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Dyslexia Review

Volume 29, Number 1. Spring 2019

The Journal of The Dyslexia Guild

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ANNIVERSARY

And **50 years** of Dyslexia Review,
our double anniversary year



Join The Dyslexia Guild

The professional body for specialist teachers, assessors and support staff

The Dyslexia Guild is a membership organisation for specialist teachers, assessors and practitioners. We welcome all interested professionals to join us. Guild members benefit from letters after their name as either Fellow (FDG), Member (MDG) or Associate (ADG). There is also an Affiliate grade for any individual who shares the interests of the Guild and for student members as well as a group membership rate.

- A Library of e-books as well as access to over 1600 professional electronic journals
- Dyslexia Review: the journal of the Dyslexia Guild
- Guild Gallery: our bi-monthly topical e-newsletter
- Guild Member online discussion forums
- The Annual Guild Summer Conference: a vibrant and engaging networking conference

Membership benefits also include preferential discounts on Dyslexia Action courses; a route to gaining an Assessment Practising Certificate and preferential rates on professional indemnity insurance.



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Welcome

Welcome to the spring edition of *Dyslexia Review*.

We hope you will approve of the refreshed design for the journal which has been produced by our new publishers, Headlines. This issue is a special edition in many ways, as not only are we celebrating 25 years of The Dyslexia Guild but also 50 years of *Dyslexia Review*, a double happy birthday! We have features about both of our anniversaries as well as member profiles from some of our many loyal members.

Those of you who tuned into the Dyslexia Debate online earlier this year may remember it as a thought-provoking and enjoyable listen. We have summarised the discussion in this issue as it covered many important (and controversial) topics for dyslexia specialists, including challenges to our understandings of access, diversity, intelligence testing and available funding resources. These are discussions that we look forward to continuing further at our Annual Summer Conference in June.

Other features include the use of sensory equipment as well as technology in the classroom. For our assessment specialists there are reviews of WIAT III UK T and the SPARCS test as well as an insightful interview on Databusting for Schools – how well do you understand statistics? There's also a reminder for Guild members that a range of assessment tests are available to borrow from the Guild library if you wish to review them first. Once you are ready to purchase your own copy, the Dyslexia Action Shop is the 'one-stop shop' for assessment tests and offers a discount to Guild members. Our book reviews highlight new publications; a reminder that there is a wealth of books and journals available through the Guild library; find out more in Membership News.

We hope you enjoy our anniversary edition and look forward to meeting and networking with you at conference and through our Guild members' online forums in the coming year. Please do let us know your thoughts.

Kathryn Benzine
Editor



50
years of *Dyslexia Review*

25
years of The
Dyslexia Guild

1,500+
Guild Members, UK
and International

700
books and resources in
our library collection

1,600
journals in our
online collection



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Our double anniversary issue.

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Membership news

Jan Beechey, Dyslexia Guild Administrator and Librarian, provides an update for Guild members.

Congratulations and welcome to our latest Fellows!

Louise van der Valk FDG
Laura Carey FDG

Have you considered becoming a Fellow? Fellowship is the recognition of a significant achievement and contribution in the dyslexia/SpLD field and is encouraged for those who demonstrate an outstanding level of commitment to advancing standards and best practice. In addition to the numerous Guild member benefits, Fellowship also includes one free CPD course or event per membership period.

If you would like to know more about any of the benefits mentioned, please contact guild@dyslexiaaction.org.uk or library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

The National Dyslexia Resource Centre (NDRC)

NDRC is our membership library which contains both hard copy and electronic books and journals. There are various ways to access content:

- **Library Catalogue** – This is the first port of call to see all the books, journals, teaching resources, tests and e-books that the library holds. You can also make purchase suggestions. When you find an e-book, you just click on the link and are taken to it to either read online or download.
- **EBSCOHost Research Databases** – This is where you can access many thousands of journal articles through two databases: Education Research Complete, and Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection.

Look out for these new titles recently added to the NDRC

- An Adventure in Statistics: The Reality Enigma
- An Introduction to Applied Cognitive Psychology, 2nd Ed
- Assessing the Need for Access Arrangements During Examinations: A Practical Guide, 5th Ed
- Assessment of Learners with Dyslexic-Type Difficulties, 2nd Ed
- Child Language: Acquisition and Development, 2nd Ed
- Teaching English, Language and Literacy, 4th Ed.

New E-Books

- Applied Linguistics and Primary School Teaching
- The Dyslexia Assessment
- Research Methods in Education, 8th Ed
- Teaching Mathematics to English Language Learners, 2nd Ed..

Assessment Practising Certificate: New guidelines from the DfE and SASC

Extending the lifespan of assessment reports for dyslexia/SpLD

The Department for Education (DfE) has changed its evidence requirements for applications for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for higher education students. Dyslexia/SpLD reports undertaken at any age will now be accepted for the purposes of a DSA. Please note that Form 8 Access Arrangement Reports are not acceptable as these are not full assessment reports.

Assessment reports undertaken prior to March 2019

Assessment reports that have been undertaken by a fully qualified specialist teacher assessor or an

HCPC-registered psychologist prior to March 2019 will now be accepted by Student Finance England (SFE) for DSA purposes.

Assessment reports undertaken after March 2019

However, from March 2019, dyslexia/SpLD reports at any age should have been produced by a specialist teacher assessor with an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by an SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) awarding body such as the The Dyslexia Guild or a practitioner psychologist registered with the HCPC for them to be valid for DSA purposes.

Grand-parenting amnesty route from March 2019 - March 2020 only

For a limited period, only qualified and practising specialist teacher assessors with a full level 7 qualification in assessment – such as the Professional Certificate in Assessment Practice (Middlesex) or the Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy (York) – who have not previously held or applied for an Assessment Practising Certificate, an APC, will be able to obtain an APC by completing an application form and uploading a copy of their qualification certificate. The fee is £180 and includes the SASC listing fee of £30. Apply using the Route 1 application. Further details can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2GAYhMQ>

Spring 2019

Our double anniversary year

Jan Beechey, Guild Administrator and Librarian, looks back at the history of the Dyslexia Guild and its members' professional journal, *Dyslexia Review*.

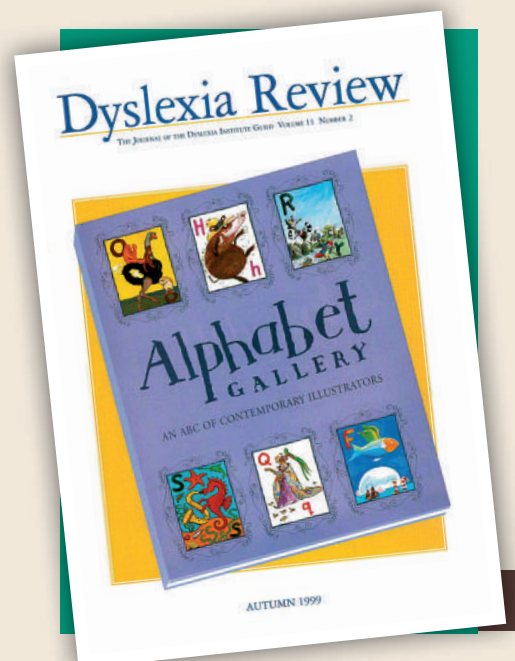
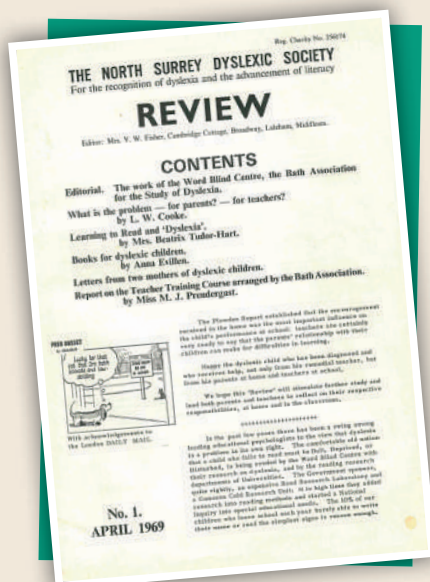
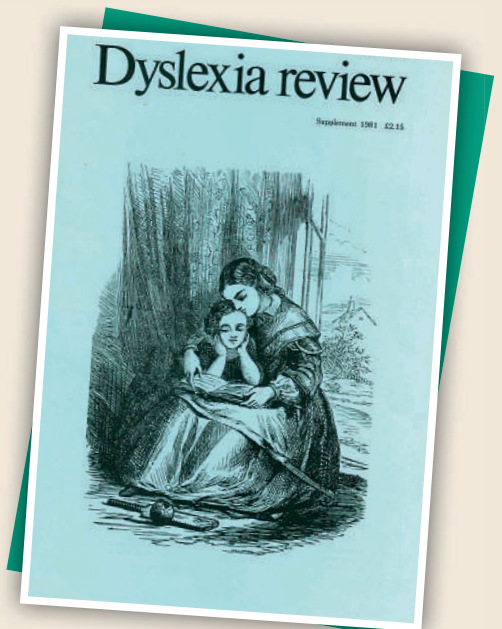
***Dyslexia Review* is 50 years old**

The history of *Dyslexia Review* and The Dyslexia Guild are, of course, intrinsically bound up with the history of Dyslexia Action, formerly Dyslexia Institute (DI), and brings to mind the familiar quote of Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." If I have made any glaring omissions in acknowledging some "giants" I hope they will forgive me.

Dyslexia Institute DI (1972) grew out of the North Surrey Dyslexic (Word Blind) Society (1968) which was set up by Wendy Fisher. Wendy wanted to campaign on behalf of her daughter who had been diagnosed with dyslexia, and to help others with the same condition. In 1969, she launched *Dyslexia Review*, containing articles by

leading experts of the time. Drawing on her father's medical background, Wendy took a rigorously scientific approach to dyslexia, ensuring that the *Dyslexia Review* was more than just a newsletter. In the very first issue, published in April 1969, Wendy wrote: "We hope this 'Review' will stimulate further study and lead both parents and teachers to reflect on their respective responsibilities, at home and in the classroom."

Wendy and Kathleen Hickey set up the first DI, developing a multisensory teaching method for children with dyslexia and literacy problems. Centres opened across the country in the 1970s, each offering assessment, training for teachers and twice weekly lessons for pupils with dyslexia. The DI Literacy Programme, affectionately known as DILP, developed from earlier work undertaken by Hickey (1977) and Hornsby (1974) and was published as manuals in 1993 when the Institute celebrated its 21st anniversary. Multisensory teaching and the Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme (DALP), developed in 2012, still form the cornerstone of qualification courses that Dyslexia Action offers for specialist teachers. DALP has been further developed to encompass a placement process and is designed to structure language-learning contexts to maximise the progress that learners with literacy difficulties can achieve.



The increasing editorial burden of the *Dyslexia Review* journal was later shared between Wendy and Dr Michael Thomson but they reluctantly took the decision to suspend the *Dyslexia Review* after the summer 1982 issue, to focus on other needs of the organisation. Wendy retired in 1985 to run a bookshop with her husband.

Janet Townend, Head of Training, became editor when *Dyslexia Review* was relaunched in April 1994. Many of you may know her name as she is the co-author of several books about dyslexia and teaching. Margaret Rooms became the editor from Vol 12 (1) 2000. Margaret was the project lead on Units of Sound, a second-chance audio-visual literacy programme developed from work by Walter Bramley in the 1970s, and which continues today.

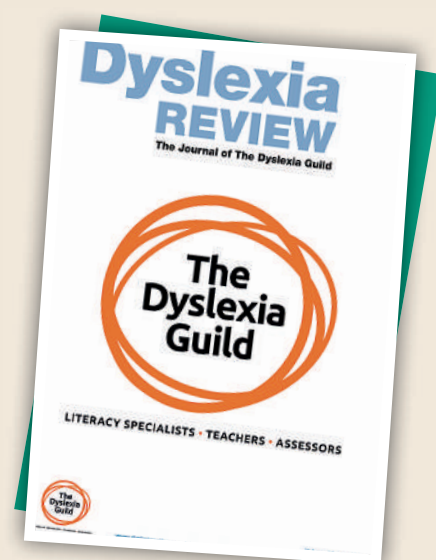
In 2006 the DI changed its name to Dyslexia Action to reflect the merger with the Hornsby International Dyslexia Centre and to sum up the purposeful and proactive nature of the organisation. The strapline on the logo reflected the three main areas that the charity supplied: training, assessment and

tuition. The charity had 28 centres that provided assessment and tuition support throughout the UK, Scotland and Wales.

I joined Dyslexia Action in the summer of 2010 and took over the administration of The Dyslexia Guild and the library. With Kathryn Benzine taking on the development of the Guild and Dyslexia Action Training and as joint editors of *Dyslexia Review*, we refreshed the publication and design of the *Dyslexia Review* in spring 2011 and incorporated colour and images throughout the issue. We now have a new publisher which is taking our design on further. We hope you approve!

The Dyslexia Guild is 25 years old

The Dyslexia Guild was established in the spring of 1994 and in the first year of membership some 650 members joined the association. The Guild grew out of an alumni association of DILP-trained specialist teachers from the DI training programmes but soon was open to all with an interest in dyslexia. In 1994 Margaret Rooms, Head of Units of Sound



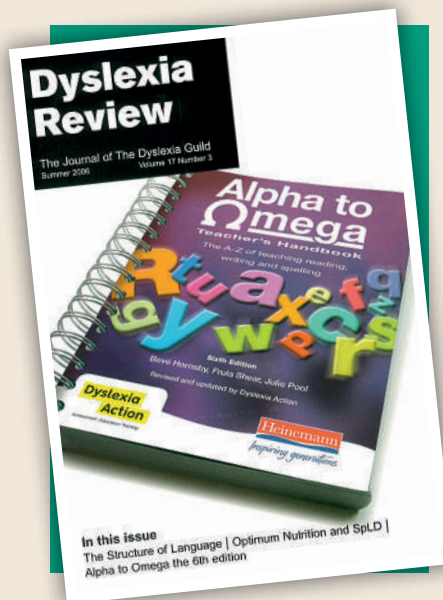
Development at DI, found herself in the Guild 'hot seat' and introduced a Register of DI Licensed Teachers and Professional Indemnity services in 2000. Following the publication of the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines and the formation of the SpLD Assessment Standards Association (SASC), the Dyslexia Guild became an issuing body of Assessment Practising Certificates. Teacher training courses became blended online learning in 2008 to fit in with technological developments, the needs of international delegates and the increasing costs of attendance and travel.





The National Training and Resource Centre was established in 2004; it was the country's first specialist library and resource centre for those with an interest in dyslexia. It included textbooks, journals, graded books, assessment tests, teaching resources and educational software. The library became a free benefit of Guild membership and was gifted some interesting historical documents when Shirley Cramer, the CEO of Dyslexia Action, left in 2010. I began collecting materials for an archive collection surrounding the history of Dyslexia Action based on some of these documents and some of the more historically important items already held in the library. Some of our archive resources have now been donated to The History of Dyslexia (UK Dyslexia Archive Project), based at St John's College, University of Oxford.

Membership grades with designatory letters for eligible members were introduced in November 2015 and a Members' Directory was created to allow introduced to allow those seeking help for dyslexia and SpLD to make contact with our members. In 2017 The Dyslexia Guild was given a logo, chosen by our members, to reflect our special identity. We are forward to new initiatives in supporting you, our members, in the valuable work you do.



The Annual Guild Summer Conference started life as The Dyslexia Guild Symposium and the first event took place on Saturday 3 December 1994 at the Institute of Child Health, University of London. Held every year, it was always based in London until 2011; we then decided to alternate it between London and regional venues and make it a summer conference.

We will be celebrating both The Dyslexia Guild and *Dyslexia Review* anniversaries on 20 June 2019 at Conference Central, University of London, and would love you to be there. With over 75 years of candles on the cake, we need you all to blow them out!

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Member profiles

***Dyslexia Review* takes a look at some of the members making a difference in our sector.**

Interviews by Annie Grant



David Bailey ADG:

A community for dyslexia professionals

David Bailey works with adults in his role as tutor with an adult education service in the north of England. He is a dyslexia specialist but also supports students learning English as an additional language. He first heard about Dyslexia Action in 2002. "I was working for Oldham Youth Service with young people who were not attending school for various reasons," he explains. "And while most would make good progress once they caught up on the learning they'd missed, there were some who continued to struggle. You'd see very articulate students whose written work just didn't reflect their verbal skills, and I knew something was wrong."

David knew a little about dyslexia, but it was not until he read *Dyslexia Review*, while studying for a Postgraduate Diploma at Manchester Metropolitan University, that he began to understand the complexities of the condition. "I picked up all sorts of useful information about how to work with young adults with dyslexia, which helped me so much with

my work," he says. "It is a very accessible publication and I often use articles as resources when I'm doing staff training."

He went on to join The Dyslexia Guild and is still an active member. "Being the only dyslexia professional in a small local authority service, you can sometimes feel a little isolated," he says. "But I can always go to the Guild if I need advice or support." He is a regular contributor to the online discussion forums and really enjoys attending the annual conferences. "Having that face-to-face contact is really stimulating," he explains. "I always come away with something new to try out in my own practice."

The Dyslexia Guild library has also proved an invaluable resource. "Tests used in dyslexia assessments are expensive, especially for a smaller service, like mine," David explains. "We haven't got the resources to buy all assessments we need, so being able to borrow resources from the members' library is very helpful."

David now works as a tutor for Dyslexia Action online training courses. Looking back, he believes that although attitudes toward dyslexia have improved, the modern world presents new challenges and barriers. "The combination of text and sequencing demanded by many online systems can be problematic for learners with dyslexia and we need to teach strategies to cope with that, as well as traditional print-focused approaches," he advises.

"The Dyslexia Guild combines the benefits of being an established organisation with being up to date in its ideas," he says. "For me, it's a community, rather than just an organisation."



Jo Rees MDG:

A dyslexia-friendly association

Jo Rees is a specialist teacher of dyslexia. She completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy with Dyslexia Action in 2010 when she was in her late twenties, and worked as a specialist dyslexia teacher. But it was to be another six years before she found the courage to confront her own dyslexia and get an assessment. As a member of The Dyslexia Guild, Jo continues to study with Dyslexia Action. She finds the practice-focused, distance learning modules suit her learning style. "I like studying online because I can go at my own place. I can take my time to read and understand content." She also praises the quality of the support she has received. "I couldn't have completed the Diploma if it wasn't for my tutor," she says. "When I don't understand something, I need to talk it through and my tutor really understood that."

Jo recommends The Dyslexia Guild Annual Summer Conference. "At conferences, really current content is presented to you directly and I learn best through listening. So, without having to do a lot of reading, which I find hard, I come away fully up to date with the latest developments in the field," she says.

She believes that the education system and its 'testing culture' pose the greatest challenges for children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. "There is work to be done to educate teachers to take account of pupils with dyslexia during everyday teaching, and not to just rely upon interventions," she says. Jo's book 'Don't forget to Smile' is available at <https://amzn.to/2lQlhtT>



Suzanne Currell ADG FE/HE

Dyslexia Action: The Assessor's Association

After an early career in the fashion and entertainment industries, Suzanne Currell studied Child Psychology at the University of Minnesota. She moved to London in 1979 and, after starting a family, worked on early literacy in a school while, at the same time, studying for a degree and then a Masters in Occupational Psychology at Surrey University. After working for the NHS, she went back to the USA, returning to the UK in 2002. She volunteered at a local secondary school doing educational testing for children with special educational needs alongside other coaching and assessment work.

In 2011, Suzanne moved to Kingston College, where she still works today in student support, assessing students who require examination access arrangements and providing one-to-one support for students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). "It's very rewarding," she says. Suzanne is encouraged that dyslexia is now better recognised in further education colleges but she fears the effect that financial cuts are having on student support, as well as the inequities associated with EHCPs.

Her first encounter with Dyslexia Action arose because she wanted to have a really solid knowledge of access arrangements for her job and so enrolled on an Access Arrangements course. "I was so impressed. The staff that run the courses are so supportive and very encouraging. The course materials are exemplary, in-depth and intellectually rigorous. So much dyslexia training is very generalist and, although there is a place for that, as a dyslexia professional, I need to know the evidence and how to apply it. Dyslexia Action Training and the The Dyslexia Guild get that as an association get that balance just right. Where else can you spend time really analysing higher education psychometric tests? It is fabulous and I'd like to see more of that."



Tess Gillbard MDG:

Following a vocation

For Tess Gillbard, supporting learners with dyslexia is a vocation; her late brother had dyslexia as do her three children. She qualified as a specialist teacher assessor in 1988. Her first teaching encounter was with the Dyslexia Institute Centre in Bath in 1990, where Walter Bramley, author of *Units of Sound*, was Principal. She has been closely associated with the organisation ever since. Having been recognised for her specialist skills, Tess set up dyslexia support, at a school in Bath while simultaneously running the Dyslexia Action Centre in Bristol, where she was Principal Designate.

Tess now fulfils a crucial role as a Study Skills Support Tutor

at Bath Spa University, supporting undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD students with dyslexia/SpLD. "I was the first dyslexia support tutor on campus, initially setting up the support with the assistance of Dyslexia Action. I now work over three campuses, supporting 30 students. Many university lecturers are still unaware of the difficulties that students with dyslexia face and underestimate the emotional repercussions of specific learning difficulties," she explains.

The Dyslexia Guild and Dyslexia Action have always been an important part of Tess Gillbard's professional life and will continue to be as she embarks upon new ventures, such as her recent appointment as an ambassador for the Children's University. "The professional development that I've been privileged to undertake with Dyslexia Action has been so valuable because it recognises that it is not just students with dyslexia that need support, but that tutors need support too," she. She finds the membership benefits of The Dyslexia Guild particularly useful, from updates on the latest research in the journal, to the conferences where professions can share their experiences and learn from each other.



Susannah Thorne ADG:

Building the foundations of a new career

After a career break to bring up her children, secondary history teacher Susannah Thorne was keen to get back into education but didn't really want to return to the classroom. She had always been interested in dyslexia but it wasn't until her son was

diagnosed with dyslexia that she considered retraining as a dyslexia specialist herself.

"I chose Dyslexia Action because it provided online training courses and I needed to fit my studies around childcare and other commitments. Plus, The Dyslexia Guild membership post-nominals are a well-recognised sign of quality." Although the course is completed online, she did not feel isolated: "The course forums encourage you to interact with others and the tutors are really responsive."

Susannah qualified as a specialist teacher in 2017 and is now completing the second part of the training, the Professional Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy, which will qualify her to work as a specialist teacher assessor and

gain an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC).

Now working as a dyslexia tutor, she believes the course is giving her a solid foundation from which she can develop professionally. "The modules are practical but grounded in research, with a very strong emphasis on self-reflection. They embed the skills you need and provide you with a fundamental understanding of how learning needs to work for children with SpLD." As a Guild Member she particularly values having access to the National Dyslexia Resource Centre library of publications, journals and tests to support her studies. "The Dyslexia Guild Annual Summer Conference was also great for meeting dyslexia professionals from different backgrounds and learning from quality speakers and workshops."



Jacqueline Taylor ADG:

Bridging the cultural divide

Before she moved to the UK in 2013, Jacqueline Taylor was teaching A-level English Literature and Language and International Baccalaureate in Singapore. Her new job teaching functional skills to post-16 students at a further education college in North East England couldn't have been more different. She knew from support staff that some of the students in her classes had dyslexia but felt unprepared to meet their needs.

"I didn't really know what functional skills were and I was surprised that the students' literacy skills were so poor. In Singapore, there is less awareness of dyslexia than in the UK, and less emphasis on the inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream education. Additional Learning Support (ALS) is in its infancy. A tiny minority of students receive extra time in examinations but I don't remember anyone receiving extra support, one-to-one or in a small group," she says.

It was a brief CPD session that first made her aware of dyslexia and its impact on learning. Through internet research, she came across Dyslexia Action's postgraduate Professional Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy. "It seemed perfect. I could study online, so I didn't need to travel." She funded the course herself, struggled at first with balancing

long working hours and Masters-level studies. "The course helped me so much with developing the skills I needed for my job," she says and describes The Dyslexia Guild library service as 'outstanding'.

Having completed the first part of the postgraduate course, and spurred on by the success her learners with dyslexia have achieved, Jacqueline is now completing further Level 7 modules in assessment and hopes to complete her Masters. She is considering a change of career in the future, perhaps with a greater focus on specialist dyslexia support. She recommends Dyslexia Action to others particularly because of the quality of the support it provides. "They really understand the needs of working delegates like me," she says. "They have great expertise and they offer you the support you need."

Dyslexia

diagnosis, scientific understandings and belief in a flat earth

What is dyslexia? Are there clear criteria for a dyslexia/SpLD assessment and how useful is the dyslexia label once it has been assigned? Alison Thomas tuned in to a thought-provoking online debate held recently to find out more.

On 31 January 2019, educational psychologists, specialist teachers and other professionals gathered at University College London, Institute of Education (UCL IOE) for a wide-ranging debate on the topic of dyslexia and the validity of singling out a particular group of learners with literacy difficulties for special attention and support.

The four-hour discussion was prompted by the controversy surrounding recent guidance from Warwickshire and Staffordshire County Councils, advocating '... assessment for intervention rather than assessment for diagnosis to guide assessment, teaching, intervention or resourcing ...' for all struggling readers.

Responding to concerns from the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) representing parents and support groups, Liberal Democrat peer Lord Addington, president of the BDA, had raised questions in the House of Lords. He objected to the implication that "dyslexia effectively is not something to worry about" and sought reassurance that the Government "will make sure that accurate diagnosis, which can be life-changing, is maintained for this group". Peers from across the political spectrum echoed his view with one peer, Lord Watson (Labour), likening the council's disregard for the science showing that dyslexia "is a medical

condition" to denying global warming or insisting that the earth is flat. Hence the title of the debate.

In search of consensus

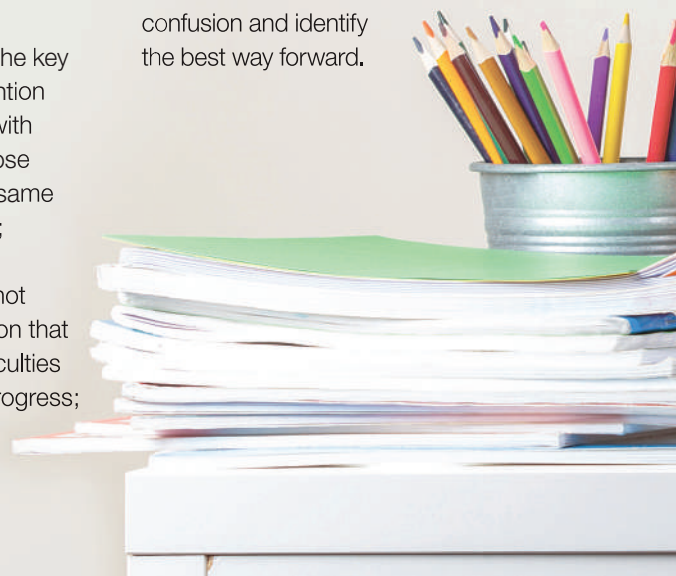
In her introduction to the debate, Vivian Hill of UCL IOE outlined the key points of the Warwickshire document, observing that there was actually very little that the audience would disagree with, particularly as this is backed up by research from leading practitioners. The summary is as follows:

- There is no universally agreed definition or assessment pathway for dyslexia so any diagnosis is dependent on the interpretation made by the professional completing the assessment; **(Elliott & Gregorinko 2014)**
- Research shows that a diagnosis determined by the discrepancy between a child/young person's intelligence and their reading ability has no scientific validity as reading is not dependent on intelligence; **(Stanovich 1994)**
- Research demonstrates that the key elements of an effective intervention for children and young people with reading difficulties (including those identified with dyslexia) are the same for all, regardless of intelligence; **(Snowling & Hulme 2011)**
- A diagnosis of dyslexia does not provide any additional information that is useful for addressing the difficulties nor does it predict the rate of progress; **(Snowling & Hulme 2011)**

- Despite substantial advances in the use of neuroscience and genetics in reading research these do not yet provide any insight to inform diagnosis and intervention; **(Snowling & Hulme 2011)**

- Assessment over time, where the child/young person's response to intervention is monitored, identifies any child/young person who is not making the expected literacy progress and also provides the necessary information required to plan further intervention.

Highlighting the complexity of the issues, Hill pointed to the conflict between the medical model, as perceived by Lord Watson, and the bio-psychosocial model (systematic consideration of biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions), adding that it is the job of educational psychologists to work with each other and with other professionals to eliminate the confusion and identify the best way forward.



In support of the label

In the absence of the BDA, which did not take part, freelance SEN and inclusion consultant Jules Daulby took up the challenge of putting the case forward for retaining the dyslexia label.

Daulby noted that it was important to recognise the empowerment that a diagnosis of dyslexia gave to some people and that, while she totally agreed that dyslexia was open to scientific scrutiny, the term “scientifically questionable” troubled her because it led to the perception in the press and in schools that the condition doesn’t exist. “What is missing is the emotional and instinctive side of the debate ... the sheer relief of some children when you tell them that they have dyslexia ...” Her view was also that she would favour widening the label to give more people the term.

The counter argument

This was led by Professor Julian Elliott of Durham University and co-author of *The Dyslexia Debate* (2014) and *Dyslexia: Developing the Debate* (2016). In both books Elliott maintains that the dyslexia label is driven by market forces, a dyslexia industry and mistaken parental beliefs

that a diagnosis will enable effective intervention.

Identifying a subgroup of poor readers and labelling them as dyslexic makes no sense at all noted Elliott, citing top researchers in the field, such as Peterson and Pennington, Mark Seidenberg and Maggie Snowling. Their conceptualisation of dyslexia would apply to anyone with reading difficulties. The same was true of the definition drawn up by the British Psychological Society. Even studies in the fields of neuroscience, genetics and cognitive science were studies of poor readers, he maintained. Listing some of the supposed symptoms of dyslexia, such as issues with phonological

awareness, rapid naming, working memory, balance and processing speed, he pointed out that any child with reading difficulties is likely to have difficulties in some of these areas.

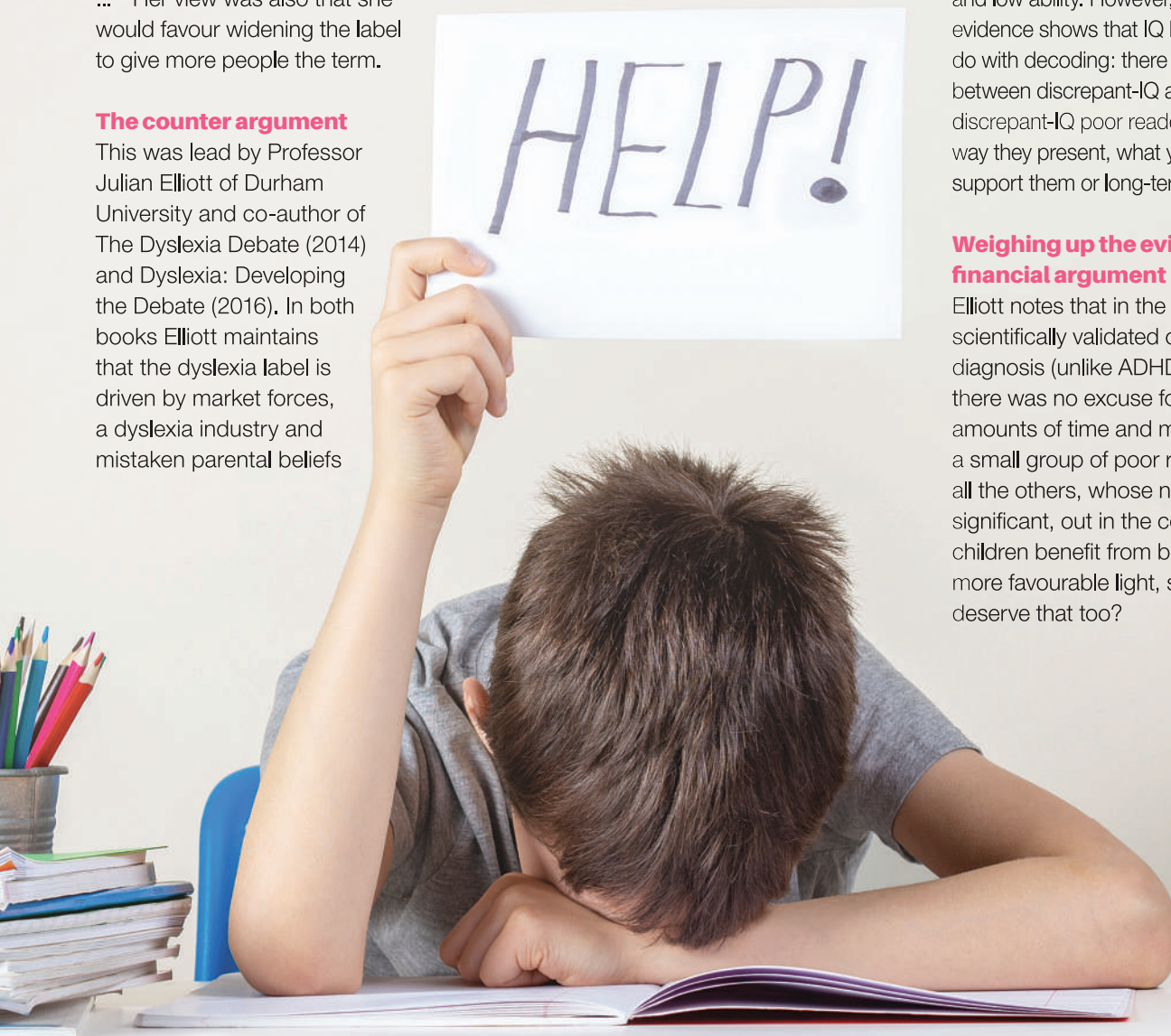
Intelligence testing: the discrepancy debate

Elliott notes that a continuing problem is the enduring prevalence of the discrepancy model (lower scores for reading, writing and spelling than a child’s IQ would predict), despite the absence of evidence to support it. “You cannot use IQ to make a meaningful differentiation within a population of children who are poor decoders.”

The model has a powerful hold on people as it allows them to repudiate any link between a child’s poor reading skills and low ability. However, the researched evidence shows that IQ has nothing to do with decoding: there is no difference between discrepant-IQ and non-discrepant-IQ poor readers in terms of the way they present, what you might do to support them or long-term prognosis.

Weighing up the evidence: the financial argument

Elliott notes that in the absence of scientifically validated criteria for diagnosis (unlike ADHD, ASD or OCD), there was no excuse for spending huge amounts of time and money to benefit a small group of poor readers, leaving all the others, whose numbers are significant, out in the cold. If dyslexic children benefit from being viewed in a more favourable light, surely the others deserve that too?



"We need to create systems that allow us to intervene as soon as we possibly can for all children who are struggling ... We need to identify them at an early age and put into place great forms of intervention that will help them all, whether they have parents who will fight for them or not. This is the kind of thing that Warwickshire and Staffordshire and other local authorities, and psychologists around the country, want to do."

Teaching reading through real books

Jonathan Solity of Optima Psychology presented a summary of his research into high-frequency words and real books. Based on the outcome of 25 years of systematic research and evaluation and underpinned by instructional psychology and direct instruction, the research combines teaching the most frequently occurring grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and high-frequency words in the context of real books. Through analysis of a vast database of children's books, fiction and non-fiction, his team at Warwick University worked out that just 16 words account for almost a third of all

written English in children's books, while 100 words account for over half (54%). Research had shown that by focusing on the most useful words and skills, children will be able to read almost 80% of what they are likely to encounter in real books.

Outlining the rationale behind his approach, Solity explained that English has 44 phonemes represented by 461 graphemes. Most commercial synthetic phonics programmes cover between 100 and 130 of these; the phonics screening check potentially assesses children on 85. This contrasts with conventional synthetic-phonics programmes, where children spend a lot of time learning GPCs that may be of limited value to them when they progress to reading real books.

Solity presented the view that real books present far more opportunities for applying phonic skills. His research team has now worked with approximately 300 schools, reducing the incidence of difficulty from the typical 20-25% to less than 3%. This also saves schools and local authorities significant sums of money

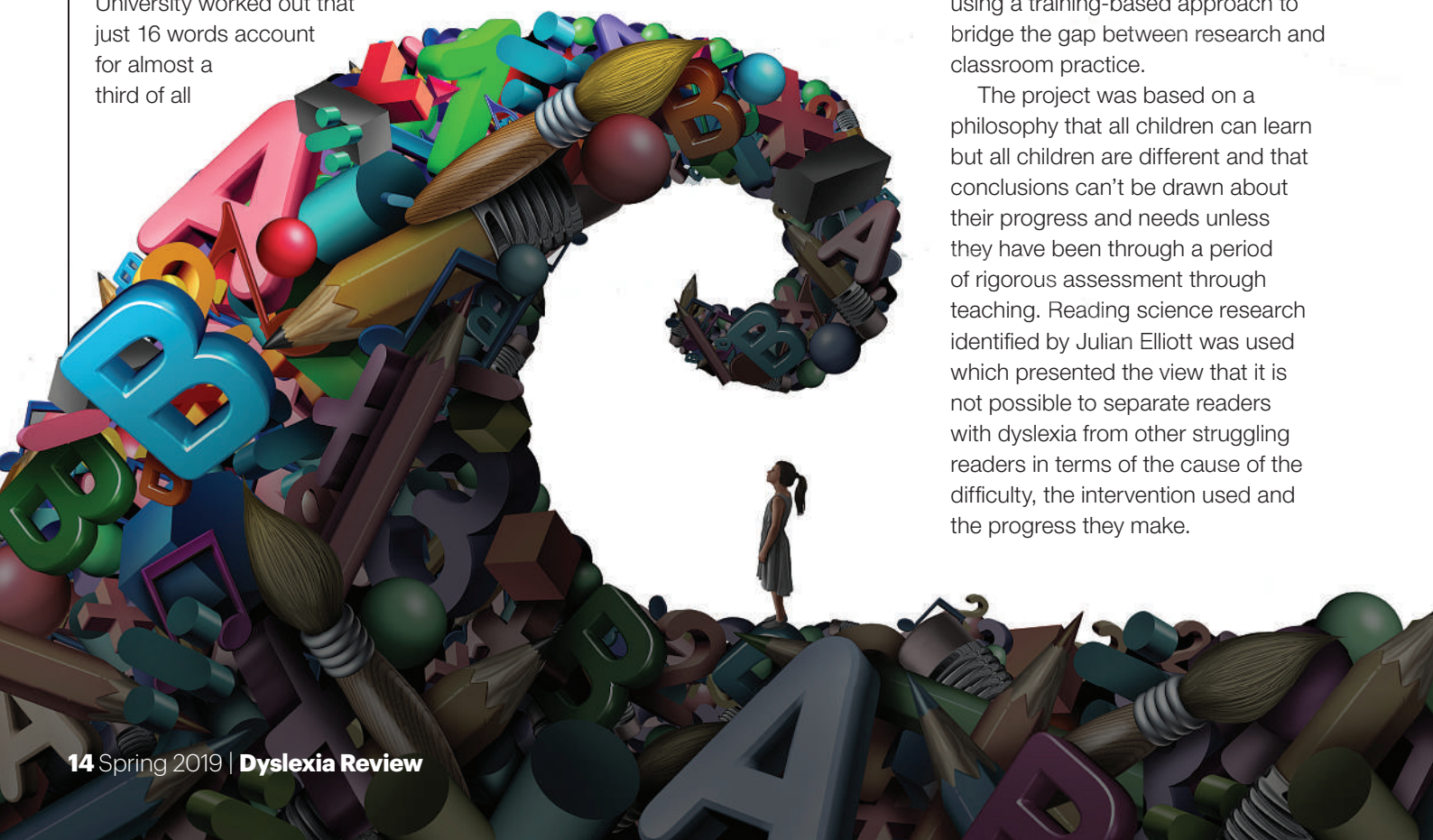
by removing the need to refer so many pupils to educational psychology services. "It frees up money to look more closely at the lowest achievers," he said. "In local authorities with large numbers of children with needs, it has to be done equitably."

The controversial document

Sarah Crawford, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist (Cognition and Learning) for Warwickshire Educational Psychology Service and Jo Ward, District Senior Educational Psychologist for Staffordshire County Council were responsible for the paper that caused the criticism and led to the debate. The original document they put together proposed fair access to the available resources, early identification of needs and evidence-based intervention.

This was based on a project piloted in 2011 with Dr Solity which aimed to identify and support struggling readers using critical skills in reading and the use of real books and assessment through teaching. Every two weeks, 14 schools in their areas were brought together and research was shared using a training-based approach to bridge the gap between research and classroom practice.

The project was based on a philosophy that all children can learn but all children are different and that conclusions can't be drawn about their progress and needs unless they have been through a period of rigorous assessment through teaching. Reading science research identified by Julian Elliott was used which presented the view that it is not possible to separate readers with dyslexia from other struggling readers in terms of the cause of the difficulty, the intervention used and the progress they make.

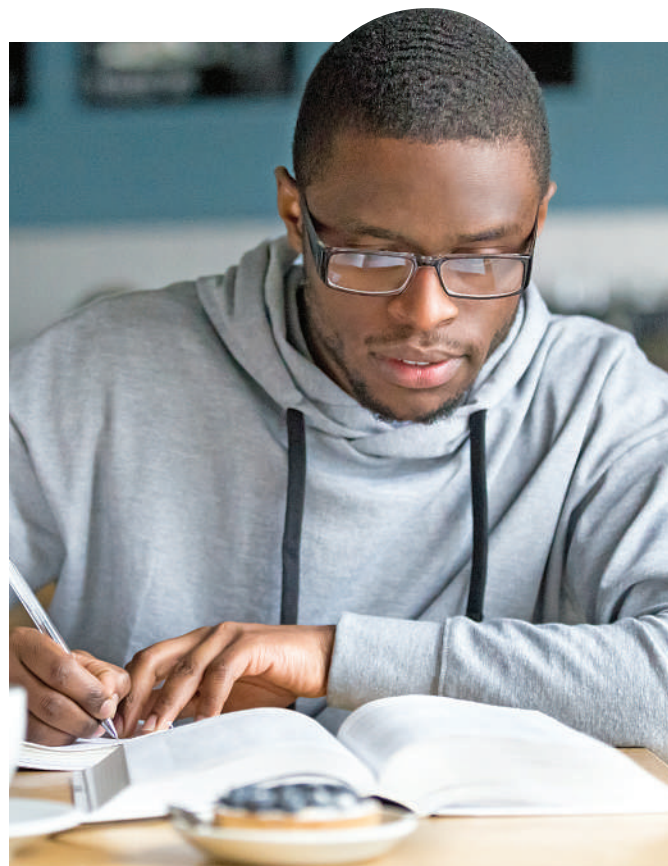


The aim was to provide clarity around how to address literacy difficulties and empower teachers to address the learner needs. Good quality assessments focusing on accuracy and fluency of skills were used to identify learner needs as early as possible and allow evidence-based interventions and teaching strategies. This also ensured fair access to the available resources and ensured that all struggling learners were identified. The focus was on reading for meaning.

Cognitive assessments were not ruled out and are considered helpful in targeting the intellectual level for a learner but they

noted that these do not contribute directly to the improvement of reading and spelling skills for poor readers. Curriculum access and skills development are considered equally important; is the individual struggling with accessing the written word or writing, or are adjustments to the curriculum content also required?

The project within schools in Staffordshire and Warwickshire concluded with substantial data that supports the reading for meaning approach and showed gains in reading progression over short periods of time using the assessment and intervention process described of



reading for meaning and reading for pleasure.

After the two-year project in both secondary and primary schools, teachers reported that they were better informed on the research, their teaching was more refined and children's metacognitive skills

were also improving. This also helped in decision making with resources and referral to education psychologists because the teachers were able to make more informed decisions and had more transparent information for parents about progress.





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Sensory equipment

in the classroom

Kim Griffin, Occupational Therapist, discusses how sensory equipment can be used in therapeutic interventions with children in the classroom.

Summary

This article considers three common pieces of sensory equipment that you might see in a classroom and discusses why you might use them with specific children. We also discuss sensory movement breaks.

Wobble cushions

- These are plastic air-filled cushions designed to create an unstable surface that provides some movement when sat on.
- The idea behind this type of equipment is to target the vestibular system, or balance sense. Movement is processed by the vestibular sense and can help to keep us alert.
- These cushions can be helpful for children that are constantly moving about, fidgeting and maybe rocking in their chair. It is hypothesised that these children use their movements to help to stay alert.
- The cushion can provide a more appropriate and less distracting way for them to receive movement whilst sitting in their chair.
- A child who is slumped in their chair and appears to have low energy may also find a cushion helpful as it might help to 'wake up' their vestibular system.
- Sitting on a sensory cushion is not a sensation that all people like. Also, some children with poor core stability and balance might find the cushions very difficult to sit on because the cushion is unstable and therefore harder to maintain a seated posture on.
- Each child will have individual behaviours that you may want to target by using the cushion. Make sure you set targets that you want to achieve before testing the cushion. Do a pre- and post-test on these targets.

A background to sensory strategies - arousal and sensory modulation

Many things can affect our level of sensory arousal. This includes basic things like sleep, general wellness, and hunger. Our arousal levels can also be affected by stress and processing sensory information.



One of the challenges that can occur when a person has Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), is sensory modulation, that is 'the ability to produce a behaviour and/or response that matches the nature and intensity of the sensory input and environment' (Miller, 2014, p.14). The brains of people with SPD do not interpret the sensory messages they receive from their body effectively. This means they may not generate an appropriate response to the sensory information they receive (Bialer & Miller, 2011). This can affect their focus and attention in class or work situations and subsequently have an impact on their learning and overall performance in many areas of life.

Challenges with sensory modulation can affect all of the senses. Each sense may also be affected in a different way for the same child (or adult).

There are three types of sensory modulation challenges or responses typically outlined in the literature.

1. Sensory Over-Responsivity (also known as sensory sensitivity): the person might have a bigger response to a sensory input than is expected by someone without sensory processing challenges. So, for example, they might not be able to ignore the clock ticking and focus on the teacher.

2. Sensory Under-Responsivity: where the person underreacts or has less of a response or a slower response to sensory input than what is expected.

People with this type of sensory modulation challenge might not even notice the ticking sound.

3. Sensory Seeking (Sensory Craving). This is when the person tries to get more of the sensory input, so they might move closer to the clock!

Sensory modulation affects arousal because when people process sensory inputs differently it affects their body's nervous system response. For a child who is sensitive, they might be in a higher alert or stressed state due to sensory inputs. For a child who is slower to process sensory input, they can frequently miss information. A sensory seeker might have to spend most of their energy on trying to increase their arousal level so they can attend. All of these responses affect the child's ability to focus on the teacher and therefore complete their learning

Some key facts about sensory equipment commonly used within the classroom.

Most sensory equipment is designed to help to increase or decrease a child's arousal. The children that are more likely to benefit from sensory equipment are the children that have difficulties with sensory modulation, as these children have difficulty maintaining the optimal arousal level required for learning and participation. We will look at three different types of equipment.

Fidget toys

- The idea of the toy is to give a more appropriate item for the child to fidget with and support their attention.
- The goal of a fidget toy will be to either increase focus or to decrease fiddling with inappropriate things.
- A fidget toy should not be distracting to the child or their peers. It is expected the child will still be engaged and listening whilst fidgeting.
- Things to consider when choosing a fidget toy are: durability, quietness, a toy that provides some resistance or movement. Some toys are too visually distracting (e.g. fidget spinners).
- Some children like Blu Tack or putty.



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Weighted products

- The theory of a weighted product is that it provides additional deep touch pressure and, when the child is moving, some proprioceptive sensory input. Sensory integration theory suggests that these sensory inputs are calming for the nervous system.
- Examples of this type of equipment are vests, lap pads and blankets. These are often seen in more specialist settings such as autism support units or specialist schools.
- Weighted products, especially lap pads, can be helpful for children that fidget due to poor body awareness (reduced proprioceptive awareness). The extra weight can give them more feedback about where their body is and this means they don't need to move to 'feel' where they are. This can help them to stay in place and focus on their learning.
- The Bodison and Parham (2018) review was cautious about the efficacy of weighted vests. It said:

"The evidence for the effectiveness of weighted vests with children with ADHD is limited, and it is insufficient for children with ASD. Occupational therapy practitioners should cautiously consider using weighted vests to support attention in the classroom" (p.9).

Key pointers for implementing sensory movement breaks/circuits

Sensory movement breaks, or sensory circuits, are a common sensory strategy that schools implement to regulate and organise children's readiness for learning. Key things to consider are:

- Supporting 'sensory seekers' to get more of the sensation they are seeking (e.g. movement) doesn't necessarily effectively regulate their ability to focus and learn (Miller, 2014).
- Miller (2014) currently recommends that the movement needs to be organised and structured in order to

help support the child's arousal and focus. Examples of this would be that the child needs to do a certain number of movements (e.g. 20 jumps and stop) or that it is in an organised routine (e.g. 20 jumps, climb over the frame, get the bean bag and take it to the hoop).

- A review by Ouellet, et al. (2018) found that the 'efficacy of physical exercise varies according to the child's sensory characteristics' (p.1).
- Whether more heavy work (proprioceptive-based) activities need to be included within the movement breaks to help organise sensory seekers.

What does the evidence say?

The most recent systematic review on using sensory strategies with pre-schoolers with either ADHD and ASD (Bodison and Parham, 2018) found that, although there is a huge amount of information written about sensory strategies, there are actually very few studies that have a robust research design.

Conclusion

For some children sensory equipment can prove a really useful tool to help with their arousal and attention in class. There is, however, limited evidence to support the use of these strategies. If using sensory strategies or equipment in the classroom, it is essential to ensure the effectiveness of these are monitored and they are being used correctly.

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Assessment test review:

Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – Third UK Edition for Teachers

Reviewed by Dr Anna Smith MDG and Dr Jenny Moody MDG, Postgraduate Psychology Tutors at Dyslexia Action Training.

Introduction

The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – Third Edition for Teachers (WIAT-IIIuk-T) is an individually administered clinical instrument designed to measure aspects of achievement from ages 4 years 0 months to 25 years 11 months. The WIAT-IIIuk-T updates the

second version of this test and contains significant revisions, including updated norms, new subtests, revised subtests with new items and improved contents coverage, updated artwork and modifications to administration and scoring procedures to enhance the user-friendliness of the test.

Applications of the WIAT-IIIuk-T

WIAT-IIIuk-T is designed to be used with children and students from a range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in a variety of educational settings. The results can support:

- a.** Identification of academic strengths and weaknesses of a learner;
- b.** Informing decisions regarding eligibility for educational services;
- c.** Provision of standard test scores that can be used alongside other evidence for applications for access arrangements and the Disabled Students' Allowance;
- d.** Planning and designing post-assessment support and intervention programmes.

Materials provided in the kit:

- Examiner's Manual
- Stimulus Book for Early Reading

used by student to read passages for the Oral Reading Fluency subtest

- Record Form containing the administration instructions for all subtests, scoring information, student responses, examiner observations and derived scores.
- Audio files (USB flash drive).

Administration and scoring

Explanations for how to administer, score and interpret the subtest findings can be found in the WIAT-IIIuk-T Examiner's Manual. This includes the scoring rules, scoring examples, and the normative and interpretative tables for manual scoring. A summary of the content and intended use of the Examiner's Manual can be found in chapter one. The Manual is not required during test administration

General testing guidelines

These can be found in chapter two of the Manual. The chapter information and guidelines support the examiner in maintaining standard administration procedures whilst still tending to the needs and comfort of the student being assessed. Recording and scoring procedures are included.

Content and structure of the WIAT-IIIuk-T

Subtest	Age Range (yrs)	Measures
Early Reading Skills	4–8	Measures several areas deemed important to developing reading skills: naming letters, letter-sound correspondence (alphabetic principle), phonological awareness, and word reading comprehension.
Reading Comprehension	6–17+	Measures untimed reading comprehension of various types of text, including fictional stories, informational text, advertisements, and how-to passages.
Words Reading	6–17+	Measures speed and accuracy of decontextualised word recognition.
Oral Reading Fluency	6–17+	Measures speed, accuracy and fluency, and prosody of contextualised oral reading.
Spelling	6–17+	Measures written spelling of letter sounds and single words.

Appendices

Appendix A: Skills analysis worksheets for

A.1 Early Reading Skills

A.2 Reading Comprehension

A.3 Word Reading

A.4 Spelling.

Appendix B: Total raw score conversion to weighted raw score for

Table B.1 Reading Comprehension

Table B.2 Oral Reading Fluency

Table B.3 Oral Reading Accuracy

Table B.4 Oral Reading Speed.

Appendix C: Standard scores

Table C.1 Age-Based Standard Scores for Subtests 4:0–25:11

Table C.2 Confidence Interval Magnitudes for the Subtest Standard Scores

Table C.3 Age-Based Cumulative Percentages Associated With Raw Scores for Word Reading Speed.

Appendix D: Percentile ranks and age equivalents

Table D.1 Percentile Ranks,

Normal Curve Equivalents, and Stanines Corresponding to the Subtest Standard Scores

Table D.2 Age Equivalents Corresponding to the Subtest Total Raw Scores and Weighted Raw Scores.

Appendix E: Critical values and base rates by age

Table E.1 Critical Values and Base Rates by Age Differences Between Subtest Standard Scores Required for Statistical Significance and Differences Obtained by Various Percentages of the Age-Based Standardisation Sample.

Appendix F: Intercorrelations of the WIAT-111uk-T subtest standard scores by age

Table F.1 Intercorrelations of the WIAT-111uk-T Subtest Standard Scores by Age.

Appendix G: UK language adaptation of the WIAT-III anglicisation of the WIAT-III

Table G.1 Language/Artwork Adaptation per Subtest.

The WIAT-III standardisation project

Details of the WIAT-III Standardisation Project are provided in Appendix G.

“The primary objective of the WIAT-III standardisation project was to provide UK norms based on a census-matched sample of children and young people aged 4:0–25:11 years. Testing was carried out by educational, clinical and assistant psychologists using the UK standardisation edition of the WIAT-III. The UK sampling matrix was created to ensure a representative number of participants were targeted for testing. The 2011 Census was utilised for stratification purposes for the UK project, according to the following categories:

Table G.2 Gender (and Age)

Table G.3 Educational Level of Parents

Table G.4 Race/Ethnicity

Table G.5 Geographic Region

Evidence of internal consistency

Table G.6: Age-Based Reliability coefficients of the subtest scores by age group and overall sample. The overall average reliability coefficients for the WIAT-IIIuk subtests range from 0.81 to 0.97, which are considered good to excellent. These reliabilities for subtests are similar to those reported for the US normative sample.

Table G.7 Age-Based Standard Errors of Measurement of the Subtests.

Intercorrelations of subtest scores

Table G.8 The average intercorrelations of the subtest scores. The subtests show strong to moderate correlations with one another. This confirms expected relations between the reading subtests and between word reading and spelling due to the

Administration and scoring

Chapter 3 includes descriptions of and detailed supplemental information for each subtest, with clarifying figures, to assist the facilitation of administration and scoring. This information is arranged according to the recommended administration order for the subtests, as given in the Record Form.

The Record Form provides the standard instructions required to be read aloud to each student during the administration of the WIAT-IIIuk-T. “Ensuring students’ comprehension of instructions is paramount to a valid and reliable measure of academic achievement.”

Analysis and interpretation

Chapter 4 includes detailed information to support subtest findings, analysis and interpretation. According to chapter information in the Manual, page 43: “The WIAT-111uk-T results should be evaluated within the context of the referral question or testing purpose and should be interpreted in conjunction with other sources of information, including medical, educational, and psychosocial history; previous test scores; direct behavioural observations; and/or qualitative aspects of test performance.”

Two case studies are included, with an extract from a completed Form 8 for Access Arrangements for the Student B case study.

interrelated skills utilised across these achievement domains.

Table G.9 Correlations Between WIAT-IIIuk and WIAT-IIuk Subtests.

Appendix H: WIAT-IIIuk reviewers, standardisation examiners and participating schools/nurseries

Consideration of reading speed when using WIAT-IIIuk-T

Together with a colleague¹, I had the opportunity to review the WIAT-III-UK-T testing materials and we tested each other for reading speed since my colleague had noted some odd scores for this measure previously. When reading at our typical, prosodic reading speed we both achieved raw scores for Oral Reading Speed of approximately 148. We found this raw score corresponded to a weighted raw score of 111 (using 17+ normative data on Table B.4, p.88) which then led to a surprisingly low quotient score of 96.

This appeared to suggest that high-achieving readers in this young adult age group may actually gain lower standard scores than expected for this aspect of reading. I thought we would take this investigation a bit further: working backwards, it seems that in order for a 20-year-old student

to score 84 for reading speed, he or she would be expected to have a reading speed total subtest raw score of 108 (Table C.1, p.161) which then corresponds to a total reading time of 171-180 (Table B.4, p.88). This is the total reading time for the passages O and P combined. This score equates to a reading speed of 125-132 words per minute² (wpm).

This is not a markedly slow oral reading speed as we know from other measures: consulting, for example, the Adult Reading Test manual normative data, we can see that the mean oral reading speed for passage five is 145 wpm with a standard deviation of 34 which means that a reading speed of 125-132 wpm would lie easily within the normal range based on this, albeit out-of-date, information.

We might have concluded from this that reading rate is not necessarily fast for effective readers: while they make fewer errors and self-corrections, they are more likely to add pauses and allow themselves to think about what they are reading, and can speed up and slow down depending on the content (Kuhn et al, 2010). This analysis shows us that reading speed can be a misleading measure and is a variable worth treating with caution.

1 Many thanks to Louise Van Der Valk, FDG.

2 Using the usual formula for words per minute: (total number of words/total time)/60) or (375/171) x 60 = 132.

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Now Available



A superior literacy assessment for education settings.





SPaRCS test kit:

spelling, processing speed, and reading comprehension speed

AUTHORS: JAMES, K., GOOD, R. AND JAMES, T. PUBLISHERS: EDUCATION ELEPHANT

Janet Desmet, Dyslexia Action tutor, reviews this new test which is suitable for teachers, SENCOs and psychologists.

This new test assesses spelling, processing speed and reading comprehension speed and covers the age range 13-18. It is aimed at access arrangements and determining who needs additional arrangements rather than identifying why a learner may be having difficulty.

It can be used by teachers who have been trained in delivering standardised tests and will take 40 minutes to complete all three areas. It is recommended that all are completed in one session, although it can be broken down into three shorter sessions and it can be used individually or in a group.

Spelling includes spelling and spelling recognition. Spelling has 40 items, including a number of homonyms.

The processing speed task is a letter-digit substitution task. As this is more recently standardised than the Symbol Digit Modalities Test (SDMT) it may be useful.

Reading comprehension is a cloze task but it does use passages rather than sentences. Only one score is given, rather than a separate score for reading comprehension and reading comprehension speed. The manual notes that the reading comprehension speed score could support, for example, a computer reader or a reader. It is difficult to answer the comprehension questions just by focusing on the sentence containing the omitted word, the entire passage needs to be read.

Plus points

- It is a recent test (published 2017) and so should be useful for some years ahead.

- It was standardised in Ireland and Northern Ireland, so there should be fewer instances of cultural references or words which are unfamiliar to UK readers
- Instructions are clear and uncomplicated
- The spelling recognition subtest offers a means of cross-checking both effort and if a learner is deliberately downplaying skills to gain additional examination arrangements.

However, the evidence from staff on the normal way of working should also be a check on this

- It does offer a score for reading comprehension speed and there are few reading tests which do this
- The numbers of people in the standardisation sample were large, with greater numbers at the upper end of the age range. For example, there were 1,313 individuals in the 17-18-years category for spelling, versus 225 individuals in the age 13 category.



Minus points

- Some confidence intervals are quite wide; i.e., ± 10 for spelling and 12 for processing speed
- Whilst we are told to keep to standard instructions and read them verbatim, the manual also states that if a learner does not understand, we are told we can supplement or reword them. This is likely to affect reliability.
- It appears to contain less technical information concerning reliability and validity than some other tests on the market.



Dyslexia Gold: going beyond phonics to help struggling readers

Liz Sedley, creator of Dyslexia Gold, investigates why it is that some children struggle to learn to read, despite high-quality phonics teaching.

Research background

Research undertaken by Shaywitz et al (2004) used MRI scans to observe brain activity when reading and found that struggling readers use different parts of their brain to read than those used by fluent readers. They repeated these MRI scans after a phonological awareness intervention, and discovered that the struggling readers' brains now functioned more like fluent readers. Their reading improved because they had started to use the more efficient pathways to read.

Torgesen (1998) also found a very high correlation between children entering primary school with poor phonological awareness, and children leaving primary school as poor readers. Excitingly, he also showed that pupils who benefited from a phonological awareness intervention were able to catch up.

Learning to Read

The skills needed to read successfully are:

- **Eye control:** To clearly see each letter in the word
- **Phonological awareness:** To hear individual sounds in the word
- **Phonics:** To blend phonemes to form the word
- **Vocabulary:** To understand the meaning of the word.

Poor phonological awareness, is when you can't hear individual sounds in words. You can't hear that goat contains three sounds. You can't hear that dog and frog rhyme or that mad and dog both contain a 'd' sound.

Phonological awareness should be taught in Early Years Foundation Stage through nursery rhymes, games such as I-Spy, sound walks and clapping games. However, because of the emphasis on the Year 1 Phonics Check, schools have often reduced these activities, and moved onto teaching phonics too quickly. UK phonics schemes focus on teaching phonemes and graphemes, blending and segmenting. This can mean that children with a phonological deficit, who need more phonological awareness training than average, struggle to learn to read.

Some children who struggle to read also have a vision problem – they cannot sustain convergence. This means they can't focus both eyes on the same letter while they read, so their brain receives two totally different images. Poor convergence also causes poor eye control and tracking problems. A fluent reader looks at around 150 points per minute when they read, but a child with these issues looks at around 1,000 points per minute – mostly in the wrong place. Poor eye control can explain

Dyslexia Gold

Dyslexia Gold is a suite of evidence-based, online programme to help children with dyslexia learn to read and write. Without good eye control and sound phonological awareness, children may find it difficult to use phonics to read. Dyslexia Gold has been designed to help these children and is a two-part programme, covering both vision problems and phonological awareness.

The first part, Engaging Eyes, is a unique online vision training programme. It contains a series of games to gently exercise eye muscles. Over time, these muscles become stronger, allowing both eyes to focus on the same point and to track across the page. The second part, Fluency Builder, is a unique online phonological awareness intervention. Children practise hearing and manipulating sounds in words. Phonics is included within the programme as well as non-fiction passages for the child to practise reading fluently. Dyslexia Gold is a daily intervention that takes around 15 minutes and can be played independently. Results show that showing that children can make, on average, 12 months' progress.

why letters b and d are reversed and why words and lines are skipped. If a reader uses their processing power to filter out the wrong images, they may read slowly and struggle to understand what they've read.

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- Torgesen, J.K. (1998) Catch them before they fall: Identification and assessment to prevent reading failure in young children American Educator/American Federation of Teachers, Spring/Summer, pp.1-8.



Let's embrace technology!

Sal McKeown outlines some of the benefits of mobile phones and computers for learners with literacy difficulties.

Technology is everywhere – especially in higher education and the world of work. The world has changed in so many ways. PINs, passwords and email addresses have superseded a handwritten signature as a means of identifying individuals or authorising transactions. Many people now keep handwriting just for reminders and personal notes.

However, in schools it is a different story. Handwriting, spelling lists and a very linear approach to composition are still the norm. Most young people have amazingly powerful mobile phone technology in their pocket and yet they are often discouraged from using this technology in their studies. The emphasis is often on children learning spelling lists rather than understanding predictive text and spell checkers, practising handwriting rather than keyboard skills and composing text in the same way that learners did half a century ago. These methods certainly do not prepare young learners for the world

of work, training and higher education.

School learners are still taught to plan, compose, proofread and correct. However, when people send an email they start to write, check a fact, delete a word or two, insert a full stop, rewrite a sentence, change the opening, alter a spelling, write an ending or move a paragraph. The technological writing process is not neat and linear anymore yet this is something we leave students to work out for themselves rather than providing them with specific training.

There is a conflict between traditional teaching based on a model of handwritten communications and the availability of new and sophisticated technologies. Teachers tell me that children are more likely to have a mobile phone in their school bag than a pen and there are now many free apps to help with dictation, planning and proofreading but these are rarely used by the majority of young people for their school work. This brief overview contains some hints and tips from teachers for using technology more effectively.

Memory

You need a good memory if you are to be a successful learner, especially if you are not getting full information from the printed word. It helps to get young people to focus and give you their full attention when you are telling them something important and to repeat what you have said. Encourage them to adopt this as a strategy so they repeat information in their head too. Hearing your own voice can help to fix things in your mind, and this is where recording your own voice notes on a phone can be invaluable for reminders or revision notes and you can then keep listening to them.

Get learners to photograph screens or PowerPoint slides and video demonstrations to keep a visual record of sequences. Use a notes app on a phone, post-its or sticky notes on the gadgets menu of a computer to make a to-do List. All of these help to embed important facts and ideas and reduce the memory burden.

Reading

E-readers are excellent for people with dyslexia since the reader can change the appearance of text, the colours, fonts and usually the spacing between lines. This means that they can have a large print book, perhaps with white print on a black background. Those with poor visual tracking skills will benefit from the layout where they see just one page at a time without being distracted by the words on the facing page. The RNIB Bookshare scheme makes e-books available to print for disabled learners including those with dyslexia and co-occurring difficulties. Reading is not just about books. Many computer games involve a lot of reading too and some learners may respond better to non-fiction books and/or websites which are tied in to popular TV shows.

Writing



Use a text-to-speech facility to make the computer read back text aloud. This is a good way to proofread. Modern smartphones usually come preloaded with voice recognition so you can dictate ideas or information and email it to yourself. While it is not 100% accurate, at least every word is correctly spelt and, for most people with dyslexia, it is easier to edit than to compose.

Spelling

Work on words the writer wants to use. Spelling programs and lists often have words that are of limited currency however we all have words and phrases that are part of 'our voice' and this vocabulary will be what comes into our head when we are composing, so it is vital that we can spell these words. There are many different strategies for teaching spelling. Using a haptic approach and teaching children the British Sign Language (BSL) alphabet can help them to practise finger-spelling the part of the word they struggle with. Some teachers encourage children to write the word in joined-up writing at least three times or to write the word with eyes shut. Many people with dyslexia have a wide vocabulary and can use this to their advantage: if they cannot spell a word, they can substitute with a synonym or use a thesaurus to find a better word that is easier to spell.

Spell checkers and the thesaurus tool which is part of Microsoft Word can give children immediate access to a spelling. The autocorrect facility on Word and text replacement in the keyboard setting on an iPhone let people type an abbreviation for long, complex or frequently used phrases so 'ed psy' magically becomes 'educational psychologist', for instance.

Exams

Some learners with dyslexia will be allowed the assistance of a human reader in their exams. However, recent changes to the JCQ Exam Access Arrangements now allow for a computer reader to be used in place of a person to read aloud any text in the exam papers. This enables students to be independent and reduces their stress levels, as they no

longer have to feel embarrassed or afraid to ask for help. Parents should be encouraged to check with the school to make sure their child gets everything they are entitled to.

Teachers

Joe Beech wrote *The Little Book of Dyslexia* when he was at the University of Chichester training to be a secondary school PE teacher. He uses predictive text to make notes, his calendar to keep track of events and keeps an eye out for apps which will help him work smarter. Joe still finds that his organisational skills are challenged by teaching but once again it is his iPhone that keeps him on track. "I now plan everything on my phone," he says. "Not only did I find the calendar easier to use but I always had my phone on me and was much better at looking after it than my diary because I was fonder of it! There is so much technology in a mobile phone these days, so it is a shame that as teachers we don't tap into them more."

Further Reading

- Jan Beechey, *The Dyslexia Guild Librarian*, also suggests these titles for additional reading, available in the Dyslexia Guild library:

Available as an e-book

- **Crystal, David. (2008).** *Txtng: the Gr8 Db8*. Oxford: OUP.
- **Sandie, Gay and Richardson, Tina. (2013).** *Using e-books and e-readers for adult learning: with a focus on adult literacy*. London: NIACE.

Available as a hard copy book

- **Draffen, E.A. (2012).** *Dyslexia and useful technology*. Bracknell: BDA.
- **Kukulska-Hulme, Agnes. (2005).** *Mobile learning: a handbook for educators and trainers*. London: Routledge.
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- **McKeown, Sally. (2017).** *The Family Guide to Dyslexia Coventry: Spike Press* (Book 1: What You Need to Know; Book 2: The Primary Years; Book 3: The Secondary Years; Book 4: The Adult Years).
- **McKeown, Sally and McGlashon, Angela. (2012).** *Brilliant Ideas for using ICT in the Inclusive Classroom*. Abingdon: Routledge
- **RNIB Bookshare** <https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/>

Understanding How We Learn - A Visual Guide

(2019) Yana Weinstein and Megan Sumeracki with Oliver Caviglioli; David Fulton/Routledge, Oxford

Reviewed by Nicola Margand MDG, CPD Lead Tutor, Dyslexia Action Training

Whether you are a teacher, a parent, a student, or simply a person interested in how human learning works – there's something for you in this book!" (Weinstein, Sumeracki, Caviglioli 2019, p.9).

I have to confess to already being a fan of the Learning Scientists and eagerly awaited the publication of this book. The Learning Scientists project was launched by cognitive psychological scientists Yana Weinstein and Megan Sumeracki in January 2016, its aim being to make "scientific research on learning more accessible" through its website at <http://www.learningscientists.org/> with its blog, downloadable resources, podcasts and social media presence. This book is both a sound accompaniment and introduction to the website, directing the reader to relevant blog posts for more in-depth discussion whilst also providing a strong foundation of the ideas covered.

The book is divided into four sections:

- **Part one:** Evidence-based education and the science of learning which includes discussion of the role of intuition and learning styles.
- **Part two:** Basics of human cognitive processes looking at perception, attention and memory. This section would provide useful extra reading for those on many of our continuing professional development courses.
- **Part three:** Strategies for Effective Learning which looks at the six key strategies of spaced practice, retrieval practice, interleaving, elaboration,

concrete examples and dual coding. Each is described and critically examined.

- **Part four:** Tips for teachers, students and parents which relate to the strategies described in Part 3. The book is presented in a journal double column style which means the print can be rather small and dense at times. However, the lively visuals of Oliver Caviglioli help to break this up and also provide summaries of key points which are brought together at the start of each chapter. Chapter summaries are also provided, and the book is written in a very accessible style with the voices of both authors present. The strategies described are essential reading for anyone studying for exams or teaching examined courses. The weakest section of the book was, I felt, part four, which tended to be repetitive but could stand alone and be easily distributed to each relevant party. It provides a new prism through which to view study skills.

Overall, I was not disappointed and would highly recommend this to teachers and lecturers at all ages and stages.

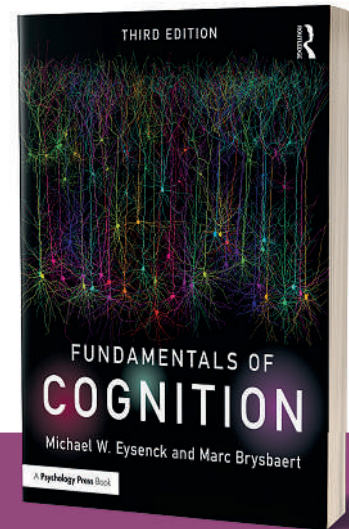
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Fundamentals of Cognition, 3rd Ed.

(2018). Eysenck, M. W., and Brysbaert, M. Milton: Taylor and Francis, Oxford.

**Reviewed by Dr Catherine Marshall MDG,
Postgraduate Tutor at Dyslexia Action Training.**



The Fundamentals of Cognition by Michael Eysenck and Marc Brysbaert is the third edition of a classic textbook which is widely used in undergraduate cognitive psychology teaching. In the preface to the book the authors make a persuasive case that cognitive psychology is “at the heart of psychology”.

The book is clearly structured and makes good use of visual aids and diagrams. It is acknowledged that that cognition is highly interactive, so at times it is difficult to separate the processes involved. For example, language is a key factor in memory and learning, and attention and perception are highly dependent on each other. The authors’ approach allows the reader to reflect on the links between cognitive processes, without this becoming confusing.

Chapter one asks ‘what is cognitive psychology?’ and answers this with an introduction to contemporary approaches and techniques in the context of an overview of historical perspectives. Chapter 2 explores visual perception – a fascinating topic which makes the distinction between sensation and perception clear using lots of intriguing visual illusions. This leads nicely on to a focus on attention and performance in Chapter 3. Here, the role of attention is highlighted as being crucial to everyday life, with very interesting examples of disorders of attention.

Memory is a key (and much studied) cognitive process, and has four chapters devoted to it here (Chapters 4-7). This section of the book highlights classic theories as well as recent advances and approaches. It is far from dry, discussing in an engaging way how aspects of memory are involved in everyday life, including examples from learning,

stereotypes and eye-witness testimony.

Chapter 8 explores another fundamental cognitive process with a wide scope: language. Here, models of language production and comprehension are outlined, and sections on reading and dyslexia emphasise the importance of language processes for reading. There is a fascinating, in-depth exploration about what we can learn about cognitive processing during reading from studies which track eye-movements.

Problem solving and judgment, decision making and reasoning, and cognition and emotion are explored in the remaining chapters of the book. These sections demonstrate how inter-linked these processes are, with fascinating insights into the relationship between our emotions and our cognitive processes.

The authors consider what we know about cognitive processes from a contemporary methodological perspective which makes use of up-to-date behavioural and brain imaging studies, as well as classic and new cognitive neuroscience studies of clinical populations and brain damaged patients. Throughout the textbook there are ‘key term boxes’ which provide succinct definitions of key terminology. This feature makes the book very accessible. The ‘In the real world’ sections are excellent, making pertinent links between theory and practice with lots of fascinating examples.

The wide range of interesting topics, recent research, and real word applications covered in the book demonstrates that understanding cognitive processing is fundamental to understanding our behaviour in so many ways. I recommend this textbook to anyone looking for an engaging, accessible and intelligent textbook on cognition.

Databusting for Schools:

How to Use and Interpret Education Data

(2018) Richard Selfridge, Sage Publications, London

Richard Selfridge is a qualified and experienced primary school teacher with a degree in Maths and Statistics. He is a regular blog writer, conference speaker and expert on the use and misuse of data in schools. His book is an eye-opening read and useful manual for all those using data or conducting assessments in schools. The book is also a reflective read for those undertaking assessments for exam access arrangements and/or dyslexia/SpLD assessments to add to the understanding of their own limitations of professional practice. The book is essential reading for all those working with data in school settings:

• **Chapter 1 Databusting**

for Schools: Provides a useful background to the use of tests and assessments in schools. The author notes that those working in and with schools need to be able to rigorously interrogate the use of numbers in any procedure which attempts to shed light on educational processes and outcomes (p.12).

• **Chapter 2 Gathering Education Data:** Where does it come from?

This looks at in-school data, National Curriculum levels – point scores and fine grades, Standardised tests and standardised scores and provides a thought-provoking review of 20 years of government-provided data analysis.

• **Chapters 3 – 8:** These focus on the how and why of numbers and delve into the inner workings of statistics looking at variables, descriptive, inferential and correlational statistics, and conclude with a chapter on critically appraising statistics. These are chapters that are not for the faint-hearted but if you are a professionally qualified assessor, then they are an essential read.

• **Chapter 9 Data-based School Research and Policy: Using Data to Understand and Change Education:** This section

provides an introduction to the use and development of statistical data, explains psychometrics (the theory and technique of psychological measurement) and the concept of reliability and validity in testing.

Accounting for difference – the use of variability in analysis and item response

theory are also well explained in this chapter, which concludes with a look at measuring progress in education and attempts to assess and evaluate research into effective education.

• **Chapter 10: The Data Debate: The Ongoing Discussion about Numbers in Education:** In his

concluding chapter, Selfridge takes a critical look at the use of numbers in education and what we (should) have learned from the use of psychometrics and norm- and criterion-referenced tests. This chapter is so useful in explaining why testing of any sort has limitations: “All of those involved in the creation of achievement tests are fully aware of the limitations of testing ... Unfortunately many of those working in schools, on governing bodies and for government bodies which hold schools to account, often have little training in or understanding of the limitations of achievement tests” (pp.230-231).

The chapter concludes with a look at some of the problems this leads to: the rise of testing as a driver of education policy; the problems of using value-added measures to summarise school and teacher effectiveness; ongoing concerns with the frequent misinterpretation of pupil performance data in education and the unintended side-effects of the use and misuse of test data.

The concluding advice on what to do to minimise these misconstrued assumptions is invaluable: accept that large amounts of complex data are overwhelming ... even a simple statistic such as a mean can hide a huge variety of possible underlying data and, in the wrong circumstances, can mislead to an extraordinary extent. We owe it to our students and ourselves not to be misled. (p.250)



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Interview with Richard Selfridge,

author of Databusting for Schools

By Gill Cochrane FDG, Postgraduate Programme Manager at Dyslexia Action.

Background to the book

Having worked extensively in primary teaching, Richard noted that many classroom teachers have not studied Maths beyond GCSE level and so may not be familiar with the interpretation of statistics and data.

If you go back to the introduction of the National Curriculum Tests in England and Wales, the underpinning desire from those working within education, and in a position to influence government, was that children should be able to see that they were making progress as they moved through school (levels one to eight) and then move into GCSEs. They make sense and you can see that with the best of intentions people wanted to see that there was some progression. Schools were then asked to set targets for children for expected levels and from that came a whole plethora of assumptions and datafication of children's standards of education which I began to question.

Because numbers lend themselves to being pictured as lines, people start to see linear progress and expect that children would move from level one to four in some kind of smooth linear fashion and that sense of linearity was imposed on children in schools. You can see that if you have a lot of children in a school or nationally that there probably is some sense of linearity but at individual level it makes very little sense to look at linear process because as you know children change as they are exposed to new concepts and that can mean that they need to rebuild everything that they thought previously.

The impact of testing and the use of standardised tests

Partly because of National Curriculum Tests and tests that were done at the end of Key Stages that did and do use standardised tests to a large extent, people began to make assumptions about other forms of testing they were doing in school which aren't justified at all. To measure children's knowledge is a difficult thing, testing to see if a child understands a concept is very different to testing to see where a child sits relative to all of their peers. The end of Key Stage tests were good summative tests and they are reasonably reliable and valid but when you are trying to use testing to support children learning, that's a very different thing. Formative assessment of children should be very different to those of summative tests.

The testing culture

There is a move now to use testing more sparingly and to make sure that children understand the concepts first. That allows teachers to think how do I best teach this concept? Quizzes and low-stakes testing and using tests of memory, recall and process are very powerful but if you put too much weight on the numbers that come out of those tests then you can distort the tests and distort the teaching. The more you understand how testing works the more you realise you have to be very careful and very sceptical, to the point of hostility, because there is every possibility you are going to misinterpret the numbers you have got. Teachers are often encouraged to be certain about things about which there isn't any certainty.

If you would like to hear more of the interview with Richard, log in to the Guild Member's website to hear the recording. <https://dyslexiaguild.org.uk/>

Children and the testing culture

So, accountability has caused issues. There is a lot of benefit to using standardised tests and using them sparingly and there is a mismatch with the curriculum that children are being taught, however they can give you a sense of whether the children are broadly in the middle of the expected level for their age or broadly below or above that level. Most children just need really good classroom teaching; the children who struggle and who are assessed below the level are going to need a lot of support if you want to get them into the middle and you are going to really need to understand those children's individual needs.

Databusting for Schools - the audience

Part of the reason why I wrote the book, and why SAGE asked me to write it, is for teachers who have been in education for three to five years, and many teachers move into management within three years. If they have learned how to manage a class and assist children to learn then they should want to know more about testing and numbers which is where my book comes in.

If you are not a mathematics person then read the first two chapters and the last two chapters because they will give you a lot of useful background information. But if you don't understand the middle bit (about statistics) then you shouldn't be making firm pronouncements about numbers in school.

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Alphabet GALLERY

AN ABC OF CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATION

AUTUMN 1999



Dyslexia Review

Volume 29, Number 1, Spring 2019

The Journal of The Dyslexia Guild



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Volume 28, Number

THE NORTH SURREY DYSLEXIC SOCIETY

For the recognition of dyslexia and the advancement of literacy

REVIEW

Editor: Mrs. V. W. Fisher, Cambridge Cottage, Broadway, Laleham, Middlesex.

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Books for dyslexic children.
by Anna Evillen.

Letters from two mothers of dyslexic children.
by Miss M. J. Prendergast.

Report on the Teacher Training Course arranged by the Bath Association.



With acknowledgements to the London DAILY MAIL.

No. 1.
APRIL 1969

The Plowden Report established that the encouragement of the child's performance at school, teachers are certainly very ready to say that the parents' relationship with their children can make for difficulties in learning.

Happy the dyslexic child who has been diagnosed and who receives help, not only from his remedial teacher, but from his parents at home and teachers at school.

We hope this 'Review' will stimulate further study and lead both parents and teachers to reflect on their respective responsibilities, at home and in the classroom.

+++++*****+++++

In the past few years there has been a swing among leading educational psychologists to the view that dyslexia is a problem in its own right. The comfortable old notion that a child who fails to read must be Dull, Deprived, or Disturbed, is being eroded by the Word Blind Centre, its departments of Universities, and by the reading research quite rightly, an expansive Good Research Laboratory and research into reading methods and started a National Inquiry into special educational needs. The JO% of our children who leave school each year barely able to write their name or read the simplest signs is reason enough.