

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of The Dyslexia Association www.dyslexia.org.au Gail Hallinan President: Contact email: contact@dyslexia.org.au phone: 0407 243 844 June 2016

To phonic... or not to phonic...

From the editor

Phonics... the routine and tradition continues in nearly all junior classrooms each morning... drills and intensive rote practices.



and YES!..., for most students it's fun, it works and assists in word studies, spelling and word recognition.

Phonics are beautiful things, they can help us decode and encode unknown words; phonics value is hereby acknowledged.

But, for some students, a minority, phonics don't make sense, they don't help and these students just don't 'get' them. . So then what?

Reading is not just about sounding out.

Reading is much more about making sense from text, recognition of a pattern, a context, a familiarity; it is the reason why some children of just 3 or 4 can read before they start school, before they've even heard of phonics.

To look at research and understanding of how children learn to read, consider *Beyond Traditional Phonics* by Margaret Moustafa...



<https://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Traditional-Phonics-Margaret-Moustafa/dp/0435072471>

To resolve reading dysfunction at school, the traditional solution is often a more intensive phonics program, focused upon more drills, more rote learning... good luck with that, it can mean more torture.

'Evidence based learning' is oft quoted to support Direct Instruction and intensive phonics, but there is a plethora of evidence to support alternative non-phonetic approaches which work brilliantly for students who have not been successful with years of traditional training.

Some facts to ponder...

- * phonics help most students;
- * phonics do not help ALL students;
- * many children learn to read before they come to school not knowing any phonics;

* around 10% of the school population can improve their literacy significantly with a non-phonetic program AND there is ample evidence, both scientific and anecdotal, to support this position. (see www.dyslexia.com)

Teachers, to provide a fair and inclusive classroom environment, must have eclectic resources.



That is, provide strategies for the phonic-able students as well as those who require another approach which better suits their learning style.

How can we help?

Our goal is to enable teachers and educational professionals to recognise the need for alternatives to phonics style programs and support the minority of students to make a real difference.

Try starting with this website...

www.dyslexia.org.au

From ... **The Telegraph**

"... it is time that everyone stopped stubbornly holding to one particular view, and embrace whatever works for the child..."

The evidence is out there and clear... do not assume one size is going to fit every child...have a look at this excellent article from *The Telegraph*, published earlier this year, by Emma Plackett, Director of Reading Revival Limited. Go to

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/25/the-lse-is-right-the-phonics-reading-method-doesnt-work-for-ever/>

Association office bearers

President: Gail Hallinan
Secretary: Frank Passmore
Treasurer: Marianne Mullally

Management Committee:

Brenda Baird, Barbara Dennis, Annette Johnston, Frank Johnston (newsletter editor)

Want to remember something??? Draw it!

Researchers at the University of Waterloo have found that drawing pictures of information that needs to be remembered is a strong and reliable strategy to enhance memory.

"We pitted drawing against a number of other known encoding strategies, but drawing always came out on top," said the study's lead author, Jeffrey Wammes, PhD candidate in the Department of Psychology.

"We believe that the benefit arises because drawing helps to create a more cohesive memory trace that better integrates visual, motor and semantic information."

The study, by Wammes, along with fellow PhD candidate Melissa Meade and Professor Myra Fernandes, presented student participants with a list of simple, easily drawn words, such as "apple."

The students were given 40 seconds to either

Need to remember something?
Draw it.



Credit: Image courtesy of University of Waterloo
draw the word, or write it out repeatedly.

They were then given a filler task of classifying musical tones to facilitate the retention process.

Finally, the researchers asked students to freely recall as many words as possible from the initial list in just 60 seconds. Want to read more? Go to...

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/04/160421133821.htm>

I'm a DVD!

Makenzie, 10 years old, of Newman Western Australia, did her Davis non-phononic program in January 2015.

Like many students Makenzie struggled with phonics and literacy generally, experiencing strong feelings of inadequacy.

The one week program put her on the track to a non-phononic learning style which perfectly suited her visual spatial thinking style.



Makenzie from Newman

Makenzie described herself as a DVD, as opposed to family members who, she said, think more like CDs.

Beautifully put!

Makenzie took it upon herself to make a video clip to describe her pride at being a clever and successful learner

See Makenzie's video clip at...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzataxuy-xw&feature=youtu.be>



WWW.DYSLEXIAWA.COM.AU

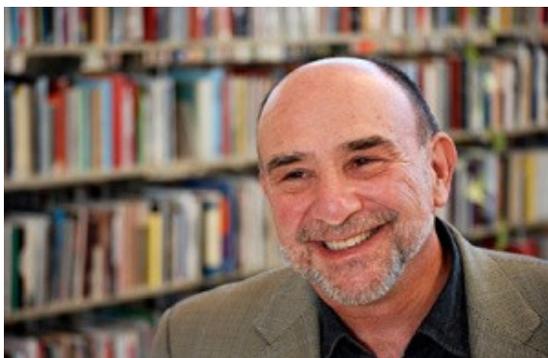
Makenzie also produced this art work to describe her thinking style

Poetry... words using a 'high vis vest'

Pulitzer Prize winner, poet Philip Shultz uses the creative right side of his brain... he describes poetic imagery as conducive to dyslexic thinking... words that wear 'a high vis vest' and learning from a more creative perspective.

And he describes some differences which may explain why dyslexic people require a different approach to learning.

Dyslexic 'disability' may even be heightened by traditional teaching methods.



You can read more about Philip Shultz's ideas as expressed at the Writers' Festival in Sydney by visiting...

<https://atthefestival.wordpress.com/2016/05/21/dyslexia-and-poetry-words-that-wear-a-high-vis-vest/>



Junior Grade Teachers... this is for you

The **DAVIS LEARNING STRATEGIES** workshop enables teachers of Years K to 3 to take the highly successful Davis strategies into their classrooms.

The Davis Learning Strategies® Workshop represents six years of working with Davis Methods in the classroom. It was developed to give Year K-3 classroom teachers' unique strategies to give their students life-long skills in **how to learn**, and provide effective reading instruction.

The workshop format and contents were researched and developed by a teacher who has over 20 years' experience in classroom teaching, curriculum development and teacher mentoring. The Davis Learning Strategies® methods were created and developed by Ronald D. Davis, author of *The Gift of Dyslexia* and *The Gift of Learning*.

Gail Hallinan, The Dyslexia Association president, is the sole provider of this PL opportunity for the Australian / New Zealand teachers and information can be obtained from...

<http://www.davistraining.info/event/davis-learning-strategies-wellington/>

Teachers in various Australian States or on New Zealand can go to www.dyslexia.com to find their local Davis Provider and get in touch to consider arranging a Davis Learning Strategies workshop for their own area.

Or you can email

contact@dyslexia.org.au to ask for information and assistance.



"Mum, is it okay if I stay home from school today and clean out my backpack?"