

The RESOURCE

Creating Avenues of Success for Dyslexics!



VOL. 18, ISSUE 2

founded in memory of Samuel T. Orton

FALL 2003

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thurs., Sept. 17, 2003
"Family Activity Night"
for parents & students
at the Riverside County
Office of Education
(see pg. 7).

Nov. 12-15, 2003
IDA's 54th Annual
Conference held in
beautiful San Diego,
CA (see ad, p. 9).

March 20, 2004
"The brain & reading"
workshop at the
Ontario Airport Marriott

Board meetings—
Open to anyone with
the desire to make a
difference and enhance
awareness of language
learning differences.
Call the branch at 909/
686-9837 for location
and times.

The Warning Signs of Learning Disabilities

Something's not quite right about Johnny and Susie. They seem bright enough, but often their performance or behavior falls short of expectations. They can do some things very well, but in other ways are behind their peers. Are they simply lazy? Do they just need to try harder?

When the development or academic performance of a healthy child falls short of what is expected for his or her age and intelligence, parents or teachers may suspect the child has a learning disability. Being aware of the signs of learning disabilities will help parents determine if the child should be referred for evaluation. This article summarizes some of the common warning signs of learning disabilities for preschool, elementary, and secondary school children and youth.

As the name implies, learning disabilities are a condition that affects learning, and sooner or later is manifested by poor school performance, especially in reading, mathematics, spelling, and writing. In addition, learning disabilities are a life-long condition and can significantly impact relationships, daily activities, and eventually work and careers.

Learning disabilities are presumed to arise from dysfunctions in the brain. Individuals with learning disabilities have significant difficulties in perceiving information (input), in processing and remembering information, (integration) and/or in expressing information (output). Outward manifestations of any of these difficulties serve as indicators – or warning signs – of a learning disability.

Continued on page 8

The Delusion of Full Inclusion

By Charles Sheffield, M.Ed. Psychology

My view on full-inclusion asserts that it is often a misguided model. We tried much of the same philosophy thirty years ago and it failed. Then we changed from an inclusion model to resource rooms and classes with teachers who were trained to deal with specific populations. This change addressed the problems inherent in inclusion. Some students with disabilities need to learn skills that other children have already mastered. A child with retardation may need to work on daily living skills, career education, etc. A child with dyslexia may require special prescriptive teaching that needs more time than is available in a regular classroom. Some students with problems in auditory processing need a distraction-free environment. Older students may be unwilling to receive special help in class in front of their peers, but are open to being helped in a resource room. For such students the regular classroom may be the most restrictive environment, rather than the least.

We have failed to look at where we have been in education—at what has worked and what has not worked. We must research and understand our history or we are doomed to repeat our mistakes. It will be the

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A Message from Your President

by Regina G. Richards

Did you know...

research indicates that up to 20% of students have a significant reading disability? Some difficulties are mild, i.e., poor organization, messy handwriting, hesitant reading, or a poor sense of time and space. Other difficulties are more severe and affect reading, writing, spelling, remembering, listening, comprehension, and/or sequencing. In a class of 25, teachers may find several students with mild difficulties. One or two students may have significant problems that are impervious to even a good literacy curriculum and require directed teaching of language skills.

Because of these facts, I never question why I am involved with IDA. The answer is obvious to me: It is to help these many students and their parents and teachers. I feel that IDA provides a wonderful vehicle to share valuable information: there are many strengths packaged in with the learning struggles, and *it is these strengths that help students cope with and compensate for their difficulties*. Also, IDA provides avenues for learning about the remedial techniques that are so critical. Many feel English is an unpredictable language, but it has been identified that English is 95% regular for reading and 85% regular for spelling. The trick is to know the *patterns*. The IDA newsletters and meetings provide a valuable source of learning about these patterns and strategies for dealing with them.

**Thank
You**

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Rochette for
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taxes every**

Think about these issues. Is there a way that *you* can help?

- Do you come to meetings and gather information to share with your own students in the classroom or at home doing homework?
- Do you meet with others to strengthen your own understanding of the issues?
- Are you interested in ideas and strategies to use and/or share with your colleagues?
- There is strength in numbers – the larger the IDA membership, the more “clout” the group has in making recommendations. This is especially true in these tough economic times and with the uncertainty of the new IDEA format. Are you a member?

The IE branch is here for you and we have a vibrant board. We also have a huge geographic area to cover and we encourage you to participate in any way that's comfortable and of value to you.

We look forward to seeing you at our events!!

Check our calendar to keep track of our upcoming events because we have an exciting year planned. All interested people are invited to our board meetings: the next one is scheduled for Thursday evening **September 4**. Pam Kehler has planned a very exciting hands-on event for our general meeting on Wednesday evening **September 17th** (refer to flyer on page 7). This program is geared for students, teachers, parents, and others interested in fun activities that help our students use their strengths while also working on areas that may be weaker.

We all have a very exciting opportunity this fall to participate in the 54th Annual International IDA Conference because it is going to be held right here in Southern California. The preconference symposium is Wednesday, **November 12th** and the primary conference is **November 13th-15th**. We still have many scholarships available:

- Inland Empire scholarships for teachers and parents living in the Inland Empire
- Scholarships from the Southern California Consortium for teachers and parents anywhere in Southern California, and

INLAND EMPIRE BRANCH

The International Dyslexia Association
P.O. Box 6701
San Bernardino, CA 92412

909/686-9837

Internet: <http://www.dyslexia-ca.org>

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Assistive Technology for Students with Mild Disabilities

By: Michael Behrmann and Marci Kinas Jerome

Technology has become ubiquitous as a tool for teachers and students. P.L. 100-407, The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (Tech Act) was designed to enhance the availability and quality of assistive technology (AT) devices and services to all individuals and their families throughout the United States. Public Law 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), uses the same definitions for assistive technology as the Tech Act and mandates that assistive technology be considered in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities. IDEA also emphasizes access to the general education curriculum for all students with disabilities.

The Tech Act and the IDEA define an AT device as any item, piece of equipment, or product system (whether acquired off the shelf, modified, or customized) that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. AT devices may be categorized as no technology, low technology, or high technology (LD Online, 2001).

“No-technology” or “no-tech” refers to any assistive device that is not electronic. No-tech items range from a piece of foam glued onto the corners of book pages to make turning easier to a study carrel to reduce distraction. “Low-technology” or “low-tech” devices are electronic but do not include highly sophisticated computer components, such as an electronic voice-recording device or a “talking watch” (Behrmann & Schaff, 2001). “High-technology” or “high-tech” devices utilize complex, multifunction technology and usually include a computer and associated software.

Lahm and Morissette (1994) identified areas of instruction in which AT can assist students. Six of these are described here: (1) organization, (2) note taking, (3) writing, (4) academic productivity, (5) access to reference and general educational materials, and (6) cognitive assistance.

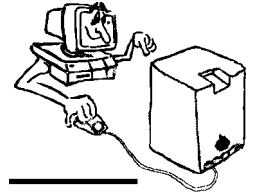
Organization

Low-tech solutions include teaching students to organize their thoughts or work using flow-charting, task analysis, webbing, and outlining. These strategies can also be accomplished using high-tech, graphic, software-based organizers to assist students in developing and structuring ideas. Such graphic organizers allow students to manipulate and reconfigure brainstormed ideas and color code and group those ideas in ways that visually represent their thoughts. Another high-tech solution might be the outline function of word processing software, which lets students set out major ideas or topics and then add subcategories of information. Using the Internet, local area networks, or LCD projection systems enables students and their teachers to collaborate, give feedback, and modify these applications either as a group or individually at different times.

Note Taking

A simple, no-tech approach to note taking is for the teacher to provide copies of structured outlines in which students fill in information. Low- and high-tech methods include:

- Videotaping class sessions for visual learners or those who are unable to attend class for extended periods of time.
- Sending web-cam photography across the Internet to allow students to see and hear what is happening in class (for students who are unable to attend class).
- Sending class notes or presentations to students via e-mail.
- Translating print-based notes to voice by using optical character recognition (OCR) software with a voice synthesizer.
- Using notebook computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), or portable word processing keyboards to help students with the mechanics of note taking.



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Continued on page 10

Recording For the Blind & Dyslexic

Did you know?

More than 55 percent of the people who use RFB&D's taped books have some form of a learning disability! Would you or someone you know benefit from books on tape? Call for a free product brochure containing information about RFB&D's line of Talkman 4-track tape players and catalogs on tape and computer disk. Specify print, braille or cassette tape. Call RFB&D Customer Service at 800/221-4792.

Looking for information??

www.ldonline.org is an invaluable website for all kinds of information for parents, children, teachers, and other professionals.

Check out "LD in Depth." Click on any of the large variety of topics for articles and help lists.



Defense Attorney Turned Writer

Tells about Dyslexic Heroine at the AABIDA Conference

By Ginny Garrison

When Stephanie Kane, a fine defense attorney in the Denver, Colorado area, retired from law to write books, she knew she wanted a dyslexic heroine as her main character. Although the learning disability was close to her heart, she still did hours of research into dyslexic characteristics. One of the ways she researched the character, a defense attorney named Jackie Flowers, was to correspond with real people with disabilities. She put a questionnaire on the Internet in a LDAA site and got many ideas from the individuals who responded.

Yet when Stephanie came to Austin to speak on her books, especially *Blind Spot*, she did not know that by not only speaking, but also by attending many of the sessions, she would learn things that would add to parts of her new book. In speaking with Stephanie, I learned that the sessions on the hardships that many dyslexic individuals face when trying to get through college helped her realize that she should add something to Jackie's background.

In being the detailed, precise person she is, Stephanie had already decided to let the readers have a glimpse into Jackie Flower's struggles in law school. Stephanie even met with one of her own toughest professors to ask if he thought it would be possible for a dyslexic person to make it through a hard law school.

He said, "Yes."

The professor felt that what matters is the content knowledge. He also added that many students get so anxious when taking exams in law school within the timed period that writing deteriorates to the point that many of the students appear that they could be dyslexic.

Jackie Flowers, Kane's main character, a very successful attorney with guts and good looks, has a magnificent auditory memory, which makes her dynamic in cross-examination. However, Jackie does not have dynamic writing or spelling skills.

Stephanie learned at the January AABIDA conference in Round Rock that the strategies for spelling or writing can help make or break a student in undergraduate or graduate school. She plans to use some of the details on how students can practice shortcuts and learn strategies to make getting Jackie through college and law school realistic. Stephanie feels that the details about how students learn and use these strategies will add even more realism to her new book.

Ms. Kane is doing more for her readers than providing a thought-provoking and exciting read. She is giving dyslexics who read her book examples of what can be done when one uses his or her "gifts" to compensate and then ends up surpassing what others in his/her chosen field can do. Her book, *Blind Spot*, did not use the word "dyslexia". Yet, as the reader sees Jackie's need to visit the murder sites for a drawn visual scenario rather than to describe the sites in written words, the reader knows he or she is seeing a person with a disability turn that disability into an asset.

Now we are all impatiently waiting for that e-mail that will tell us that Stephanie Kane's new book, *Extreme Indifference*, has gone to press and will be out shortly!

Reprinted with permission from: The Austin Area Branch of the IDA, Spring 2003

The Delusion of Full Inclusion..., Continued from page 1

children who will suffer. In education we often tend to throw out what worked before without thinking that many approaches may work for different kinds of students. The responsible school needs to keep and use it all (Richardson, 1996).

Part of the push to inclusion has been initiated by advocates for disability rights who believe in inclusion without truly taking the consequences into account. Parents may believe that the behavior that accompanies a disability will fade away when a child is in contact with so-called "normal" children. If schools are going to inclusion simply to improve the self-esteem of students, this change will probably not have the desired outcome. Unless they have been carefully prepared to be accepting, mainstream students can be brutal to anyone that they perceive as different.

Changing to an inclusion model without giving teachers and school systems adequate time to do it right is misguided. Regular education teachers do not often have the background required for dealing with all children. Many are not ready emotionally to deal with students diagnosed as "different." The teachers need adequate training, and sometimes an attitude change, to know how to help special education students (Richardson, 1996).

If students in special education must learn special skills, teaching in inclusion must include a continuum of services that best meets each child's unique learning needs. A special education teacher might explain his/her role to the regular education teacher in the following manner: "Sometimes this will involve me being in your classroom; other times it will involve pulling a student or group of students out for more intense remediation. Although I can empathize with your feeling of being overwhelmed, I am not an educational aide. My role is to serve as an intervention expert on the needs of a larger number of students. We will have areas where we agree and we will have areas where we disagree. Our role together is to figure out creative ways to make education work for all our students. My role is not to critique your teaching approach for regular education students. I will, however, make suggestions of what modifications may be helpful for you in presenting information to special students, modifications that can obtain better outcomes for all our students. When possible, I will attempt to be a resource in problem solving different ways that we can reach goals together."

Moving more toward inclusion does not mean we have to get rid of what has already worked, as we so often do, in the latest pendulum swing. It simply means we need to determine for which students and what situations this approach will work. Ideally a student needs to be included in classroom activities to the greatest extent that is possible given that time and trained teaching is also allowed for special needs (Richardson, 1996).

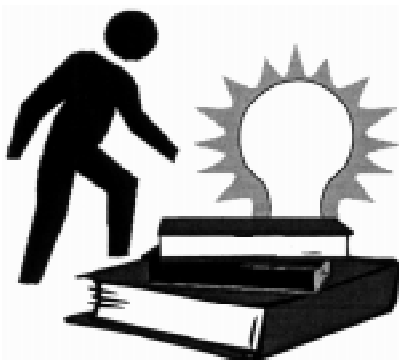
References:

Richardson, Sylvia. M.D. Speaker, (1996). The Downside of Teacher Education. At the International Dyslexia Association's Annual Conference: Literacy: The Trail to Freedom. Boston, MA.

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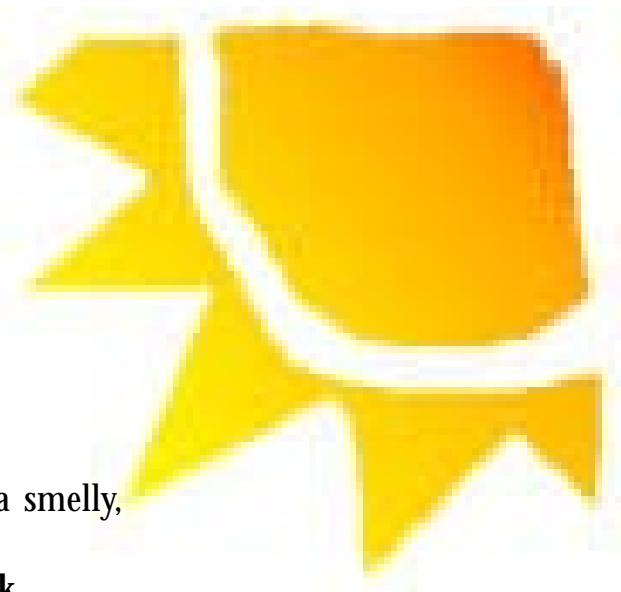
Definition:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association
Board of Directors, November 2002

❁ **Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions** ❁

Author Unknown



When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over my yard.

❁ **My kids see flowers for Mom and blowing white fluff you can wish on.**

When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who probably wants money and I look away.

❁ **My kids see someone smiling at them and they smile back.**

When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm so I sit self-consciously and listen

❁ **My kids feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them, they make up their own.**

When I feel wind on my face, I brace myself against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk.

❁ **My kids close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it, until they fall to the ground laughing.**

When I pray, I say thee and thou and grant me this, give me that.

❁ **My kids say, "Hi God! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to Heaven yet. I would miss my mommy and daddy."**

When I see a mud puddle, I step around it. I see muddy shoes and dirty carpets.

❁ **My kids sit in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross, and worms to play with.**

I wonder if we are given kids to teach or to learn from? No wonder God loves the little children!

Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

I wish you Big Mud Puddles and Sunny Yellow Dandelions!

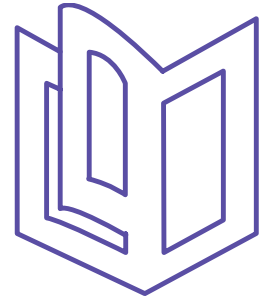


Thank You for Helping

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO our two guests, Jean Aklufi (Principal, Franklin Elementary School, Riverside) and Leslie Huscher (Director of Big Springs School & Therapy Center, Riverside & Murrieta.) Your participation helped enhance the value of our May meeting by providing timely information and insight to the many parents and teachers who attended.

Local Resources

Look for books & videos on dyslexia and learning issues at your local public library! Our branch has donated a large number of items to local libraries in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties four times, over the last few years. Check it out – the libraries have interlibrary sharing programs.



Try Webcasting for Information

The following website is a super source for online videos and articles related to dyslexia.

Working Together: A Focus on School-Wide Literacy Webcast and Dyslexia:

Finding the Answers video: http://www.knowledgenetwork.ca/know_tool/dyslexia/

Int'l Dyslexia Assn.
Invites you to

Family Activity Night

Thursday
September 17, 2003
6:45 - 8:30 pm

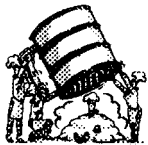
Riverside County Office of Education
Corner of 13th & Almond, Riverside

Parents and Students

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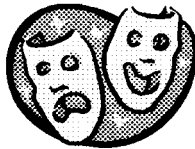
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And Much, Much More!!!

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Visit our web site at www.dyslexia-ca.org
And our newsgroup at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dyslexia_riverside



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Warning Signs from page 1

Warning Signs in Preschool Children

Although children's growth patterns vary among individuals and within individuals, uneven development or significant delays in development can signal the presence of learning disabilities. It is important to keep in mind that the behaviors listed below must persist over time to be considered warning signs. Any child may occasionally exhibit one or two of these behaviors in the course of normal development.



Visit
the
national
office of the
IDA website
www.interdys.org

Including:

- * New Kids Only web site
- * Ask the Experts
- * Facts about dyslexia
- * Pen pals bulletin board
- * Resources . . . and much, much more!

Language

- ✎ Slow development in speaking words or sentences
- ✎ Pronunciation problems
- ✎ Difficulty learning new words
- ✎ Difficulty following simple directions
- ✎ Difficulty understanding questions
- ✎ Difficulty expressing wants and desires
- ✎ Difficulty rhyming words
- ✎ Lack of interest in story telling

Motor Skills

- ✎ Clumsiness
- ✎ Poor balance
- ✎ Difficulty manipulating small objects
- ✎ Awkwardness with running, jumping, or climbing
- ✎ Trouble learning to tie shoes, button shirts, or perform other self-help activities
- ✎ Avoidance of drawing or tracing

Cognition

- ✎ Trouble memorizing the alphabet or days of the week
- ✎ Poor memory for what should be routine (everyday) procedures
- ✎ Difficulty with cause and effect, sequencing, and counting
- ✎ Difficulty with basic concepts such as size, shape, and color

Attention

- ✎ High distractibility
- ✎ Impulsive behavior
- ✎ Unusual restlessness (hyperactivity)
- ✎ Difficulty staying on task
- ✎ Difficulty changing activities
- ✎ Constant repetition of an idea, inability to move on to a new idea (perseveration)

Social Behavior

- ✎ Trouble interacting with others, playing alone
- ✎ Prone to sudden and extreme mood changes
- ✎ Easily frustrated
- ✎ Hard to manage, has temper tantrums

Because early intervention is so important, federal law requires that school districts provide early identification and intervention services. The special education department of the local school district can direct families to the agency that provides these services. Families may also want to consult the child's doctor, who should also be able to refer the family to appropriate resources.

Warning Signs in Elementary School Children

It is during the elementary school years that learning problems frequently become apparent as disabilities interfere with increasingly demanding and complex learning tasks. Difficulties in learning academic subjects and emotional and/or social skills may become a problem. Warning signs for this age group may include any of those listed above for preschool children in addition to the following:

Language/Mathematics

- ✎ Slow learning the correspondence of sound to letter
- ✎ Consistent errors in reading or spelling
- ✎ Difficulty remembering basic sight words
- ✎ Inability to retell a story in sequence
- ✎ Trouble learning to tell time or count money
- ✎ Confusion of math signs (+, -, x, /, =)
- ✎ Transposition of number sequences
- ✎ Trouble memorizing math facts
- ✎ Trouble with place value
- ✎ Difficulty remembering the steps of mathematics operations such as long division

Motor Skills

- ✎ Poor coordination, or awkwardness
- ✎ Difficulty copying from chalkboard
- ✎ Difficulty aligning columns (math)
- ✎ Poor handwriting

Attention/Organization

- ✎ Difficulty concentrating or focusing on a task
- ✎ Difficulty finishing work on time

Continued on page 14

President's Message from page 2

- Multiple volunteer opportunities which provide discounts on the registration fee.

Forms and further information are available on our web site.

We have a new format for our newsgroup and this now allows for interchange among members. I received positive feedback from the members when I changed the format last June. In July, we welcomed Michelle Mock back to our board now that her daughter has graduated high school (congratulations Stephanie!). Michelle is now a moderator for the newsgroup and she brings substantial experience in this area. Thank you, Michelle, for your wonderful assistance!

As I close, I wish to thank every single person on our board and committees who has shared his/her wonderful ideas, time, and experience in helping make our Inland Empire branch an exciting, active and vibrant advocate for learners who learn differently.

**Inland
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needs YOU!
Help us help
others.**



"Our Mission to Literacy" 54TH Annual Conference of The International Dyslexia Association[®] November 12-15, 2003

Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, California

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IDA Disclaimer



The International Dyslexia Association supports efforts to provide dyslexic individuals with appropriate instruction and to identify these individuals at an early age. The Association believes that multisensory teaching and learning is the best approach currently available for those affected by dyslexia.

The Association, however, does not endorse any specific program, speaker, or instructional materials, noting that there are a number of such which present the critical components of instruction as defined by the Task Force on Multisensory Teaching which works under the guidance of the Association's Teacher Education Issues Committee.

Writing

Word processing may be the most important application of assistive technology for students with mild disabilities. Writing barriers for students with mild disabilities include:

- Mechanics: spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
- Process: generating ideas, organizing, drafting, editing, revising, and producing a neat, clear final copy.
- Motivation: interest in writing.

Grammar and spell-checkers, dictionaries, and thesaurus programs assist in the mechanics of writing. Macros are available that will insert an entire phrase with the touch of a single key. Word prediction software helps students recall or spell words.

During the writing process, word processors allow teachers to make suggestions on the student's disk. If computers are networked, students can read each other's work and make recommendations for revision. Computer editing also reduces or eliminates problems such as multiple erasures, torn papers, and poor handwriting. The final copy is neat and legible.

Motivation is often increased through the desktop publishing and multimedia capabilities of computers. A variety of fonts and styles allow students to customize their writing and highlight important features. Graphic images, drawings, video, and audio can provide interest or highlight ideas. Multimedia gives the student the means and the motivation to generate new and more complex ideas. For early writers, there are programs that allow them to write with pictures or symbols as well as text. In some of these programs, the student selects a series of pictures to represent an idea; then the pictures are transformed to words that can be read by a synthesizer and then edited.

Academic Productivity

Tools that assist productivity can be hardware-based, software-based, or both. Calculators, for example, can be separate, multifunction devices or part of a computer's software. Spreadsheets, databases, and graphics software enhance productivity in calculating, categorizing, grouping, and predicting events. The Internet, computers, and PDAs can also aid productivity in note taking, obtaining assignments, accessing reference material and help from experts, and communication with peers. Instead of relying on the telephone, students are increasingly sharing documents, using instant messaging, and transferring documents to each other as e-mail attachments.

Access to Reference and General Educational Materials

Access to the general education curriculum is emphasized by IDEA and includes the ability to obtain materials as well as the ability to understand and use them. Many students with mild disabilities have difficulty gathering and synthesizing information for their academic work. In this area, Internet communications, multimedia, and universal design are providing new learning tools.

Internet communications can transport students beyond their physical environments, allowing them to interact with people far away and engage in interactive learning experiences. This is particularly appropriate for individuals who are easily distracted when going to new and busy environments such as the library, who are poorly motivated, or who have difficulty with reading or writing. Students can establish "CompuPals" via e-mail or instant messaging with other students, which often motivates them to generate more text and thus gain more experience in writing. Students can also access electronic multimedia encyclopedias, library references, and online publications. However, these experiences should be structured, because it is easy to get distracted or lost as opportunities are explored.

Multimedia tools are another way in which information can be made accessible to students. Multimedia use

Continued on page 12

Let us hear from you!

The Resource is intended as an educational resource for professionals and families alike. We welcome your input on our newsletter. Please send us your ideas for future articles, book reviews, upcoming seminars, etc. We would also love to be able to share "success stories" of individuals in our area.

VISIT YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

Inland Empire Library Project

In 1996, our Inland Empire Branch donated \$500 of books, videos and audiotapes to the Riverside City and County Public Library. The article in the Riverside Press Enterprise was titled "Dyslexia books take step into present"—and we were proud to be able to help in such a wonderful productive manner. Then, in 2000 we presented and other \$450 worth of books, videos and audio tapes to the San Bernardino City and County Public Library System.

Now, we are delighted to inform you that in July 2003, we presented an additional \$450 worth of books, videos and audiotapes to the Moreno Valley Public Library. The Director, Cynthia Pirtle, informs us that all of Riverside County Libraries share a common card catalog system and the inter-library loan is a wonderful program that helps library members borrow a book from almost any library.



Sheila Argueta of the IDA Inland Empire Board presents the materials to Cynthia Pirtle, Library Director of the Moreno Valley Public Library.



17 books and 2 videotapes and 1 set of audiotapes presented to the Moreno Valley Public Library in July 2003 by the Inland Empire Branch

Have you noticed?

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We are seeking original contributions:

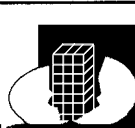
- art work (no larger than 8"x11", black and white)
- photographs of sculptures or models
- poems
- essays about your feelings about having a learning difference
- essays about how you cope with your learning struggles—what works, what's frustrating, what or who has helped you
- anything else about learning differently

Want to be involved? Send entries to:
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of text, speech, graphics, pictures, audio, and video in reference-based software is especially effective in meeting the heterogeneous learning needs of students with mild disabilities. While a picture can be worth a thousand words to one student, audio or text-based descriptive video or graphic supports may help another student focus on the most important features of the materials.

Used in conjunction with assistive technology, e-books can use the power of multimedia to motivate students to read. They include high-interest stories: the computer reads each page of the story aloud, highlighting the words as they are read. Fonts and colors can be changed to reduce distraction. Additional clicks of the mouse result in pronunciation of syllables and a definition of the word. When the student clicks on a picture, a label appears. A verbal pronunciation of the label is offered when the student clicks the mouse again. Word definitions can be added by electronic dictionaries and thesaurus. These books are available in multiple languages, including English and Spanish, so students can read in their native language while being exposed to a second language.

Conclusion

Special educators are familiar with the need to create or customize instructional materials to meet the varied needs of students with disabilities. Today, assistive technology can be more specifically targeted to address an individual's needs through the emergent power and flexibility of electronic tools and the ways in which they are combined and used. These innovations affect teaching and learning as well as individual capabilities. For students with mild disabilities, assistive technology can help to balance weak areas of learning with strong areas.

Source: ERIC EC Digest #E623

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Warning Signs, Cont'ed from page 14

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☛ Contributions to the Dovid Richards Memorial Scholarship Fund are welcome to help provide scholarships to parents and teachers to expand their knowledge of dyslexia. The fund was established by Regina and Irv Richards in memory of their son Dovid, who was in a fatal car accident shortly after his 21st birthday.

☛ We are a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible. Donations are a meaningful way to remember a loved one, honor a special occasion, or show appreciation for someone. Just send a note with your donation, indicating "in memory of" or "in honor of." Include the name and address of the person you wish to receive the acknowledgment. You will also receive acknowledgment of your contribution. (* Online scholarship application is available at www.dyslexia-ca.org)

A Message From the V.P. of Membership

By: Diane Wright, Vice-President of Membership, Inland Empire Branch

We want to thank you very much for being a part of IDA! You are helping to inform the public about dyslexia and related learning differences, including strengths and talents. Membership provides informative conferences and programs. As a member, you will receive a discount toward some publications, as well as conference registration discounts. You will receive the Annals of Dyslexia, Perspectives, and our own Inland Empire Branch newsletters. Become a member and be a part of our international support system! Again, thank you to all current and previous members. A special thank you to members who have requested the Inland Empire Branch.

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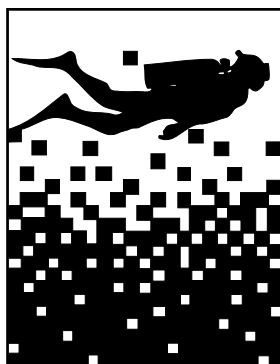
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Warning Signs, Continued from page 8



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- ✦ Inability to follow multiple directions
- ✦ Unusual sloppiness or carelessness
- ✦ Poor concept of direction (left, right)
- ✦ Rejection of new concepts, or changes in routine

Social Behavior

- ✦ Difficulty understanding facial expressions or gestures
- ✦ Difficulty understanding social situations
- ✦ Tendency to misinterpret behavior of peers and/or adults
- ✦ Apparent lack of common sense

If teachers have not discussed the possibility of an evaluation already, the parents may request that the child's school conduct a formal evaluation. A request submitted to the school principle must be honored by the school system in a timely manner.

Warning Signs in Secondary School Children

Some learning disabilities go undetected until secondary school. Physical changes occurring during adolescence and the increased demands of middle and senior high school may bring the disabilities to light. Previously satisfactory performance declines. Inappropriate social skills may lead to changes in peer relationships and discipline problems. Increased frustration and poor selfconcepts can lead to depression and/or angry outbursts.

Warning signs of learning disabilities in secondary school students include the following, which again, should occur as a pattern of behaviors, to a significant degree, and over time:

Language/Mathematics/Social Studies

- ✦ Avoidance of reading and writing
- ✦ Tendency to misread information
- ✦ Difficulty summarizing information
- ✦ Poor reading comprehension
- ✦ Difficulty understanding subject area textbooks
- ✦ Trouble with open-ended questions
- ✦ Continued poor spelling
- ✦ Poor grasp of abstract concepts
- ✦ Poor skills in writing essays
- ✦ Difficulty in learning foreign language
- ✦ Poor ability to apply math skills

Attention/Organization

- ✦ Difficulty staying organized
- ✦ Trouble with test formats such as multiple choice
- ✦ Slow work pace in class and in testing situations
- ✦ Poor note taking skills
- ✦ Poor ability to proofread or double check work

Social Behavior

- ✦ Difficulty accepting criticism
- ✦ Difficulty seeking or giving feedback
- ✦ Problems negotiating or advocating for oneself
- ✦ Difficulty resisting peer pressure
- ✦ Difficulty understanding another person's perspective

Again, parents have the right to request an evaluation by the public schools to determine if the student has learning disabilities.

Summary

Research has shown that the sooner learning disabilities are detected and intervention is begun, the better the chance to avoid school failure and to improve chances for success in life. When parents or teachers suspect a child has learning disabilities, they should seek an evaluation.

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Priscilla Vail

In Memoriam

We lost Priscilla Vail on July 6th. Priscilla had a gift. She could make a believer out of a skeptic and develop passion, dedication, and hope in the passive and victimized. She made the complicated – simple, the esoteric – understandable, and the scientific – practical. Priscilla was a translator. She took the incomprehensible and interpreted for the masses without losing site of the nuance and the specific. She made it possible for us to understand the “conundrum kids,” the science, the pedagogy, and the solution. She turned disability into a temporary condition that could be recognized, overcome, admired, and ultimately respected as an opportunity to develop passion and achievement that made being normal appear to be an impediment.

Priscilla’s talent would have supported success in a more remunerative genre. We have reason to be grateful that her love of children and teaching firmly tethered her talent to developing the skills and dedication of teachers and improving outcomes for children.

Some of you may remember Priscilla’s wonderful presentations at our conferences. With her passing we have lost a fearless, effective, and dedicated advocate as well as a gracious, patient, and caring mentor.



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