

Dyslexia REVIEW

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk | Autumn 2013



The Journal of The Dyslexia Guild

Volume 24 Number 3

In this issue:



Dyslexia and
composing writing



Dyslexia and
Entrepreneurship



Improving outcomes
for children with
special educational
needs

**Dyslexia
Action**

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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.

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- 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
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Autumn Issue

November 2013

Download the Media Pack at:

<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-review>

Published by:

Dyslexia Action
Park House
Wick Road
Egham, Surrey
TW20 0HH
Tel: 01784 222300
Website: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Designed and Printed by:

Darwin Press Ltd
Unit B, Pier Road
Feltham
Middlesex
TW14 0TW

 Printed on Recycled Paper

Dyslexia Action Guild Membership and Subscriptions

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Cover Photo

Delegates at Guild Summer Conference 2013

ISSN

0308-6275

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Editorial

This edition of the Dyslexia Review has follow up features from two of our keynote speakers from the Annual Summer Conference. Professor Vince Connolly is a leading researcher in the area of dyslexia and writing at Oxford Brookes University. His research in the department of psychology provides an enlightening insight into the impact of poor spelling on the handwriting of children with dyslexia. Professor Julie Logan from the CASS Business School at City University has focussed her research on entrepreneurs who have dyslexia. In a thought-provoking article she looks at the way in which entrepreneurial skills are apparently enhanced in those with dyslexia.

We are also pleased to welcome a guest feature from Brian Lamb OBE summarising the present situation with regard to the latest government legislation and special educational needs. Brian is currently Chair of Achievement for All and previously led the independent Lamb Inquiry into Parental Confidence in Special Educational Needs in 2008-09.

Dr Barry Johnson and colleagues have provided an article using evidenced data to provide interesting statistical information on the correlation between summer-born children and educational attainment. Also in this issue, we feature an article from Dr Sylvia Moody which contains valuable practical advice to assist those working with candidates with dyslexia/ SpLD who need to undertake Multiple Choice Questionnaires.

Our book reviews are complemented by a wealth of reader offers which we hope you will enjoy. In Membership News, Guild members are reminded to check the website regularly for details of training and events. As a membership benefit, relevant webinars are provided free of charge to Guild members and recordings and presentations are made available after the event. Members should also receive our electronic newsletter and have access to the online library, so to enjoy this edition of the Dyslexia Review and our wide range of other benefits, do check that the contact details we hold for you are always up to date.

Kathryn Benzine

Editor



Contents

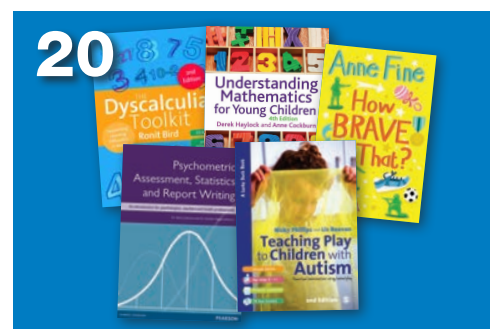
- 05** Membership News
- 06** Dyslexia Action Centre Directory
- 07** Dyslexia and composing writing:
Poor spelling constrains the quality of
composition
- 10** Dyslexia and Entrepreneurship:
the key to success
- 13** Dyslexia and Summer-Born Children
- 15** Examination Access Arrangements:
JCQ Regulations for academic year
2013 - 2014
- 16** Multiple choice questions: the challenges
they pose to students with specific learning
difficulties and visual processing problems
- 18** Improving outcomes for children with
special educational needs
- 20** The Dyslexia-Friendly Teacher's
Toolkit: Book Review and Author Interview
- 24** Book Reviews
- 29** Dyslexia Action Training Courses



Summer Born Children



Multiple choice questions



Book Reviews



Training Courses

Membership News

Jan Seabourne reports on news and events for Guild members.

Assessment Tests

Turner & Ridsdale Digit Memory Test Withdrawn

For those of you with Assessment Practising Certificates (APC) who are undertaking diagnostic reports for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), please be aware that the Turner and Ridsdale Digit Memory Test (DMT) has been removed from the SASC approved list and is not acceptable to Student Finance England after 31 August 2013 (reports with DMT tests administered before 31st August will still be accepted). Updated test guidance and a list of Suitable Tests for Higher Education is available from the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) website www.sasc.org.uk

For those of you undertaking Exam Access Arrangements, see JCQ regulation **7.5.6. Recent editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores must be used, where published.**

Dr Barry Johnson, Head of Dyslexia Action Assessment Services notes that the DMT was not nationally standardised, nor was it actually standardised. Professional bodies involved in assessment and test standards are rightly critical of tests that have no standardisation data/ validity and where reliability coefficients, standard error of measurement, etc. are not available. Contemporary test standards if applied to the DMT would therefore regard it to be unsafe. Dyslexia Action will no longer be using DMT for any purpose and we advise members to follow suit.

Please also note that the **Alloway Working Memory Assessment, 2nd Edition (AWMA-2)** has been temporarily withdrawn whilst it is re-normed. Contact Pearson for more details: <http://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk>

Forthcoming Events

Examination Access Arrangements

The course is designed for professionals who need further information or updating in this area of disability in order that they can complete Form 8's and write equivalent reports in support of Examination Access Arrangement requests. Our next SASC approved EAA online course date is February 2014. Find out more on our web page: <http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa>

Free webinars for Guild members

Recorded Webinar October 2013

'What's new in Access Arrangements: Extra time, transitional agreements and more'

This popular webinar was delivered on 15 October and was very well attended. For those of you who registered

for the webinar we have sent you the details of how to access the recording again at your leisure.

Live Webinar November 2013

Using TOMAL-2: key features for specialist teachers and assessors, will look at the Test of Memory and Learning – second edition (TOMAL-2), which provides professionals with a standardised measure of different memory functions for children, adolescents and adults, for the age range 5 through to 59.11 years. This can be used as a wide ranging and flexible tool for highlighting subtle aspects of short term auditory memory and working memory comparisons, and is being widely used as a replacement for the Digit Memory Test: for the purposes of DSA assessments, examination access arrangements, and general diagnostic purposes.

For details of all up and coming webinars see our website: <http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/webinars-and-other-online-events>

Save the Date! Dyslexia Guild Annual Summer Conference 2014 Lincoln

The next dates for our annual conference are 18th and 19th June 2014 at Bishop Grosseteste University in the historic cathedral city of Lincoln. We will provide CPD events and a pre-conference dinner on Wednesday 18th, followed by the conference and exhibition on Thursday 19th. I do hope you be able to join us. Save the dates in your diary now!

See <http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild-annual-conference-2014> for further details.

National Dyslexia Resource Centre

I hope you will enjoy using this great library resource as part of your membership benefits. Contact me if you would like your login details to access e-books and e-journals, your webinar discount code or your Guild number.

Back copies request! Over the summer I have been tidying up the library catalogue and ensuring you get all the information about books, journals and assessment resources that you need to make an informed choice about what to borrow. I have been consolidating Dyslexia Review journal records and have found that the library is missing a few copies. Guild members might be able to help out if they have some copies at home that they no longer need that could plug our gaps. Please contact me if you have any of the issues I am looking for (guild@dyslexiaaction.org.uk) :

Numbers **1 April 1969** through to **No 4 Autumn 1970**;
Numbers **7 Summer 1972** through to **10 Winter 1973**;
Numbers **12 Winter 1974** through to **16 Winter 1976**.

Dyslexia Action Centre Directory



Catherine Wright – Principal, Lincoln centre, Kay Bowes – Principal, Darlington centre, Pam Smith – Principal, Bath centre

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Dyslexia and composing writing:

Poor spelling constrains the quality of composition.

Professor Vince Connelly, Emma Sumner and Anna Barnett explore how spelling difficulties can constrain the writing of children with dyslexia

It is well known that children with dyslexia struggle with writing in the classroom. While their obvious reading difficulties will have a part to play in this, we know less about how poor and hesitant spelling may constrain the quality of written compositions produced by children with dyslexia. We recently carried out a series of research studies at Oxford Brookes University to investigate this difficulty in writing.

Writing is a complex activity that requires co-ordinating cognitive, linguistic, and motor processes. Children learn to write from a young age and are expected to be able to integrate a number of related skills, such as spelling, handwriting, and vocabulary. Writing takes a long time to develop to competence and is a good example of a skill that can take a lifetime to master. Therefore, when thinking of the many demands of writing, it is not surprising that many individuals with dyslexia struggle with writing throughout their life.

Many children with dyslexia are slow and hesitant writers. We know that children with dyslexia are poor spellers but it is often suggested that children with dyslexia are slow handwriters. In fact, the Rose review (2009) suggested that some children with dyslexia might experience co-occurring motor problems. However, studies rarely assess general motor skill or the influence of spelling ability on the rate at which handwriting can be produced. We were concerned to tease apart these issues.

Teachers often express concern that children with dyslexia limit the vocabulary in their writing to simple

words that can be more successfully spelled. Surprisingly there has been little previous research on this selective written vocabulary.

Testing writing skill

Our studies in this area, led by Emma Sumner, compared a group of 31 children diagnosed with dyslexia (aged eight to ten years) with children of the same age and year group, and with another group of children of the same spelling ability (aged six to seven years). Children completed measures of cognitive ability, motor skill, reading, spelling, and writing. This confirmed the diagnosis of dyslexia and, interestingly, no differences were found in motor skill between the three groups.

Children were asked to write a letter to a friend about their dream home. They had 15 minutes to complete the task, using an inking pen to write on lined paper placed above a digital writing tablet. The surface of the digital writing tablet recorded the co-ordinates of the pen to a laptop while the child wrote, so that the writing could later be analysed. In particular, the analysis examined the execution speed of the pen and temporal characteristics, such as locating where the child paused while writing.

The written narratives composed by children with dyslexia in this task were rated significantly below those produced by their same-age peers in aspects of ideas and development, coherence, vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation. Children with dyslexia performed at a similar level to the spelling-ability matched children, and spelling ability was shown to highly correlate with the text quality ratings above.

When children with dyslexia composed the written narrative, their level of lexical diversity (a measure of how varied the vocabulary use was) was much lower than when they were asked to compose a similar narrative text verbally. This implies that the spelling demands experienced by children with dyslexia when writing are restricting the level of vocabulary these children can actually express, compared to the verbal task. In comparison, the same-age peers showed a higher lexical diversity in their written composition than in their verbal task. A more highly graded written text is typically associated with a higher level of diverse vocabulary.

“...spelling demands experienced by children with dyslexia when writing are restricting the level of vocabulary these children can actually express, compared to the verbal task.”

Children with dyslexia were found to write fewer words per minute than their peers, suggesting a slow rate of productivity. However, the digital writing tablet delivers a more detailed analysis of the execution speed of the pen when writing. This measure (cm per second) calculates the physical distance the pen covered divided by the total writing time (excluding any time spent pausing) and demonstrated that children with dyslexia were able to execute the motor act of handwriting at the same speed as their peers, disputing the suggestion of slow handwriting due to poor motor control.

The software used to analyse the temporal characteristics of the writing demonstrated that children with dyslexia paused frequently while writing, often around spelling errors and within-words, reflecting a word-level problem. It was the time spent pausing (hesitating around spellings) that accounted for the lower number of words written by the children with dyslexia. Again, a similar pattern was shown to the spelling-ability group, suggesting that spelling level constrains handwriting fluency. This result is particularly pertinent given the fact that many measures of handwriting speed are measures of words written per minute.

Pausing frequently while writing indicates a breakdown in the parallel processing of transcription, whereas typically developing children aged nine were able to transcribe, (combining the act of spelling and handwriting) more fluently. The same-age peers paused less and thus composed more words per minute and overall. Statistical analysis revealed that a large proportion of productivity was predicted by spelling ability for children with dyslexia.

“Children with dyslexia were found to write fewer words per minute than their peers, suggesting a slow rate of productivity.”

Practical suggestions

The findings show that poor and hesitant spelling hinders the quality of the written texts produced by children with dyslexia. By using a digital writing tablet to analyse writing in more detail, it was possible to identify that the typical slow writing associated with dyslexia is not always due to poor motor control and co-ordination. Thus, interventions that focus on practicing motor skills to speed up handwriting might not always be beneficial for children with dyslexia. As the root of the problem is spelling, time may be best spent trying to increase spelling

knowledge. A review of research from the USA shows that classroom based spelling interventions are effective at improving spelling within compositions and also contribute to improvements in the quality of the composition.

By improving spelling, children with dyslexia may become more confident writers and may pause less while writing as a result. They could feel more confident expressing their vocabulary in writing and not hold back on the more difficult spellings. Interestingly, a small number of the children with dyslexia we sampled were not slow hesitant writers. They tended to be children who ignored their plentiful spelling errors in favour of producing a lot of text. Further study of these more confident, motivated writers with dyslexia can give more clues to the design of future writing and spelling interventions.

In fact, we carried out some studies a few years ago on undergraduate students with dyslexia (Connelly et al, 2006). These students are very motivated to write and while they still tend to do slightly less well than their peers (they still have poorer spelling and punctuation) we could find no difference in the quality of their written ideas or the organisation of their written work. Therefore, with much practice and positive motivation it is possible for those with dyslexia to produce advanced writing. However, even in this sample of high achievers comparatively poor spelling still impacted on their work.

It is interesting to note that a recent paper published in the USA showed that examples of writing with spelling errors were scored more harshly for quality of ideas than the same writing with no spelling errors. As researchers we make sure we correct spelling errors before rating essays for content. This is not always practical in the classroom and so informing colleagues of our own potential for marking biases is also an important part of professional education.

While it is possible to use strategies to reduce the spelling demands and transcribe ideas, this does not fix the problem and remains only a short-

term solution. Writing is a crucial life skill to acquire throughout education and thereafter. The findings from children with dyslexia emphasise that if a foundational skill such as spelling is poorly developed, it acts as a constraint on other key processes (vocabulary choice and rate of handwriting production) when producing written work. Support for spelling is therefore important to allow children with dyslexia to fully express themselves through their writing and demonstrate their actual knowledge in written assessments. Reasonable adjustments such as extra time for writing assessments are also supported by our work.

Improving spelling will also allow working memory resources to be devoted to other aspects of writing, such as idea generation and structuring. Writing demands many different language and cognitive skills to be drawn upon at the same time - potentially overloading an already reduced capacity working memory. By reducing the cognitive load through automating spelling the implications for text quality are thus clear, and could increase the motivation to write.

Finally, we would like to point out that a difficulty with writing is not just an issue for students with dyslexia. Children who struggle with language also show similar profiles of difficulty and our work in this area with Julie Dockrell at the Institute of Education in London shows we can expect many children with various learning difficulties to find writing a challenge. Diane Montgomery, Professor in Education at Middlesex University, also recently pointed out that up to a third of the children with writing difficulties she had assessed presented with spelling problems but without any obvious reading difficulties. Thus, very few of them had been referred for any special help in school. These children also deserve our attention.

Professor Vince Connelly of Oxford Brookes University is an internationally known researcher on the development of children's writing. See examples of some of his work on <http://psych.brookes.ac.uk/ewsc/>. Contact: vconnelly@brookes.ac.uk

Child with Dyslexia, 9 years, 2 months.

Writing produced in a 15 minute writing task. Pauses longer than 2 seconds shown. The larger the circle then the longer the pause.

I play hoer garden a San pit along the hoer-
With a bed room a cation a living room a of's.
I want toys to be in the living room a Maick Felyeg
She will live in a toy room. With lots and lots of stuff Sam In
My garden

**Same 15 minute writing task.
Child without Dyslexia of the
same age and same school.**

Similar handwriting execution speed. All pauses over 2 seconds.

Dear Mum and dad,

I would really like it if you could
send over some more food, drink and
other supplies that might come in
handy like teabags and tooth
paste. I do need some new pens and
paper for writing and bug repellent
too! It would be nice if you could
get me some guinea pig food for
Sugar and rose my pets. My
house would look nice with new
furniture and clothes for my dresser
and sitting room. I do need to paint
the walls so I would like some
turquoise paint and new curtains.
Some of the sofas are a bit shabby
and I would really like some nicer
plates and cutlery. I hope you can
get some of these supplies for me.

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Dyslexia and Entrepreneurship: the key to success

Professor **Julie Logan** discusses the research that she has undertaken in this field and defines the amalgamation of skills that those with dyslexia evidence as entrepreneurs.



In my work as a Professor of entrepreneurship I meet many entrepreneurs who are dyslexic. Initially I was puzzled by this so started to investigate. I carried out a study of 300 entrepreneurs in the UK and found that about 20% of those entrepreneurs were dyslexic (Logan 2001). A similar study in the US found almost 30% of the entrepreneurs were dyslexic (Logan 2009).

Those with dyslexia are often successful as entrepreneurs. Having found a high incidence of dyslexia in entrepreneurs I was keen to move beyond the statistics, delve deeper and find out why they do so well. The research was published in detail last year (Logan 2012) but this article gives an overview of what we found. I have included our findings along with some of the quotes for the dyslexic entrepreneurs we studied.

Many of the entrepreneurs we studied have learned coping strategies to manage their dyslexia and it is these strategies that seem to have given them a head start over non-dyslexic entrepreneurs. This is probably why they have been able to grow their ventures more quickly than other entrepreneurs (Logan 2009).

Their skills are discussed in sequence but it is almost certainly the amalgamation of good interpersonal skills; leadership skills; ability to delegate and ability to think differently that has given these entrepreneurs the edge in business.

“...it is almost certainly the amalgamation of good interpersonal skills; leadership skills; ability to delegate and ability to think differently that has given these entrepreneurs the edge in business.”

Firstly they have excellent oral communication skills which may have been developed to compensate for their weaknesses in written communication. They have a vision for how their business will succeed and this ability clearly helps them to communicate their vision persuasively.

Most entrepreneurs are passionate about their vision and business, having excellent communication skills to articulate this passion will almost certainly inspire those around them. The respondents also talk about painting pictures to explain concepts to those around them and this seems to be a very powerful tool. By painting pictures with words a difficult concept can be understood more easily.

Secondly, they lead and motivate by developing personal and long-lasting relationships with their team; it is not just about getting the job done. Taylor and Walter (2003) talk about dyslexics having excellent people skills and clearly this is a factor. However in addition, these entrepreneurs with dyslexia gave many examples of having sought and received help throughout their lives. They have learnt to rely on others for help. As a result they value the contribution of those around them and this is perhaps why they are good leaders.

Thirdly, they had to learn early in life to delegate in order to cope and because they have to delegate they value those around them. Delegation is skill that many entrepreneurs struggle to learn so those who are dyslexic have a head start when it comes to growing a business.

Fourthly, they think differently, this includes trusting their intuition when making business decisions, especially when selecting staff. The dyslexic entrepreneurs discussed their ability to pick good people and intuitively know someone will fit within the organisation. Other people may have this skill but the interviewees used their intuitive skills a great deal. Furthermore they talk about seeing things differently, looking for solutions and the ability to paint concepts and solutions in pictures, this ability to visualise and to communicate this to others seems to really help them in their daily business life. Research has suggested those who are dyslexic have skills associated with the right brain and creativity (Geschwind, 1982; Galaburda, 1993; West, 1992; 1997; Reid & Kirk, 2001). The responses of the entrepreneurs in this study suggests they are using these skills in order to lead and manage their ventures.

For the dyslexic entrepreneurs who have collaborated with the research, excellent communication skills, together with a genuine interest in people, the application of intuition and



an ability to delegate, have provided a distinct advantage in business. These skills are missing in many entrepreneurs and indeed the lack of skills may hamper the growth of the business.

The responses of the entrepreneurs in this study may also help us understand how corporate organisations might benefit from the talents of those with dyslexia. Not all people with dyslexia have the same skill set but the skills demonstrated by these entrepreneurs are those which all organisations need in order to succeed.

Leadership, communication, teambuilding and delegation skills are vital elements within most organizations. Are larger companies missing out on some of the best leaders? The dyslexics in this study valued their teams; given that an organisation's personnel are probably its biggest cost, is it not vital to have leaders who truly value the people around them?

Problem solving ability is another important skill for the organisation. The dyslexic entrepreneurs in this study frequently alluded to their intuition and to their ability to visualize how things can work; this must surely be a skill that companies would value.

“The dyslexic entrepreneurs in this study frequently alluded to their intuition and to their ability to visualize how things can work...”

Some corporate leaders are dyslexic but working in a large organisation can prove stressful. Composing an e-mail to a line manager can be fraught with danger and mistakes can be humiliating. Dyslexics frequently hide their problems for fear of discrimination and ridicule but given the correct opportunity and support they can achieve their full potential and benefit the organisation.

Our research is continuing. We are in the process of surveying adults with dyslexia who are in work to find out how about their experiences good and bad. This work is important because we need a body of evidence to present to employers so that they will be better able to understand the strengths and needs of their talented employees who are dyslexic.

To give you a flavour of our findings: On the positive side a very large number of respondents say: they have made it through life by having internal drive, working hard, and overcompensating; they say they are creative and are good at finding novel solutions to problems but they also worry about making mistakes in their written communications at work, feel exhausted coping with dyslexia and over half found the corporate work place a struggle.

If you know someone who would like to help with this project please ask them to complete our online questionnaire. Log onto: https://qtrial.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_2lwrYB5shXiXpit

Professor Julie Logan is Professor of Entrepreneurship at Cass Business School, City University London. Contact: J.Logan@city.ac.uk

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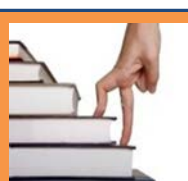
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Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils

Gives parents choice.

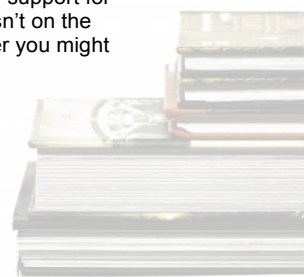
Every School on the **CReSTeD** Register has been assessed for SpLD (Dyslexia) provision.

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



Contact CReSTeD on 0845 601 5013
lesley@crested.org.uk www.crested.org.uk
 Registered charity no. 1052103
 Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils

Dyslexia and Summer-Born Children

Dr Barry Johnson, Lesley Freedman and Dr John Rack review the evidence on the referral of summer-born children for a dyslexia assessment.

There is reliable evidence to show that summer-born children perform significantly less well on measures of educational attainment and that a highly disproportionate number of these children are referred to sources of specialist assessment and support (Squires et al, 2012; Sykes et al, 2009). Therefore, Dyslexia Action decided to interrogate its database to determine whether or not this summer-born factor is also evident within the parental referral process of children to its 27 centres across the UK. It collated the numbers of children between the ages of 6 and 11 years of age and sorted them according to their season of birth. A total of 3,561 children were referred for assessment from January 2011 to June 2013. Figure 1 below gives the seasonal referral numbers.

Number of Referrals by Season of Birth

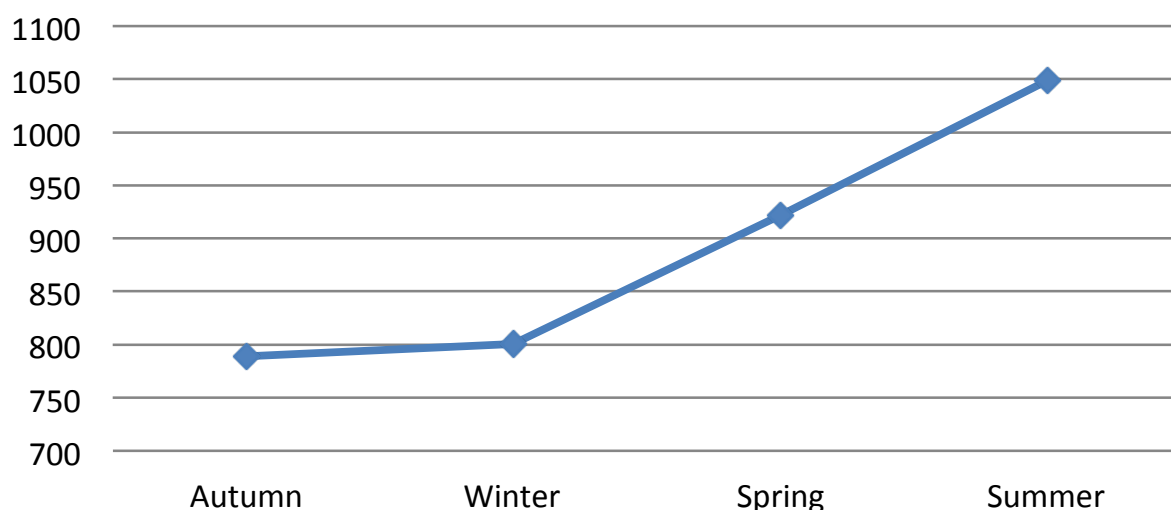


Figure 1

Visual inspection of the figure and statistical analysis (chi-square 40.393, $p = 3.064 \times 10^{-5}$) does indeed give some initial evidence that the summer-born factor should be considered as an important influence on the parental decision to seek an assessment for dyslexia. Any claim that the disparity could be caused by fluctuations of numbers of births across the seasons can be discounted; available evidence suggests that the number of births across all months of the year is stable (ONS 2013). This observed seasonal factor is consistent with previous research on dyslexic children (Livingston et al, 1993; Martin et al, 2004). However, it is important to note that Dyslexia Action does not have any overview information on the incidence of diagnosed dyslexia in its referral databases.

There are competing hypotheses regarding the reasons for the summer-born effect. One is the length of schooling hypothesis: when school admissions are staggered over the year then the youngest have the least schooling. Another is the relative age hypothesis: even with the same amount of schooling, the youngest in the year group will be, on average, less mature - cognitively socially and emotionally - than their older peers which could lead to a negative impact on the younger children's overall development. The latter hypothesis tends to be favoured by contemporary researchers (Sykes et al., 2009). Also, teacher expectancy effects may contribute as well. Teachers may not take children's relative levels of maturity into account when making qualitative and intuitive assessments of their abilities and may therefore label younger children as less able than their older peers within the same classroom cohort (Squires et al, 2012).

Clearly, given that it is the parents who make the decision to refer their children to Dyslexia Action, one needs to reflect on whether the presence of the summer-born factor demonstrates a vicarious transmission of teachers' concerns via the parents or if the parents are making their decisions mainly according to their own perceptions of their children's learning.

However, the causal influence of dyslexia on the referral process should not be dismissed out of hand. Further analysis of the referral data according to month of birth gives support for this position as shown in Figure 2 on the following page.

Number of Referrals by Month of Birth

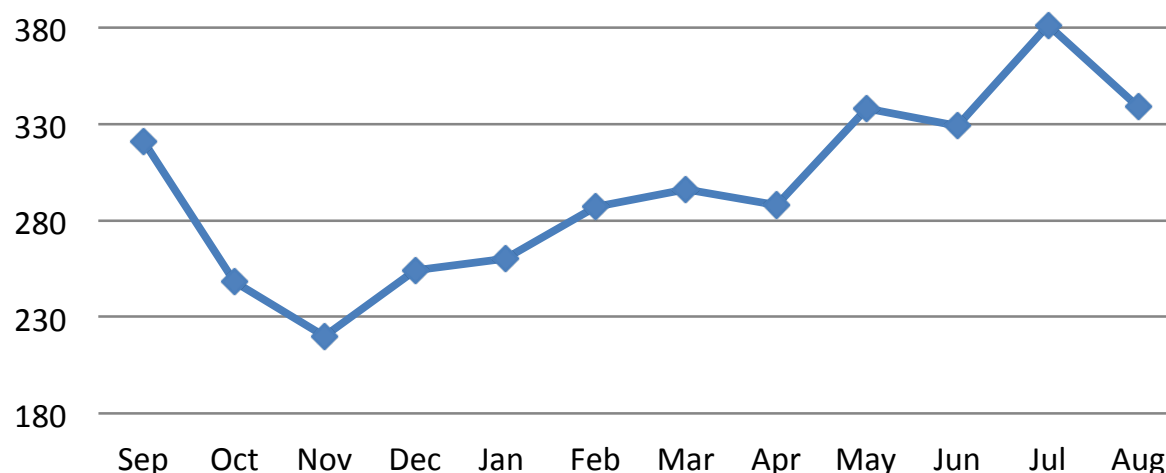


Figure 2

Figure 2 suggests that the presence of a relatively high number of children referred in September provides some contradictory evidence to the summer-born theory and may indeed highlight those children who do have dyslexia, causing the parents to be concerned and thus seek an assessment regardless of season, or month, of birth. Of course, there may be more than one contributing factor and other hypotheses could be put forward: if the data for figure 2 was to be transposed to place September after August then this could stimulate reflection on whether or not some type of seasonal factor is present: not necessarily the summer season, but one covering the summer-autumn period. Such different classifications of the concept of 'season' are used in other anthropometric and neurocognitive areas of research which have found equivalent evidence of risk and output measurements being correlated with 'seasons' such as winter- spring and summer-autumn (McGrath et al, 2006).

As Dyslexia Action is keen to identify the presence of dyslexia in children as early as possible it will be important to investigate further the summer-born effect and attempt to tease out the dyslexia factor. Application of the use of suitably normed psychometric assessment tools will continue to be a useful tool to reduce the influence of adults' unsafe qualitative judgements on young children's abilities (Squires, 2012). The importance of having a means of obtaining and analysing overview data on factors relating to learning and the referral process to all support agencies is also highlighted.

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Examination Access Arrangements:

JCQ Regulations for academic year 2013 - 2014

This SASC approved course provides Continuing Professional Development on assessment in the context of dyslexia and other SpLDs. The course is designed for professionals who need further information or updating in this area of disability in order that they can complete Form 8's and write equivalent reports in support of Exam Access Arrangement requests. The latest JCQ regulations and report writing requirements within this framework will be covered.

Eligibility

This course is open to those who hold one of the following:

- a specialist qualification at Level 7 such as a University Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia/ SpLD or an OCR Level 7 Diploma qualification
- a specialist qualification at Level 7 such as a University Postgraduate Certificate in Dyslexia/ SpLD or an OCR Level 7 Certificate qualification plus BPS Test User: Educational Ability/Attainment (formerly CCET)

What are the benefits?

- Updates knowledge and skills of teachers in assessment.
- Information on the latest requirements of JCQ for writing Exam Access Arrangements reports for the 2013-14 academic year.
- Provides an opportunity to exchange ideas and experience with teachers doing similar work.

Course content and structure

This course is run as an e-learning course via Moodle our Virtual Learning Environment. It takes on average

about 35 hours over 6 weeks to complete the whole course depending on prior experience. The course provides:

- Review of the latest JCQ Regulations for Exam Access Arrangements
- Revision and updating for specialist teachers on the completion of Form 8 for EAA
- Brief coverage of theoretical background and technical terms
- Hands-on experience with recently published tests
- Discussion of case studies and report writing
- Useful handouts
- Discussion forum to share questions and ideas and to keep up-to-date

Course award

Successful applicants will receive a Dyslexia Action Certificate of Continuing Professional Development for Examination Access Arrangements. This course also meets the SASC requirements for 5 hours of approved CPD for the purposes of APC renewal.

Course dates and fees

October, February and May 2013 – see website for details. The course costs £275 (£255 for Dyslexia Guild Members).

<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa>



Multiple choice questions:

the challenges they pose to students with specific learning difficulties and visual processing problems.

Dr Sylvia Moody, provides an overview of problems caused by multiple choice examinations and offers some solutions to help overcome these difficulties.

Typical difficulties and their effects in examinations

In Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) examinations, candidates with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD) and/or visual processing problems may be disadvantaged for the following reasons:

1. Poor short-term (working) memory

This makes it difficult for the candidate to hold in mind both the question and the possible answers.

2. Organising information in memory

Candidates may find it difficult to tailor the wide knowledge they may have of a subject to the specific requirements of the question.

3. Slow reading

A person with specific learning difficulties will need more time than other candidates to read through lengthy questions, or passages of text, which may precede MCQs. In cases where the question or case study that they have to read is complex, their difficulties with slow reading will be compounded by their difficulties with working memory, and so they may need to re-read the text several times in order to grasp the detailed meaning.

4. Poor visual tracking / visual processing

Candidates with these difficulties may find it hard to keep their place on a line of text and so a close group of four short answers could be visually confusing.

If some answers are differentiated simply by the presence or absence of a single word (such as *not*), the candidate could easily fail to spot this.

The candidate may identify the right answer but mistakenly mark an incorrect box on the answer grid.

5. Visual stress

This may cause the candidate to see:

- white paper as 'glaring';
- lines overlapping and jumbling together;
- words / letters shifting about on the page.

Visual stress is greatly exacerbated by fluorescent lighting.

6. Poor layout of papers / inconsistency in phrasing of answers

Candidates with any or all of the above difficulties will be particularly disadvantaged if the MCQs are not clearly laid out on the page, and if alternative answers use inconsistent vocabulary.

Accommodations that can be made for candidates with specific learning difficulties and / or visual processing problems

1. Extra time (25% of the total time is usual) could be allowed.
2. Examination papers should have a clear format – in particular there should be plenty of space between the lines of the answers.
3. The candidate could be allowed simply to circle his / her chosen answer rather than having to enter the code for that answer into a grid.
4. Candidates who suffer from visual stress could be allowed to take coloured overlays or monitor overlays, as necessary, into the examination, or, if feasible, to have the use of a screen reading ruler. Alternatively examination questions can be printed on coloured paper.
5. If the examination room has fluorescent lighting, candidates with visual stress / visual processing problems could be assigned desks as close as possible to windows so that they benefit from natural lighting.

Alternative examination methods that could be considered

1. The 'Open Book' examination, where the candidate is able to refer to manuals and reference material during the examination – this reduces the emphasis on the retrieval and processing of information.
2. The examination paper could be presented in a conventional question -and-answer format.
3. If a candidate does well generally in essay-based examinations and written assignments, but performs badly in MCQ examinations, consideration could be given



to offering a *viva voce* examination in order to determine if the candidate has the requisite knowledge to pass the examination.

It should be noted, however, that a *viva voce* examination can also present problems. It is important that examiners avoid asking complex questions with sub-clauses as limited working memory capacity will make it hard for the candidate to remember and respond to all the points raised. It may also result in the candidate frequently going off on a tangent – and this could mistakenly be interpreted as an attempt to avoid a question. Care needs to be taken to give the candidate plenty of time to respond to questions and, if required, to refer back to notes.

4. In the context of professional examinations, consideration could be given as to whether a work-based assessment rather than a written examination could be used to determine whether the candidate's skills are adequate to meet the demands of the workplace.

The British Dyslexia Association's *Code of Practice* includes this advice: Avoid multiple choice questions if possible. These can be discriminatory for candidates who have difficulties in the areas of reading comprehension, working memory and visual tracking.

Advice for candidates on how to tackle Multiple Choice Question examinations

(a) Revising and preparing for MCQ exams

- Revision for MCQ exams can be particularly onerous for students with specific learning difficulties because it can mean detailed revision of a whole area of knowledge.
- When revising, it may help to choose different coloured paper / card for particular areas of revision notes or

mind maps and to have these pinned up on your wall so that, in the examination, you can mentally visit that part of the room in your mind. This may also help you to match the knowledge you have to the specific area covered by a question.

- If sample MCQ examinations (with answers) or previous papers are available, then start your revision completing the sample papers so that you can identify gaps in your knowledge, and also practise doing multiple choice questions.

(b) During the examination

- Do not rush through the questions and answers too quickly – this will make comprehension difficult and cause stress.
- Instead, first, read the question slowly. Pause briefly after each meaning unit *within* the sentence and think actively about what you are reading.
- When you are sure you have understood the question, consider if you know the answer to it before looking at the set of answers on the examination paper.
- Then *slowly* read through each of the possible answers. Put a cross against any answers that you *know* are wrong so that you don't keep re-reading these.
- Highlight, or mentally note, any key words, especially negatives, such as **not** or **never** or **uncommon**.
- If two or three answers seem very similar and you begin to be confused by this, it may be best to favour the answer that you were first drawn to.

Dr Sylvia Moody is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist specialising in the assessment of adults with dyslexia and a specialist writer on dyslexia.
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Improving outcomes for children with special educational needs.

Brian Lamb OBE reviews the latest government legislation affecting children and young people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties and outlines the impact this may have.



One of the major challenges over the last thirty years for the education system in this country has been the inability to deliver better outcomes and higher attainment for children with dyslexia. Both the Rose Review (2009) and later my own Inquiry (Lamb 2009) showed there remains a large and continuing gap between children with dyslexia and the rest of the school population. Too many children and young people with dyslexia do not achieve as well as their peers and this has a damaging impact on wider outcomes and life chances. What then are the prospects of the reforms in the Children and Families Bill addressing this failure?

The Government has been clear that one of the major drivers of the reform is the desire to improve outcomes for children with SEN. (DFE 2011). Yet the overall legal framework may not look that different from the point of view of a person with Dyslexia or their parent. It is rare for children with dyslexia to secure a statement of special educational needs so the introduction of the Education, Health and Social Care Plan, the most significant legal change, will have little impact on provision for children with dyslexia. Instead the two areas that will have most impact are the removal of School Action and School Action Plus and the introduction of the Local Offer which parents and young people will have to be fully consulted on.

The New Single Category of SEN

The removal of the school based categories is a significant change aimed at delivering a more personalised approach to the learner with a greater focus on outcomes. The driver for removal of the categories is the fear that there is an all too easy progression from School Action, then School Action Plus without enough differentiation about individual needs, good assessment and early intervention. The Ofsted review of SEN (2010) found that for children identified at School Action level the additional provision was often an inappropriate response to inadequacies in whole-class teaching or pastoral support. Identifying SEN was sometimes viewed as the only legitimate route to gaining additional provision rather than schools focusing on raising the offer for all children with SEN.

The move to a single category has led to concerns that the graduated response to identifying and responding to children's needs would be lost along with the trigger for mobilising additional resources. However changes to funding arrangements for schools have already made the use of School Action Plus less relevant in drawing down resources from specialist support services. Since last September new funding rules have made clear that schools have to secure additional support from their delegated SEN funding. Schools are now required to fund the first £6,000 of SEN provision, on top of the normal pupil allocation, before the Local Authority will step in with additional support. Further Local Authorities do not use School Action

or School Action Plus as indicators in their formula for delegated funding to schools.

A single category means that schools have to think much harder about how they are either going to develop more of their own expertise or where they are going to commission this from if they are to meet needs. As the indicative Code of Practice (2013) has already made clear the removal of the categories is not a retreat from a graduated response to identifying and meeting special needs. However if removal of the easy signposting of the categories is going to work embedding a more graduated response in schools practice is fundamental. The concept of a graduated response has been retained in the Indicative Code and hopefully will be strengthened further in the next iteration for public consultation in October. Early indications of thinking and it requires schools to ensure that there is good teaching across the whole cohort and then where there is an SEN need identified that there is a plan in place to address needs, that reviews of progress are timely and that specialist external services are available.

In theory children with dyslexia could have the most to gain from this approach-but only if teachers have a much greater knowledge of dyslexia and specialist support is on hand when needed. It is crucial that the final version of the Code is more explicit about the expectations both for improving the competence and knowledge of mainstream teachers and support staff to address children

and young people’s needs. Crucial to this is ensuring that there are good assessment processes and screening in place, ideally at foundation stage, so that children are identified early and interventions can address learning needs before progress is severely delayed. This may be difficult without any national screening programme in place for dyslexia or a teacher training programme that embeds these skills in teachers.

The Local Offer

The Local Offer opens up the possibility of a more transparent conversation about what the shape of local provision should be on SEN. Local Authorities have responsibilities to consult with both parents and young people but also professionals and other stakeholders. Crucial to making a success of the local offer will how schools respond to ensure that they have a clear offer for children with dyslexia and how parents will be able to judge this against national quality standards. Discussions around the content of the Offer

provide a major opportunity to promote dyslexia friendly schools and the professional development programme. It will also be an opportunity to clarify what specialist support and training will be available within the schools and what the policy is on providing additional support to schools and where specialist resources bases already exist. This will be helped by new regulations which require schools to communicate to parents what assessment methods they use, how staff are skilled to meet the needs identified and what provision is available, mirroring some aspects of the Local Offer at the schools level.

Authorities are inevitably going to focus where the biggest gaps are to be plugged and gains to be made. In turning around the achievement gap for dyslexia there needs to be a ruthless focus on making the case for more provision on dyslexia in early intervention and in service training and increased support for early intervention from specialists support services or parents and

professionals will find that the focus from LA’s and schools moves elsewhere in the SEN spectrum.

Conclusion

It is interesting that as we are moving towards a greater focus on encouraging cultural change in schools the normally de-regulationist states in the USA are moving the other way. A New Dyslexia Legislation has been signed into law in Arkansas and Utah to ensure early screening and then guaranteed provision of dyslexia support and follows similar legislation in a number of other states.

The Government rightly say that they want every teacher to be a teacher of SEN. To achieve this we need to ensure that every teacher knows how to identify and support the learning needs of children with dyslexia. The change in school category and the Local Offer present a challenge and an opportunity to make this happen. But only if professionals working with parents ensure that the needs of children with dyslexia are put centre stage in roll out of the reforms.

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Lamb Inquiry into Parental Confidence in Special	

Addendum

In Volume 24 No 2 Summer 2013 issue of Dyslexia Review, page 17 of the *TOMAL-2 Review: A teacher assessors’ perspective* the following sentence “not realising that I could buy the manual and a pack of the profile/summary forms for much less!” should have said “not realising that I could buy the Examiners’ Manual and the Examiner Record Booklets for much less”.

We apologise for any confusion caused.

The Dyslexia-Friendly Teacher's Toolkit: Book Review and Author Interview

Pavey, B., Meehan, S. and Davis, S. (2013), *The Dyslexia-Friendly Teacher's Toolkit: Strategies for Teaching Students 3- 18*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London.
ISBN 978-1-4462-0707-9

Reviewed by Jo Hollingsworth and with an interview with Barbara Pavey.

In 1999 Neil Mackay put forward his original 'dyslexia friendly' concept, which was subsequently adopted by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), and is now prevalent in many mainstream schools. The *Dyslexia-Friendly Teacher's Toolkit* explores current philosophical approaches and theories of dyslexia, and builds on the ideas and initiatives generated by Mackay's original initiative by applying them to good teaching practice.

The book is based on the premise that within our education system, "dyslexia discussion is often about how to improve the learning power and skills of dyslexic students; this can become a discourse of deficit" which "focuses on students failings." Instead, this book promotes commitment to holistically improving learning environments for the benefit of all students because "in spite of advances in good practice, there will always be some students who experience a greater degree of difficulty, so there is a continuing need for solutions to support their preferred learning style and skills." It proposes that practices designed to help dyslexic learners can in fact help ALL learners including high achievers, and are therefore not exclusively aimed at those affected by dyslexia.

The book is organized into 8 chapters which cover the following topics:

- Understanding learners with dyslexia
- Supporting learning
- Dyslexia and Phonics
- Dyslexia and English as an additional language
- Reading, writing and spelling
- Dyslexia and mathematics
- Dyslexia and science
- Dyslexia and creativity.

Whilst the book provides a wealth of advice which will be of interest to all teachers, organisation of the material into chapters by subject makes it easier for teachers with a specialist interest to access and implement the ideas more easily.

Each chapter begins with good practice points, and includes case studies which are useful to bring the theory to life. In each chapter there is a practical suggestion of 'something to try' and examples of learner's experiences described in their 'own words' which brings a crucial insight into the challenges faced by dyslexic learners and how this can profoundly affect their confidence. Also included in each chapter are ICT, homework and revision ideas. Each chapter concludes with a five step process to help teachers move towards a dyslexia friendly teaching method, plus useful websites and further recommended reading.

There is a great deal of useful material packed into this book; it includes theory and research findings; big picture ideas on how to make the learning environment more dyslexia friendly and conducive to different learning styles, and very specific strategies that can be used in whole school or whole class context from early years, through to tertiary education.

It would be impossible to do the book justice without picking out a chapter to review in more detail. Hopefully this will provide an insight into the range and depth of material included in the book.

The opening chapter- Understanding learners with dyslexia, begins with Good Practice Points including, for example, "Understand that there are good days and bad days, appreciating that this is not deliberate avoidance or laziness in a learner." The authors encourage teachers who are not dyslexic themselves to develop empathy by reflecting on their own past experience or personal difficulties in their own schooling. There is a photocopiable quiz for self-reflection or training, which is designed to assess the readers own current level of knowledge of dyslexia. Items include for example "Dyslexic learners experience more fatigue" (true) and "Dyslexic learners are best placed in low achieving sets/groups" (false).

This initial chapter provides a useful overview of the current definitions of dyslexia from the Rose Review Report and the BDA and examines this in some detail. The authors discuss and advocate the use of word processing to enable dyslexic students to manage written tasks more easily, improve legibility and presentation, as well as ostensibly simple but underutilised strategies such as introducing homework at the beginning of the lesson to help clarify the link between homework

and classwork and to enable students to clarify, ask questions and write instructions down legibly whilst not under time pressure. It also introduces the concept of revision techniques based on graphics like thought spray, spidergrams or mind mapping. These will appeal to visual learners, because they do not depend on the written expression of an idea.

There are whole-school and whole-class strategies that support language and literacy development at each stage. These range from high level whole school strategies. For example, "There is a system for identifying signs of disaffection among poor readers. Where a child is showing behavioural difficulties there is assessment for dyslexia and appropriate remediation," to more tactical whole class interventions such as, "Classroom displays are clear and easy to read. They are not too chaotic or overcrowded". Like all subsequent chapters it concludes with a list of useful website and suggestions for further reading.

Other chapters deal with specific issues like maths, science and English as a foreign language. This book should provide a mine of information for all teachers who have an interest in creating a dyslexia-friendly school or classroom environment which embraces all learning styles. Whilst some of the information will already be familiar to specialist dyslexia and SEN teachers, the book provides a very useful template that can be used for them to quickly help other teachers put good practice in place without having to 'reinvent the wheel.'

Although the language of the book is reasonably technical, which some parents may find challenging (especially if they are affected by dyslexia themselves), the book is also recommended by the authors for parents and carers of dyslexic children and learners of all ages who struggle with dyslexia in their own right. As a parent of a dyslexic child, I know that with the best intentions it is still easy to fail to make time to create the ideal environment for revision and homework. This book inspired me to refocus. For parents that are new to dyslexia the book should provide quite a comprehensive insight into some of the challenges associated with dyslexia and learning, and many useful techniques to use in supporting their own child, as well as invaluable information to start a dialogue with their child's school to help ensure that support is in place.

In summary, the book is an inspiring and comprehensive source of information and ideas for creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment at all levels, and in my opinion deserves a place in the staff room of all schools.

About the authors: Barbara Pavey is a Lecturer in Higher Education, Training Dyslexia Specialists in the North of England, Margaret Meehan is Co-ordinator of Specialist Tuition at Swansea University and Sarah Davis is an Early Years Lead Teacher working in North Yorkshire.

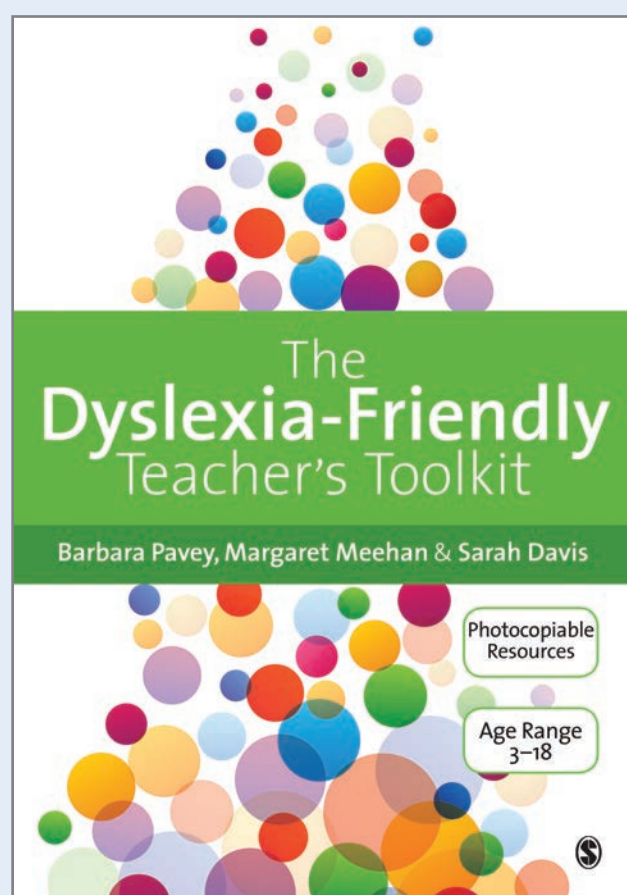
Jo Hollingsworth interviews Barbara Pavey, one of the authors of *The Dyslexia-Friendly Teacher's Toolkit*

What was the aim in writing this book?

We wanted to create a toolkit type of approach which would inspire teachers to adopt a can-do attitude. The idea is not to be prescriptive, but to encourage teachers to generate ideas themselves. Teachers often have to deal dynamically with learning situations which they can't fully anticipate- the book should trigger that there are lots of options and give teachers the confidence to try to figure out what might help in each situation. Teachers need to be empowered to adopt a special needs mindset and ask themselves what is the step or bridge that will help the learner make connections? Teachers need to have the confidence and inspiration to make their own bridges.

What has been your inspiration?

In 1990 when I did my master's degree, I was hugely inspired by Professor Peter Pumfrey, at the time Prof Peter Pumfrey and Prof Tim Miles were both big names in dyslexia research; he talked with incredible passion and enthusiasm, and used multisensory teaching techniques which was quite unusual at the time, and systematically broke things down into small steps. This was a huge revelation **and** it got me through my



statistics module! It gave me the confidence that I could successfully complete it. When I teach and write I try to emulate this approach because I know that it works on a personal level. For every person who tells me they are dyslexic I know that there will be at least another one who doesn't tell me, so taking a dyslexia-friendly view has the capacity to help more people and not exclusively those who are dyslexic.

What changes have you seen in attitudes towards dyslexia over the last few years within the education system?

Even as recently as the year 2000, dyslexia was not widely understood unless you were a specialist. When I was writing SEN statements in 2002, there were still 14-15 year olds with a clear dyslexic profile coming through who had not been previously identified. Now, although I wouldn't say it never happens, it is quite rare because we are so much better at identifying and supporting children whose dyslexia is clear. The children I see now, that have slipped through the net, are those with more complex learning profiles or mild dyslexia which is masked by other learning needs.

We are also better at accepting that dyslexia exists. When I go into primary schools now, I recognise things from a dyslexia-friendly approach in the learning environment, and it's very close to the wave 1 approach. There are still teachers who don't believe that there is such a thing as dyslexia but they are in a small minority. The Rose Review¹ made a big difference in that it brought together the major contenders in dyslexia and got them to agree on a definition and explanation of dyslexia which is very clear and easy to read. We need to keep updating the definition- it's still evolving and a work in progress, but we've come a long way.

So how well do you feel dyslexia is understood by mainstream teachers?

In general we are much better at understanding and creating dyslexia-friendly learning environments, but understanding in some cases may be quite limited, for example it may be confined to the reversal of letters, or the belief that a child can't be dyslexic because his reading is okay, or that dyslexia is a left brain, right brain distinction. Initial Teacher Training still has very little input on dyslexia in relative terms, but the younger generation of teachers is increasingly more knowledgeable and accepting as they will have met students on their course who are dyslexic, and have grown up in a generation where there is greater dyslexia awareness.

What are governments doing to promote dyslexia friendly practice?

It is encouraging that whatever government has

been in power, they have demonstrated quite a good understanding of dyslexia. The Inclusion Development Plans and the Rose Review were spot on. The DfE initially provided funding for one year to train 4000 specialist teachers, as a result of the Rose Review, but with the change in government and financial cuts, this was reduced to 2000. Of those 2000, not all have finished their training, so it's vitally important that people who enrolled on the Postgraduate Diploma course do go on to complete it.

What are the top three things that schools and teachers could do to make a significant difference for dyslexic learners?

First and foremost, take care of the emotional aspect! Think of something you were not good at in school and then think of having to do that thing every day for the whole of your school career and imagine what that would be like - use that empathy. Every child knows who the best reader in the class is, so it follows that everyone knows who the worst reader is, and that child knows it too. If we deal with the emotional aspect we can get the rest right, if we don't deal with it we can't achieve the rest because a worried or anxious child will not be able to learn well. Interestingly, teachers often start with teaching material which has built in emotional aspects to hook involvement and enthusiasm, and then that atrophies and becomes more content driven and less emotionally engaging- the confidence building stuff is eroded, we have to remember to put it back!

Secondly, use multisensory means as standard, not as a treat!

Thirdly, put in a step or make a bridge when a child is having difficulty. An example is the use of clay modelling - if a child is having difficulty learning to spell a word ask them to make a model of something which reminds them of it, resist jumping in and making suggestions, it should be something they generate which helps them make the connection. Alternatively help a child learn to spell one word, for example a child who learns to spell 'nation' may suddenly be able to spell lots of words ending in 'ion.' It's easy to dismiss it as just one word but that may be what it takes to give that child the confidence. There are many ways to do it, find the bridge and put it in!

What are your hopes for the future regarding best practice in this area?

To see the above three things being done by every teacher, not just specialists. However, there will always be some learners who experience severe difficulty and the risk of a dyslexia-friendly approach is that it can dilute the seriousness of the issue. We need to

¹ *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)*

recognise that for some children the difficulty will be severe and we will still need specialist SEN teachers. We must be careful that the dyslexia-friendly approach doesn't diminish the awareness of dyslexia being a serious issue. If we get it right schools should be a happier place for children, parents and teachers.

You say in your book that “dyslexia is owned by the people who experience it and who are close to them.” What key advice would you give to parents of dyslexic learners and to dyslexic learners themselves?

Again, to consider the emotional aspect first. The single biggest piece of advice, which I appreciate will not be universally popular, is that if the school isn't listening, then find another school. In my experience, when that change has been made, the outcomes have been better for the child - the reality is that some schools do more than others. By the time a parent approaches a school to express their concerns, they will have researched and talked to lots of people about their concerns, and had many sleepless nights - the chances are that they are probably right about their concerns. In addition, if a child is consistently displaying difficult behaviour, ensure that their literacy level is checked as it could be masking dyslexia. There are tests in every school that teachers can use, but teachers need to make sure the test is up to date and not rely on outdated test materials.

You highlight in your book that discussion about dyslexia is often a “discourse of deficit,” how can we re-frame this?

We have to learn not to do it! We may not be aware, until someone draws attention to the fact that we are doing it. Special needs practitioners are focused on helping people, so the natural tendency is to want to fix and 'normalise' things. The social model of disability is at the heart of it, people are not diminished by being dyslexic, rather they are part of life's rich tapestry. Treating people equally but differently is a difficult concept; the whole psychological discourse is one of deficit as it is based on norms, so anything outside that norm is automatically regarded as a deficit. The premium that education places on literacy is becoming greater and greater so this is an ongoing problem. We still hear about children being put in lower sets because of their literacy, they should be in higher groups with

support but it's very difficult for schools to organise and manage around this.

I am greatly interested in dyslexia and entrepreneurship. Is creativity and strategic thinking a characteristic of dyslexia or of very bright people who are not being hampered by their dyslexia? More research is needed in this area.

You say that “students who display dyslexic tendencies will require very much more revision, repetition and rehearsing of knowledge and skills before they are retained in the long term”. Do you see any conflict between this and the strong emphasis on testing and the national curriculum, and if so how could this conflict be managed?

There is undoubtedly a huge conflict which is difficult to reconcile, most teachers know it and are constrained by it. We need to empower teachers more. A recent paper by Snowling in 2013, concluded that teacher's judgments were as good as testing. Testing can have a profoundly damaging effect on children emotionally.

We are hearing arguments, as we have heard many times before, for a more play-based curriculum in the early years. There is always tension between play-based early years and drilling down with the curriculum, and the effects remain to be seen. Big questions are never easily resolved; all we can do is make sure questions keep being asked. It's interesting that we have seen various consultation documents about early years; although they push for a more free play-based approach, when the legislation comes out it is much more formal. What is the answer? In the future technology may move away from paper-based literacy.

The book also looks at dyslexia and English as a foreign language. What additional problems exist in identifying and supporting children whose first language is not English?

The central issue is that difficulties with dyslexia may look like difficulties with the language concerned and this can mask it, but dyslexia is continuously distributed across the population, so some of those children will almost certainly be struggling with dyslexia. Consequently, all mainstream teachers need good dyslexia awareness so that they don't just see it as a problem with language learning.

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Book Reviews

Johnson, B. and G. Hagger-Johnson, (2013). *Psychometric Assessment, Statistics and Report Writing: an introduction for psychologists, teachers and health professionals*, Pearson Assessment, London. ISBN 9780749163778 RRP: £30.00 pbk

Reviewed by **Dr Anna Smith**, Cognitive Neuropsychologist and Postgraduate Psychology Tutor for Dyslexia Action.

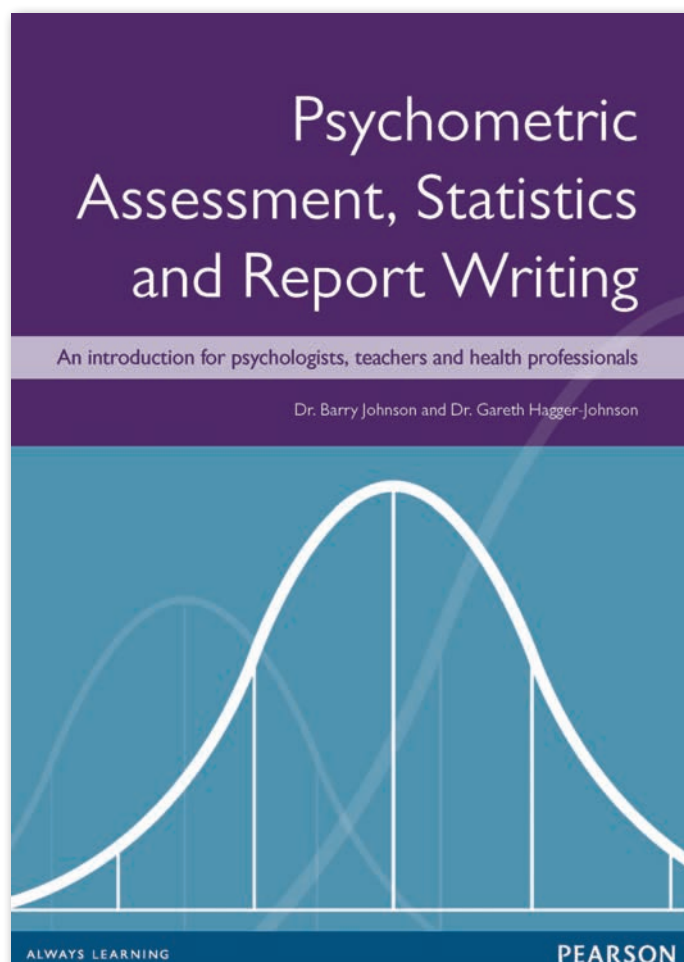
This timely book written by two well known psychologists with expertise in the field of statistics is aimed at SENCOs, psychologists, and other teaching professionals who intend to assess individuals with educational needs. While the content of this book is sometimes technical and may not suit those who are not already familiar with assessment, the first chapter introduces many of the statistical components required for competent skills in this field, such as correlation and the standard error of measurement (SEM).

The book is divided into three sections: Section 1 contains the nuts and bolts of the book and forms the largest section. Helpfully, the concepts to be tackled are introduced by way of case examples, such as a practitioner wishing to convert T to standard scores for the purposes of comparison in Chapter 2 and further on in Chapter 13, the use of probability to decide whether extra time in a reading test has resulted in significant improvement in a learner's raw score. This unique approach gives the book a pragmatic feel and may appeal to more nervous readers. Another very practical aspect to this book is the use of excel tables throughout, which eases the reader through necessary calculations while encouraging us to create our own collection of tables for future reference.

Section 2 covers report writing and includes a very useful section on the confusing issue of range descriptors, a chapter devoted to producing charts and graphs in Excel, as well as other practical and time saving advice to enhance report writing skills. Finally Section 3 discusses future issues including a useful account of alternatives to the discrepancy model.

The style of this book may appeal to those who find statistics daunting as it uses Excel as a calculating device rather than presenting abstract equations. Additionally, the focus upon problems that may well come up in a typical assessor's day also contributes to a less abstract and more practical style. The statistical concepts are explained for those who are interested and it is particularly helpful to see references to online statistical tools such as stattrek.com, as alternatives to using excel formulae.

While these inclusions may well date the book prematurely, it currently serves as a very useful handbook for any assessor who wishes to enhance their statistical knowledge and in so doing will very likely improve their report writing skills.



Reader Offer

Psychometric Assessment, Statistics and Report Writing: an introduction for psychologists, teachers and health professionals,

Pearson Assessment is offering free copies of this book to the first 3 lucky readers who contact them at marketing@pearsonclinical.co.uk.

Subsequent readers will be offered 20% discount on the retail price when they quote ZADAPY13 before 30/12/2013.

Bird, R, 2nd Ed (2013). *The Dyscalculia Toolkit*, Sage Publications Ltd, London. ISBN 978-1-4462-6719-6 RRP: £34.99 pbk.

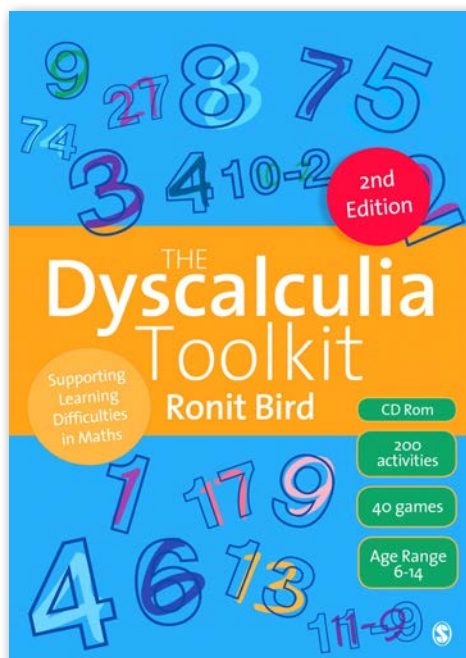
Reviewed by: Heather Casey, Head of Supportive Education at Feltham Community College.

Ronit Bird, the author of *The Dyscalculia Toolkit*, is a practising teacher with a great deal of practical and advisory experience working with dyslexic children and those with dyscalculia.

The book is divided into an introduction followed by four very practical sections detailing activities and games to teach specific maths areas. There is a useful contents page and an outline of what can be found on the accompanying CD.

The introduction initially states that the book is aimed at primary teachers who do not have a specialist background in maths or special needs but then goes on to suggest that mainstream teachers, specialist teachers, teaching assistants and parents might also find it useful. It also claims a wide audience of students beyond that of those diagnosed as dyscalculic, and I can see a use for many of the practical activities with a range of SEN students struggling with number regardless of the root cause. Bird presents a sound rationale for her games approach to learning and stresses that these are not 'bolt-on' activities but rather provide the actual learning experience for specific topics. The activities and games in the ensuing sections bear this out to a certain extent. However, as most are designed to be teacher-led, there is not a great deal of explicit opportunity to develop enquiry in the learner but this could easily be adapted by the experienced teacher who could modify the delivery according to need and build on her good ideas.

The introduction also details how to use the book advising that you can dip in and out at different points depending on your students' particular needs. An outline of what dyscalculia is and the indicators is included. The author gives some guidance on the kind of teaching needed by dyscalculic learners; some of this is a little superficial with a



natural overlap with the needs of other SEN children, so would not be new to a good SEN practitioner.

The final part of the introduction consists of a table listing the games in order as they appear in the four sections and indicating the main teaching points they address, and more useful I feel, another table detailing the teaching points and the games and activities which could be used to address the specific points.

The ensuing four sections cover basic calculation with numbers below and above ten, place value, times tables, multiplication and division. Each of the sections begins with an overview putting the relevant topic into context and then outlines the main problems associated with the topic followed by a list of ideas on how to help.

Finally there are copious activities to teach specific areas and games to develop and reinforce these areas. A useful aspect of the presentation is the distinction made between activities and games by shading the former which makes searching back for a game for example, quicker. Each of the games has a list of the teaching points and equipment needed. Some

of the equipment most people would either have or they could easily use something similar but some activities are dependent on having specific concrete resources.

I particularly like the way the author promotes talk at every stage, vocalising the learning process for and with the student. She suggests that it is possible to dip into the book at any stage but I think some of the activities are dependent on knowing the way something has been taught and learnt previously. At the end of the book there is a useful index and a list of further reading, there is no glossary which would have been useful.

The accompanying CD has a good explanation of a range of concrete materials and the rationale for the author's preference. It has all the activities and games worksheets in an easy black and white format ready to print. However, some colour and graphics would help to motivate and engage the learner further.

Overall I found *The Dyscalculia Toolkit* easy and enjoyable to read and full of practical ideas which would be accessible to the less experienced as well as the more practiced in working with children diagnosed as dyscalculic. Much of the advice and activities would work equally as well with other SEN students. I would certainly recommend this book to those supporting learners with difficulties in maths and number.

Reader Offer

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Phillips, N and L. Beavan, 2nd Ed, (2012)
Teaching Play to Children with Autism:
Practical Interventions Using Identiplay,
Sage Publications Ltd, London. ISBN
9781446207666/ Electronic 9781446258590
RRP: £27.99

Reviewed by: Siobhan Smillie, teacher working on the Dyslexia Action /BDA Sound Check project and for King Edward's school in Bath. Her eldest son has an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

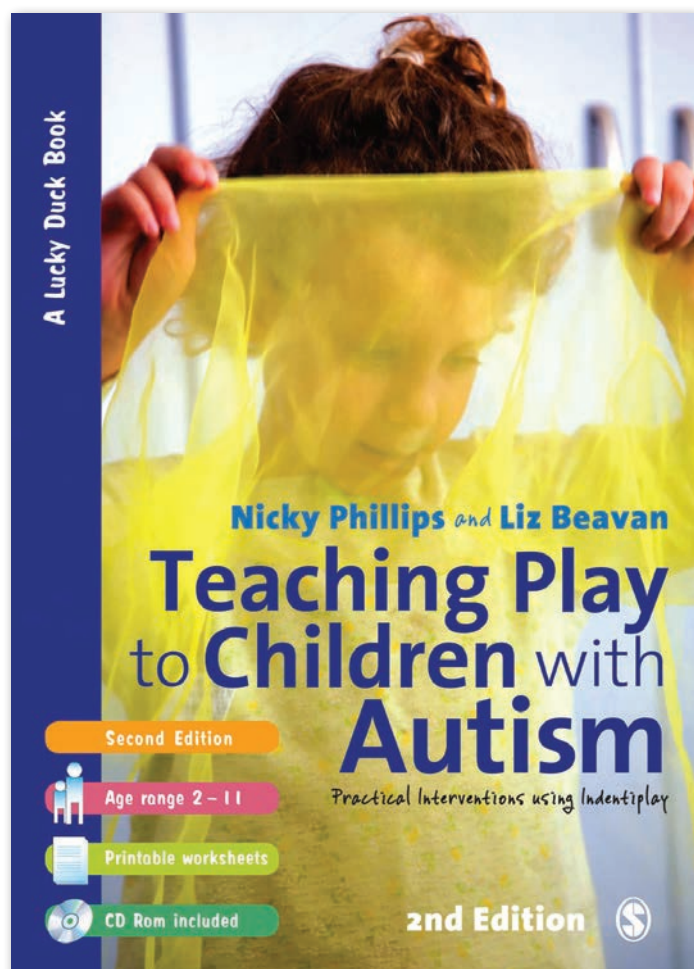
Play is a tool for learning and relies on language, social interaction and understanding, flexibility and imagination and social experiences. The skills underpinning play are the very areas included within the triad of impairments that are central to the difficulties and differences experienced by a child with ASC. The authors, an educational psychologist for Portsmouth City Council and a retired head teacher involved with charity work in the field of Autism, have written a book that reflects their own practical experiences working directly with children using 'identiplay' to develop these skills.

Identiplay is an adult-led teaching strategy providing practical starting points to enable autistic children to develop their existing play skills, extend and enrich them and possibly make generalisations with the aid of adults. The authors refer to research that shows autistic children can learn 'play acts' if prompted and there are explorations as to whether the children are developing 'learned' behaviours or demonstrating genuine, spontaneous play behaviours. Evidence from case studies referred to in the book show some children have made links and generalisations and engaged in spontaneous play. The 'identiplay' process begins with an assessment of the child in free play before any intervention begins, to establish a baseline and make realistic judgements about their skills. For example, a child who is not yet exploring toys or engaging with others is unlikely to be ready to sit at a table and copy the play of another person.

What seems like a simple activity actually has many skills involved such as a shared focus, imitation and mirroring, parallel play and play dialogue and turn taking – some of the very skills autistic children find so difficult.

Identiplay involves setting a 'stage' using recognisable toys that motivate the child. Two sets of toys should be used so the adult has the same as the child. Using parallel play, the adult mirrors the child at first, gradually introducing new ideas.

The use of simple language communicates affective and semantic meaning and gives a reason, a framework and an end to the play. A script is written beforehand that provides structure and narrative at the appropriate level e.g. 'push car, brrrm. Finished.' When ready, a new piece of play is added; 'man in car, push car, brrrm. Finished.' Eventually, the adult will set out the two sets of toys in the area and model the simple playscript, watching and waiting for the child's engagement. The book contains a section with suggested kits and scripts for



the younger child including ideas for farmyard, garages, dolls, space shuttle and another section for using identiplay with other resources such as planting a seed and self-help skills such as washing hands, making a sandwich and a cup of tea.

The purpose of identiplay is to increase the repertoire of toys with which the child will play and the authors claim to have successfully used it with pre-school children through to Key Stage 3 children.

The book is easy to read, well laid out and has a wealth of resources such as a list of useful websites and a CD rom containing video clips of the intervention in practise, printable scripts and annotated powerpoint slides to facilitate professional training.

This book would be informative for SENCO's and teachers who work with autistic children that may be further along on the spectrum and it is probably more useful to those in the early years and primary settings. However, I believe it may have a more limited application for the specialist literacy teacher and is a book that could be read for background knowledge and interest.

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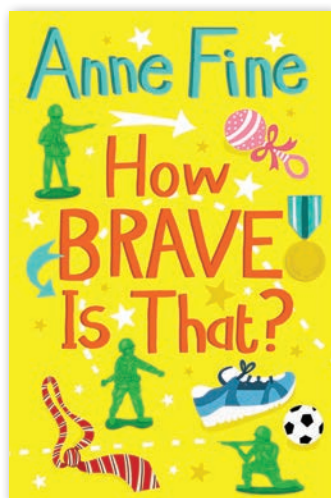
Fine A, with illustrations by V.Gausden (2013) *How Brave is that?*
Barrington Stoke, Edinburgh. ISBN: 978-1-78112-243-3 RRP:£5.99

Reviewed by Jamie Philp,
age 9 from South Wonston
School. With thanks to
Jane Priest, DA Centre
Winchester.

The cover is bright and colourful. The army men make the book stand out as a book about the army. The writing is very easy to read. The pictures are good but need more colour.

Tom wanted to join the army ever since he was in nursery. He needed to pass exams to get into the army but he found school work really tricky. When his Mum had triplets, Tom got into trouble for not wearing school uniform because the babies kept getting them messy. On the exam day as usual Tom did not have any school uniform to wear. So he was told he couldn't sit the exam. Tom was desperate! How would he pass the exam?

Tom is kind and brave, he struggles with school work and gets extra help from his Mum at home and a teacher at school. Tom's friend is the narrator of this story and helps him to get through difficulties at school. This book has lots of humour. It is very comical and fun to read. If you are taking exams it helps you not to worry so much. I recommend it for age eight and above.



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Award-winning Barrington Stoke publishes books for struggling and reluctant readers using dyslexia-friendly features in all titles. In celebration of *Dyslexia Awareness Week* in October, the publisher is offering the chance to win one of three goody bags with bookmarks, posters and free books in either the 5-8, 8-12 or teen age range categories!

5-8	8-12	Teen
		

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DAW COMPETITION in the subject line with your
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Deadline: 30th December

Dyslexia Guild Annual Summer Conference 2014 – Call for presentations and workshops

The Dyslexia Guild Annual Summer Conference 2014 will be held on Thursday 19th June at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln.

We now invite proposals for seminars or workshops and whole conference presentations.

Papers are welcome from members and non-members of the Guild. Sessions can be aimed either at specialist teachers/assessors or at teachers/support staff who are less experienced or new to the role.

The Theme for the conference is '**Dyslexia and Co-occurring difficulties: exploring aspects of performance.**'

Submissions will be considered that are relevant to all Guild members including sessions aimed at newer members and less experienced practitioners, who increasingly work with students with complex needs.

Submission Guidelines:

Proposals should be submitted to the Guild Administration Office by Friday 13th December 2013 using a presentation and workshop submission form which can be downloaded from the Guild website at:
<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild-annual-conference-2014>

Haylock, D and A. Cockburn, 4th Ed.(2013) Understanding Mathematics for Young Children: A Guide for Teachers of Children 3-8, SAGE Publications Ltd, London. ISBN 978-1-4462-4866-9, RRP:£24.99 pbk, £29.99 ebook

Reviewed by **Ruth Hale**, SENCO in three Essex Primary schools.

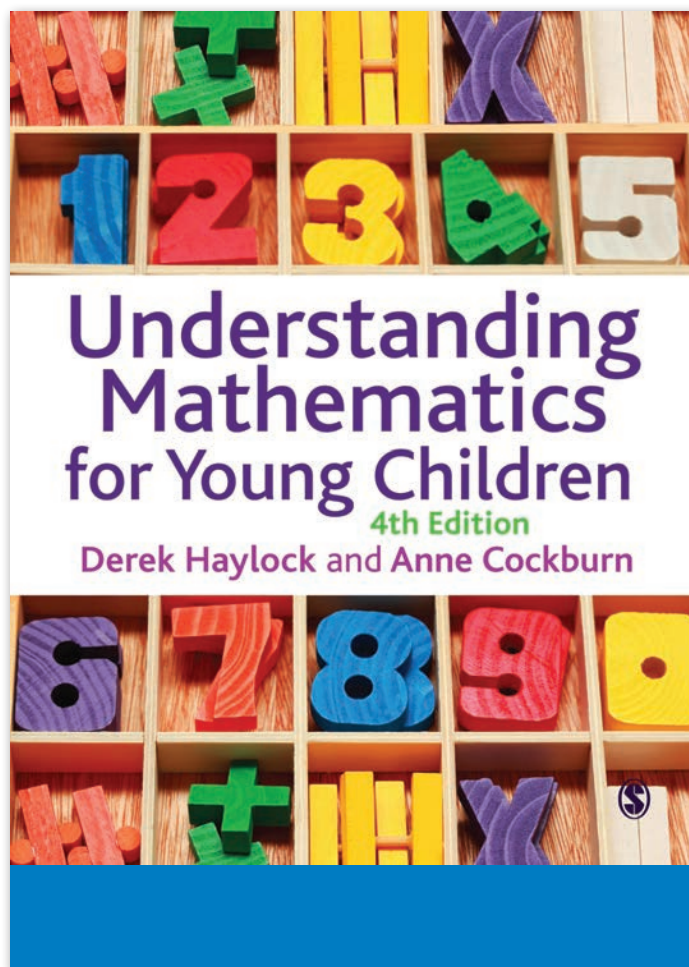
This book is written by Derek Haylock who worked for over 30 years in primary teacher training and in education research and Anne Cockburn, Professor in Early Years Education at the University of East Anglia. They use input from groups of teachers as well as extensive research and provide ideas for discussion and many activities for classroom and home use. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key ideas and suggestions for further reading. Theory and Practice mingle naturally in every chapter. The 'Pause to reflect' sections are fascinating with challenges, intriguing alternative methods and great quotes such as 'Do not worry about your difficulties in mathematics, I assure you that mine are greater'. (Albert Einstein 1879-1955)

It is a very readable book with many real-life examples, photographs and diagrams. As a SENCO I value its insights into children's mathematical development. The whole book is relevant to teachers of older children as well. Some children have gaps in their understanding of concepts and it is often difficult to know how to reduce barriers to learning in this area. Unlike many interventions the book covers all areas of mathematics including shape and space, data handling and problem solving.

Anyone supporting children in mathematics would find it an incredibly useful book to dip into for relevant explanations and resources. The book focuses on ensuring that adults understand a wide range of concepts in order to develop the children's understanding and their ability to make connections between language, symbols, concrete experience and pictures. The materials needed would all be readily available in any classroom. The index and contents pages are very comprehensive and the authors' use of coloured text and backgrounds makes navigation extremely easy.

This new edition includes Research Focus sections which are, by nature, more academic in style but easy to understand and interesting. Anyone wishing to follow up any of the research has many further references clearly listed.

As stated on the back of the book, 'This is an essential student text and professional reference work for teachers of children aged 3 to 8 years.' In my opinion it is far more than this. I believe that it should be available to every teacher and learning support assistant involved in working with children in mathematics. Each chapter would form the basis of a fascinating training session, parent workshop or discussion.



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Dyslexia Action Training Courses

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<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/training-courses>

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These short, online courses have been developed to strengthen the expertise and confidence of teachers, teaching assistants and support tutors in order to ensure the progress and achievement of children and adults with special educational needs. Our courses allow you to build a Certificate or Diploma by studying individual units and awards.

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The Dyslexia Action Postgraduate programme is delivered primarily as an online programme with personalised tutor support and is designed for specialist teachers and support tutors in further and higher education. The course aims to develop skilled practitioners who understand both the theory and practice of teaching and assessment of dyslexic learners of all ages. The course is modular and flexible and is undertaken as a part-time programme. The Postgraduate Certificate offers teaching and assessment pathways and the Diploma course builds on and develops the skills and knowledge and leads to an Assessment Practising Certificate. Book now for 20th January 2014.

Join the Dyslexia Guild

The Dyslexia Guild is our professional association of specialist teachers and assessors and other professionals who are interested in the field of Dyslexia and Co-occurring difficulties. Membership is open to all. Benefits include access to the online library with e-books and e-journal resources, a specialist journal – Dyslexia Review – and e-newsletter and discounted attendance at our Annual Summer Conference.

E: guild@dyslexiaaction.org.uk **T:** +44 (0)1784 222342

W: <http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild>

OTHER COURSES

Exam Access Arrangements

This is an updating course to enable teachers qualified in dyslexia and SpLD to comply with JCQ regulations and undertake Examination Access Arrangements. The course is delivered by e-learning and runs throughout the year.

<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa>

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The HDQ is a 32-item screening questionnaire designed for people aged 14 and older. The screening tool highlights features of hidden disabilities, including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Attention Deficit Disorder, and enables appropriate referral and consultation to be put in place. Specialist training is required to administer the questionnaire and is available through Dyslexia Action. The course is part attendance and part web based.

<http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/hdq-training-course>

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development

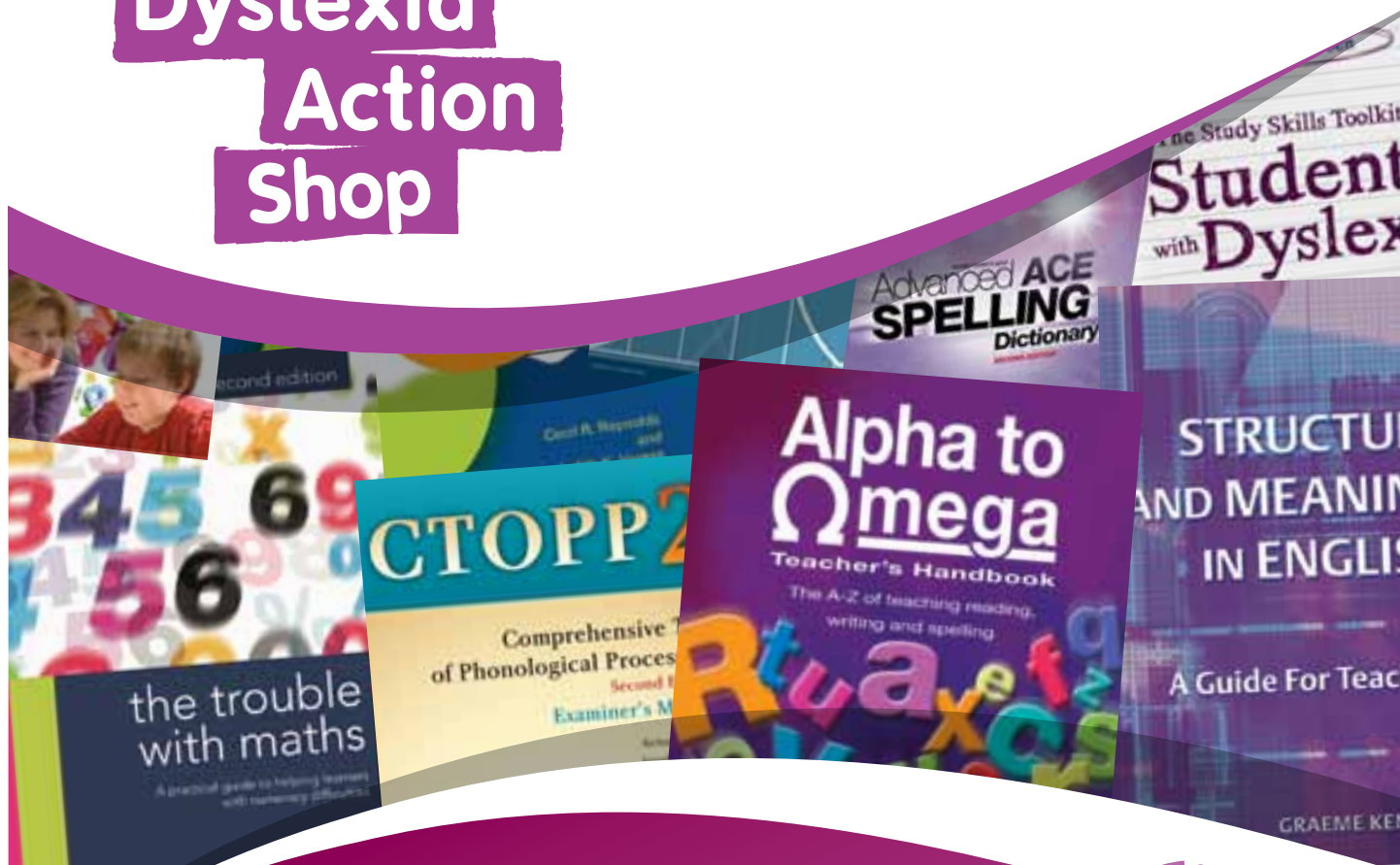
Park House, Wick Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 0HH

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**Dyslexia
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Taking Action • Changing Lives

A young girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a red striped tie, stands in profile looking out a window. The background is a school hallway with a wooden door and a glass panel showing a glimpse of another room.

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