



Newsletter

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Two-way thanks



Heartfelt thanks go to Professor Emeritus Dirk Bakker for his impeccable chairmanship of D-I-T-T's Scientific Advisory Committee as he steps down from this role in January 2006. His wise counsel, kindness and willingness to share his extensive scientific knowledge, based on more than 40 years of research into dyslexia, have been

invaluable. D-I-T-T believes that scientific fact is the only proper basis for remedial intervention and treatment.

Dirk is a former director of the Pedological Institute, Department of Child Neuropsychological Research, Amsterdam-Duivendrecht, and the European Graduate School of Child Neuropsychology, Amsterdam-Duivendrecht. He was president of the International Neuropsychological Society and the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association.

Dirk will continue to stay on the Committee as a regular member and will give the keynote lecture at the D-I-T-T Annual Open Forum scheduled for 10 October 2005 at the European Parliament. (See page 9.)

D-I-T-T also warmly thanks Professor John Stein of Oxford who has kindly agreed to take over as Chair in January 2006 for the next two years.

Nutrition linked to disorders

Judith Stansfield, Consultant to D·I·T·T on technologies that meet the needs of dyslexic learners, recommends 'a really good article in the Guardian on John Stein's fatty acids research'. Here is an extract from the article:

dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can all be dramatically improved by simple nutritional supplements

The Oxford scientists estimate that about two thirds of the children they see have difficulty with controlling eye movements and with visual attention, which arises from problems with the magnocellular pathway of the brain. About a third benefit from another low-tech intervention – supplements of fish oils, high in the omega-3 series of essential fatty acids vital to the brain's structure and to the functioning of the magnocellular pathway, but deficient in most modern diets.

The lab buildings in Oxford are where John Stein, professor of physiology and brother of chef Rick, has gathered a team of researchers whose studies into the brain are beginning to challenge the very notion of free will.

In a series of trials, they have found that dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can all be dramatically improved by simple nutritional supplements. Their work exploring the biological basis of personality and behaviour suggests we may need to rewrite the books on crime and punishment. Revealing as it does that mood, behaviour and achievement are affected by whether the brain has enough of the right kind of nutrients to function properly, it throws into doubt how far anyone, from the disruptive child to the convicted criminal, can actually control their behaviour.

...suggests we may need to rewrite the books on crime and punishment

The implications of a study conducted by another researcher in Stein's department are even more startling. In another randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, Bernard Gesch gave a course of supplements containing essential fatty acids and key vitamins and minerals to prisoners in one of Britain's maximum security prisons. The inmates were responsible for some of the highest levels of prison violence in the UK. The number of serious offences, including violence, by the prisoners, fell by nearly 40% in those taking the supplements but not at all in those not taking them. To Gesch, the case is just 'bleeding obvious'. 'The brain is a metabolic powerhouse, which despite being only 2% of our body mass, consumes around 20% of available

energy. To metabolise this energy requires a range of nutrients, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. These are essential for the normal functioning of the brain, which means there are likely to be consequences if we don't get enough of them from our diet.'

To read the article in full, go to
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/life/feature/story/0,13026,1476219,00.html>



Professor John Stein's research findings

John Stein heads the Dyslexia Research Trust (DRT), Oxford, which has assessed more than ten thousand children in Oxford and Reading in the UK during the last 20 years. 75% of these children had visual problems that the Trust could treat.

Randomised controlled trials have shown that the cheap visual treatments that the Research Trust has developed, designed to improve direction of visual attention and eye fixation, have helped these dyslexics to increase their reading by an average of 12 months in 6 months.

Normally children's reading ages increase by 6 months in 6 months; without treatment dyslexics usually regress, gaining only 3 months in 6 months. But the Dyslexia Research Trust (DRT) treatments have enabled these dyslexics to quadruple their progress compared with no treatment, and the DRT is proud to have saved these thousands of children from the misery and shame of reading failure, and to have significantly helped them to achieve their full potential. The treatments are cheap (for example, glasses cost just £1) and require minimal supervision. As a result, they are highly cost-effective.

DRT support has contributed to over 150 peer-reviewed papers in scientific journals about the magnocellular basis of dyslexia. Its research has enabled the development of powerful new tests of visual magnocellular sensitivity, attention and eye control. Research has also supported the development of effective new tests of people's sensitivity to sound frequency changes, to assess the auditory basis of dyslexics' phonological problems.

Three hundred DRT families with at least one dyslexic child have volunteered for genetic-linkage studies, which have demonstrated important linkage sites on chromosomes 2, 6 and 15. Recently the team identified one of these genes, KIAA, on chromosome 6, which is helping us to understand the mechanism by which the development of magnocellular neurones is impaired.

75% ... had visual problems that the Trust could treat

The treatments are cheap ... and require minimal supervision.

The DRT has also shown the importance of unsaturated fatty acid. It has supported properly designed, randomised control, trials that have demonstrated that omega-3 unsaturated fatty acid (fish oil) supplements can help dyslexics, dyspraxics, attention disorder, autism spectra disorder children, schizophrenics and even criminals to significantly improve their reading and spelling, attention, concentration, coordination, mood and behaviour.

For information on the DRT: <http://www.dyslexic.org.uk>

Profiles

Scarlett van Rijn



As a dyslexic who didn't discover her condition until her late teens, Scarlett van Rijn endured many years of being thought stupid, in spite of her obvious ability at school debates.

Her teachers' attitudes seem to resemble that of Rhett Butler's towards her near-namesake Scarlett O'Hara – 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn' – until a psychology teacher started to take a keener interest in her.

Scarlett's essays were long-winded – 'I explained the same things in so many different ways because I didn't want them [the teachers] to misunderstand what I meant' – and only one teacher had an idea as to why this might be.

It was a relief to know that she wasn't just being stupid, but Scarlett says that at the time she didn't really know what being dyslexic meant, and she believes that she would have benefited from extra supervision. 'We could have worked out a system,' she says.

Scarlett, 26, grew up in Belgium with her English mother, who is also dyslexic. She has always 'instinctively' known that she needed to make a note of all her appointments in a diary to get through her day. 'I have a big "to do" list which helps me out,' she says, 'and I have an agenda which I carry with me everywhere, so I'm always where I need to be. If I didn't look at my agenda, I'd mix things up!'

These tools have helped Scarlett enjoy an interesting working life. Since moving to London, she has worked as a marketing manager for the mobile telephone company Orange and a mobile gaming company. Scarlett says she always tries to be honest with employers about being dyslexic, but for these two positions 'it wasn't such a big problem because I was working on a computer.'

Certainly spell-checks have been a great help. Scarlett even uses the predictive text function on her mobile phone to check the spelling of words if she has to write a note by hand. 'There aren't really many jobs I wouldn't apply for. But before computers, I probably wouldn't have applied for the jobs that I have,' she says.

Scarlett says she now wants to work for a charitable organisation, explaining: 'I've been given a caring heart that I want to use.'

Scarlett appears in D-I-T-T's latest project, the interactive cd-rom *The Mystery of the Lost Letters*, in which users accompany Tintin and Snowy on a quest to find Professor Calculus. In the 'Hall of Fame', Scarlett talks about her experiences of coping with dyslexia.

Judith Stansfield



For 20 years Judith Stansfield has been working with SEN and ICT as an advisory teacher, initially at Newcastle SEMERC and then in Cleveland LEA. Although officially retired, Judith continues her consultancy work, assessing the ICT needs of SEN children, providing INSET, reviewing software and hardware, giving talks and participating in several SEN forums on the Internet.

She is Reviews and Literature Editor for the British Dyslexia Association Computer Committee and designs modules. She was a mentor for the SEN aspects of the New Opportunities Funded ICT training for teachers.

Judith and her husband live in a 200-year-old cottage overlooking the village green of a North Yorkshire village, where she is a parish councillor and a governor of the small village school. During the summer holidays, Judith spends as much time as possible sailing on the Clyde.

To access Judith's comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on technologies, visit www.ditt-online.org.

What works

Good news for accessibility to higher education institutions across Europe

Welcome to the HEAG database – a guide to accessibility services in Higher Education Institutions across Europe:
<http://www.heagnet.org>.

Dyslexia and the arts

Subscribe to the Arts Dyslexia Trust free newsletter by going to:

<http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/newsletter.html>.

For information about the Arts Dyslexia Trust go to <http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/mag17>.

Learning about learning styles?

At his recent talk in Luxembourg on learning styles, Dr Gavin Reid spoke on the importance of self-knowledge and barriers to learning. He spoke of the dyslexic learner's difficulties in dealing with a left-hemisphere dominated society. What they wanted was understanding. They wanted to learn what could be done to help them compensate for their different perspectives when they came in conflict with rules, such as meeting deadlines and organizing work. For information on Gavin Reid's latest book, which will be published in September 2005, go to <http://www.paulchapmanpublishing.co.uk/book.aspx?pid=106934>

Gavin master-minded the questions for the self-discovery diagnostic games young users 'play' alongside a mentor. They can then win the 10-page print-out in the *Mystery of the Lost Letters* cd-rom. (See www.ditt-online.org.)

He and Charles Weedon – both of Edinburgh University designed SNAP (Special Needs Assessment Profile) – an assessment tool specifically designed for use in schools by special education needs co-ordinators, learning support and specialist teachers in primary and secondary schools, support services personnel, special schools and dyslexia/special educational needs assessment centres. There is no pre-training requirement.

For information go to:
www.snapassessment.com



Thumbs up for computer games?

The Education *Guardian* suggests we can learn useful lessons for education by looking at how computer games draw players in and motivate them to concentrate, plan forward and tackle complex problems.

See <http://education.guardian.co.uk/elearning/story/0,10577,1496931,00.html>

Parents' needs

Special Educational Needs – A Guide for Parents and Carers is highly recommended. It is available free from DfES Publications. Tel: +44 845 60 222 60, or it can be downloaded from the DfES Web site:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3755>

Words and more

An interesting online thesaurus for the visually adroit: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>

Maths and more

Maths Circus Act 5 by 4mation provides practice and enhancement for many maths skills. It:

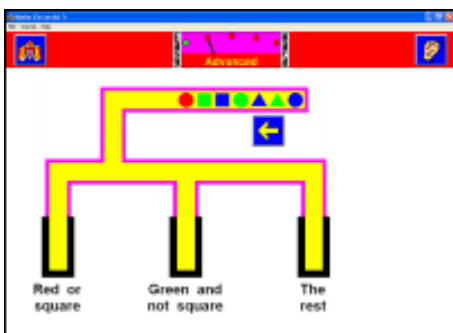
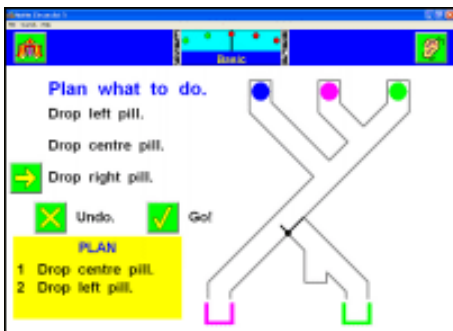
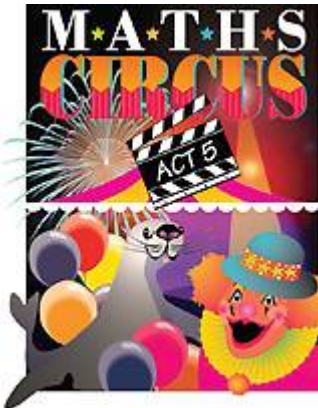
- stimulates spatial, logic and sequencing skills
- includes problems which particularly develop facility with numbers
- is suitable for most ages and abilities
- covers a wide range of maths problems
- includes 12 printable worksheets and a user guide with solutions and hints
- lays the foundations for algebra.

For more information go to <http://www.4mation.co.uk/cat/circus5.html>

Confidence booster needed?

For positive role models try:

<http://www.xtraordinarypeople.com/>.



Money matters



The D.I.T.T. *Annual Report 2004* –
available at: [http://www.ditt-online.org/
Archives/DITT%202004-ARep.pdf](http://www.ditt-online.org/Archives/DITT%202004-ARep.pdf)

Worldwide – D.I.T.T. is pleased to supply boxes of Tintin cd-roms to distributors who guarantee to make *The Mystery of the Lost Letters* widely available. The aim is to make it accessible to all learners for getting into control over their learning style, and for all wanting to understand dyslexia and its effects. For quantities of more than 200, each cd is conceded at a token price of €7. Inquiries to admin@ditt-online.org.

Thanks to DHL for sponsorship

D.I.T.T. warmly thanks DHL, who transported a stand and books both for the Children's Book Fair in Bologna and the EDA Conference in Cyprus.

EU funding for training

As part of its community action programme in the field of vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci), the EU is providing funding for 'innovative pilot projects to improve the quality of education and vocational training systems, promote co-operation between training establishments and businesses, exploit the potential of information and communication technologies, make qualifications more transparent, promote new language skills and develop trans-national co-operation networks and schemes with a view to producing information and analyses and promoting comparability of data in the vocational training sphere.'

The total available budget is €1,150 million.

For more information contact:

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Announcements

■ Great news from India – Eswar, a former D·I·T·T volunteer and web designer *par excellence* writes that he is making progress after a serious illness. We hope to see you in Brussels soon, Eswar.

■ D·I·T·T Board Member Chris has been in Cyprus at a meeting of minds on dyslexia (a report will follow in the Autumn newsletter).

■ *Unlimited Potential Microsoft courses*: Jerome Selosse and his team with Marianne Hallet of APEDA are to be congratulated, and Microsoft thanked, for sustaining further training-courses – now available in French.

■ This year's *D·I·T·T Annual Open Forum* at the European Parliament, 10 October, 5–7pm, will be on the theme: 'Dyslexia – how society responds'. Professor Dirk Bakker will speak on the long-term effects on reading of early intervention with children at risk of dyslexia. Please book now as pre-booking is essential for security and places are limited.

■ On Wednesday 11 January D·I·T·T has been invited to speak at *BETT*, the technology in education show at Olympia, London.

■ Other upcoming events to which D·I·T·T has been invited and would greatly appreciate volunteer back-up:

Rencontres Pédagogiques, Namur, 16–21 August

The Welcome Fair, Brussels, 23–24 September

Salon de Logopèdes, Brussels, 8 October

Children and Youth Fair, Luxembourg, 15–24 October

■ D·I·T·T welcomes Vincent Goetry, PhD, a distinguished young researcher, to work at D·I·T·T throughout the month of August.

■ *Please note*: Sue Wriglesworth – who wrote on music and dyslexia in our Spring 2005 Newsletter – is a BDA-recognised teacher with a teaching certificate from Westminster College, Oxford, now part of the university. She has an Advanced Diploma in Special Needs from the Cambridge Institute of Education and a Hornsby Diploma with distinction in Specific Learning Difficulties.





**ADULT
DYSLEXIA
ORGANISATION**

The Adult Dyslexia Organisation

The Adult Dyslexia Organisation (ADO) is a national body run by dyslexics for adult dyslexics and those concerned with adult dyslexics. It provides a wide range of services to the public and to professionals in the UK.

ADO is running a campaign 'Dyslexia Friendly – User Friendly' to show that services and support for dyslexics can also benefit those with other disabilities and the non-disabled. Services offer benefits in the areas of education, employment, ICT and day-to-day living.

The campaign, supported by Lord Addington, focuses on harnessing the potential of adult dyslexics, who can make a greater contribution to society through their innovative approaches to problem-solving. The campaign will research links between dyslexia and the entrepreneurial mind. Learndirect is also supporting the campaign – visit <http://www.ufi.com/dyslexia/>

ADO has produced a new cd-rom: *Dyslexia and Employment – Enabling Full Potential*, which covers a wide range of difficulties that dyslexics encounter in the workplace and addresses other employment issues. The ADO Web site is: www.adult-dyslexia.org.

The 2005 Altran awards

D·I·T·T was proud to be pre-selected for the Altran Foundation for Innovation 2005 award – thanks to Larry Moffett and a brilliant panel of supporters. (See D·I·T·T Newsletter No.18, page 2.)

The award for 'overcoming social exclusion through scientific and technological innovation' was won by researchers at the Laboratory of Nervous System Disorders of the Wadsworth Center, USA, led by Jonathan R. Wolpaw. The team devised a brain-powered remote control for paralysed people. Also short-listed for the 2005 award were:

- ALTACRO, which helps people who have lost the use of their legs walk again. ALTACRO was designed by a Belgian team led by Professor Dirk Lefeber of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.
- NAVWORKS, a portable navigation assistance system that offers guidance for the blind and visually impaired. NAVWORKS was developed by Gilles Candotti and his team at the French company CECIAA.

-
- Top Chair, an electric all-terrain wheelchair for people with reduced mobility. The chair can even climb stairs.
 - WebSourd, which aims to bring the Internet and multimedia technology to the deaf and hard of hearing. WebSourd was developed by a French partly-nationalised co-operative directed by François Goudenove.
 - A wheelchair guided by waves emitted by the brain. It was designed by a Spanish team led by José Luis Martín Sánchez of the electronics laboratory, University of Alcalá, Madrid.

Reflections

*...stop putting all the
adapting and accommodating
on the disabled*

Extract from a contributor to the SENCO forum (see D.I.T.T Newsletter No.2, Winter 2000, page 7 for details of how to join) from Graeme of APDUK (Auditory Processing Disorder UK):

‘Society has to adapt to coping with and accommodating dyslexics and stop putting all the adapting and accommodating on the disabled, the least able. Those who are dyslexic have an underlying information (organising) processing disability.’

dolfrog@apduk.org, <http://www.apduk.org>

Words of wisdom from Sally Raymond

*We often assume children
know things that they don't.*

When someone makes a spelling mistake, they can take it as personal failure leading to ‘the guilt’. This can happen when children are placed in an educational setting where they assume that they are supposed to be able to succeed. Displacing this failure away from the individual to the oddities of English spellings is therefore very important. Opening up the discussion about why ‘what’ is spelled in such a ridiculous manner ... why ‘horse’ has a useless ‘e’ and why ‘cough’ doesn’t rhyme with ‘through’, encourages learners to recognise that spelling errors are very likely to happen. We often assume children know things that they don’t. For the weak speller, the realisation that it’s the English language that is causing them problems can be quite a revelation.

Sally Raymond is a qualified teacher of dyslexic children. Since gaining the Hornsby Diploma she has been a special needs teacher, presented talks and workshops to teaching-staff and local support groups, and has written a number of books on the needs of dyslexic children.



*'... Bevé Hornsby took
dyslexia from the shelf and put
it on the coffee table.'*

RCSLT (Royal College of Speech and
Language Therapists) *Bulletin*,
reviewing *Dyslexics I have known*

'Odd Ode', by David Hornsby, originally
appeared as an appendix to the book
by Bevé Hornsby: *Dyslexics I have
Known or Reaching for the Stars*
(Whurr, 2001).

Remembering Bevé

A leading British pioneer and Honorary Professor, Dr Bevé Hornsby was a major contributor to the understanding of dyslexia. Through her ability to communicate clearly without resorting to jargon, she reached a huge public. This poem 'Odd Ode' by her nephew David Hornsby – capturing Bevé's spirit of fun – was read out at her Thanksgiving Service in London on 26 May, attended by Judith Sanson on behalf of D-I-T-T.

In the days of his childhood, Professor Malarkey
Spoke simply and clearly and knew how to spell,
But as he grew older he pondered this question:
'Why couldn't everyone do so as well?'
So he studied dyslexia, also dyslalia
Linguistics as well – and his knowledge increased,
And he found to his joy that the world of phonetics
Provided a terminological feast!

How seductive were phonemes and morphemes
And graphemes
And fricative uvulars, allophones too!
He exulted whenever a plosive was glottal
And never used short words when long ones would do!
Soon he was practising phatic communion
With Alexia (this was the name of his cat)
But she merely made nasal bilabial noises
So he made a phonetic transcription of that!

Gone were the days when he used to think syntax
Was something that sinners must pay when they
sinned.
Now he was sailing the sea of Semantics,
Breasting the waves with his sails full of wind!
Prolific indeed were the deeps of the ocean
With affricates, laterals, nasals and rolls
And he learnt all the hundreds of sounds that they made,
For these curious creatures abounded in shoals!

At last they awarded Professor Malarkey
The Chair of Phonetics at Frinton-on-Sea
Where he lectured on morphophonemic components
And other such matters beyond you and me.
The students attending his lectures were happy
To sit at the feet of a master, no doubt
Though some of them said they'd be happier still
If they knew what on earth he was talking about.

The rights of the child: 1959–2005

How far are we towards living in a society where the basic rights of the child are addressed as spelled out at the UN General Assembly in 1959 in the 'Declaration of the rights of the child' (in which 'he' in the text represents both sexes)?

Article 5

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

Article 7

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

from Article 10

... He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

Edited by Jon Eldridge