



## Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL

*building learning abilities*

1 rue Defacqz

B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel/fax: +32-2 537 70 66

Web site: [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org)

E-mail: [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org)

Bank account: 310-158 1288-80

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein

# Newsletter

No 16 · Summer 2004

## CD-ROM now on sale



*The Mystery of the Lost Letters – Tintin helps dyslexic learners*  
The CD-ROM produced by the BBC for D-I-T-T is now out

Backed by Levi Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation, Cable & Wireless, Microsoft, and the Hergé Foundation, this CD-ROM with a new linked Web site was created thanks to the tireless efforts of the D-I-T-T all-voluntary work-force: teachers, psychologists and researchers backed by the D-I-T-T Scientific Advisory Committee; also trainers, community leaders, technologists, designers, translators and, of course, D-I-T-T typographer Pauline Key-Kairis and Web master Dave Rowan, supported by D-I-T-T's loyal members and associates.

Now D-I-T-T counts on all concerned to get alongside Tintin to spread the word about dyslexia and its effects – to show young learners everywhere just how they can discover their own best way of learning for themselves, and what tools and technologies are out there that can be life-changing for the better.

## Contents

*The Mystery of the Lost Letters* 2

Quiz – testing for What Works 4

Feedback 5

Presenting the project 5

The Future 6

- A five-year [www.ToSuccess.org](http://www.ToSuccess.org) site development plan 6
- Sustainability and scalability 6
- E-training: Europe and Unesco 7

D-I-T-T events 8

- 6 May 8
- 15 May 8

Profile – Virginia Haydon 9

Money matters 9

Announcements – music music music 10

Reflections 12

---

D-I-T-T volunteers work with leading experts, creating and promoting tools that enable dyslexic learners to succeed in a competitive world

---

# *The Mystery of the Lost Letters*

## **What is it all about?**

Best used with a guide or mentor, this first ever, tri-lingual, educational CD-ROM puts users on a journey of self discovery. Using all paths to the brain – audio, visual and keyboard manoeuvres – the user will systematically progress through a series of games of hide-and-seek, catch, balloon-popping and having fun with Tintin and company whilst, unawares, responding to a series of diagnostic tests that will provide a profile that can be printed out.

## **What is a mentor?**

A mentor might be a trusted friend, learning assistant, or parent.

## **Does the mentor play a vital role?**

Not necessarily. Some users will prefer to go it alone. But if the user cannot read at all, then the mentor is vital for reading out the questions – in the Hall of Mirrors games for example. Then again, some young users actually prefer a further level of interaction with a trusted aide alongside to offer encouragement where it is needed.

## **What are the benefits for the users?**

First, the realisation of how they learn best: in what social setting (alone or with others), environment (listening to music or quietly) and how.

Second, moving to the linked D·I·T·T Web site, the user can join the D·I·T·T Winner's Team in trying out and recommending tools and technologies in the Success Self-service section.

Already there is a first selection of software, books, technologies and recommended links under eight headings: reading, writing, spelling, learning a language, keyboard skills, maths, memory and organisation. It is the Winner's Team who will direct the Success Self-service section of the Web site that links to the CD-ROM [www.ToSuccess.org](http://www.ToSuccess.org).

## **What are the benefits for the mentor?**

Their section of the [www.ToSuccess.org](http://www.ToSuccess.org) will include an A-Z of resources, research papers in the Reading Room, and e-training (yet to be developed) for teachers and learning assistants.

On the CD itself, the mentor can dip into a series of 13 articles by leading international authorities on the subject of dyslexia: the brain, diagnosis, visual perception, multilingualism and the effects of mobility, dyscalculia, globally-researched teaching techniques, the use of technology to support learning, and more.

## **Who is it aimed at?**

*The Mystery of the Lost Letters* is aimed at dyslexic learners aged 8–13 but would also be useful to any and all young learners wanting to get a handle on how they learn best.

The user group is in fact unlimited, given the ageless appeal of Tintin and the fact that the challenges dyslexic learners face are not age-bound either.

Research shows that across the European Union alone, with its population of 450 million, more than 12 million children of up to 13 years of age will have to cope with dyslexia to some extent. Many will have problems that will go unrecognised and will not even achieve a level of functional literacy, nor have the opportunity to express otherwise latent talents. Too frequently this results in isolation, exclusion, an inability to integrate socially; barriers to pursuing further education and finding employment become insurmountable.

### **Why only French, English and German?**

These languages were selected for the first version of the CD as being the most widely-used for communication across the European Union, where D·I·T·T has its headquarters (in Brussels).

Other language versions have already been requested, including Chinese, Japanese, Estonian, Spanish, Hebrew and Arabic.

It is likely that the Dutch version will be the next to follow if permission is granted.

### **What does this CD-ROM do?**

*The Mystery of the Lost Letters* boosts the morale of despondent learners who find themselves falling behind in their study skills and unable to keep up with their peers in traditional classroom settings. Users come to understand their potential and how to tap into their individual talents.

The series of games masks a sophisticated diagnostic tool which builds a profile of how the user learns best cognitively, socially and environmentally, and offers positive feedback on how to build on strengths and advice on how to cope with weaknesses.

### **How do you play?**

The user is first invited to join trusty Tintin and faithful Snowy on a quest to find Professor Calculus. (Choices of background screen colours are offered.)

Hide-and-seek in the Hall of Fame reveals seven highly-successful dyslexic celebrities who tell their stories, including architect Lord Richard Rogers, poet Benjamin Zephaniah and eight times world memory champion Dominic O'Brien. Sometimes it was sheer determination and self-discipline that enabled them to find their own route to success. Each one must be visited to earn the key to enter the next Hall.

Then, in the Hall of Mirrors, users explore how they learn best through a series of engaging quizzes. Next they face their challenges in the Dangerous Dungeon: hearing and reading out useful feedback recorded in their profile. Finally the users scale the Tower of Triumph, having won their personal print-out profile, to be awarded with a Certificate and – yes: the clue as to where to find Professor Calculus.

### **What happens next?**

Armed with new-found knowledge of their personal learning styles, users can then click on the CD-ROM's accompanying Web site [www.ToSuccess.org](http://www.ToSuccess.org) – which signposts the latest technologies and resources recommended by and for young dyslexics.

## Where can you get it?

Young learners and their mentors, teachers and schools can still buy copies of this unique self-help learning assessment tool at a special introductory price of €20 + postage by mail order or shopping on-line through [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org). The new price will be set at €30.

D·I·T·T welcomes all ideas and feedback at [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org).

## Quiz – testing for What Works

D·I·T·T asks: does this CD and linked Web site work? Does this software meet the following criteria based on assessment strategies devised by Dr Robert Sedlak, provost and vice-chancellor for academic and student affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Stout? In your view:

- Does the approach – in this instance, the games with Tintin disguising diagnostic tests – guarantee a solution for some or all of the problems of the young learner?
  - in what way?
- What is the validity of the theory that
  - you can learn from listening to the experience of successful dyslexic learners?
  - you can take control over your learning by understanding how you learn best?How applicable and effective are these theories?
- What values are transmitted and do these allow for openness and acceptance of people who think differently?
- What view of humankind is projected?  
Is this holistic – taking into account the thinking, feeling, spiritual, physical and social?
- Is the user asked to be independent, responsible and active – or reactive?
- How is knowledge acquired?  
How does learning take place?  
Is there only one 'right answer'?  
What are the practical conclusions or effects coming out of the assumptions made?
- Is the strategy time-bound to a limited life-span through topical references?
- Are there promises of direct solutions?  
Are people taken seriously as individuals?  
Are distinct feelings and aptitudes taken into account?
- What role do the individual user's social situation and surroundings play?  
And how do these affect the outcome?
- What interactions between one person and another will be assumed?
- What happens when assumptions are questioned?
- What outcome is imposed on the user?  
What kinds of behaviour should be changed?
- How can you recognise someone who has used the programme?

## Feedback

Compliments on the beautiful presentation of the product and the true worth of this important educational tool have been plentiful.

First in line with applause came Germany:

'We all think that with *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* you create an exquisite and very important diagnostic tool. Juergen Fliege is glad that he has had the chance to support your project....' (Andrea Macion, Presse und PR, Bavaria Entertainment GmbH)

Responding to questions from Pauline Clayton of the Dyslexia Institute, Gavin Reid, Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh University, and the educational psychologist behind the games, wrote – concerning the number of questions in the games:

'In order to ensure that the dimensions are fully covered and that there is some reliability in the responses, it was necessary to provide a reasonable amount of questions. We started with more questions but after piloting, and test and re-test procedures, we cut these down as much as we could.'

– on the validity of the test conclusions – how are these reached:

'I am not of the opinion that learning styles are fixed but individuals may have a range of styles, although usually they may have some learning preferences. It is these that are important, especially for children with dyslexia, as they often cannot adapt to different learning and teaching styles as some other children can.'

'The conclusions were reached after five pilot trials and discussions with teachers on the outcome of the results. The qualitative comments, i.e. the feedback, was developed from teacher knowledge of the child, the results of the trials and from established data based on the Dunn and Dunn learning styles model and its implications for teaching. It is important to remember that children are all individuals, including children with dyslexia, and every child will not fit a category or feedback description exactly, but this can be used as a guide for teaching and learning.'

## Presenting the project

Thanks go to Vicki Roberts-Gassler for master-minding the PowerPoint presentation and to D·I·T·T Honorary Board Member Gabriel Bara for translating it into French. It is now available for presenters on request. D·I·T·T plans to develop a training package and welcomes ideas.



Apart from being introduced at a training session in Geneva by new D·I·T·T member Diana Smit, Tintin has been invited to training-sessions in various venues in Brussels. Presenters offering their time include Robin Truyen, Hugh Terlinden, Paule Zoller and Paulina van Rijn.

Even before the product was out, a twenty-minute presentation was made to the Education Committee of the European Union, and then to 16 language teachers at European School II. Later a small group of special education teachers at European School I and the local Brussels Chazal School for dyslexic pupils were shown the CD-ROM.

Where commercial contacts are concerned, D·I·T·T benefits from an introduction to the trade delegations at Brussels Export by the Altran Foundation. Fifty-seven Brussels Export Attachés around the world have received a sample copy of the CD-ROM, as has every EU Minister of Education and all participants at the 29 March EU Education Committee meeting.

## The Future

### **A five-year www.ToSuccess.org site development plan**

This will involve setting up new management and technical back-up and, once again, major voluntary effort by:

- young dyslexic learners on the Winner's Team to review software and update the Success Self-service section
- language teachers to finalise the language games section
- trainers to develop the e-training modules
- researchers
- translators.

D·I·T·T welcomes ideas & commitment and energy & expertise on all these fronts and is more than grateful to all volunteers who have recently joined for their on-going invaluable input and backing: Diana Smit in Geneva, Baihua Zhang, Asian researcher, now back in China, Eswaamoorthy Murugan, computer consultant and new Chair of the D·I·T·T Transactions Subcommittee, and Vicki Barrière, not to mention sterling work in German by Board Member Gudrun Dziallas, the hard work of D·I·T·T's Board members and willing translators including Aline, Marie France and Jutta.

### **Sustainability and scalability**

These are Microsoft's buzz words when it comes to talking about goals to be reached and the future of their Unlimited Potential (UP) pilot projects. As partners in an eight-month January–August initiative to introduce technologies that empower dyslexic learners, the D·I·T·T UP team members have been unstinting in their efforts to see the project reach both these goals.

Proposals include:

- the development of the course with local universities – in cooperation with the appropriate Ministries of Education departments (Autumn 2004)
- making a module of the course available on the new e-training platform to be developed on the www.ToSuccess.org site
- taking part of the course to a more extended level at a Unesco conference for wider take-up – in co-operation with the major international teachers' trade union and library associations.

## E-training: Europe and Unesco

D·I·T·T, with appropriate European sectors and universities, proposes submitting an application to the Comenius programme. Thanks go to Sara Calamassi for her research.

### General call for proposals 2004 – EAC/41/03 – Community action programme in the field of education Socrates (OJ C 177, 26 July 2003)

The second phase of the Socrates programme covers the 2000 to 2006 period and has a budget (EU 15) of EUR 1 850 million. In addition to the 15 Member States of the European Union, the programme is also open to participation by the EFTA-EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) within the context of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, as well as the acceding (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia) and candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey). Grants will be awarded in respect of participation of those countries which are not EU Member States provided that the relevant financial contributions of these countries are paid.

The Socrates programme ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/socrates\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/socrates_en.html)) promotes cooperation under eight Actions, summarised below:

- Comenius, which seeks to enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of school education)
- Minerva, which promotes European cooperation in the field of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/minerva/ind1a\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/minerva/ind1a_en.html)) ...

Grants are also available to enable appropriate members of staff from eligible institutions to undertake preparatory activities in another participating country in order to lay the foundations for future projects or networks. Details of these grants are available from National Agencies, which will also provide information on any preparatory seminars that may be scheduled during the period

In December 2003 the Official Journal of the European Union recorded the adoption of the multiannual programme (2004 – 2006) for 'the effective integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (e-learning Programme).

Sir John Daniel, pictured right, Unesco's former Assistant Director of Education, newly appointed President of the Commonwealth of Learning, has been a long-time enthusiast of e-learning as the way forward. In reviewing a new free e-learning book by Terry Anderson and Fathi Elloumi from Athabasca University entitled *Theory and Practice of Online Learning*, he commends this book for its intrinsic worth and for the way it addresses the social and individual aspects of on-line study and the right balance between independent and interactive learning, stressing the value of 'this form of publication as a way of bridging the digital divide and thereby helping to bring on-line learning to all the world's people.'



### 6 May

D·I·T·T benefited from the professional PR services of Aries in organising an event at rue Defacqz on 6 May in the presence of D·I·T·T's Patron, Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, which attracted wide press coverage.

Fully understanding the difficulties that can arise from dyslexia, Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden won the hearts of everyone with her enthusiasm and her interest. She attended an introductory session of the Unlimited Potential technology for dyslexic learners project. Members of the Swedish team of Femmes d'Europe helped organise the reception, and D·I·T·T was delighted to welcome Honorary Board Member Gunilla Løfgren Nisser from Sweden.



D·I·T·T's Patron, Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden and Judith Sanson of D·I·T·T

### 15 May

This year's Annual Open Forum was organised by Professor Emeritus Dirk Bakker, Chair, D·I·T·T Scientific Advisory Committee. An excellent programme, 'Developmental Dyslexia', involved each of the five members giving their presentation on dyslexia from the perspective of their particular specialisations. Professors Porpodas, Wimmer, Stein, Bakker and Beheydt travelled from Greece, Austria, the UK, Holland and locally from Louvain for this special event.

D·I·T·T continues to receive compliments on this day. Members and associates came from Geneva and Paris and wrote enthusiastically about how beneficial the programme had been. As a result, two Unesco participants are strongly urging D·I·T·T to propose dyslexia as a conference topic at Unesco next year. As this is Unesco's 'Decade of Literacy', the suggestion seems highly appropriate.

## Profile: Virginia Haydon



Plans for the UK launch of *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* are currently being co-ordinated by Virginia Haydon.

Highlights on the cards for the UK press launch, scheduled for this September, include a photocall with renowned poet Benjamin Zephaniah, one of the stars from the CD-ROM's Hall of Fame.

Review copies are being sent out to the countries' national educational press and special education and dyslexia press, Web sites and newsletters.

Other media being targeted include parenting and lifestyle media, technology and charity press as well as the publications of the CD-ROM's sponsors Cable and Wireless and Microsoft.

A freelance consultant specialising in editorial, press and PR work for the charity sector, Virginia's background is in journalism.

She worked as a fully-trained reporter with Trinity Newspapers Southern for over five years, culminating as Content Editor of the Crawley News.

As well as helping the team at D·I·T·T, Virginia has worked with a number of charities including Sargent Cancer Care for Children, Action for ME and the National Childbirth Trust.

Previous achievements include securing international television, Web, radio, newspaper and magazine coverage of royal press launch for D·I·T·T – with reports on the evening news of both major Belgian TV national stations.

In the course of her work, she regularly secures UK national and regional TV, radio and press coverage of celebrity events and charity campaigns. She also edits a number of charity publications and enjoys writing high-profile interviews and features.

She can be contacted via e-mail at: [Virginia.haydon@btinternet.com](mailto:Virginia.haydon@btinternet.com).

## Money matters

### **Generous gifts to advance D·I·T·T's projects:**

- Colin Lowndes Family Trust: £500
- Diana Smit: €1000 raised through her presentation on dyslexia in Geneva

### **Transactions sub-committee**

D·I·T·T's newly set up Transactions Sub-committee met for the third time on 6 July. Its brief is to address best ways forward, as a non-profit organisation, to promote and distribute the Tintin CD-ROM. Raising funds to cover project development is a source of on-going concern that the sub-committee will also address.

## Bulk orders

These are especially welcome from ministries and educational software outlets.

## CD-ROM sponsors

D·I·T·T owes warmest thanks to Cable & Wireless for funding professional press and public relations services for the UK focus on the Tintin CD-ROM. This is currently being co-ordinated by Honorary Board Member, Jay Johnston, with Virginia Haydon.

## Announcements – music music music

🎵 Teun Michiels will be showing another aspect of his musical talent when he gives a Carillon concert in the Grand' Place in Brussels on 1 August (see next page).

🎵 D·I·T·T is grateful to AXA for offering their beautiful new concert hall for a concert and to the choirs who have so generously come forward to sing. A St. Valentine's concert is being planned.

🎵 Nina's song

At the 6 May reception, Swedish song-writer Nina Andersson presented D·I·T·T's royal guests with a copy of the song she wrote for D·I·T·T.

All of us at D·I·T·T are honoured and delighted. Thank you Nina!

We look forward to hearing it once the right singer is found. The expression alone in the words she chose make the song worthy of sharing here (see Reflections, final page).



## Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL

*building learning abilities*

1 rue Defacqz

B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel/fax: +32-2 537 70 66

Web site: [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org)

E-mail: [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org)

Bank account: 310-158 1288-80

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein

### Press release – 29 June 2004

D-I-T-T press contact: Judith Sanson

Tel. +32 (0)2 733 0390 E-mail: [sanson@village.uunet.be](mailto:sanson@village.uunet.be)



### Ringing out the bells for dyslexia – a carillon concert by Teun Michiels

Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies (D-I-T-T) – a non-profit organisation working to promote understanding and provision for young people with specific learning difficulties - is honoured to announce that their 2004 Summer Event will take place in the very heart of Europe, the Grand' Place in Brussels, on Sunday 1 August, 12 noon – 1.00 pm, with guest artist Teun Michiels.

The 49-bell travelling carillon of Eijsbouts, Asten, in the Netherlands will be played by 24-year-old Teun Michiels of the world-famous Carillonschool 'Jef Denijn', Mechelen, in front of Brussels' 15th-century Town Hall. The one-hour-programme will include a typical carillon repertoire in addition to familiar, well-loved pieces.

Teun was awarded distinction as a prize-winning opera singer at the Royal Music Conservatory of Liège. As a multi-specialist, he not only plays the carillon but is building his solo-career as baritone throughout Europe.

This unique event is open and free to the public. Some seating space will be available.

For more information on the programme, please contact

Teun Michiels, barytone – carillonneur, Markt 10, 3980 Tessenderlo

[www.teunmichiels.be](http://www.teunmichiels.be) – [info@teunmichiels.be](mailto:info@teunmichiels.be) – +32 478 581529

For information on the work of D-I-T-T, please visit [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org)

**Please note:** copies of D-I-T-T's latest educational tool, *The Mystery of the Lost Letters*, a CD-ROM featuring Tintin produced by the BBC for D-I-T-T in English, French and German, are now available via [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org). *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* has been produced with the backing of the Levi Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation, the Hergé Foundation, Cable & Wireless, and Microsoft. Further inquiries to +32 (0)2 537 7066 or e-mail: [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org)

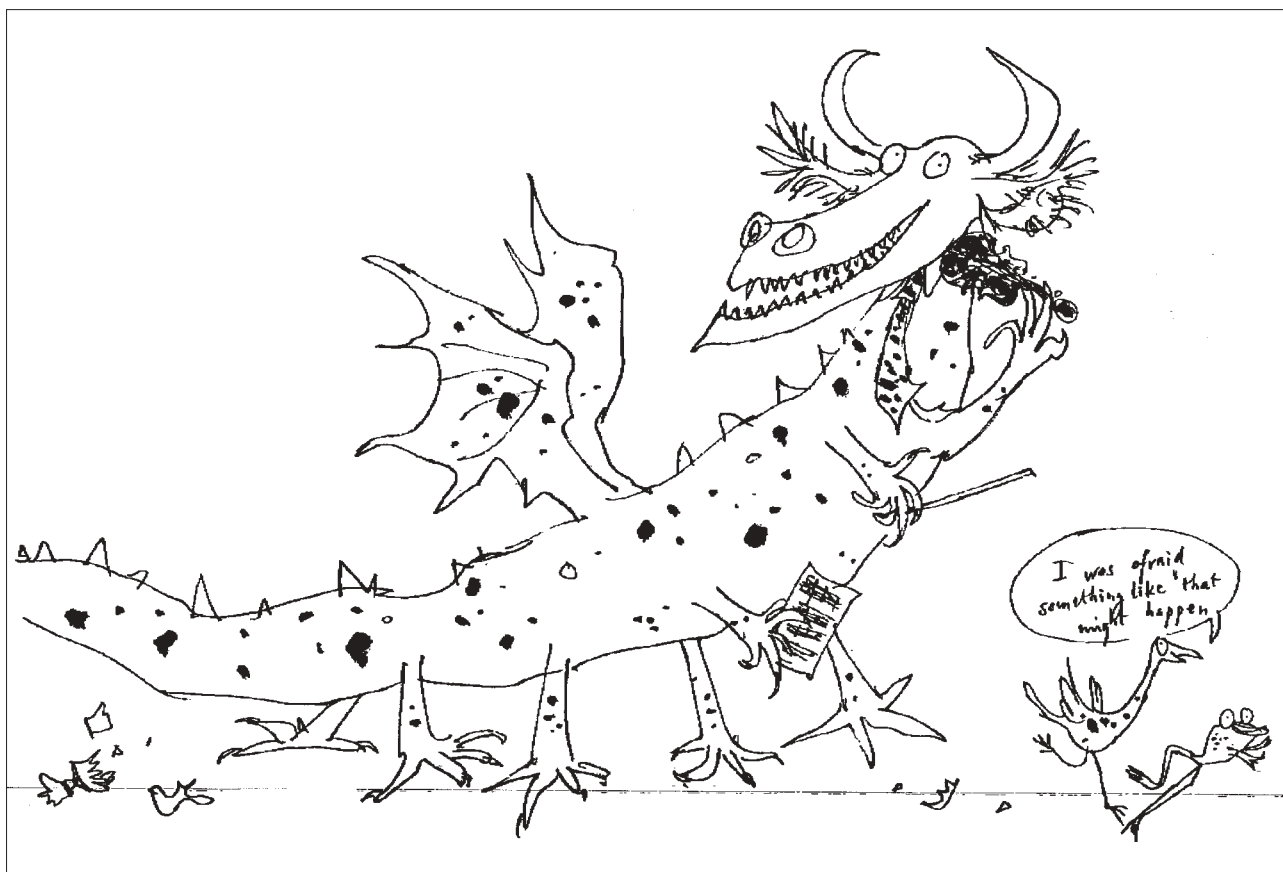
*D-I-T-T ASBL is a non-profit, all-volunteer organisation. All proceeds go to projects that create and promote tools and technologies that enable young dyslexic learners to succeed.*

## Reflections

'All children have the right to education and care suited for their needs...'

(UN Treaty on the Rights of the Child, art.28-33) Quoted in the Lighthouse Special Education project folder, Den Haag, 2000

And, looking for humour in less-than-happy situations, such as having much of the contents of your hard disk raided by a dragon-virus:



*Illustration by Quentin Blake, published here with his kind permission.*

And finally, the words of Nina's song – see next page...

This copy presented to Her Royal Highness Princess Victoria of Sweden  
on the occasion of her visit to Belgium May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

### How do you spell dyslexia?

Others read so easily and simply jot things down  
I cannot take a simple word and make its proper sound  
I know that I'm not stupid and I do know my own name  
But when I try to write it down I'm told it's not the same

I change the order of words sometimes involuntarily  
I use my finger to follow lines, moving carefully  
Given time I can read texts, though slowly I'm afraid  
It takes some time to get it right, to get the meaning straight

*What's written in the stars I'm never meant to see  
I can't make out a meaning - they're only stars to me  
Words are pieces of a puzzle playing on my wits  
The puzzle's left unfinished, as the pieces never fit*

How do you spell a word like for example 'probably'  
When B without a warning takes on the role of P  
Those letters always trick me into making a mistake  
Each is like the other in sound as well as shape

And words I'm told are short seem quite long even so  
Whatever is the secret, what is it I don't know?  
The explanation came to me in pure and simple facts  
'Dyslexia' they said to me. How do you spell that?

*What's written in the stars I'm never meant to see  
I can't make out a meaning - they're only stars to me  
Words are pieces of a puzzle playing on my wits  
The puzzle's left unfinished, as the pieces never fit*

© 2004 Nina Andersson