



Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL

building learning abilities

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Newsletter

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Magic in the air!



Look out! Magic is in the air! No, it's not Harry Potter's! It is all about that Multimedia Pack 'magic box' again: now regularly used by learners, parents, teachers and remedial teachers. *Language Shock – Dyslexia across cultures* is known to transform lives. The front cover illustration is by Quentin Blake too.

If you want to understand dyslexia better or know how to cope and link up as learner, teacher or parent, order a copy now for yourself or to give to a school, teacher or parent, from www.ditt-online.org. Thanks to *Femmes d'Europe*, and the excellent co-operation of the Ministry of Education in Lisbon, the Portuguese version of the pack will be distributed throughout Portugal's teacher-training programmes, schools and remedial resource centres. The Italian translation will soon be joining the other language-versions in the D-I-T-T e-library.

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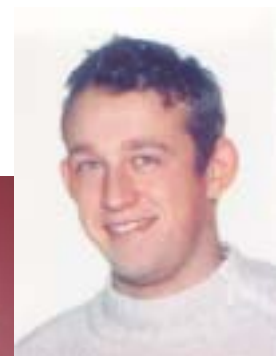
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Brilliant!



Already out there on the *Roadmap to Success*:

Just some of this autumn's BBC prime-user group of experts who are coming up with breakthrough ideas: Nikki, Pierre, Sam, Kevin, and Elliot with BBC Producer Gail Block; Jeff Savage and Caryl Hooper, designers for BBC Interactive Media Group, and Robin Truyens, D-I-T-T member working on Web resource development.

Brilliant!

say Gail Block, BBC Producer, and Jeff Savage, BBC Designer, following two *Roadmap to Success* CD-Rom consultancy sessions held last month at rue Defacqz.

It is rare but it does happen...

...that everyone agrees wholeheartedly on a project outline. But this was the case when Producer Gail's careful fact-finding and sensitive listening exercises were all rolled up in the excellent Phase One for the CD-Rom and signed off by the D-I-T-T Board this autumn.

Working with Moulinsart and consulting the young dyslexia experts, designer Jeff enjoyed first-class hospitality courtesy of the Royal Windsor Hotel, Brussels, on his latest visit on 23 October.

Meetings were held with Alexa Joyce at European Schoolnet on plans for an inter-schools forum on dyslexia and virtual learning, and with D-I-T-T designer Pauline Key-Kairis and D-I-T-T Web-master Dave Rowan on the *Roadmap to Success* data interface. Violetta, Petra, Robin and other volunteers are working on assembling this section of the project. The amount of useful material to sift through is huge. The aim is to make a selected sample clear and easily accessible.

Looking ahead

Whilst the BBC production team is working with consultants on the production of the *Roadmap to Success* CD-Rom, D-I-T-T will be setting up a series of meetings on distribution, starting at the end of January with Joe Franses of Cable & Wireless and Peter Horemans of Moulinsart.

Schedule for the package:

- March: Delivery of design build interface for acceptance by D-I-T-T and completion of the first section of the CD dealing specifically with raised morale.
- May: Delivery of section on self-profiling.
- July: Delivery of section on overcoming weaknesses, and presentation of the pre-final version of the exploratory and orientation section for D-I-T-T acceptance.
- September: Delivery of master CD-Rom including cover.
- October: Launch in Belgium.
- November: Launches in many other countries leading into the phase of on-going updates on the Web, with user consultation via forums and demonstration of good practice through virtual learning.

Raising awareness

Throughout November 2002, thanks to David Zimmer's introduction to Jan Taljaard, the *EU Reporter* carried three consecutive articles on D·I·T·T illustrated with Tintin: the highly successful Quiz originally designed by Petra Zollner for the recent Brussels Welcome Fair, an interview with MEP John Alexander Corrie, himself dyslexic, and a third on Professor Stein – Oxford University's leading researcher on dyslexia and the brain.



Dyslexia – Difference or Disability?

Next year, the European Year for People with Disabilities, Professor John Stein will address the D·I·T·T annual Open Forum. D·I·T·T hopes that the venue will be the European Parliament, as for Susan Greenfield's address last year. In this case, interpretation in French and German could be available but there would be no more than 350 places available. Please book early.

Questions on genetic, immunological and nutritional factors that affect how the brain functions should be sent in advance. D·I·T·T has invited the European Dyslexia Association and the DYSPEL support group in Luxembourg to collaborate in this event.

Marcelle Napier Research Award

D·I·T·T Board Members, with the approval of the Scientific Advisory Committee, voted unanimously that the prize-money for 2003 should be awarded to one or more researchers contributing to the *Roadmap to Success* project.

Mover and Shaker at the BBC



Driving force: Ex-BBC education development executive, Jay Johnson

Behind the scenes of every great production is a fixer – someone who recognises the potential of a concept and works tirelessly to bring together the right people to make it happen. Over the past years, that’s exactly what Jay Johnson has been doing.

A ‘mover and shaker’ with BBC Education for much of this period, Jay got involved with Brussels-based D·I·T·T after working on a dyslexia training pack for teachers.

Recalling her first meeting with D·I·T·T’s executive director Judith Sanson, Jay said: ‘Somehow, Judith got to know about my involvement with the BDA training pack. Anyway, I was out in Brussels for another project and it happened that I was sitting in an open air restaurant when Judith arrived, sat down and she was off! I knew a lot about dyslexia at that stage and I knew where she

was coming from when she started telling me about these families in the European situation and the difficulties they were facing. It was a nice project and I decided to get involved.’

The former BBC Education Development Executive, who was ‘Auntie’s’ deputy head of education in the 1990s as well as executive producer of a number of ‘controversial’ teenage and adult education series, played a crucial role in developing proposals, finding funding and getting a BBC production team in place for the highly successful video that forms part of the *Language Shock* multimedia pack.

More recently, Jay’s input has played an invaluable part in pulling together the essential cornerstones for D·I·T·T’s pioneering *Roadmap to Success* multimedia project – which is currently in production with the BBC.

As well as helping formulate a brief and securing funding with telecommunication company Cable and Wireless for the *Roadmap to Success* project, Jay helped negotiate the constantly-changing structural environment at the BBC. One key achievement was introducing D·I·T·T to Andrew Law, who had worked on similar projects with the Open University and has since become the project’s executive producer.

She said: ‘It was a long gestation period.... The BBC was committed to doing this project, but we hadn’t got the people in place. The BBC is a gargantuan organisation and if you don’t know people in it then you get nothing done. I knew that if I just passed the project on to someone, but it didn’t belong to them, then it would just fester away.’ But she added: ‘Andrew really likes the project and I think conceptually things have moved on greatly. It needed fresh ideas and it is now moving forward. I’m really pleased.’

During her time as development executive for BBC Education, she represented the Corporation at many international conferences about young people and the media in Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia. She believes the international aspect of her work has given her a useful understanding of the issues involved in D·I·T·T’s multi-lingual projects. She said: ‘I can see that what D·I·T·T is doing could be

tweaked for other cultures outside of Europe, although it is important for things to be localised for a particular area's own needs.'

After opting to take early retirement from the BBC, Jay is now working as a freelance development executive for a range of charities and trusts, including Adopt a Minefield (UK), Save the Children, Education Broadcasting Trust, Comic Relief and Story Circus, helping them develop partnerships and education resources for broadcast and digital media.

The former principal teacher of geography lists policy, development and public relations as her key skills, but recognises that her dogged determination also plays an essential role in her work.

'I'm always positive, I tend to keep looking forward and be upbeat. People can get very depressed and fed up if it doesn't go to plan. But I can turn things on their head and go off on a different tangent. I don't mind starting again on a different tack. I suppose you could say I am tenacious! There's also a lot of good humour involved ... and not giving up!'

And she admits that working with the BBC, with its long-held reputation for excellence, means there is the added incentive to make sure that each of her projects achieves the very best standards possible. 'You have to live up to the name and brand. Everyone expects things to be of a high quality and professional. I was always representing the BBC and what it stands for.'

With all her projects, Jay generally takes a back seat during the production stages itself. But she takes great pride in seeing the fruits of her labour finally come together in the end – and is keenly awaiting the launch of *Roadmap to Success* package next autumn.

She concluded: 'It's one of the main things I enjoyed about my job at the BBC and am still doing on a freelance basis. It's getting the ideas, and seeing the potential partners and pushing things forward. It's lovely when you get people together and they are feeding off each other's enthusiasm, especially in an educational context. It's very fulfilling for them and very fulfilling for us too.'

What Works

Quicktionary Reading Pen

Melanie Chong writes: My niece – aged nine, is dyslexic. She received a hand-held scanner for her birthday present and since then it has become her best pal when it comes to reading her favourite storybooks.

The gadget is small, portable and convenient and she simply puts it in her pocket wherever she goes. When she comes across difficult words, all she needs to do is to scan the word and the scanner will read out the word to her. The meaning of the word will also be shown on a small screen.

Her language ability, in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, has improved by leaps and bounds.

Shortcomings? It is unable to pick up words in certain fonts and colours, and it is not very reliable if scanned over handwritten words, especially if the letters are cursive

For more information see: <http://www.dyslexic.com/rp.htm>



DIY Readers' Support Pack for parents



The *DIY Readers' Support Pack for parents*, developed as a result of the SPELLIT research, is the first resource developed by the Dyslexia Institute to target directly parents and carers.

The pack is aimed at parents of young children just starting to read, or of older children who need additional help, and should also prove a useful resource for teachers and teaching assistants. It consists of a booklet, video, cards and stopwatch.

There is a quick and simple diagnostic test so that potential users can easily check whether the pack would help.

For more information contact Geoffrey Grant: e-mail: ggrant@dyslexia-inst.org.uk

For more information on the Dyslexia Institute see: www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

ReadPlease

The award winning text-to-speech software that lets your computer talk.

ReadPlease 2003 and ReadPlease PLUS 2003 are now available for download from:

<http://www.readplease.com>

Seeking a French-language publisher...

Overcoming Dyslexia, a book by Dr Bevé Hornsby, is highly recommended. It is one of the most widely-acclaimed popular texts and has helped thousands of teachers and parents world-wide. Contact www.hornsby.co.uk where news of the new teacher-training distance-learning pack on dyslexia can also be found.

Organised by D·I·T·T, *Overcoming Dyslexia* has now been translated into French and is being proof-read by French translation experts before a publisher is found. Belgian French-speaking authority on dyslexia and D·I·T·T consultant, Marianne Klees, has written the Foreword. Marianne Klees remarked on the usefulness of the content of Dr Hornsby's teacher-training materials – to date only available in English.



D-I-T-T in Paris

On 23 November D-I-T-T members attended an excellent day of lectures and discussion at the University of Paris: 'Dyslexie, Etat des Lieux et Controverses' with Anne Delaveau, Professeur de Linguistique, Catherine Billard, Dr en Neuropédiatrie, and José Morais, Professeur, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Directeur de l'Unité de recherche en Neurosciences Cognitives de ULB, Membre de l'Observatoire National de la lecture, France, who spoke on 'Apprentissage de la lecture et dyslexie.'

Other distinguished contributors spoke on 'Relations entre troubles de perception du langage oral et dyslexie' and 'Qu'est-ce que les données de neuro-imagerie nous apprennent sur la dyslexie?'

D-I-T-T in Colorado, Berlin and London

D-I-T-T members have taken publicity to different venues and represented DITT at conferences across the summer and autumn. Reports are available at the D-I-T-T offices.

Coming soon – a New Year bonus for all D-I-T-T members and visitors to our site

Look out for the re issue of this popular prototype do-it-yourself Guide, fully illustrated in colour by Quentin Blake that you can make your own by filling in in the language of your choice and local information wherever you are.

Dyslexia at Home and Abroad – a do-it-yourself self-help guide, designed by Pauline Key-Kairis, is being reviewed by parent and teacher groups.

Tintin goes to Hollywood

This will be great news for public understanding of dyslexia if Steven Spielberg's film on Tintin goes ahead. D-I-T-T wishes our trusty reporter on the *Roadmap to Success* a *bon voyage* on this exciting venture!

The leading light for teaching and learning: BETT 2003

8-11 January, Olympia, London

Wednesday 8 January – Friday 10 January, 10.00am – 6.00pm

Saturday 11 January, 10.00am – 4.30pm

Entry to the BETT show is free of charge for visitors.

To pre-register for your free ticket and more information, go to <http://www.bettshow.co.uk/>

Thanks and congratulations to Daniel

The Portuguese version of the *Language Shock* multimedia pack was managed by D·I·T·T volunteer Project Manager, Daniel Ofori. Thanks to Dr Ofori's top-level management, care and attention to detail, many Portuguese-speaking children and teachers will benefit from access to the information and understanding of dyslexia the pack provides. A brief report will be given to the *Femmes d'Europe* President, Mrs Romano Prodi, in January.

Congratulations to Daniel and his wife Golda on the birth of baby Zara!



New chairman for D·I·T·T Scientific Advisory Committee

Professor Dirk Bakker will take over from Professor Costas Porpodas as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee in order to share out duties. Our warmest thanks go to Professor Porpodas for his enthusiastic response in backing up D·I·T·T by agreeing to become Chairman when D·I·T·T was first set up, and for all his kind co-operation – including being filmed by the BBC in 1998.

A copy of extracts from this interview: '*Dyslexia and Diagnosis*' (in Greek and English) is available on request from the D·I·T·T office and will soon feature on the D·I·T·T Web site.

Volunteers in oriental splendour

Thanks to June Davey's superb hospitality, D·I·T·T volunteers' annual party took place in a beautiful home in the warm glow of oriental splendour with Portuguese lyrics and guitar by Luis Reis, in the presence of D·I·T·T Patron HRH Princess Margaretha.

Susan Calamassi paid tribute to June for her hard work, commitment, unflagging good humour and generosity. Thanking all the volunteers, Judith Sanson, Executive Director, said that in an all-volunteer organisation such as D·I·T·T, it is important for us to realise that each volunteer's contribution is vital to the wider picture – like each stitch in a tapestry, every contribution, great or small, counts and makes a real difference to the whole.



Money matters

D·I·T·T counts on the loyal support of its Members through subscriptions which keep the office up and running and allows us to respond to inquiries for help besides developing projects in accordance with our statutes. With the loyal and persistent efforts of the fund-raising sub committee (new members always welcome!) D·I·T·T hopes to have further good news in the New Year.

Supporter Minos van Joolingen, new to D·I·T·T, deserves a special word of thanks for his imagination and determination in securing a signed tee-shirt by a world-famous footballer, which will be auctioned in London thanks to D·I·T·T Board Member, Geoff Cummins.

D·I·T·T once again thanks 'Tie Rack' for its generosity. An auction of all the splendid contributions to D·I·T·T is due to be held in the New Year.

Reflections

2003 will see the launch of the *Roadmap to Success* multi-media package. D·I·T·T invites you to send in your own favourite reflections on the theme of 'success' by e-mail to our office admin@ditt-online.org

American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who famously wrote of education that it should be 'brave and preventative – not merely a poor patching,' said on this topic:

Success is
To laugh often and much.
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children.
To earn the appreciation
of honest critics
and endure the betrayal
of false friends.
To appreciate beauty,
to find the best in others.
To leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch,
or a redeemed social condition.
To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.



Christmas tree illustration by Linda Liu