Keynote speaker</b> <b>Professor Julie Dockrell, UCL Institute of Education</b> Assessing Language Skills in Young Children: Identifying the issues for professionals when assessing language skills.
2.45pm - 3.30pm	Lecture Theatre, Lower Ground Floor	<b>Panel discussion</b> A discussion and question and answer session on: Diagnostic Assessment: is it fit for purpose? Conference speakers, representatives and delegates.
3.30pm - 4.00pm	Ground Floor	<b>Tea and coffee, prize draw, conference close</b> <b>Guild Members' meeting</b>

**Book online now: [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)**  
Early bird and Guild Member discounts available.

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# Annual Summer Conference

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**Join us at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London for our Annual Guild Conference.**



**SpLD assessment in context**  
**Thursday 18 June 2015**

## **Who should attend?**

The Dyslexia Guild welcomes all those with a professional interest in dyslexia and SpLD. From specialist teachers, SENCos, learning support staff and teaching assistants to educational psychologists. Guild members enjoy a preferential rate.

## **Why 'SpLD assessment in context'?**

In current educational settings it is important for all staff to understand the process that leads to assessment and diagnosis. Understanding the way in which assessment tests are developed and used in the context of dyslexia and SpLD can assist you in your support of people with special educational needs and ensure that they have the resources they need to progress. This conference will look at some of the specific challenges in the development of assessment and current research in this field. Why do we undertake diagnostic assessment; what leads to the development of assessment; and is it fit for purpose; are all questions that will be explored during the day.

## **What can I expect from the conference?**

You will hear about current research and benefit from taking time out of your daily schedule to learn, debate and reflect on cutting-edge practice. Expect a warm welcome from our friendly Dyslexia Action staff, meet researchers and exhibitors and enjoy a networking lunch. An attendance certificate is provided for your Continuing Professional Development portfolio.

## **The venue**

The Brunei Gallery at SOAS is conveniently located off the north-west corner of Russell Square in Bloomsbury, London with excellent public transport connections and a choice of nearby hotels.



# Can Infant Vocabulary Skills Predict Childhood Reading Outcomes?

**Dr Fiona Duff, Gurpreet Reen, Dr Kim Plunkett and Dr Kate Nation** from the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford present the findings from their research into infant language skills.

## Background

We know from research of school-age children that spoken language skills are important for the development of reading skills: Children with good language skills tend to develop good reading skills; and children with poor language skills are more likely to struggle with reading (e.g., Muter, Hulme, Snowling, & Stevenson, 2004). Language develops very early in a child's life—with most children learning to understand and use words (develop their vocabulary) within the first two years of life (e.g., Fenson et al., 1994). An interesting question is whether these infant language skills are a good indicator of reading and language outcomes later on in a child's development. If they are, infant vocabulary could be used to identify children early on who might later develop reading or language difficulties.

Some researchers have looked into how infant vocabulary relates to later reading development. An example of one such study comes from Lee (2011), who tracked over 1000 American infants at regular intervals up to the age of 11. Children's productive vocabulary skills at 2 years old were correlated with their childhood language and literacy outcomes. The correlations between infant vocabulary and reading outcomes were low. We wished to carry out a similar investigation in a sample of children from the UK, and compare our findings.

## Study Design

Children who took part in this study were assessed on two occasions.

## Infancy

When children were between 1 and 2 years old, they visited the University of Oxford's *BabyLab*. As part of this visit, one of their parents completed the *Oxford Communicative Development Inventory (OCDI)*. This involved parents working through a list of 416 words, and for each word indicating whether their child understood it (this is referred to as vocabulary comprehension) and whether they understood and used it (vocabulary production). You can find out more about the *OCDI* online (<http://babylab.psy.ox.ac.uk/research/oxford-cdi>).

## School-age

We followed up children when they were in primary school (between 4 and 9 years old). We assessed children's reading and language skills using the kinds of tests that an educational psychologist or speech therapist might use.

**Vocabulary Knowledge** was measured in two ways.

Vocabulary comprehension was assessed using the *Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test* (Brownell, 2000). In this test, children hear a series of increasingly harder words, and for each word are asked to choose which picture (out of four options) matches the word's meaning. Vocabulary production was assessed using the *Expressive One Word Picture*

*Vocabulary Test* (Brownell, 2000). Children saw a series of pictures and had to name the pictures aloud.

**Phonological Awareness** refers to the ability to tap into the sounds that make up our spoken language, and is a critical skill for learning to read (Muter et al., 2004). This was assessed in children using the *Children's Test of Phonological Processing* (Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 1999). Children were asked to take away different chunks of sounds (syllables, then phonemes) from spoken words.

**Reading Accuracy** was measured by asking children to read aloud three sets of different kinds of words: nonwords (made up words, e.g., *mon*), regular words (words that can be 'sounded out' easily, e.g., *sun*) and exception words (words that can't be 'sounded out' easily, e.g., *who*). These words were taken from the *Diagnostic Test of Word Reading Processes* (Forum for Research into Language and Literacy, 2012).

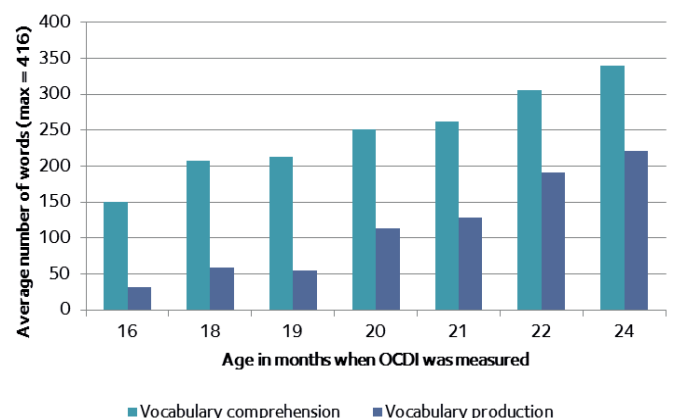
**Reading Comprehension** was assessed using the *York Assessment of Reading Comprehension* (Snowling et al., 2009). Children were asked to read two short stories, and then answer some questions about the stories to demonstrate their understanding of what they had read.

## Participating Children

In total, 300 children from Oxfordshire and beyond were assessed in infancy and in primary school.

## Infancy

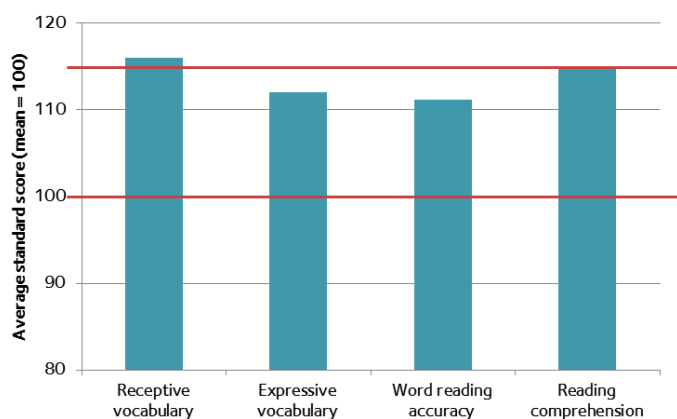
When seen in infancy, the children were aged between 16 and 24 months (with an average of 19 months). Figure 1 shows the average number of words from the *OCDI* that children could understand (comprehension) and use (production), according to the different age groups.



**Figure 1:** The average number of words (out of 416) that infants understood (vocabulary comprehension) and used (vocabulary production) according to their age.

## School-age

When followed-up at school, the children were aged between 4 and 9 years (average of 6½ years). In general, the children were higher than the national average in terms of social and economic well-being. As a group, the children performed in the high-average range on the school-age measures of reading and language. Figure 2 shows the group's vocabulary and reading attainments. The bottom line represents the average score (100) expected for children of their age. The top line represents the boundary between average and above-average performance for children of their age (115).



**Figure 2:** The vocabulary and reading scores for the whole group of children at school-age (a score of 100 reflects average performance; 115 is above average).

## How to Answer our Research Question

Our key research question was: Is the size of an infant's vocabulary a good indicator of their level of reading and language in later childhood? To answer this question, we analysed all of the children's test results together, using a special statistical technique called 'structural equation modelling'.

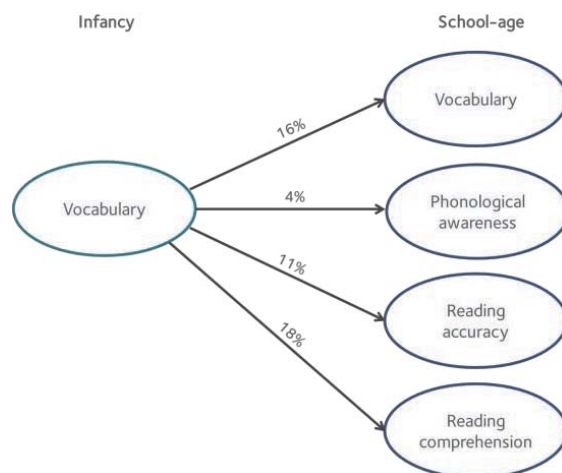
Taking the example of vocabulary knowledge, our statistical models tell us how closely a child's vocabulary level in infancy relates to their vocabulary level at school-age. If they are closely related, then infant vocabulary level is a good indicator (or predictor) of school-age vocabulary level. We can assess how closely vocabulary levels are related over time are by using a percentage score, with 0% meaning they are not at all related and 100% meaning they are perfectly related.

## Main Findings

### Question 1: Is infant vocabulary a good indicator of school-age outcomes?

Figure 3 answers our first question. Infant vocabulary is related to school-age outcomes: Children who have larger vocabularies when they are infants tend to achieve higher levels of reading and language in primary school. However, we can see from the percentage scores that the strengths of the relationships over time are at the low end (between 4% and 18%). This means that even though children with better vocabulary knowledge early on tend to have better school-age outcomes, the relationship is not strong enough for us to be able to predict how well an individual child will do. In particular, it would not be wise to

use our parent-measure of infant vocabulary (the *OCDI*) to identify young children who are at risk for having language or reading difficulties in primary school.

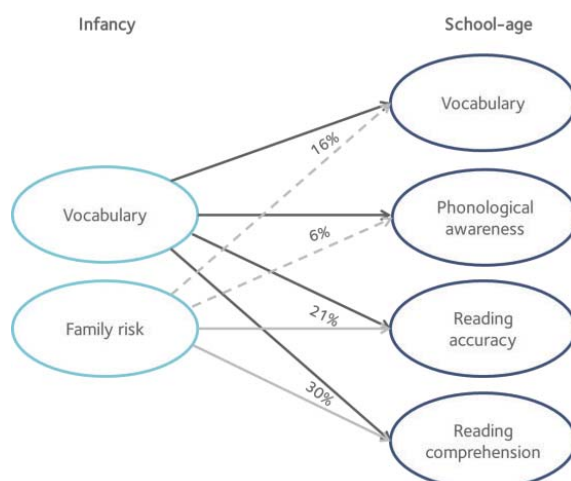


**Figure 3:** This shows how closely infant vocabulary is related to school-age outcomes (0% = unrelated, 100% = perfectly related).

### Question 2: How can we improve prediction of school-age outcomes?

Our percentage scores, which show how closely performance in infancy and in primary school are related, were quite low. This led us to wonder whether there were other simple measures from infancy that would improve our prediction of how well children would perform in primary school. Other researchers have shown that children who have a close family member who has a reading or language difficulty are at risk of having poorer reading outcomes (e.g., Bishop et al., 2012).

We asked parents in our study whether their child had a sibling or parent who had a reading or language difficulty. We call this having a 'family risk'. We got responses for 139 children, and 35% of them had a family risk. We added this information into our statistical model (Figure 4). This time, the percentages show how well infant vocabulary and family risk are related to school outcomes, when considered together.



**Figure 4:** This shows how well infant vocabulary and having a family risk for a reading or language difficulty, when considered together, are related to school-age outcomes (0% = unrelated, 100% = perfectly related).

We can compare the percentages in Figures 3 and 4. The values are similar for the arrows that lead to vocabulary (16% in Figure 3 and Figure 4) and to phonological awareness (4% in Figure 3, 6% in Figure 4). This tells us that when estimating spoken language outcomes, a child's 'family risk' status does not give us any more information than their infant vocabulary level on its own. However, the percentage values are higher in Figure 4 than in Figure 3 for the arrows that lead to reading accuracy (11% in Figure 3, 21% in Figure 4) and reading comprehension (18% in Figure 3, 30% in Figure 4). This tells us that when estimating reading outcomes, 'family risk' adds important information over that from infant vocabulary level.

Although prediction for individual children would still not be perfect, these results suggest that infants with small vocabularies who also have a family risk for a reading or language difficulty are more likely to have reading difficulties in primary school. This observation fits with findings from studies of children at family risk of developing dyslexia, which have found that children with a family risk who go on to reach a diagnosis of dyslexia in middle childhood have weaker pre-school vocabulary skills than children with a family risk who do not go on to reach a diagnosis of dyslexia (e.g., Scarborough, 1990).

### Summary

When children were infants (16 to 24 months), their parents filled in a checklist to show how many words their child could understand and use (their vocabulary knowledge). We tested how closely children's vocabulary levels in infancy were related to their reading and language levels at school-age (4 to 9 years) – around 5 years later.

Infant vocabulary was related to school-age outcomes: Infants with larger vocabularies tended to achieve higher levels of reading and language in primary school. However, the relationship was not strong enough for us to recommend the use of this parent-report of vocabulary alone to identify infants who might go on to have a reading or language difficulty. Having a parent or sibling with a reading or language difficulty (having a 'family risk') was related to school-age reading outcomes but not language outcomes. Infants with small vocabularies who also have a family risk are more likely to have reading difficulties in primary school.

It is quick and easy to get information about vocabulary knowledge and family risk from parents. Practitioners could use this information as an indication of which children are at greater risk of future reading difficulties.

### Acknowledgements

The *Learning to Read* project team wishes to thank those who took part in this research and made it happen: all the children, their parents, and their schools. A number of researchers helped with this project at the University of Oxford: Nadja Althaus, Dorothy Bishop, Julia Dilnot, Charles Hulme, Jane Ralph, and Suzy Styles. We appreciate all their contributions. Finally, we are grateful to the Nuffield Foundation, who funded this research project (grant number EDU/4006, awarded to Kate Nation and Kim Plunkett).

A full scientific report of these findings has been published and is freely available online (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12378/abstract>). The reference is:

Duff, F.J., Reen, G., Plunkett, K., & Nation, K. (2015, online). Do infant vocabulary skills predict school-age language and literacy outcomes? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

Correspondence to: [kate.nation@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kate.nation@psy.ox.ac.uk)

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# Reading in Transition

**Alison Keeley, Southern Region Manager for Dyslexia Action reflects on ways in which reluctant readers and struggling readers can be engaged at the point of transition into secondary school.**



**Alison Keeley**

**T**here is consistent evidence that age affects attitudes to reading and reading behaviour; that children enjoy reading less as they get older (Topping, 2010; Clark and Osborne, 2008; Clark and Douglas 2011). The move to secondary school can be the point of disengagement for students or it can offer a key opportunity to engage reluctant readers and inspire those who find reading a challenge.

One of the ways in which secondary schools can successfully engage reluctant readers at transition is by having, and promoting, a range of high quality books and reading material which is both age appropriate and accessible. Fortunately, there is a wealth of such reading material available.

Finding time to read and make selections from the vast range of published titles is not easy. Here are some carefully selected titles which you might like to share with your students. The books listed here are only a few of the amazing and exciting titles which are in existence.

## Familiar authors

Darren Shan, Malorie Blackman and Bali Rai are amongst the authors who write for a wide range of audiences. These are authors that your students will recognise, who write books for modern teenage audiences and who are skilled in creating stories which engage and entertain readers.

Crafting a gripping story in a small number of words is not an easy task. Stories such as these can be held up as examples of good story writing and can be used to demonstrate to students some of the strategies authors use when writing.

**Hagurosan** by Darren Shan is the story of a young Japanese boy who agrees to take an offering of cake to a shrine at the request of his mother. When he gets hungry on his journey he eats the cake meant for the spirits, events then take a turn which no one could have expected.

In **Robot Girl** by Malorie Blackman we are introduced to Claire whose father is a scientist who has been spending a lot of time on his latest project. Claire is keen to know what her father has been working on but when she eventually finds out what her father has been working on she is less than impressed!

**Old Dog, New Tricks** by Bali Rai introduces us to the Singh family who have just moved house. Their new neighbour Mick is less than welcoming and Harvey Singh

decides that there must be a way for them to get along – he just needs to figure out what that way is.

## Tackling relevant issues

Bullying, exam stress, family situations, racism and friendships are all topics which students encounter on a daily basis, if not personally then through their peers. Books which deal with these issues can be used to enable difficult topics to be discussed. They allow different viewpoints to be presented and explored within a safe, blame free environment

**Web** by Alison Prince describes the dilemma faced by Tom who accepts help with his homework from his football coach Max. When Max starts to blackmail Tom he is not sure who to turn to.

**Six Hours** by Pete Johnson details an unusual day spent by Dominic and Lara. Having sneaked out of school to escape the pressures they are feeling from taking exams they enjoy a day together and surprisingly become good friends.

**The Unforgotten Coat** by Frank Cottrell Boyce uses atmospheric polaroid photographs to create an unusual story of friendship. When Julie is asked to be the guide for two brothers who have arrived in England from Mongolia and a beautiful and unexpected friendship develops.

## Range of reading material

Different types of reading material suit different readers. If a range of types of reading material are on offer students are more likely to be able to find one which suits their taste.

## Newspapers and magazines

Students may already be aware of **First News** from their primary school, it is newspaper for young people that schools can subscribe to. If you have the budget you may wish to subscribe to a range of national and or local newspapers or magazines. If you are not sure which newspapers or magazines to select then by far the best solution is to ask your students which ones they would enjoy reading. If you have no budget for subscriptions you can still include free newspapers, like **Metro**, and magazines, such as **Stylist**, in the range of reading material you offer.

## Picture books for older readers

Picture books are not exclusively written for younger readers. There is an ever growing range of picture books



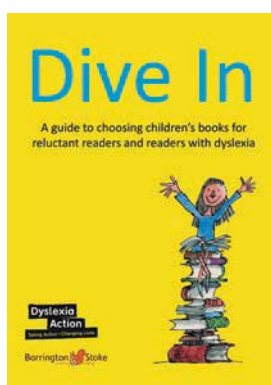
which are aimed at older readers. **Eric** by Shaun Tan, **Way Home** by Libby Hathorn, **Azzi in Between** by Sarah Garland and **Tuesday** by David Weisner are examples of just some of the picture books which are accessible to a wide range of readers, cover topics which are suitable for older readers and which offer varied discussion points.

### Graphic novels

A wide range of stories from different genres have been used to create graphic novels. This style of story-telling can have huge appeal for some readers. The **Boffin Boy** series by David Orme are graphic novels focussing on the super hero Boffin Boy with a punchy story and minimal text. Many authors such as Anthony Horowitz and Robert Muchamore have had graphic novels created from their young adult fiction. Classic stories from Beowulf to Northanger Abbey have all been restyled as graphic novels bringing them to a new audience.

Although all of the books suggested above are suitable for dyslexic and reluctant readers they should by no means be considered as only being suitable for those who find reading challenging. The books identified are high quality tales written by skilled authors which will entertain readers of all abilities.

There are many places you can go for further information. Dyslexia Action has created the Dive In book guide which can be downloaded from the Dyslexia Action website, you can also find the Dyslexia Action monthly book blog. Barrington Stoke and Franklin Watts are two of the



growing number of publishers who specialise in creating books for reluctant readers and dyslexic readers. There are also websites such as the Booktrust website where independent reviews and comments about books from a wide cross section of publishers can be found.

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/book-guide-reluctant-and-dyslexic-readers](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/book-guide-reluctant-and-dyslexic-readers)

### 10 ways to promote reading

**Featured texts** – Choose somewhere prominent and create a display of related texts. Putting the books in an unusual place or presenting them in a different way will draw attention to them.

**Different ways of reading** – Offer students the opportunity to try out different ways of reading – audio books, e-readers, text to speech etc. so that they can find out what works for them.

**Book groups** – Book groups are a fantastic way to encourage students to talk about books. You could meet online or in person. Students do not all have to read the same text encourage them to share what they are reading and promote it to other members of the group.

**Peer spokespeople** - Peer pressure can be a powerful tool. Offering students ways to promote books to each

other can work really well. You might want to select some 'Reading Champions' who you know will be vocal about the books they have read.

**Same story, different style** - Introducing a text in a different format to the one it was written in can increase engagement levels, confidence and understanding of texts. Using a range of different versions and formats of the same story can allow discussions between readers of differing abilities and tastes.

**Book selection** – It is always difficult to know which books to purchase or to highlight to your students. Involving your students in choosing the books you purchase or choose to promote gives the students a meaningful role and makes your job easier.

**I am reading...** - Let students into your world by sharing with them what you are currently reading. Encourage other adults that the students come into contact with to do the same and talk to your students about what you are reading and why. Don't forget to include newspapers, magazines and reading online.

**Book reviews** - Encourage your students to review books that they read and share the reviews with others. Book reviews can be in any format – written, video or audio.

**Link with the library** – Libraries are exciting places which are looking for ways to engage with young people. Talk to your local library, find out what they are offering and promote this to your students. Offer rewards for students who go and investigate the library themselves.

**Use their passion** – If a student has something they are interested in it can be a hook to encourage them to read if they are presented with a book which features their passion. For example there are a vast number of high quality accessible texts which feature different sports and sports stars.

If you have any questions or comments or suggestions for future articles I would be very happy to hear from you. Contact: [Alison.keeley@dyslexia.org.uk](mailto:Alison.keeley@dyslexia.org.uk)

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**See also: Reading hints and tips for parents of reluctant and struggling readers:**

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/files/dyslexiaaction/a5\\_01\\_4pp\\_leaflet\\_reading\\_hints\\_and\\_tips\\_aw.pdf](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/files/dyslexiaaction/a5_01_4pp_leaflet_reading_hints_and_tips_aw.pdf)

# Springboard for Children

**Mary Dawson, Chief Executive,** talks to Dyslexia Review about the aims and focus of the Springboard for Children charity.



**Mary Dawson**



**S**pringboard believes every child deserves a fair chance of future success. As a charity we provide one-to-one literacy teaching for children and young people who struggle with learning to read, write, speak and listen. We also provide additional training and resources for schools and parents to help children unlock their learning potential. We only work one-to-one and we always work in partnership with schools.

Set up nearly 25 years ago, Springboard's focus is early intervention in challenging settings. Our aim is to make sure children have the literacy and learning skills they need as early as possible in their school lives to secure better long term outcomes. We focus our efforts on schools and communities with high levels of poverty and free school meals.

In the last 25 years education policies and priorities have, of course, changed. But it is still true that some children and young people need more support than others to reach their potential. Springboard is unique but it's not new. We base all our work on what the research says is most effective for those struggling with literacy and we evolve as we learn more.

The multi-sensory literacy programme we use is delivered by a mix of highly trained tutors and volunteers and in 2013/2014 we worked with over 700 children. Targeted fundraising means we can heavily subsidise the programme for schools and reach those who need the support the most.

We continue to develop our approach to evaluation to complement school assessments. In 2013/2014 Springboard Expert narrowed the reading age gap from an average of 22 months to just 8 months for its pupils based on evidence from the Salford Sentence Reading Test. Springboard Essential which is a volunteer led programme narrowed the comprehension age gap from an average of 9 months to just 1 month.

In September 2014 we rolled out Springboard to 7 new schools including 2 new secondary schools. Our work in secondary schools is based on a successful pilot with 29 students, funded by the Dyslexia-SpLD Trust. During the pilot 96% of students made progress in reading with over half of the students making in excess of 12 month's progress.

More recently we have also developed the Reader Leader programme to help schools introduce structured peer to peer literacy tuition. We've seen

gains in reading and comprehension ages as well as benefits to student's attitudes to learning.

Here are a few of the things that we have learned when introducing peer tutoring for literacy for the first time.

- Make sure everyone in school is clear about the commitment expected at the start and who is responsible for making sure it will happen.
- When and where will tutoring take place? Libraries and lunchtimes are common options but lunchtimes can be busy so we recommend using tutor time. This also gives the sessions more status.
- Make sure your tutors have the right sort of training from the start. We found Years 9 and 10 quickly pick up the basics of tutoring and can handle some complex phonic details to help their tutees from Years 7 and 8.
- How will you mark the beginning and end of the programme?
- How long will the tutoring last? We found 10 weeks a good timeframe.
- How will you know what difference you have made? We used the Salford Sentence Reading Test and the Myself as a Learner scale to understand progress.

If you think Springboard can help in your setting or if you would like to join us as a volunteer or supporter please contact [info@springboard.org.uk](mailto:info@springboard.org.uk)

You can find out more about Springboard for Children at: [www.springboard.org.uk/](http://www.springboard.org.uk/)

# Laying the Right Foundations for Reading

**Beverley Williams**, Head of Professional Training at the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre, discusses how to discover more about a child's phonological strengths and weaknesses with the *Phonological Assessment Battery 2*

**T**he earlier we can identify the reasons for any learning difficulties in children, the better. Without a correct diagnosis, children with dyslexia can feel as though they are 'stupid' – as our own Helen Arkell did – leading in turn to both short and long-term consequences such as loss of confidence, behavioural difficulties, or missed learning opportunities.

Dyslexia, as we know, isn't a 'one size fits all' learning difficulty. It covers a very broad spectrum of issues and manifests itself variously in different people. This means diagnosis isn't always straightforward.

One of the key areas we explore when children come for an assessment at the Helen Arkell

Centre is phonological awareness. This refers to the understanding of the smallest units of sound in a word and is a critical first step in learning how to read. Children use this knowledge to decode new words they see.

To put it in technical language we need to find out as much as we can about their underpinning skills, for example their phoneme segmentation, deletion and blending skills. It is really important to investigate their phonological memory too. With new subtests, the Phonological Assessment Battery 2 (PhAB2) Primary allows for an even wider range of information to be gathered about a child's phonological processing skills and abilities.

## The need to update assessments

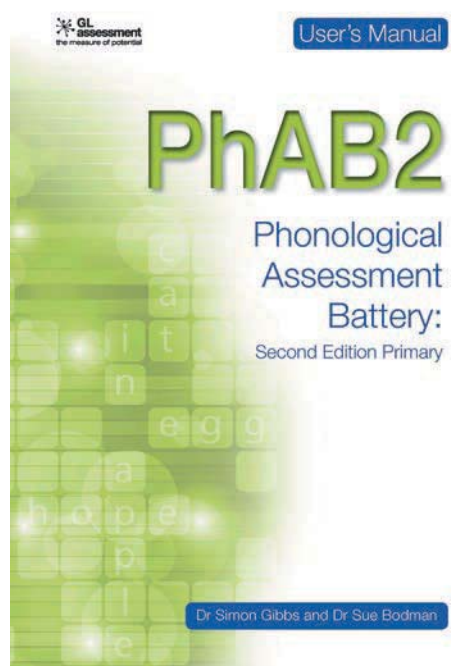
It goes without saying that any tests we use in our assessment process must be comprehensive, robust, reliable and carefully designed for the task in hand. Researchers, however, are continually discovering more and more about what is important when it comes to phonological awareness and how any weaknesses in these skills will impact on learning. So the fantastic assessment you designed or bought in five years ago may not be the best one to use today.

As leaders in our field, we are obviously keen to make use of the latest developments so when we heard GL Assessment's PhAB assessment battery of tests had been re-standardised and updated we were keen to try the latest version.

## Accurate assessment

During an assessment we start by looking at general ability, attainment in reading, spelling and writing, and then at cognitive processing skills such as memory, phonological awareness and speed of processing. Let's take Child M, a boy aged 8 years and 4 months, as an example. He came for assessment having not made the expected progress at school. He had issues with spelling, retaining information and reading. Recently he had begun to get frustrated as he was unable to complete tasks. His general ability was sound, so we looked at what was going on cognitively using the assessment.

Using the naming speed test, we discovered that his speed of processing phonological information was slower than expected and he needed more time to retrieve the right words. He also found the phoneme substitution task very difficult, struggling to take away and add the sounds needed to change 'go' into 'so', for example, and the new phoneme deletion test even more so. We also discovered he found the phonological (alliteration and rhyme) fluency tests tricky, but could do the semantic fluency task easily. These subtest results highlighted his particular difficulty in retrieving information automatically from his long term memory when there was a phonological element involved. From this knowledge we can now recommend that extra time is given so that he can access and retrieve the information from his long-term memory and demonstrate his understanding and knowledge.







In my view it is always important to use a range of assessments; so we brought this data together with results from other tests, which revealed Child M also had issues with his short-term and working memory and visual motor integration (the way his eyes and hands work together). Overall, his difficulties were impacting on his acquisition of literacy and he had below average scores. With this information together, we were confident in diagnosing the boy with dyslexia.

### Afterwards

A diagnosis of dyslexia isn't an end point, of course, more a beginning. We speak to parents directly afterwards, explaining what we've found and also discussing a programme of support taking into consideration the child's underlying ability and current attainment.

In our subsequent written report, we detail reasonable adjustments that could be made in the classroom, ways in which parents can help at home, as well as access arrangements in exams

### Phonological Assessment Battery 2 (PhAB2) Primary from GL

Assessment consists of a battery of 10 tests including:

- Alliteration (5-11 years) – isolating the initial sounds in single syllable words
- Blending (5-6 years) – combining sounds to form recognizable words
- Fluency (5-11 years) – retrieving phonological and semantic representations from long-term memory
- Naming Speed (5-11 years) – assessing speed of phonological production
- Non-word Reading (5-11 years) – decoding unfamiliar strings of letters
- Phoneme Deletion (7-11 years) – detecting individual sounds in a word and then processing how the word would sound without a specific phoneme
- Phoneme Segmentation (5-6 years) – demonstrating ability to detect the individual sounds within a word
- Phoneme Substitution (7-11 years) – detecting and deleting first sound of a word and replacing with another eg 'cat' with a /f/ gives 'fat'
- Phonological working memory (5-11 years) – explicitly testing a child's short term phonological memory.
- Rhyme test (5 - 6 years) – assessing a child's ability to detect similar sounds in words

[www.gl-assessment.co.uk](http://www.gl-assessment.co.uk)

and specialist teacher support, if appropriate.

For those with phonological issues, the interventions don't always need to be heavy-handed. It could simply be playing more family games at home such as I Spy or rhyming games. The child doesn't even need to know they are being helped. On the other hand, a child with slow processing skills might need a little more think time when being asked about a spelling or when reading.

### Essential Toolkit

One of the things I really like about the PhAB2 assessment is that it can be administered by teachers in schools as well as

by educational psychologists. As a specialist assessor, I might be able to delve more deeply into the information yielded, but there is no doubt it has also been well designed for use in a school setting. In fact, it's an ideal follow-up assessment for pupils with low scores in any phonics screening or literacy test which will mean that the children that needs it can get help quickly.

There is no cure for dyslexia, however, early diagnosis helps children develop strategies to cope with their challenges and encourages them to find their strengths. In my view that is something we should all be working towards.



# PhAB2:

## A Specialist Assessor's View

**Dineke Austin**, Specialist Assessor and Lead Exam Access Arrangements Tutor for Dyslexia Action, puts the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the *Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB2)* under the practitioner's spotlight.

**T**his journal already presents a detailed account of the ways in which the recently published PhAB2 can be used to identify and support an individual pupil's needs. To complement this, I present a specialist assessor's perspective, setting out a personal view of the test's applicability in the primary sector.

At the point when the excellent book 'Dyslexia Assessing and Reporting'<sup>1</sup> appeared on the market, the original edition of PhAB, published in 1997, was already 16 years old, thus not on their recommended test list. As we know, good practice guidelines recommend that assessors use only nationally standardised, recently published editions of tests; whether for examination access arrangements or full diagnostic assessments. Now that the second edition of PhAB has been published, it very definitely meets those requirements, and is an extremely good addition for primary school practitioners.

What does PhAB2 have in its favour? Age apart, one of the relative weaknesses of PhAB's first edition in comparison even with the first edition of CTOPP was the fact that it did not include tests of phoneme blending, segmentation and deletion; or any test of phonological memory. Comparing this with Sir Jim Rose's working definition of dyslexia<sup>2</sup>, '*...features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed*', edition one of PhAB did not fully explore these aspects. However, with the addition in PhAB2 of *Blending, Phoneme Segmentation, Phoneme Deletion* and *Phonological Working Memory* this deficit has now partially been filled: only partially, because sadly the phoneme segmentation and blending subtests cover the 5-6 age range alone, so although these tests can still be used as a qualitative measure, Standard Scores cannot be reported above that age.

What else marks this out as a good testing tool? Compared with CTOPP-2, PhAB already included tests of rhyme, spoonerisms, alliteration, fluency and non-word reading, the majority designed for the full primary age range; thus covering aspects not included in CTOPP-2, which would need supplementing with another test in order to gain as full a picture. Now these tests, along with the new additions, have been standardised against a modern UK primary school population, grounded in phonics approaches; which is what made the earlier version so dated. It also incorporates features that make it an accurate tool for assessing additional language learners; visual materials are more attractively and appropriately designed: an important consideration with younger children.

The original PhAB always had significant strengths in terms of clear administration instructions, delivered by the assessor, not through a CD: which for children with fitted grommets or other hearing difficulties is an important consideration, enabling the pace to be varied and the child to lip read. Items of vocabulary are clearly rooted in a UK cultural background, and the interpretation sections of the manual continue to have clear links with the English National Curriculum. PhAB-2 can provide evidence of children's specific difficulties in preparing for the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1, particularly those pupils who need to retake the check at the end of Year 2: hence the focus in certain tests on the 5-6 age range. It also provides data in support of extra time for examination access arrangements in Key Stage 2 tests; along with classroom evidence of need and normal way of working. On cost grounds also, PhAB2 is a good investment: at £155 plus VAT it is less expensive than its immediate rivals.

Assessors in Key Stage 3 in secondary schools will be disappointed, as the first edition included 12-14 year olds, whilst PhAB2 only goes up to the age of 11 years: for this reason a different battery of tests is required, as PhAB really should not be used for much longer, due to its age. Additionally, scores close to the age ceiling are less reliable than other scores, so even if used with pupils in Year 9, PhAB was never recommended as a test for JCQ examination access arrangements.

What are the disadvantages of PhAB2? It does what it claims – assessing phonological abilities – but does not include tests of reading, spelling or writing. In these respects other tools are needed to assess such aspects; as well as numeracy skills. However, it now covers phonological awareness extremely thoroughly, and for those who work solely in the primary sector I would argue that it does this in more detail and in more user-friendly ways than does the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP2). Would I buy it? If I worked in a primary school, most definitely yes. Practitioners who work across several sectors, such as myself though, will be better advised to buy CTOPP2, which is also SASC approved for the post-16 age range.

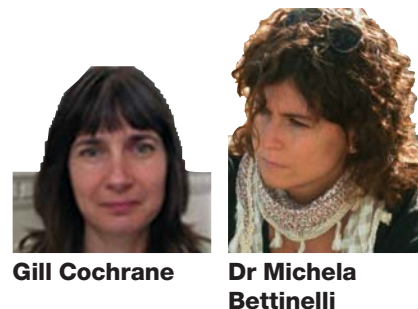
**PhAB2 and CTOPP2 are both available at a 10% discount to Guild members from the Dyslexia Action Shop, [www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk/](http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk/)**

<sup>1</sup> Jones A and K. Kindersley (2013) *Dyslexia: Assessing and Reporting*, The Patoss Guide, Hodder Education, London.

<sup>2</sup> Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties: An independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, June 2009, p13.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00659-2009DOM-EN.pdf>

# Language Learnability and the Teaching Context: Perspectives on Dyslexia in Italy



In this article **Gill Cochrane**, Postgraduate Senior Tutor at Dyslexia Action, considers how the features of languages and the features of teaching practice can combine to affect learning outcomes for learners with dyslexia. It was inspired by and includes conversation with **Dr Michela Bettinelli** who works with teachers and groups of children in an after-school club in Cremona, Northern Italy.

## The Learnability of Languages

A language's learnability is related to its inherent accessibility for end-users. Both the teaching and learning of literacy skills is more challenging when there is a mismatch (a lack of direct correspondence) between the spoken and written form of the language. How a language is captured in textual form (its orthography) therefore affects its inherent accessibility. Languages that have a low level of abstraction are known as orthographically shallow – in such languages the sound to symbol mappings are generally simple and reliable and therefore relatively easy to learn. Languages classified as orthographically deep, have a high level of abstraction, which can arise from several different features of language:

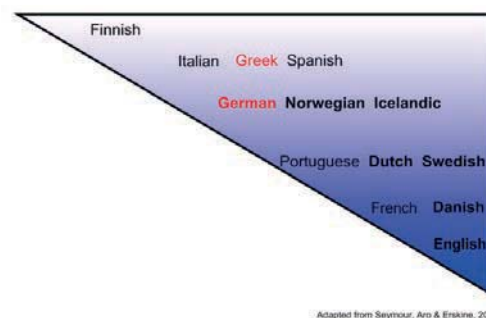
- There are spelling choices for phonemes. For example in English, /f/ can be spelt <f>, <ff>, <ph>, <gh> and so on.
- There are alternative pronunciations for graphemes. For example, in English the following pairs of words look like they should rhyme: 'rough' and 'Slough', 'reading' and 'Reading'.
- Inconsistencies in sound-symbol correspondences. For example, in English 'girl' has the initial phoneme /g/, whereas 'ginger' does not.
- Prevalence of silent letters – these are often historical artefacts (as in 'knight' – where the <k> would have been sounded in Chaucerian English).
- Prevalence of loan words from other languages.

Frith discusses this sort of loss of efficiency in the foreword to *Reading and Dyslexia in Different Orthographies*:

"When alphabets have been in use for a particular language for centuries, then there are likely to be many changes to the spoken language and even in the meaning of words. Writing systems, like ships at sea, tend to take on extra cargo and end up encrusted in barnacles. This changes their efficiency but also gives them their character and history. English orthography is one of the 'ships' that exemplifies a writing system that has grown to be particularly complex and historically rich" (Frith, 2010, Foreword).

Cahill and Kagan (2008) see this orthographic inefficiency less picturesquely as a cost to learners, educators and the educational system as a whole.

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of research done by Seymour, Aro & Erskine in 2003.



Adapted from Seymour, Aro & Erskine, 2003

Figure 1

Languages such as Italian<sup>1</sup>, Finnish and Spanish are seen as being at the shallow end of what we could call 'the orthographic swimming pool' – a pool in which it is assumed that it is easier to learn to linguistically swim in the shallow end: 'swimming' independence is achieved faster. Note that the English language is at the bottom of the deep end of the orthographic swimming pool. Most often it is assumed that this is the case because of its "...exceptional, indeed, outlier orthography in terms of spelling-sound correspondence" (Share, 2008, p.584). But there are other factors that we need to consider. In Figure 1 some of the languages are also emboldened – this indicates that the languages also have complex syllable structures: many closed consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) syllables and complex consonant clusters (CCC) both initially and at the end of syllables (Seymour, Aro and Erskine, 2003). This complexity can affect decoding as well as spelling (Bowey & Muller, 2005; Share, 1995; Struiksmma, van der Leij & Stoel, 2009; Ise & Schulte-Körne, 2010), as reported by (Struiksmma, van der Leij & Stoel, 2009, p.451):

*"Not being able to cope with the necessary split between CC and V appears to represent a poor prognosis to catch up in Dutch, once a student has fallen behind. It is plausible to assume that the same would be true for readers with dyslexia in other*

<sup>1</sup> There are a few exceptions, for example <gh> is used to represent the phoneme /g/ (as in 'spaghetti') where a following vowel would otherwise 'soften' the consonant to make the sound /dʒ/ (as in 'gelato' – ice-cream).

*Germanic languages with relatively many closed syllables and double consonants (e.g. German, Swedish, Norwegian and English)."*

In contrast, 'Romance languages' such as Italian predominantly feature open consonant-vowel (CV) syllables – initial and final consonant clusters are relatively rare – the syllable structure is simpler than that of the Germanic languages. This suggests that the acquisition of reading and spelling skills in the Italian language might be relatively less challenging because of the transparency of the Italian orthography and because of its simple syllable structure. However, Tressoldi, Stella and Fragella (2001) characterise the difficulties for learners with dyslexia in transparent orthographies, such as Italian, as stemming from a deficit in the automation of reading processes.

The actual prevalence of dyslexia in Italy is not clear, a relatively recent study has challenged the view that the prevalence of dyslexia in Italy is as low as 1%, talking of '*The Submerged Dyslexia Iceberg*' in Italy. This study of over 1300 children suggests that the prevalence is possibly around 3% (if not higher) and that only 1 in 3 of the children categorised as having dyslexia by the study had been previously diagnosed (Barbiero, Lonciari, Montico, Monasta, Penge, Vio, et al., 2012).

Gill Cochrane:

Within the UK there have been initiatives that have sought to enhance the continuing professional development of practitioners working in the field of dyslexia. This has been by means of training through providers such as Dyslexia Action and by the definition of key strands of knowledge and skills and the cataloguing of key competences in the Literacy and Dyslexia – SpLD Professional Development Framework<sup>2</sup>. What is the situation like in Italy?

Dr Michela Bettinelli:

At the moment in Italy we can't methodically monitor teachers, but we are constantly offering lectures to all levels of teachers in school. Some of them don't need it because they already know about dyslexia, but most of the teachers are seeking solutions for problems they constantly encounter with children with dyslexia in their classrooms. There is a new type of practitioner available now who works outside the school and who creates a link between the school and the child with dyslexia - called "tecnico dell'apprendimento" they work on a freelance basis or in specialised after-school clubs which aim to teach students learning strategies and make them self-confident and independent.

The problem is not about "giving solutions, instructions or information about dyslexia". The Italian Dyslexia Association delivers a lot of lectures, workshops and seminars; the real problem is implementation of that knowledge into the everyday classroom: if the teacher has a deep knowledge of how the child with dyslexia learns, he or she can change the way of teaching and create a good atmosphere in the classroom to make learning easier for children with dyslexia (and for the other classmates too). Although we are working hard in that field and many tools are available, some teachers still hesitate to apply new learning strategies and ICT tools. Although they are compatible, we would like teachers to become aware that

strategies are more important than ICT; you can have good ICT tools but not have sound strategies for using them, which makes them useless.

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It matters how teachers conceptualise dyslexia. One model of dyslexia is shown in Fig 2. The grey area signifies a perceived location of dyslexia in the view of some practitioners. Most notably in this model dyslexia is seen solely as something that exists within the learner and arises solely because of the attributes that the learner has. This is a narrow-realisation of dyslexia and practitioners who have this perception will typically attribute difficulties with learning as arising from characteristics of the learner.

In Fig 3. the grey area again represents the perceived location of dyslexia, but in this model the realisation of dyslexia is wide (Wilson, 2001). Wide realisation sets a difficulty with learning within a context: the learning environment is part of what must be considered. The learner does not exist in a vacuum, just as in evolutionary biology the notion of fitness is not detached from a particular environment, from a particular species' niche. Someone espousing the wide realisation of dyslexia would consider appellations such as 'difficulty with learning' or indeed 'intelligent' as being "incompletely specified in a way that makes them meaningless without an implicit reference to an environment" in which the performance is taking place (Wilson, p.13).

Thus the difficulty with learning is not entirely within the learner, but is a mix of that learner's particular cognitive profile and the situations that the learner is operating in, with the profile itself shaped by earlier interactions with the environment.

This model of dyslexia matches that of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health-based (ICF) model of disability. The ICF model of disability which states 'disability is always an interaction between features of the person

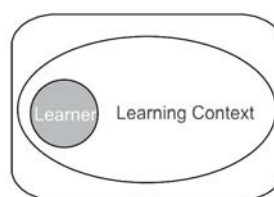


Figure 2

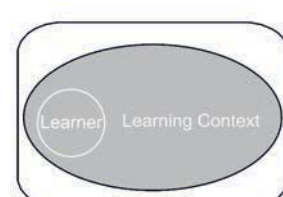


Figure 3

<sup>2</sup> <http://framework.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/>



and features of the overall context in which the person lives' (WHO, 2002, p. 9).

Gill Cochrane:

If the child is having difficulties with learning in school, do you think that generally teachers interpret this difficulty as being within the child, rather than within the learner context?

Dr Michela Bettinelli:

In Italy we can find many different situations: some of the teachers see the problem as within the child, not the way they are teaching. They say that dyslexia is the individual's problem because they have to deal with 28 children and they can't change their teaching methods and make them suitable for only one.

What we're trying to do is make the child able to use strategies and ICT tools and become autonomous. We are trying to make the child an independent learner so s/he can use these strategies not only in the after-school club, but also at home doing homework and in the regular classroom. They have to learn how to use strategies and tools in a correct way; otherwise they will not be able to use them without supervision.

Children in Italy are protected by a good law about dyslexia made in 2010. But the complete application of this law is far from being well established in schools.

If a child is well trained about the way her/his brain is working and in how to use strategies and tools and if teachers let them use all of them, or better still, guide them in using the strategies and tools and in them being a concrete part of the learning process – then that would be the best solution.

The reality is quite different. Italian education doesn't provide the opportunity to all children to have the same ICT tools and the same training in using them, and if the school doesn't help in that, the situation is far from being resolved.

Evaluating teaching practices is fraught with difficulties as national policies, federal regulations, and different teaching philosophies can co-exist and create complex operating environments for practitioners. In 2006 Klieme, Pauli and Reusser built a theoretical model of student learning and motivation consisting of three 'deep structure dimensions' (p. 140):

Cognitive activation and deep content – this includes a range of enhanced teaching initiatives such as dialogic exchanges, metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

Classroom management, and the clarity and structure of the information.

Supportive climate – includes the consideration of the affective aspects of learning that are important elements of motivation.

The second dimension is complex in that a range of different teaching practices can fall within it – for example, rote memorisation and the use of routines to promote the retention and automaticity of recall would both fall within it. This highlights how the notion of structure, when applied to different learning contexts, can mean very different things and lead to very different sorts of learning experience. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation

and Development (OECD) produces a survey that has adopted Klieme et al.'s (2006) model of categorising teaching practice (the *Teaching and Learning International Survey - TALIS*). In 2012 the OECD published a survey which examined teachers' practice across the world. Unfortunately there is no data for the UK, but the data on Italy is interesting. Teachers in Italy were shown to demonstrate relatively high uses of structuring teaching activities, compared with student orientation (regard for motivation and affective aspects of learning) and enhancing teaching practices (dialogic teaching, conceptual understanding etc). The only other countries in the survey with this profile were Belgium (Flemish Speaking sector), Ireland and Malta.

Gill Cochrane:

Can you explain a little bit about your working context in Cremona?

Dr Michela Bettinelli:

I work in an after-school environment which specialises in learning disabilities supported by AID (the Italian Dyslexia Association) and in private practice teaching strategies, as we can't get access to these learners during school hours. I train teachers to work with children in constructive ways.

We also do activities with the learners – mainly we use homework as a means of teaching strategies that will be generally useful to the learner and will help them to understand how to learn. I see what we do as providing tools for the learner – the tool can be strategies as well as actual assistive technology products. We use first of all free technology because most of the time we don't know the social background of the family, so if the software is free everybody can get access to it. It would be useless teaching someone how to solve a school problem with ICT tools if the student doesn't have the opportunity to use it later at home. That would be really frustrating and frustration is the last negative feeling a student needs in the learning process.

We work to build a relationship with the child, to demonstrate mutual respect. We try to help the child to view the work conceptually and to take control of his or her own learning. Every child needs to know what can best help them.

Let me give you an example: text to speech software is usually recommended for children with dyslexia. These tools are very good, but also very dangerous if you don't teach students how to use them. There are some children with attention deficit disorder who will not have any kind of help from this tool. With regard to foreign languages, text to speech is very suitable because it helps the child to decode text; but it doesn't help with comprehension at all. To use text to speech in this way a child must be very good in their mother tongue text to speech, and then has to be trained in listening. In foreign language learning, the learner must have very good aural comprehension to fully benefit from this product. The pre-requisite of using tools is always to be very well trained and to become aware of competence in learning.

The TALIS data shows that the consideration of learner motivation and engaging learners in challenging cognitive tasks that give them relational understanding of bodies of knowledge is relatively low in Italy. In fact an association has been created in Italy to

<sup>3</sup> See the World Health Organisation's work on classifying/conceptualising disability within a biopsychosocial framework: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>



address what is seen as the passive character of lessons in many Italian school rooms: The Associazione Culturale Linguistica Educational (ACLE). Its website states that the 'Mainstays of more progressive educational methodologies, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), group work, peer education, and hands-on learning have gained little ground within the Italian educational system' (ACLE, 2014, para 2). The organisation states that there is an emphasis on rote learning and theoretical learning with few practical activities for learners (ACLE, 2014, para 1).

Gill Cochrane:

How is English taught within the Italian School System?

Dr Michela Bettinelli:

English is predominantly taught by rote methods, with an emphasis on oral repetition. Reading and writing are not always taught in unison with the verbal repetition – so a different angle or level of analysis has not been opened up for learners. This is particularly difficult for learners with dyslexia, as the input is not meaningful and is therefore harder to retain. On the other hand, there are some teachers who are using different methodology: teaching English using pictures and relying on prosody.

Usually that kind of learning doesn't take place in regular school but only in schools for foreign languages and associations. Since teachers are not teaching phonology and phoneme - grapheme correspondences, students lack this experience when learning to read in English. This problem in teaching English in Italian schools doesn't affect only dyslexic students but students learning English in general.

Another website that gives information for people moving to Italy notes: 'The school system has a good reputation but tends to focus on rote memorization and obedience over creativity (<http://www.lifeinitaly.com/moving/school-system.asp>). There is balance to be struck in any learning context, and it is certain that some teachers within the UK still do use rote learning or fact-amassing approaches even when other approaches that promote relational understanding<sup>4</sup> are available. But considering this within the Italian context shows us that even if a language is orthographically transparent and has inherent ease of learnability there can still be obstacles to learning for learners with dyslexia if the actual pedagogic practices in the classroom are not designed to promote relational understanding. Providing these sorts of 'enhanced learning' experiences (Dimension 1 on Klieme et al.'s list) is a fundamental requirement for learners who do not have a good working memory system and for learners who need to be able to understand concepts to consolidate and remember them properly. Learners with dyslexia almost always display both of these characteristics. This is something that more class teachers and dyslexia practitioners within the UK need to carefully consider as well.

**Gill Cochrane** is the Senior Tutor and Programme Leader for the Dyslexia Action Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes in Dyslexia and Literacy.

**Dr Michela Bettinelli** is a specialist in didactics and teaching methodology, educating and supervising teachers who are working in remedial classes in a special after-school club

established by the Associazione Italiana Dislessia (AID) - the Italian Dyslexia Association. Her first diploma is in the field of history where she gained a doctoral degree at the Sorbonne University and in Pavia University (Cotutelle).

Michela gives lectures to teachers at all levels of education (from elementary school to university) and is a lecturer of the programme for future special tutors working for AID. She has completed a course in Superior Training for Experts of Learning Methodology for children with dyslexia and learning disabilities at the University of the Republic of San Marino. She trained in the Orton-Gillingham Method at the Reading Center in Rochester, Minnesota, USA and in Enseignement Multisensoriel Simultané (E.M.S), a reading recovery scheme also based on the Orton-Gillingham method, at the Canadian Dyslexia Center, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada.

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<sup>4</sup> A learner that has relational understanding has flexible ways of working, has conceptual understanding and is confident to tackle unfamiliar problems by applying knowledge that is grounded within a familiar framework because he or she grasps the subject's structure.

# Units of Sound v6 is Online

**Hannah MacLellan**, Units of Sound Education Manager, presents the latest updates and features of the UoS literacy development programme.



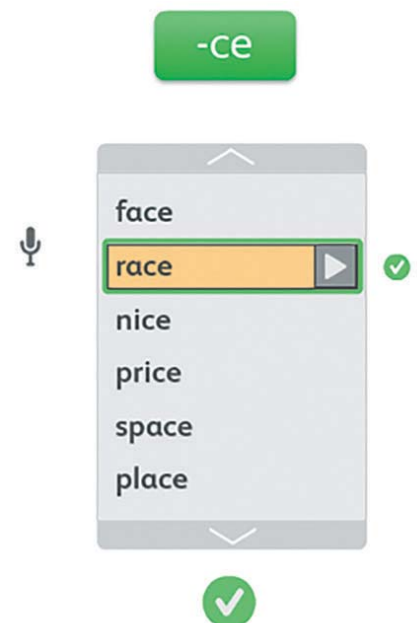
Units of Sound is keeping up with the times and is online. Being “in the cloud” has huge advantages as it can now be accessed anywhere, anytime. Students can work at home as well as at school and progress more swiftly, and there is also scope for online teaching. In addition, there are new accompanying resources that enhance the programme. We have also created a parallel programme for the United States and Canada with American content. This article outlines the key new features and reminds you of some of the underlying principles. We are running a series of free webinars where you can see Units of Sound v6 being demonstrated. You can sign up from [www.unitsofsound.net](http://www.unitsofsound.net).

## KEEPING ON TRACK

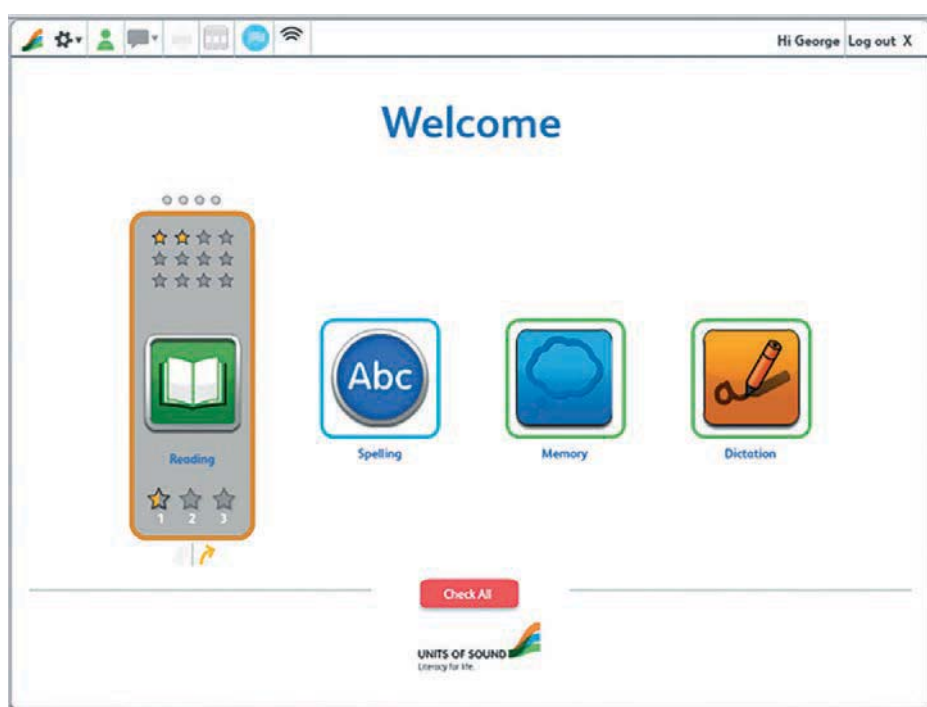
The four skill areas and three stages remain the same: Reading, Spelling, Memory, Dictation. The Placement exercise places students so they are always working at a level that is comfortable. There is now an *AutoRoute* system whereby students are put on a set skill sequence depending on Placement results. This means that only one skill is open at a time, which allows the student to progress in a balanced way through the programme, without needing to ask what to do. This frees tutors from having to monitor students’ activity. The video Screen Tutors on every activity page guide both the student and tutor on how to complete an activity.

## READING

The Reading programme focuses the student on a single task on each page without additional competing content.



For Reading Blocks, the student explores the new Unit of Sound, records the words and listens back to the recording. This promotes self-checking and encourages independent learning. Handily, the student can home in on a single error and redo just that word, which makes the experience much smoother. The Check Words and Check Sounds, which allow the student to revisit words and sounds covered in previous pages, also have the recording feature. Sentences and Passages put the words in context for practice reading. The Quiz Questions, which focus on vocabulary, challenge



the student more by only allowing one attempt at an answer.



Tutor's Guide

## Reading Check

# Stage 1

Student Name

The Reading Check document is a pick-up-and-go resource for busy teachers and teaching assistants to replace the need for check-reading after every reading page. Divided into 12 sets with each set covering sample words from four pages, progress and fluency can be checked 1:1 with the student. This valuable resource also includes an additional passage with ready-made comprehension questions.

## SPELLING

A few clever tweaks here and there have enhanced the Spelling programme. Rather than being shown which letters are wrong in the Word Blocks and Check Words, students have to work out errors for themselves. There are still three attempts available at spelling the word correctly, but students are now challenged to think a little harder. The new Hints & Tips section displays the correct word if wrong on the third attempt. Students need to get 8/10 in the Check Spelling to move on to the next page and they can print the test page to have a closer look at mistakes. There is no longer an overlap option for Spelling so that students move on more quickly, regulated by Check Spelling.

## MEMORY

The Memory programme is still set from the Spelling Placement,

but it now comes in 10 pages behind Spelling. The content has remained the same with the two activities of Speed Reading and Memory Phrases. Speed Reading allows the student to practise decoding at speed. Memory Phrases tests the short term memory, revisits words for spelling, and encourages students to use memory techniques.

## DICTATION

Dictation is a powerful activity and it has now been brought forward to begin only 15 pages behind the Spelling programme to get students started earlier. All the sentences are new and have been re-recorded. The Hints & Tips feature supports the student by giving the number of words in the sentence as well as tips on punctuation.

If a fuse blows, the lights will go out.

The students are still able to listen as many times as necessary and correct sentences are displayed if there are errors. For both Memory and Dictation the student needs to get a certain number of answers correct to move on.

## WRITING

Another great addition to UofS v6 is the Writing Activities resource, which develops writing skills. Using the Dictation sentences as a basis, the Writing Activities gives the student a framework to produce extended sentences and progress onto planning, drafting and editing paragraphs. This means that as soon as students start Dictation, they can also start to build up their confidence with their writing skills - even the most reluctant writers.

## HELP

Everything a tutor needs to know about working with students on Units of Sound can be found in Help - the new online support site. This is also home to the Library, which houses all the extra resources including certificates for students.

## TUTOR AREA

The Tutor Area has had a radical make-over and contains more detailed information for the tutor to be able to keep track of students' progress and provide information for parents. Now that all records are held centrally online, rather than on a school server, the tutor always has complete up to the minute information on student activity. No longer is there a split between records in school and on work at home.

## PRACTITIONER'S COURSE

The new online Practitioner's Course takes tutors step by step through the programme with 20 short modules and a Certificate Assessment. Taking a minimum of five hours to complete, the course uses a combination of video demonstrations, theory, hands on practice and quizzes to help tutors feel confident using the tool with their students.

## TEACHING STUDENTS

In spite of all the developments and nice new icons, Units of Sound remains what it always has been - a powerful literacy development programme that can provide personalised tuition and practice within a diverse group. With Units of Sound you are always teaching a student, not a programme.

## LICENCES

Units of Sound v6 is based on a per student 3 year licence with options for 5, 25, 50 and 100 students. There is a 30 % upgrade discount for v5 customers.

We are providing free training and demonstration licences to teachers and learning support teams who have an advisory role for other schools. If you think this would be useful for you please contact Hannah MacLellan at [hmaclellan@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:hmaclellan@dyslexiaaction.org.uk) or call 0207 391 2109.

The Units of Sound team hopes you enjoy exploring the new online version of Units of Sound.

## Useful contacts:

[www.unitsofsound.net](http://www.unitsofsound.net)

For licence enquiries contact DASL 01784 220 339 or email [dasl@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:dasl@dyslexiaaction.org.uk)



# Creative Dyslexic Thinking

**Dr Louise Tondeur**, Principal Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Roehampton reaches out to the creative community with forthcoming workshops.

I am a dyslexic writer, teacher and academic. I currently work at the University of Roehampton. I've published two novels and various other writing, and now teach Creative Writing fulltime.

At Roehampton, we're planning a project looking at the claims that dyslexic thinking makes us more creative. We're hoping to work with dyslexic adults, community organisations, teachers, writers, other creative practitioners and academics to debate the links between creativity and dyslexia.

If we manage to get our funding, we will look at definitions of creativity and the claims made by proponents of dyslexia positivity and we'll create

space for dyslexic writers to reflect on their own practice. Over a year and a bit we will arrange seminars and writing workshops, at different venues across the UK, funds allowing. We'll end with a conference at Roehampton and discussions about how we can take ideas further. A key element of the project will be writing workshops for dyslexic adults.

Organisations interested in the project include Dyslexia Action, the British Dyslexia Association, Achievability, Dyspla, RASP Books, the Dyslexia Research Trust and University of Sunderland.

We're interested in hearing from anyone who would like to come along to one of the workshops should we

go ahead. We've got our interactive blog up and running, although it is still in its very early stages: <https://creativedyslexicthinking.wordpress.com> If you are interested in contributing a blog post on what it means to be dyslexic and a writer, artist, performer or other creative practitioner, get in touch!

## Contact details

Dr Louise Tondeur. Principal Lecturer in Creative Writing, University of Roehampton.  
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**Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils**

Gives parents choice.

Every School on the CReSTeD Register has been assessed for SpLD (Dyslexia) provision.

Schools are revisited every 3 years to ensure standards are being maintained.

If a school offering support for SpLD (Dyslexia) isn't on the CReSTeD Register you might want to ask – *Why not?*

All the information you need can be found on our website:  
[www.crested.org.uk](http://www.crested.org.uk)

Contact CReSTeD on 0845 601 5013  
[lesley@crestedschools.org.uk](mailto:lesley@crestedschools.org.uk) [www.crested.org.uk](http://www.crested.org.uk)  
Registered charity no. 1052103  
Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils



**units of sound**

[www.unitsofsound.net](http://www.unitsofsound.net)

*Units of Sound* covers decoding skills from 2 letter words to multi-syllabic words of the type needed for GCSE and adult level work through short independent sessions with a computer – Windows Platform only.

**Units of Sound Professional**  
Already used in 600 schools

**Units of Sound: Literacy that fits**  
Specially designed for home use with minimum support.

**Online Practitioner's Course**  
An online course for Tutors to enable them to get the very best out of Units of Sound for their pupils.

Details of the above can be found on the dedicated website:  
[www.unitsofsound.net](http://www.unitsofsound.net)



# The National Dyslexia Resource Centre: A Guild Member Benefit

**Jan Seabourne** outlines the key features of this specialist resource that members can access

**M**any members do not take full advantage of the library and in this economic climate it seems a shame to miss out on something that comes as part of your professional membership. Based in Dyslexia Action Offices in Egham, this specialist library offers a wide variety of resources in many formats on Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD) and the topics that surround them. If you live locally and would like to visit, we are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm but if not, we offer a postal service for UK based members; we send the resources out and you pay the postage when you send the items back.

We have a large collection of e-books and e-journals that can be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, so do not think that the library is too far away from where you live. Below we give a breakdown of the resources that all members are able to access.

## E-Books

Electronic copies of books are available within the library catalogue, you just click on them to be taken to the electronic book platform where you can either read online or download for 24 hours. Here is a selection of some of the titles you might find interesting:

Albro, E., O'Reilly, T., Sabatini, J.P. (2012) *Measuring up: advances in how we assess reading ability* – this book questions the traditional format of reading comprehension tests and offers ideas we might expect in a next generation of 21<sup>st</sup> reading assessments.

Boyle, J. and Fisher, S. (2007) *Educational testing: a competence based approach* – provides support for those of you studying Test User: Educational Ability/Attainment (CCET) courses

Brunswick, N. (2012) *Supporting dyslexic adults in higher education and the workplace* – provides practical advice in supporting adults with useful advice on how to disclose particular needs to

employers and colleagues plus guidance on the latest research.

Kersaint, G., Thompson, D.R., Petkova, M. (2009) *Teaching Mathematics to English language learners* – classrooms increasingly include students for whom English is a second language. This book provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face and how you might address them.

Mather, N. and Wendling, B.J. (2012) *Essentials of dyslexia assessment and intervention* – The authors address the components that need to be considered in the assessment of dyslexia, both cognitive and academic, and include descriptions of the various tests that might be utilized in a comprehensive dyslexia assessment.

Martin, D. (2013) *Researching dyslexia in multilingual settings: diverse perspectives* – draws together current research on dyslexia and literacy in multilingual settings across disciplines and methodologies.

Reid, G. (2009) *Dyslexia: a practitioner's handbook* – incorporates the most recent theoretical and practical research in the field of dyslexia and literacy and presents it in a user friendly format for Practitioners. It refers to government reports on literacy and dyslexia in a number of countries such as, USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

## Books

New books on SpLD and surrounding subjects are purchased on a regular basis, if it is a popular title we may have multiple copies or we may also have the e-book version. Many of the titles that we review in the *Dyslexia Review* are made available in the library for members. We hold the most recent copy of The Dyslexia Handbook, which contains useful articles and information about many SpLD organisations.

## E-Journals

We subscribe to several journals, going back to five years back copies which gives you access to hundreds of journal articles.

The platform also gives you access to the abstracts of thousands more. We recently added the NASEN journals to our subscriptions, and these go right back to the first date of their publication, creating a huge resource of useful articles.

## Journals

As well as the back copies of *Dyslexia Review*, we also take titles such as *Special Children*, *nasen Special* and *Patoss Bulletin*. I have been compiling Author, Subject and Title indexes for the *Dyslexia Review* which has been added to the website so it is easier for you to find articles you might want to refer to. Most of the back copies of the Review are available electronically, so contact the library should you need anything.

## Teaching Resources

The teaching resources comprise items such as cloze books, teacher and pupil workbooks on various subjects such as writing, grammar, spelling, punctuation, comprehension, numeracy and reading.

## Games and Activities

We have a set of TRUGS, Smart Chute flipper and cards as well as board games and other card sets to help children who need to develop skills in thinking, listening, or concepts such as time.

## Tests

The library stocks some of the more popular tests such as CTOPP, TOMAL, TOWRE, DASH, PHAB, WIAT for teachers, WMTB for Children, WRIT and WRAT. These tests may be restricted to those who are qualified to use them but this is a great way to try out a test before you or your organisation decide to purchase it. If you do purchase it, do so via our Dyslexia Action Shop who offer a 10% discount for Guild members.

## Library Catalogue

The Library Catalogue is available every day, so if you would like to search our online catalogue to see what we have, just contact us to get your login details, [library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

# Book Reviews

Tracy Packiam Alloway and Ross G. Alloway (2015)  
'Understanding Working Memory' 2nd Edition; Los Angeles:  
Sage Publications. ISBN 9781446274200 (hbk £75); ISBN  
9781446 274217 (pbk £24.99); ISBN 9781473909298 (ebook from  
Ebooks.com £29.99); ISBN 1446274217 (Amazon Kindle £23.74)

Reviewed by Jenny Moody, Postgraduate Psychology Tutor, Dyslexia Action.

The first edition of this book 'Improving Working Memory: Supporting Students' Learning' was published in 2008. This 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 'Understanding Working Memory', follows a similar organisation of chapters, some with slightly different titles and re-organised content. There is an additional chapter 'Anxiety disorders' included.

According to the authors, Alloway & Alloway, the book is about "a powerful cognitive skill called working memory that, when properly supported, can stop students like Andrew (see below) from remembering their school years as a frustrating experience" (page2).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition has nine chapters plus an Epilogue and Appendix. Each chapter is kept quite short and can be read alone. Chapter 1, 'Our Brain's Post-it Note' considers 'WHAT is Working Memory', 'WHERE is working memory in the brain?' 'WHY is working memory linked to learning?' The scene is set with the reader introduced to Andrew, a 6 year old who loved being at school but towards the end of the school year he began to struggle with daily classroom activities. Two years later he seemed like such a different child – in the lowest ability groups for language and math, more easily frustrated and would not even attempt some activities.

Emphasis is given to the point that 'all classroom activities involve working memory'. The chapter goes on to answer the 'What', 'Where' and 'Why' questions and at the end gives an overview of the book. Chapters 1 to 8 include a:

- *Try it* box, where the reader has an opportunity to have 'hands-on understanding of the material'
- *Science Flash* box to give the reader 'a snapshot of current and interesting research related to the chapter'

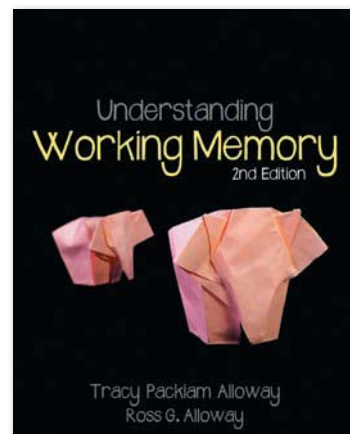
- *Current Debate* box which discusses 'a controversial issue pertaining to the disorder of the chapter'.

At the end of Chapters 1 to 9 there is a summary of the main points from the chapter, also references and further reading.

Chapter 2 'Diagnosing Working Memory' offers brief information concerning standardised tests to screen for working memory deficits, looking at classroom behaviour to help to understand working memory difficulties and also discusses a few standardised resources that include a working memory subtest.

Chapters 3 to 8 each consider a particular developmental condition (disorder) in relation to working memory – 'Dyslexia', 'Dyscalculia', 'Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD)', 'Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)', 'Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)' respectively. Chapter 8 'Anxiety Disorders' is written by Evan Copello. Each of these chapters looks at 'WHAT is [...]?', 'WHERE are the affected brain regions?', 'WHY is working memory linked to [...]?', 'HOW can working memory be supported in students with [...]?', and include example Case Studies.

Chapter 9 'Student Strategies and Training' considers ways to help to develop student-centred learning and how to encourage students to be more independent. Evidence for the efficacy of working memory training is also included.



Kim Grant, a US school psychologist is the author of the Epilogue: 'A School-Based Program to Support Working Memory and Learning'. She briefly describes her 'working memory journey' and provides a short but informative Case Study of John, who was diagnosed 'under the category of speech-language impairment'.

There is a short Appendix providing a list of the general working memory strategies discussed in the book, presented in a useful table format with chapter indication, as well as a list of specific working memory strategies, suggested for students with a particular disorder. Disappointingly, there is no whole chapter devoted to Speech and Language Impairment.

Overall, this is a clearly written and well-organised book, providing valuable information about working memory and how it can affect individuals' learning and progress in an educational context. It is a 'must read' for all teachers and support assistants in primary and secondary schools. Many parents are likely to find the book of interest to them if they have a child with any of the disorders discussed in the book.

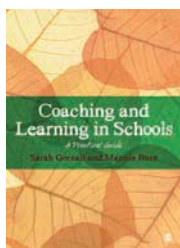
Undergraduate psychology students would also benefit from reading this book as background understanding to working memory in context – the references and further reading offering opportunity to extend their knowledge.

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Gornall, S & Burn, M. (2013) *Coaching and Learning in Schools – A Practical Guide*. London: SAGE, ISBN 978-1-4462-4087-8

Reviewed by Lisa Brockway, Dyslexia Action Principal, Leicester and Derby Learning Centres.



**C**oaching and Learning in Schools is written by two experienced coaches Sarah Gornall and Mannie Burn and is aimed at teachers and school leaders. The book introduces the concept of coaching, exploring its role in developing the individual's capacity to learn and change. The book attempts to emphasise the how and the why of coaching, with the aim of extending the skills of teachers and leaders and thus helping others.

The guide is easy to read and well set out. The idea of starting each chapter with a written dialogue between the 'coach' and one of the authors takes a bit of getting used to; the author's idea being that because the book was born out of dialogue and conversation they wanted to include as much of this style as they could within it. The difficulty is that reading a conversation and listening or being part of a conversation are different things and so this style takes a bit of getting used. We rely so much on the tone and inclination of conversation and this is missing in my opinion. However, having said that by the time I had read a majority of the book I was beginning to get used to who was talking and beginning to imagine the enthusiasm that came across in the written dialogue. A suggestion to the author may be to include a CD or online resource to access.

The guide could easily be read by teaching assistants, teachers, head teachers or school leaders; the style is presented in such a way that it is clear and understandable. The Introduction contains a summary of the chapters' content thus allowing you to move round the book easily and allowing you to find specific information quickly. Each chapter is well presented with the use of bullet points and spacing making it easy on the eye.

The book brings together the what, how and why of coaching but also gives some practical advice and examples on how coaching works. The chapter on coaching tools and activities gives you templates to use that are supported with ideas on when and how to use them.

I think the book is value for money, it is readable and a useful book for someone who is new to coaching. References are provided at the end of the book and are useful for those who would like to go into the subject at a deeper level.

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Kirby, Amanda. (2014). *How to Succeed in Employment with Specific Learning Difficulties: A guide for Employees and Employers*. London: Souvenir Press Ltd. ISBN 9780285642461 Price: £12.00 pbk; Kindle Edition: £7.60

Reviewed by Jan Seabourne, Guild Administrator and Librarian, Dyslexia Action.



**T**his book is written by Dr Amanda Kirby a leading expert in the field of Autism Spectrum Conditions and Dyspraxia, also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD), ADHD and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). She also writes about Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Language and Communications Disorders. The book has been written to help potential employees and employers to identify best strategies to use for success. It is also designed to help those in support networks – parents, educators and advisers to assist in preparing those with specific learning difficulties for the workplace and/or supporting them if they need it once employed. The great thing about the layout of the book is that you do not have to read it cover to cover; you can just read the chapters of interest or you could just look up a useful app or website.

Kirby's book begins with an introduction to understanding the issues around Specific Learning Difficulties and their relevance to the workplace. Chapter Two outlines each of the conditions and describes the challenges they may present. It also introduces the reader to the terminology associated with the conditions as this can sometimes be confusing, especially with language differences between the UK and USA. It then outlines each specific difficulty, gives a list of workplace difficulties as described by adults, followed by a list of strengths, and then a list of reasonable workplace adjustments for employers to make. This is very practical for employers to be able to see, at a glance, what can be done to allow an employee to perform to their full potential.

The following chapters give guidance on considering careers and how to think about strengths and experiences that could be used to show transferable skills. Finding and applying for a job including writing a curriculum vitae, and attending interviews with discussion around disclosure. Chapter 6 considers the implications of starting and keeping a job, something that all first time employees would benefit from reading. Chapters 13 and 14 cover guidance for employers and how to make reasonable adjustments in more detail. There is a list of useful organisations at the back.

This is a great book to recommend to your clients, their parents and to employers as it sets things out in a very succinct way. I can see it sitting on the desks of many managers as a sensible guide to assist in all aspects of employability.

Dr Amanda Kirby is speaking at the Guild Summer conference on 18 June 2015. For further details see our webpage: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild-annual-summer-conference-2015>

## Reader Offer

£2 off and free postage! Call 01235 827702, or email [mailorder@bookpoint.co.uk](mailto:mailorder@bookpoint.co.uk), and quote discount code 'Kirby2015'. Offer valid until 31/12/2015



Cheminais, R. (2015) *Rita Cheminais' Handbook for Sencos*, 2nd Edition.  
London: SAGE. ISBN 978-1-4462-7418-7 £75, ISBN 978-1-446-7419-4 (pbk) £25.99

Reviewed by Katy Parnell, Postgraduate Education Tutor, Dyslexia Action and Additional Learning Support (Neurodiversity) Tutor at Richmond upon Thames College.

**R**ita Cheminais' expertise in the field of Special Educational Needs is recognised both nationally and internationally. She has worked as a SENCO, OFSTED inspector, School Improvement Officer and freelance consultant among her other roles. This is the second edition of her "bible" for SENCOs and it is fully up-to-date.

Cheminais takes on board the latest 2014 DfE Statutory Guidance and the practical implications of the 2014 Care Act, creating an easy-to-use reference manual, with a handy glossary and a table that serves as an aide-memoire to the constantly evolving and proliferating family of educational acronyms (for example BESD is now termed social, emotional and mental health difficulties).

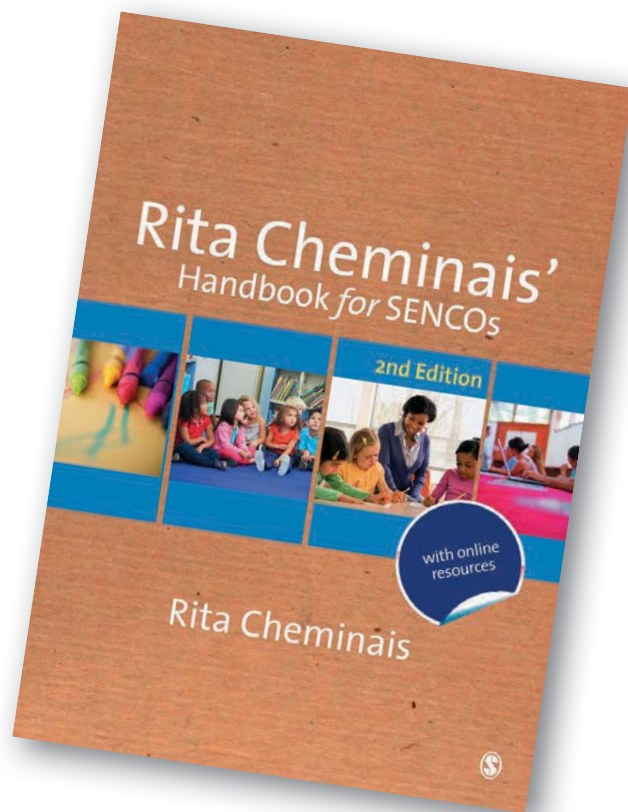
The book is further supported by a wealth of online time-saving resources downloadable from the SAGE website: these include templates for risk assessments, budget summaries and staff training audits as well as a model SEN pupil/student transfer passport, a model SENCO PowerPoint for a SEND INSET session and an at-a-glance guide to meeting OFSTED requirements.

There is an admirably succinct timeline at the start giving an overview of changes since the 1981 Education Act and this is supplemented by a comprehensive list of suggestions for further reading and research at the end of the book.

The scope of the 2014 SEND Code of Practice spans from birth to 25 years of age. Key challenges for practitioners involve taking on board both the increased weight given to the views and participation of young people and their parents and carers in the provision of SEN support, as well as the requirement for joint planning and joint commissioning of services.

Statements and LDAs for those with more complex needs are now replaced by the new 0-25 Education and Health Care (EHC) plans. This change to practice will impact on FE provision too, with implications for funding. The Handbook for SENCOs guides the practitioner through these responsibilities in manageable chunks, emphasising the SENCO's central and strategic leadership role in shaping and coordinating improvements, implementing and evaluating provision and building capacity among colleagues. The handbook also offers helpful suggestions for managing budgets as well the stress of the SENCO role and building emotional resilience.

Each chapter begins and ends with a section highlighting key points covered and provides some imagined scenarios to assist SENCOs in planning their responses to the issues raised - these include ways to handle cyber



bullying and to gather information to ensure best value for money. This summary feature helps to connect the wealth of information in the text to praxis and also meets the requirements of the National Award for Special Education Needs Co-ordination, promoting reflection and professional development.

The handbook is probably an essential purchase for SENCOs and programme managers of Supported Learning sections in FE but both parents and educational psychologists/specialist teachers operating in a freelance capacity would find it an invaluable guide to the altered SEND landscape in 2015; Cheminais points out that we have just been through the biggest SEN reforms in three decades. The book would also be a good starting point for a research student trying to get a handle on the complexity of the SENCO's role in the UK education system.

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# Dyslexia Action Training Courses

Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development is a leading provider of specialist training courses in the field of Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties for teaching and support professionals.

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/training-courses](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/training-courses)

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Courses are also accredited by the BDA (ATS and AMBDA) and SASC for the Assessment Practising Certificate.

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**Email:** [guild@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:guild@dyslexiaaction.org.uk) **Tel:** +44 (0)1784 222342

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[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa)

### Diagnostic Report Writing:

A refresher course for practitioners seeking to gain or to renew an Assessment Practising Certificate. This SASC accredited course is delivered online and runs three times a year (Nov, April and June).

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/diagnostic-report-writing](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/diagnostic-report-writing)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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