



Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL

building learning abilities

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Newsletter

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Tintin praises volunteer efforts

Tintin treated D-I-T-T volunteers to a sumptuous meal this summer to thank them for all their hard work.

Peter Horemans, director general of Moulinsart, the commercial wing of Tintin's Hergé Foundation, generously invited D-I-T-T supporters to a lunch at the White Room on Avenue Louise, Brussels, on 29 August.

Moulinsart has agreed to team up with D-I-T-T for their pioneering *Roadmap to Success* CD-Rom project in conjunction with the BBC – which is to be illustrated by Tintin and Snowy.

Thanking him for his outstanding hospitality, D-I-T-T executive director Judith Sanson presented Mr Horemans with a Tie Rack tie as a token of the charity's appreciation for his support.

Below: A toast to Tintin: 'The Reception' reproduced with the kind permission of the Hergé Foundation



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

Speaking afterwards, she said: 'What a spectacular occasion! There was so much attention to detail – even our name tags had beautiful Tintin lapel pins attached.'

Mr Horemans said: 'I thought it was essential to arrange the lunch. D·I·T·T works with a lot of volunteers. I also am involved in voluntary work and I realise that it is important that people get recognition for their work and support... a lot of people spend their precious time helping.'

He added: 'It was a good opportunity for us all to get to know each other and to speak about all kinds of things, but not in a workshop environment. It was an informal event with a nice atmosphere – I think the human part of it was important and it was well appreciated.'

'I talked to some very interesting people who were able to share their experience with dyslexia. It gave me confirmation that we are participating in the right project.'

Representatives from the *Roadmap to Success* multi-media project partners, including Eveline Verdonck, Cable and Wireless Benelux PR manager, and Gail Block, freelance producer for the BBC, also attended the lunch, although unfortunately Grace Hermitage, EMEA corporate business manager at Levi Strauss, was unable to join. □

CD-Rom wins support of Hergé family

Tintin's pledge to help young dyslexics with D·I·T·T's pioneering new CD-Rom is one of the biggest charitable projects he has ever been involved in.

The ingenious adolescent detective has a long history of helping the underdog, as a quick glance through the pages of his many books will reveal, and he has lent his backing to a number of good causes over the years.

But according to Peter Horemans, director general at Moulinsart, he has never been linked to such a far-reaching project before. 'This is the biggest one he has been involved in,' he confirmed. 'Tintin's never been involved in something of such a scale before. Most of the time, the projects are just nationally based, but the *Roadmap to Success* will have an international impact.'

How fitting then that Hergé crusading comic character's popularity has reached cult status worldwide – a fact confirmed to Peter during his recent business travels. He said: 'I have just come back from a trip to Asia and Tintin is very popular in certain areas, particularly Singapore, Taiwan and even China. It is amazing that he is so universal.'

Moulinsart, the commercial wing of the Hergé Foundation, handles requests from a wide variety of organisations around the world who want to use Tintin's image, whether in musicals, animated television series, or advertising and merchandise. One such project includes support for the Belgian-based charity Action Damian that helps leprosy sufferers.

Peter stressed: 'We have to be very protective of the property. We don't take lightly any potential partners and we have to be very selective.'

'Tintin is 73 years-old today. And for him to continue to be as popular as he is, great care needs to be taken of his use. However, we know the intentions of D·I·T·T are good and the *Roadmap to Success* project is very important.'

In fact, he revealed, support for the CD-Rom goes straight to the highest echelons of the organisation: Hergé's widow Fanny and Nick Rodwell follow its progress with keen interest.

He said: 'We have the privilege to be in contact with Mr and Mrs Rodwell. I report to them directly. They have very high regard for the CD-Rom project. Quite often Mr Rodwell asks if there is any news.'



Wined and dined: at the summer lunch hosted by Peter Horemans

Unfortunately they could not be at the lunch in August, but they would have been delighted to attend. They feel a very strong involvement.'

Peter too reveals a personal interest in the project. He empathises with the plight of a young dyslexic having struggled with reading problems himself as a child. And he is aware of the confusion facing parents of young dyslexics through his sister's difficulties in getting help for her adopted child from India, who has dyslexia.

'That is why this CD-Rom is very important. It helps these children, who are already feeling so lonely and isolated. It helps give them hope for the future,' he said. 'And with the BBC and the dynamic people working on the project, I am sure it will be very successful.' □

Freelance producer joins BBC team

If one person has to take responsibility for keeping D·I·T·T's CD-Rom show on the road, it's Gail Block.

A freelance producer, Gail has taken over the day-to-day running of the *Roadmap to Success* multi-media project for the BBC.

Working under the guidance of 'top dog' executive producer Andrew Law, introduced to Newsletter readers earlier this year, she's charged with overseeing creative content, coordinating the team and staying on budget.

And with the first project planning phase successfully under her belt, Gail is now juggling the challenges of producing the pioneering CD-Rom on schedule – a prospect she relishes.

However she is the first to admit that the *Roadmap to Success* project presents some very different challenges. 'The way it has been put together is unique. Judith [Sanson, D·I·T·T executive director] has managed to bring together the Tintin element and come up with a basic brief and funders to support it. From a production company's point of view, it's an unique set up to work within,' she said.

The CD-Rom is aimed at young people with dyslexia who are living in an international multilingual context – perhaps as the offspring of mixed-language parents going to a school where teaching is in a different language from their mother tongue. D·I·T·T recognises that learning a second language is a make or break hurdle for all school children – and, for the dyslexic learner, it is often the final straw.

Gail is fully aware of the impact of producing for an international audience. 'As a programme maker the language and cultural issues do make it more challenging ... it does add another layer of complexity.'

But little daunts this dynamic self-confessed Europhile, who fondly recalls how her family used to speak French at the breakfast table. 'My father grew up in the South of France, and we spent a lot of time in France and Italy when young.'

Likewise, she is thrilled to be working with Tintin, despite the technical challenges the partnership with the Gallic cartoon hero presents. Gail revealed: 'I love him. My father introduced me to him at an early age and I remember looking through the comic books of my French pen pal's younger brothers. The idea is great and now we are grappling with the realisation. We love that the fact he's an investigator and this CD-Rom is a personal investigation for the dyslexic user. We love the confluence ... the opportunity for the medium to reflect the message.'

Just like the Tintin comics, the CD-Rom's content aims to be of value to anyone, aged seven to 77, but the primary target audience is 9- to 13-year-olds, 'a group which is highly attracted to Tintin,' according to the joint BBC/D·I·T·T planning document. It highlights how these youngsters may well have slipped through the education net, so their needs will be great,' adding: 'recent research reinforces the message that the earlier



Working lunch: Gail (on the left) meets D-I-T-T supporters.
In the centre is Peter Horemans, director general of Moulinsart, and on the right is Anny Cooreman.

the professional intervention, the better the prognosis, which makes the plight of the undiagnosed 13-year-old even greater.’

Proudly introducing the production line-up, Gail admitted one of the joys of working with such a large corporation as the BBC is the chance to hand pick the most appropriate people for a project. ‘We’ve gone to some effort to put together a team which we think is right for the job.’

This select crew will be working hand-in-hand with experts and consultants brought together by or members of D-I-T-T.

An accomplished film and CD-Rom maker, whose clients have included the Open University of Great Britain, Channel 4 Learning and the National Youth Music Theatre, Gail specialises in ethical, medical and environmental issues.

She also has a wealth of experience of working with voluntary organisations – which she claims has given her an insight into their particular needs and sensitivities. And she feels her practical understanding of many of the common issues facing such organisations is complemented by her education and training: she studied biology, psychology and philosophy at Durham University. ‘It all moulds my general approach,’ she said.

Ever since she first became involved with the D-I-T-T project, Gail says she has been astounded to discover the number of people whose lives are touched by the learning difficulty. She recalls how on a recent train journey a fellow passenger struck up conversation about her severely dyslexic son after noting the producer was reading a book by dyslexia expert Bevé Hornsby.

And she admits her meetings with D-I-T-T supporters in Brussels this summer have been extremely inspiring. ‘It was wonderful to see how concerned and caring people were about their children, how hungry they were to make their children’s lives better for them. It also made me realise, as I know from my own experiences, how disruptive the wrong kind of teaching can be. I really empathised with them.’ □

Web Site hits the mark

On average over 200 visitors a month have turned to D·I·T·T's Web site, according to a professional Web-tracking company.

Around 50 people have been logging each week to www.ditt-online.org since April this year. And the majority of users have found it so useful that they have bookmarked the site among their favourite pages, according to data produced by Stats4all.com. Other top 20 referrers include links from Tintin's Web site, European Schoolnet, Altavista and the British Dyslexia Association.

The lively and informative site is packed with a wealth of information on the learning difficulties as well as news of the non-profit making organisation's wide range of initiatives.

Created solely by volunteers, including D·I·T·T Web-master David Rowan and designer Pauline Key-Kairis, special features include details of different state education provision for education, free electronic versions of key publications translated into five languages, a comprehensive list of resources and back copies of the colourful e-newsletter.

Visitors have flocked from 47 countries worldwide, although the statistical information reveals that www.ditt-online.org is most popular with Belgian users with other 40 per cent of hits from this country's browsers. Other users come from as far afield as Australia, Canada and Brazil as well as much of Europe. Last February marked a climax in popularity when nearly 400 visitors browsed the Web pages.

D·I·T·T board member Susan Calamassi said: 'These are impressive first results for D·I·T·T, giving us a lot to build on. One of our key aims is to reach out those who most need help and the Web site will be, and is already proving to be, an invaluable tool.' □

Mosaic helps dyslexics read

Dyslexic students achieve higher reading-test results after using a pegboard device, research has found.

Experiments by D·I·T·T-commended scientist Thierry Bourdignon have shown that dyslexic children who handled a non-verbal device described as a 'mosaic' scored significantly higher results in reading tests with new words and pseudo words than those who had not used the device.

The University of Mons Cognitive Sciences specialist, who was awarded the Marcelle Napier highly-commended prize by D·I·T·T in 2001, teamed up with one of his students, Mieke Soetaert, to carry out this research.

The pair worked with a group of 16 dyslexic seven-year-olds over 10 half-hour sessions to test the hypothesis that a non-verbal device can help dyslexic children. They believe that one kind of pegboard exercise can help install segmental consciousness – and could thus remediate segmentation difficulties encountered by dyslexic children. The pair did not work with the control group of children in order to avoid interference with their 'normal' acquisition of reading skills. Both groups were tested before and after using the 'BELEC'.

Describing the results as 'promising', Dr Bourdignon said: 'The statistical treatment of the results shows that the segmentation exercises have a significant effect on reading performances.'

To read Bordignon and Soetaert's 'memoire' in full visit [Projects/The Marcelle Napier Award](#) at www.ditt-online.org □



Campaigning for change:
Judith Sanson

Pledge to break the cycle of despair

It was the horror of meeting child after child whose dyslexia had driven them to the brink of despair and even attempted suicide that compelled Judith Sanson to do something.

D·I·T·T's executive director declares: 'The anguish of seeing children bullied in school by teachers because they are considered to be stupid spurred me into action. I was seeing it close up in the European context ... children becoming utterly demoralised because of their treatment because no one education system could or would take responsibility.'

The married mother-of-two's decision to dedicate herself to helping dyslexics succeed eventually led her, in October 2000, to help found D·I·T·T as a non-profit-making organisation with a mission to create and promote tools and technologies that enable dyslexics to do just that.

But why dyslexia? 'Because it causes the most anguish and its symptoms are so widespread,' explained the committed 60-year-old volunteer. 'It is still so little understood because it cannot be seen. People can see people on crutches or when someone has cerebral palsy. I felt something had to be done to bring this crippling disability out into the public arena.'

In 2000 the inexhaustible pragmatist qualified for the Hornsby International Centre for Teaching Dyslexic Students with distinction. She feels the course has given her a greater understanding of the issues involved and the sort of training that is appropriate to help young dyslexics.

But helping one student amongst so many who need help was not an option: 'I always wanted to work on a much wider scale. I feel the need to help more and more young people and help break the cycle of despair and destruction. One child I came across had tried to commit suicide because he was so desperate with dyslexia – and his story is not unique.'

Judith became an unstinting campaigner, whose work with D·I·T·T is the culmination of a long history of battling to improve the drop-out and failure rates because of language difficulties.

An English graduate from Aberdeen University, Scotland, she studied French in Paris at the Sorbonne and qualified in teaching English to foreign and second language learners after taking her PGCE teacher training and a proficiency in phonetics at London University. She made a study of both reading development and management before becoming a tutor at the Open University.

After moving to Brussels in 1989, she volunteered with FOCUS, a career development organisation, and the Community Help Service, helping devise outreach programmes and a first Education Directory. Later she became involved in founding European Children in Crisis. There she set up a tradition of training sessions with distinguished speakers in special education, and coordinated a Children's Music Festival, one of a series of events to raise funds for children trapped in the adversities of separated education systems.

With a team of concerned parents and teachers, she wrote a first guide for families of children with specific learning difficulties: a post-conference document following Action for Dyslexia at the European Parliament in 1994 funded by the European Commission. The Guide was illustrated by Quentin Blake and distributed world-wide through the Belgian Ministry to their embassies.

She devised and compiled a second guide with leading experts on dyslexia, multilingualism and culture shock to accompany the *Language Shock – Dyslexia across Cultures* video, which explored the issues faced by the child with learning difficulties and was produced by the BBC.

A regular churchgoer, Judith is motivated by a burning desire to help the underdog. She said: 'I have a sense of social responsibility. I don't like to see social ills ... not that I'm better than anyone else at addressing them. But I hate to see people suffering unnecessarily and I like to feel that I can make a difference and I'm prepared to devote myself to that.'

Before coming to Brussels, Judith worked for the United Nations in New York, Vienna and Paris, and the BBC in London, as well as travelling extensively around the world. She said: 'It was difficult for me to find a career initially, I was not a doctor or a musician with a whole career pattern laid out in front of me. I felt guilty at spending the money I had earned so painstakingly on travel for myself, but someone advised me it was investing in life. The experience was enriching beyond belief and in so many ways. I will never forget the enthralling sight of the hills of Tibet at sunrise... there was a lot of mind-blowing stuff, particularly for a young mind. Very enriching.'

Her travel experience throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East all certainly added value to her work. It all fell into place when she became Borough Language Organiser with Hammersmith and Fulham, one of the twelve inner London boroughs setting up language classes. Her work took her into the world of immigrants, refugees and migrant workers in one of the most disadvantaged areas in London. She said: 'I had been to the places where my students came from ... the Punjab, Hong Kong ... and was all the more keenly aware of language issues and how they are linked with identity and so many other social factors. I was and still am keenly aware of society's inequalities and keen to do all I can to address the issues.' □

What works

□ Choosing the right programme

Dyslexia expert Judith Stansfield gets to grips with the diverse range of computer programmes currently available on the market. Reprinted below is the independent SEN and ICT consultant's response to a baffled parent's plea for advice during a recent Senco forum debate.

As a rule of thumb, work done at home should complement and extend what is done at school; time is not so critical at home, so activities that require regular short stints like learning to use the keyboard and practising spelling and arithmetic can be done every day and slotted in between more 'interesting' activities like computer games etc. Incidentally these are much better restricted to games machines than cluttering up the memory of the computer! They are useful for developing hand-eye coordination, self-esteem and **fun!**

Daily practice on a keyboard program over the school holidays can provide the necessary skill to use *Alphasmart* or *Dreamwriter*, etc. effectively, which could be promised as the carrot for success. There is also time at home to explore adventures, longer talking books, etc. that are restricted at school by the bell or another child's turn.

For younger children using *Clicker4* (Crick), with all its downloadable resources, provides a valuable and growing resource for parents to use to foster interest and success in reading and writing. For older children *Writing with Symbols 2000* (Widgit) supported with *Wordbar* (Crick) will enable them to prepare written homework more independently as the picture rebuses and speech tap into the visual strengths of many dyslexics. The final document can be stripped of the rebuses and printed out as a normal piece of word-processing to hand in.

Electronic Library and the *Comprehension disc* (Carron) are really useful for older pupils who still have reading difficulties. The latest EL Lib has some extra features, one of which provides a simple tool to find the preferred screen colour choice and the stories can then be read with that background.

Wordshark (Whitespace) and *Gamz* provide well-structured spelling practice for dyslexic/ dyspraxic children, but *Starspell2001* is better if there is any element of Asperger's, as it is totally predictable in style and format and therefore more re-assuring than the busy screens of *Wordshark*.

Lexia UK and *Scan IT* (Maia) are good for developing reading skills, speed and accuracy. *Timely Reminders* and *Time to Revise* (CALSC) are good for developing good memory habits. A mind-mapping program is good to use at home to organise ideas and plan essays etc. *Kidspiration* or *Draftbuilder* is recommended for young children; *Inspiration Ygnius* or *Mindmanager* for older students and *Thinksheet* for those who are not so visually strong, but need help to organise themselves in a more serial mode.

A screen reader (*TextHelp* or *Penfriend*) or talking wp (*TextEase*, *WWS2K*, *Write Outloud* etc.) is a useful revision tool to provide sound as well as text when going over essays and notes produced on the computer.

The home computer is such a valuable resource it is vital for school and home to work together to get the most out of it. Parents only see what is available from the high street stores so letting them know about the R-E-M, AVP, Semerc, Inclusive Technology, Don Johnston, Crick and Widgit sites and how to get their catalogues is an eye-opener! This is not a definitive list but should give food for thought.

For more information visit <http://web.onyxnet.co.uk/Stass-onyxnet.co.uk> □

□ **Therapist and mum join forces**

A UK information booklet has earned such a distinguished reputation that parts have been added to the publications lists of two major teaching organisations.

Developed by a Hornsby-trained dyslexia therapist and now co-edited by the mother of a dyslexic child, the *SpLD Resources* booklet has been recognised as a first-class source of information relating to specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) for parents and professionals across the country.

Over 1,000 copies have been sold in the last year alone, and the Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (SENJIT) at the London Institute of Education and the Professional Association of Teachers with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) have both adopted the national section for their lists.

The national booklet offers resources for common conditions such as specific language impairment, dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Asperger's syndrome and autism. The 84-page directory also provides brief information on specific learning difficulties including: handwriting problems, vision and hearing, speech and language problems, literacy and numeracy, enlisting specialist help and choosing a school.

It is designed so that users can quickly find the names and addresses of relevant organisations, publications and Web sites where more help, expertise and advice is available.

Mum Sarah Rae recalls how desperate she became after her son Iain's local primary-school teachers refused to acknowledge his dyslexia even after assessment – leaving the once articulate and able eight-year-old to stagnate near the bottom of his class.

After a long battle she stumbled across therapist Gillian Hawley, who provided a listening ear, plenty of practical advice and specialist tuition. Sarah admitted: 'I felt as though I'd won the lottery that morning – what a relief to find someone who understood the problem.'

Over the next few years Sarah offered informal help to other parents facing similar situations. And five years ago, Gillian invited her to become co-editor of the home-produced booklet she had already developed and distributed free to all her regional LEA establishments.

'We were both committed to supplying information to parents in a form that was easily accessible and affordable,' said Sarah. 'Parents need pointers – it's a steep learning curve. They also need to acquire enough basic information to know what questions to ask their potential helpers and to better understand and discuss advice being given by professionals.'

The booklet is sold at cost price along with a free supplement listing local organisations, support groups and specialist registers for counties including Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and part of Northamptonshire.

For more information contact gillianhawley@amservice.net

Booklets are available costing £4.50 (including postage and packaging) from Gillian Hawley, SpLD Resources Booklet, The Old Bakery, Radwinter Road, Ashdon, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2ET. Cheques should be made payable to Gillian Hawley SpLD Account. □

□ Web site news

- Click on www.simonmidgley.co.uk for a with a comprehensive selection of educational reports, links to useful sites including many dedicated to dyslexia, on-line learning, mentoring, literacy, learning and ICT and post 16 choices.
- Youngsters looking to forge friendships by mail or e-mail need look no further than the European Schoolnet Web site. Pupils searching for pen pals can visit www.eun.org/penpal and teachers looking for exchanges between classes can browse www.eun.org/partner-find
- Worldwide teaching issues are the focus of Education International's Web site at www.ei-ie.org The site, which is available in French, English or Spanish, claims to represent the world's largest educators' federation, with 25 million members through its 311 member organisations.
- A site centred around conditions like ADHD, Asperger's syndrome and dyslexia, which was featured in an earlier newsletter, has undergone a major revamp this summer. Aimed at people with hidden impairments, www.Hi2u.org has won over 20 awards from around the world, according to its creator. It has also been granted the 'wired patrol kids safety seal of approval' meaning the site has been vetted and considered safe for youngsters to visit. New improvements include pages on voice recognition software. □



Farewell thanks: Retiring board member André Poncelet

★ D·I·T·T stalwart retires

Legal and financial consultant André Poncelet, whose grandfather founded the Ligue de Familles, is to stand down from the D·I·T·T Board.

André championed D·I·T·T by masterminding the *Roadmap to Success* self-help learning tool, the Marcelle Napier Research Award and the organisation's original set-up in 2000.

Fellow board member, Susan Calamassi said: 'He was keenly aware of the gaps in provision for children with hidden handicaps. He has, unfailingly, given generously of his time and backing and above all his vision. And in the role of friend and adviser André has stated he will always be there for D·I·T·T too.'

Across the years, M. Poncelet has inspired and assisted many philanthropic organisations in their aims to improve social and educational opportunities for the disadvantaged. D·I·T·T looks forward to his continuing encouragement as a wise counsellor and friend. □

★ FAWCO fact-finding mission

The opinions of like-minded individuals on guidelines aimed at helping teachers across the globe are being sought by an international group of women.

The project, initiated by the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), aims to support mainstream classroom teachers world-wide by providing simple strategies that they can employ to help learning-differently students in their classrooms. The guidelines, developed by FAWCO's education support committee, will also aim to provide help to internationally-mobile students and their families.

Now FAWCO it is calling on students, parents and educational professionals, support groups and organisations to contribute and eventually endorse the one page guide which they hope to make available to the European Council of International Schools, the European Union Ministry of Education and the educational authorities of the 35 countries where FAWCO has member clubs. Distribution is scheduled for March 2003.

In August, educational support committee chair and D·I·T·T member Susan van Alsenoy presented details on the project to the University of Uppsala's International Research and European Policy conference on dyslexia. She explained how it had developed because most mainstream teachers were busy people working many uncompensated hours, who received little or no practical guidance on how to help a learning-differently student in their classroom, adding: 'This paper would not go into any explanation of learning difficulties – the whys, hows and how-comes... It would be suggested that teachers keep this paper together with their class register for easy reference.'

For more information about the project visit <http://studentswholearn.fawco.org> or e-mail Susan direct at s.van.alsenoy@pandora.be.

FAWCO is a non-profit-making umbrella organisation for 78 independent American women's clubs in 35 countries around the world representing over 17,000 women. See www.fawco.org □

★ Conferencing at home

Teachers, parents and educationalists were invited to log in to a nationwide UK conference from the comfort of their own computers last month.

The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) hosted the online conference, 'ICT in schools across the UK,' from 23 to 26 September.

Visitors to the 'virtual' event, which was held in partnership with Classroom 2000, Education Technology Strategy in Northern Ireland and Learning and Teaching Scotland, were able to participate in online discussions tackling issues such as Interactive ICT teaching and learning for pupils with SEN, ICT and Special Educational Needs, SEMERC Software and Inclusive Practice in ICT.

Before the event, Becta organisers said: 'Taking part in the online conference means you can join in presentations, visit exhibitions and enjoy the social discussion at a time which is convenient for you – from your living room or office. Put the kids to bed, pour yourself a cup of tea, and join in! It's that easy!'

The online event was held free of charge in conjunction with the Education Northern Ireland (ENI), Belfast, 23-24 September and the Scottish Education and Teaching with Technology (SETT) show, Glasgow, 25-26 September.

And delegates attending the 'real' conference were also able to take part in workshops and online discussions from computers on the conference floor.

For more information visit www.ictadvice.org.uk/conference □

★ Portuguese meeting

Hopes are high that the Portuguese government may help with distribution of the translated version of the *Language Shock Pack*.

D·I·T·T executive director Judith Sanson is due to meet with Filomena Pereira, dyslexia specialist at the Portuguese Ministry of Education, this month. She said: 'We are offering to provide them with copies of the Portuguese Pack for distribution to their own schools and training programmes.' □

★ Italian Guide on the cards

Essential help and advice on overcoming learning difficulties will soon be available in Italian – if funding can be found. The e-book version of the *Language Shock Guide* will be made freely available. A printed version is scheduled to follow when funding becomes available. □

★ CD-Rom eagerly anticipated

D·I·T·T's pioneering CD-Rom project is already attracting interest from the international education community.

The Head of Child Development at the Community Help Service, Belgium, who is currently developing a group for seven- and eight-year-olds, has warmly welcomed the *Roadmap to Success* multimedia package, which is due to be completed next autumn. □

★ **Quentin note-card packs for sale**

Supporters are being urged to purchase D·I·T·T's unique Quentin Blake greeting cards and help raise much-needed funds for the organisation.

The cheerful notelets feature a full-colour version of the drawing for the *Language Shock Packs* by the top children's illustrator, and are available from the D·I·T·T office in packets of 10 cards with envelopes for €10 – the ideal gift. □

★ **Second language classes – yes for dyslexic learners too – praised**

Finnish lessons at a Brussels teaching centre have been given the thumbs up by a dyslexic learner and D·I·T·T member.

Paulina Van Rijn warmly praised the Call International course, in particular highlighting the beneficial way the sessions adopted a variety of methods in which the target language was reinforced for memorisation.

Paulina, who learnt to count in Finnish and say the hours of the day using techniques such as role play, lotto and bingo, said: 'I really enjoyed the three lessons, they were very well done! We changed "games" the whole time, so I didn't get a chance to get absent-minded, tired or even desperate.'

For more information contact Patrick Waquet, Centre Manager, Call International, Rue des Drapiers 25, 1050 Bruxelles, or telephone + 32-(0)2 644 95 95. □

Money Matters

⊕ **Funds urgently required**

Researching new sources of income remains a top priority for the D·I·T·T board. Treasurer Ralph Palim said: 'We are looking for funds for pressing the *Roadmap to Success* CD-Rom, paying for translation, Web site development and consultation fees where these are a prerequisite. We also need help to cover the costs of office back-up.'

D·I·T·T is grateful to Levis Strauss Advised Fund at Charities Aid Foundation and Cable&Wireless for making the *Roadmap to Success* possible. Other sponsors are already showing an interest in helping with the essential core funding. □

⊕ **British Telecom**

Thanks go to BT, which has generously offered to help support D·I·T·T by providing services in kind. □

☉ Tough words from Bill Gates

The world's richest man recently dished out some words of wisdom to students at an American high school. And D·I·T·T member Elizabeth Catzel, who forwarded Bill Gates' advice for readers to mull over, reckons he's hit the nail on the head, adding: 'He talks about how feel-good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.'

Bill's rules for real life are as follows:

- Rule 1: Life is not fair – get used to it.
- Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something **before** you feel good about yourself.
- Rule 3: You will **not** make \$40,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.
- Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.
- Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping – they called it opportunity.
- Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault; so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.
- Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you are. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.
- Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life has not. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to **anything** in real life.
- Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you find yourself. Do that on your own time.
- Rule 10: Television is **not** real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.
- Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one. □

☉ And finally...

Thanks to Ruth Newbury of Senco forum – poetry for 16-year-old school leavers – not to be distracted by life's obstacles to success in their lives:

Trouble's like a thistle that stands right in your way,
It cannot fail to grab you some sad and bitter day.
But why not walk around it as anyone can do?
Never trouble trouble, till trouble troubles you!

Editor: Virginia Haydon, Press & PR consultant