Seminars

TERM 3 2015

UNDERSTANDING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Presenter:  Marion McMahon, Speld Executive Officer

Earlybird Price:  $105.00 Members | $140.00 Non-Members  
Standard Price:  $150.00 Members | $200.00 Non-Members

Event Details:  In this practical full-day workshop the recently released AUSPELD Learning Difficulties Guide will be reviewed and effective ways to make use of it explored. Successful strategies for assisting students with developmental learning disorders, such as dyslexia, will be identified. All attendees will receive a copy of the Learning Difficulties Guide (valued at $60.00).

TOOWOOMBA  
Venue:  The Pavilion, Toowoomba Grammar School  
24 Margaret Street, Toowoomba

Date and Time:  17th July 2015, 9:00am - 3:00pm  

Venue:  Ellis Drive Richmond Hill, Charters Towers

Date and Time:  25th July 2015, 9:00am - 3:00pm

MACKAY

Venue:  Sunbird Education Centre,
347 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo

Date and Time:  31st July 2015, 3:30pm - 8:30pm

AUDITORY PROCESSING

Date:  19th Aug 2015, 9:30am - 11:30am

Presenter:  Julie Tasker, Specialist Literacy Teacher & Assistive Technology Consultant

Venue:  Queen Alexandra Home (top level), 347 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo

Earlybird Price:  $33.75 Members | $45.00 Non-Members

Standard Price:  $48.75 Members | $65.00 Non-Members

Event Details:  Auditory Processing is not about one’s hearing ability—it is about the processing of that information in the brain. Difficulties with Auditory Processing can cause problems with reading and spelling as well as general classroom learning. To bring about positive results it is important to identify the difficulty and learn strategies to cope with the disorder. Practical ideas for managing CAPD as well as the use of software will be discussed.

LOOK COVER WRITE AND THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LITERACY

Date:  17th Sep 2015, 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Presenter:  Dr Lillian Fawcett

Venue:  Queen Alexandra Home (top level), 347 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo

Earlybird Price:  $33.75 Members | $45.00 Non-Members

Standard Price:  $48.75 Members | $65.00 Non-Members

Event Details:  Two workshops in one: In the first half of this workshop, Lillian will discuss the theory underlying learning to spell and then she will teach you a unique and highly successful multisensory strategy which can be applied to learning to spell any word. In the second half, Lillian will discuss the component that students need to master in order to become successful readers. A key component of this session is teaching parents a simple syllabification strategy that students can use to decode unfamiliar words. This workshop will be of particular interest to teachers and parents with younger students and those experiencing difficulty in reading and spelling.

TERM 4 2015

PARENT WORKSHOP: DYSLEXIA... WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO WE DEAL WITH IT?

Date:  7th Oct 2015, 9:30am - 12:30pm

Presenter:  Leslie Keast-Patch, Learnersaurus

Venue:  Queen Alexandra Home (top level), 347 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo

Earlybird Price:  $33.75 Members | $45.00 Non-Members

Standard Price:  $48.75 Members | $65.00 Non-Members

Event Details:  Dyslexia...what is it and how do we deal with it?  
This session is great for parents who are looking for information about dyslexia or starting their journey with dyslexic child.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPELLING SKILLS, CAUSES OF SPELLING DIFFICULTIES & STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION

Date:  28th Oct 2015, 9:30am - 11:30am

Presenter:  Julie Tasker, Specialist Literacy Teacher & Assistive Technology Consultant

Venue:  Queen Alexandra Home (top level), 347 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo

Earlybird Price:  $33.75 Members | $45.00 Non-Members

Standard Price:  $48.75 Members | $65.00 Non-Members

Event Details:  Practical strategies will be explored in this workshop to teach spelling in a multi-sensory way. For both teachers and parents.

Front cover image: Famous Dyslexics
A Word from the President and Executive Officer

Of those students identified with a learning disability, four out of every five are assessed as having a reading disorder (or reading disability), commonly known as dyslexia. Dyslexia is best characterised as a persistent difficulty with reading and spelling. Some 10% of the Australian population is said to be effected. There are about 5 million school age students in Australia with about 1.1 million of these in Queensland. This means about 110 thousand students across all parts of Queensland have associated dyslexia difficulties in learning to read. However, dyslexia isn’t just an academic problem. It is also a family problem. Having a child with a learning difference impacts the entire family and so these figures mean that there are also thousands of families involved in the struggle to achieve fluent literacy. In recent research, Reid (2015) notes that usually individuals with dyslexia have average to superior intelligence but just learn differently and therefore need to be taught differently.

Dyslexia is one type of learning difference. Other learning differences include:

- Dyscalculia – unusual difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts.
- Dysgraphia – impaired handwriting interfering with learning to spell.
- Dyspraxia – difficulty with fine and gross motor coordination

The good news is that with the assistance of Speld, teachers, parents and the students themselves can learn effective practices which not only help with learning differences, but also helps remove a major cause of family disharmony.

The Speld approach is one of a tiered teaching strategy (Vaughn and Fuchs, 2003) which involves:

- early identification
- using data to inform decisions
- early intervention
- family resources and support
- a tiered teaching strategy, where students receive additional explicit teaching recommendations in their areas of need

Check out our new website and see the many resources available.

I love it when there is so much excitement in the office and our organisation grows from strength to strength. In this edition of the magazine, I would like to introduce you to the new staff at Speld. It is great to put a face to a name and to know a little about the people at the end of the phone when you call for advice. Our 4 delightful ladies, with an amazing amount of expertise in diversified areas, have enhanced our team to ensure we are equipped to move the organisation forward.

I have also had an opportunity to work with the other Executive Officers at Speld under the banner of AUSPELD. Although we work quite differently and are funded in very different ways we do have common goals and are all members of IDA (The International Dyslexic Association). It was agreed that this year we would celebrate Dyslexic Empowerment Week from the 18th – 25th October with the theme “Making Sense of Dyslexia”. The committee are currently planning our cocktail party to be held on the 16th October from 6-8 – we trust you will all be able to join us for this event.

Ken

Marion

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Marion’s Chinese Story

Our Executive Officer, Marion McMahon, wrote the following story about her time in China. Marion is generally a private person, however, she chose to share her experience to inspire others to explore what life has to offer.

Mark Twain once wrote “20 years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you have not done than by the things you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the Trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

It seemed that this message was written just for me. I was in my mid fifties and had been a Primary School Principal for 18 years, my daughters had successful careers, and I had just become a widow. I love to travel and take on challenges so - I applied for an overseas Principal position. What could be tricky about this??

Sooner than I had imagined, I had been offered the position of foundation Principal of an International school in China. The company was owned by a 3rd generation Chinese lady now living in Singapore and my school was part of a chain of international educational institutions, springing up in Singapore and China. Jinan the Capital of Shandong Province, was classed as a “small city” of 6.5 million. It was located midway between Shanghai and Beijing and just 100 kilometres from Qufu, the home of Confucius. The town had a number of foreign companies with interests in Jinan and there were no other international schools in the city.

So began my adventure in International Education. My foundation staff consisted of 4 Chinese administration workers, 3 Chinese student teachers, an Australian teacher on her first foreign appointment and myself. The initial enrolment was 5 Chinese students ranging in age from 3-5. The staff could speak basic English and I could not speak Chinese. They had never seen a foreigner let alone worked for one when I arrived. I was so conscious of the enormous amount of trust this community would need to have in me to enable this school to develop.

The school was a disused village high school – 3 wings, 4 stories high, on a very large block which obviously was the envy of all, on the outskirts of a rapidly growing city. It had no heating, and often no electricity or water. Dirt roads and a village surrounded the campus. Major renovations, outfitting classrooms, building kitchens, nurses stations, sleeping rooms, playgrounds consumed us 24 hours a day. And then there was the curriculum to develop and deliver.

I lived in the downtown area and quickly became the centre of curiosity for the locals. They were intrigued by my fair skin, touching my fair hair and marvelling at my blue eyes, as they picked through my shopping at the market to see what I liked to buy.

I quickly learnt that although there was foreign investment in this city, the foreigners did not actually live here – they chose Beijing or Shanghai and would
fly in and out for a week. They were waiting for the school to be established and the school needed foreign children to progress.

Wealthy Chinese families, who understood their child would need to be part of a global community in the future, were very keen to have their children attend the school and taught by the lowai (a person who is a foreigner). We had so much to learn together.

The children who would attend the school would range in age from 2 to 6 years if they were Chinese and up to 12 years of age if they were foreigners. All Chinese children must attend a National school once they turn 6. The curriculum would be inquiry based and all instruction would be in English.

To address the needs of this unique situation in Jinan, it was necessary for me to create two sub schools. One would offer an International program taught by a foreign teacher and the other would offer an International curriculum taught by Chinese teachers who had worked beside me and attended professional development from me.

Marketing events, open days, public exposure all became the nature of our school. The Chinese teachers, staff, and families were the best I have ever worked with – so dedicated, so willing to learn, and so proud to be working with a foreigner.

Our days were long, the children attended school from 8am until 5pm. Breakfast, lunch and for some even dinner was prepared. Together we learnt so much, as I introduced a community to concepts and a world so foreign to their own, and they taught me about their beautiful ancient culture and its traditions.

After 30 months I completed my contract and returned to Australia to care for my parents. I had established the first International school in the city, with the most amazing and attractive facilities any school would be proud to own, an enrolment of 210 students, 35 Chinese teachers and 9 management staff.

I still communicate with many of the staff, families and children and I often return to check on their progress. Many of my former staff have now opened schools of their own – teaching English in the evenings and on the weekends.

It is always an exciting roller coaster to open a new school – so many unknowns, so much to offer, so many adventures one could never anticipate when starting such a journey. To be given the opportunity in a foreign country is even more exciting. My time in China is a journey that I will cherish forever.

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**Luncheon Success**

Once again the Clem Jones Group has managed to sprinkle their magic towards Speld. At a specially hosted luncheon at Shangri La, we were able to network and spread the news about our services. It was a very special surprise to end the luncheon with Peter Johnstone the CEO of the Clem Jones Group announcing that they would donate another $20 000 – this is an amazing contribution to our organisation and will be directed at moving our services to regional centres. We do have 3 workshops planned in Charters Towers, Mackay and Toowoomba and it would be ideal if whilst we were in the area we could conduct assessments for these areas. We would like to offer our services to as many communities as possible so, please contact our office if you have a need, and we will negotiate how we can make this work. Also offering support were the Mayor of Ipswich Paul Pisasale, John Penglis from Cedar Creek Winery and Paul Paxton Hall from Paxton Hall Lawyers – Dyls Bertelson from Windsor Recruitment, David McDonald from Variety Qld, Tanya Forbes from Gold Coast Dyslexia Support Group, Sandy Hobley from Embracing Dyslexia and Dr Norm Pyle who is a Life Member of Speld Qld also attended.
“Dyslexia can be properly and successfully addressed by schools…. there is no excuse not to.”
– Dr Sally Shaywitz

Outside the Square is an Australian series of documentary films to increase awareness and understanding of dyslexia in our education system.

We share the difficulties encountered by students, the transformations of proactive teachers and the expertise of Australia’s leading education researchers to develop a deep understanding of dyslexia and showcase effective teaching strategies to assist students with dyslexia in the classroom.

Outside the Square is a community driven project to bring a blanket awareness of dyslexia into schools. The idea for the documentary was an outcome of the dyslexia policy roundtable hosted by the federal Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP in June last year. The project was funded using Kickstarter crowd funding and received a Commonwealth grant from the Department of Education and Training.

Sadly dyslexia is the ‘forgotten’ disability in education. There is a lack of understanding in our education system due to the omission of dyslexia in teacher training courses. This combined with the ‘whole language’ teaching of reading has been a disservice to children with learning differences. As a result, children are left to struggle on a daily basis…. unidentified and unsupported.

Dyslexia is more widespread than realised. According to research, the prevalence of dyslexia is estimated to range from 10% to 20% of school children (International Dyslexia Association). In every classroom, there will be between 3 – 5 students with a language based learning difficulty.

All children arrive at school, excited and eager to learn. The first struggles begin in prep has children with dyslexia will struggle to learn the alphabet sounds and have problems associating the sound to its corresponding letter. Already the gap has appeared. As time continues, this gap continues to grow...

As the student gets older, they will disengage from learning and they may become withdrawn or disruptive. This is soon followed by learned helplessness, avoidance of work and school refusal. The social and emotional implications can be enormous, such as a low self esteem, frustration, stress, anger, withdrawal, anxiety and depression. The long term consequences may include underemployment, unemployment, poverty, mental health concerns and encounters with the legal system.

Dyslexia education is a social justice issue. There is a real sense of urgency around these students and we desperately need to support them in their education. We cannot afford not to!

Film 1 – Understanding and Identifying Dyslexia

The scene is set with students and parents sharing their personal experiences so we have a better understanding of the daily struggles in the classroom and their impact.

Australia’s leading researchers and educators discuss the nature of dyslexia, common misconceptions, key indicators to identify children at risk, and associated difficulties that are a daily challenge to students.

Early indicators of dyslexia may include mispronouncing words, trouble recognising rhymes, difficulty sounding out words and slow to learn the alphabet letter names and sounds. Reading will be slow and laboured, spelling will have many errors and handwriting may be messy. As a student gets older, they will have difficulty...
understanding instructions, problems sequencing information and difficulty keeping up in class with gaps in their written work.

Film 2 - Targeted Teaching for Students with Dyslexia

Our dedicated teachers share their reflections that led to a transformation in their teaching. Progressive schools share their practices to support the education of students with dyslexia.

Effective strategies include evidence-based instruction, multisensory learning, classroom accommodations, reasonable adjustments for assessment and assistive technology. Students will require an individual plan with differentiated teaching, supplementary adjustments and targeted intervention.

Social and emotional support can greatly improve future outcomes for students with dyslexia. We showcase the schools program that will build self esteem and develop resilience.

Film 3 – Explicit Teaching of Language and Literacy

Current statistics indicate that over 40% of children struggle with literacy (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). Many of these children are instructional casualties of the ineffective teaching of reading. Learning to talk is a naturally acquired skill but the brain is not hard wired to learn to read. All children require explicit teaching to take them from speech to print... and crack the alphabet code.

Prominent educators showcase scientifically researched evidence-based methods including explicit instruction and the ‘Big 6’ of Reading. Research indicates that building a bridge between oral language and written language facilitates reading acquisition. The effective teaching of reading encompasses oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, structured systematic phonics, as well as developing fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Research indicates what is most effective for students with dyslexia are teaching practices that benefit ALL students. These documentaries will bring evidence based instruction and effective teaching strategies to every teacher in every classroom of every school. Outside the Square will empower students with dyslexia to receive the best learning opportunities and allow them to achieve their true potential.

The complete set of three films is essential professional learning for educators. The films are designed to also be conducted at either teacher initiated or school based professional development sessions and are aligned with Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

It is anticipated every school will have a copy of these films as a resource to be shared with students, parents and teachers. The complete set of DVDs including all 3 films for $70 AUD (including GST and postage) can be ordered directly from the website using PayPal. Alternatively, please send an email to gc.dyslexia@gmail.com and an invoice with payment details can be sent to you.

Please click on the link to the website for more information: http://www.outsidesquare.net/
**Neuromyths** By Max Coltheart

Emeritus Professor, Department of Cognitive Science at Macquarie University

What are parents to do when they find that a child of theirs is really struggling with learning to read – as children not infrequently do? There a number of commercially-available programmes that advertise themselves as capable of solving this problem. i.e. capable of turning struggling readers into competent readers, and parents are often tempted to turn to these. One problem with these programmes is that they are usually very expensive, possibly costing the parents thousands of dollars. But a more serious problem with most of them is that there is no evidence at all that they help children learn to read. Many of these programmes claim that they are based on evidence about how the brain works and what this evidence tells us about how children learn. But these claims are often based on “neuromyths”. Neuromyths are claims about how the brain works that simply have no basis in brain research (it is an unfortunate fact that brain science has not yet got to the point where it has discovered anything that can usefully be applied in the classroom).

For example, consider the DORE/DDAT programme, which was widely available in Australia in the mid-2000s. Its proprietor, Wynford Dore, a businessman who made his fortune from his paint-selling company, established a chain of Dore Achievement Centres across Australia, where the DDAT programme, claimed to help children with reading difficulties (and ADHD and Asperger’s syndrome), was administered to such children. The programme was aggressively marketed throughout Australia and was expensive. It consisted of a series of exercises aimed at improving the function of a region of the brain called the cerebellum, and it was claimed that reading difficulties, ADHD and Asperger’s syndrome were due to impaired functioning of that part of the brain. That was a neuromyth: no brain research supported that claim. Nor was there any scientific evidence to indicate that going through this programme improved a child’s ability to read. These criticisms of the DORE programme were made by me on “Four Corners” in 2007 (see https://tinyurl.com/2xx2aua). The DORE company threatened legal action against me, but nothing came of that. Instead, in 2008 the company went into liquidation (interesting accounts of all of this can be found at https://tinyurl.com/m8wmebf and https://tinyurl.com/kpnefrw).

The DORE programme is not unique in these problems. There are numerous other programmes claiming to help children with reading difficulties that are expensive, that lack independent scientific evidence that they are of any help for children who are having difficulties learning to read, and that make at best tenuous claims of being based on new developments in brain science. Examples of these include **Fast For Word**, BrainGym, the Irlen coloured lenses programme and, currently, the Arrowsmith programme. It is disturbing that some of these programmes have been taken up by State and Federal education authorities and actually used in Australian schools even though there is no independent scientific evidence that they work. For example, the website of almost every Australian State Department of Education endorses the BrainGym programme. Why is this the case when there is no independent scientific evidence that this programme does what it claims to do?

What’s a parent to do, then? A wise course of action, when contemplating using any commercial programme to help a child who is having difficulty learning to read, is to ask the vendors of the programme what the evidence is that the programme does actually help such children. What would count as evidence here? Vendors saying “I’m telling you that it does” doesn’t count: they would say that, wouldn’t they? Anecdotes from parents who have used the programme and believe that it worked for them don’t count either, since we don’t know how many parents there are out there who used the programme and considered that it didn’t work. What is essential is research that has been carried out by scientists who are independent of the organization marketing the programme, that showed improvements in children’s reading, and that was published in reputable scientific journals. Some reading programmes have passed all of these tests (“Jolly Phonics” is one that has, and so is MultiLit). Many have not.

A valuable resource for parents who are contemplating enrolling in one of these programs is offered by
Macquarie University’s Special Education Centre (MUSEC). At [http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/community_outreach/musec_briefings](http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/community_outreach/musec_briefings) the public can download one-page reports on many different methods that claim to be able to help children who are having difficulties learning to read. Each report offers a verdict about the method (“Not Recommended” or “Worth a Try” or “ Probably Only Mildly Effective”, for example) and explains how that verdict was reached. These reports are written by experts and can be trusted. At that website parents can read reports about BrainGym, the Dore programme, the Irlen lens approach, FastForWord, and various other methods they might be considering using.

Speld QLD aims to present information that is current and relevant, without necessarily implying endorsement where the supporting evidence is not yet all available.
Meet Tyler Lentz

“I feel it is important for students with dyslexia to understand their disability and what will help them learn best.” Tyler Lentz

As a preschoo...
One Mother’s Ramblings on her Discoveries through Today’s Dyslexia Messiness - March 15, 2015

I have a six year old daughter. To me, as is inherent with being a parent, she is perfect. She and I are intensely connected. She is just now starting to “like” school (three years of it seeming like a torture chamber). She still strongly dislikes reading. She, as always, is reading at the lowest level of average for her age. Her name is Lexie. Lexie has received her fair share of vision therapy. It did help progress gross motor skills (physical awareness of brain to body messaging). It did help with strengthening the muscles around her eyes. This resulted in improved eye teaming/tracking abilities. I pursued the path of behavioral optometry because this was the first “official” (from a teacher) directional point offered. Why did I readily go in this direction? At birth, I recognized something amiss in my daughter’s left eye. Was this something that I should be concerned about in my perfect daughter I asked the pediatrician? Nothing to worry about were the words I wanted to hear and that was indeed what I heard. I also was very comfortable going in this direction because my perfect daughter was clumsy. Although she walked on schedule, it was clear she was a bit behind in gaining control over her body muscles. In sum, this felt right.

With the improvements noted from Lexie’s first go of vision therapy treatments, Lexie still disliked school. In fact, this dislike was growing exponentially (we were now in first grade in an academically challenging school). Anxiety attacks begin to occur frequently; excuses are made to go to the nurses office; trips to the pediatrician ensue. I am a bit slow, but something is wrong here. A teacher/learning support specialist/parent meeting is held. I, being the parent, the one who has called the meeting, lead the discussion. All of my intuitive/reading people skills are on high alert. I instinctively know that there is something SIGNIFICANTLY wrong here. Teacher/Reading Support Specialist are, as is too common the case, on high cautious alert. They sense, and I’d even say know, that something is significantly wrong here. But because their “cautious parent radar” is up, they are comfortable with letting more time pass to see if this might be just a developmental issue. I too would like to believe it might just be developmental. My instinct/intuition carries the day. I pull the words out of their mouths; let’s get a learning disabilities assessment. It is scheduled. A death in the family occurs, my daughter and I leave the continent; the appointment gets cancelled.

Due to the death in my family and being in a different continent with a different school year, I begin homeschooling Lexie. I am not a teacher. Lexie and I both like and enjoy this environment. I receive help with homeschooling Lexie by a family caregiver who had, long ago, homeschooled her children. Our observations: Lexie is bright. Lexie has very weak verbal skills. Lexie HATES trying to read. More observations: When reading Lexie gets frustrated. She gets anxious and fidgety. She cries. More observations: Her eyes seem to be bothering her. She picks up a pair of Mommy’s reading glasses and says “hmmm.....these help”. More vision therapy is recommended and I heed this advise.

More progress is made in the previous aforementioned areas. I am, however, conflicted about this path now and decide to explore other paths. To the internet I go. In my internet searching, I find a Learning Disabilities Center that assesses across a very wide spectrum of learning issues.....one being Dyslexia...difficulties with reading/ language. We go; we get our Dyslexia diagnosis; it feels right. Beautiful process, beautiful people experienced throughout this path (as well as the previous one, just more time has been spent here...a massive amount of time has been spent in this path...the neuro-scientific one....the one where the research is indeed indisputable). Lexie has been working for six months with a private tutor. The first few months was two to three times a week for 50 minutes (the program being used was a “blended” OG one). The last several months has been five days a week in 50 minute sessions with a less blended OG program (specifically S.P.I.R.E). Throughout this time period, the programs have been reinforced at home. This is all in addition to the “normal” curriculum work, plus extracurricular activities. Well done Lexie!

The results to date of this path: more progress has definitely been made at a decent rate. It appears Lexie’s reading is improving greatly. Lexie’s sound to symbol associations are improving greatly. Lexie’s sound to symbol associations seem to be REALLY solid. Lexie still dislikes reading. She is more confident; she is more fluent; the automaticity is increasing yet she still dislikes reading. My observations: Lexie is still battling with her eyes.

With all the progress being made, I can’t get out of my mind that although this all feels right, there is still something going on with the eyes. An accidental meeting gives me my third directional point. Back to the internet I go. I go into the world of Irlen Syndrome. It feels a bit like snake oil. BUT, I watch the process; I watch my daughter and I take home a blue transparency and agree to schedule another appointment to go deeper into this path. During the holding period, Lexie is drawn to the blue transparency. When I or Dad forget the blue transparency when doing homework, Lexie GRABS it. Observations: Lexie likes her blue transparency. Less battling with the eyes. Irlen lenses are ordered (light yellow with a light green overlay lenses in pink aviator frames). What this is, in layman’s terms, in Lexie’s case: light sensitivity which results in visual processing issues. In another, not so accidental conversation, I receive my fourth directional point: The Alison Lawson Center. To the internet I go. An appointment is made.

We get our fifth diagnosis: Visual Dyslexia. This TOO feels right (just like the previous four but this one is feeling possibly even more right). We are potentially putting laser like focus (no pun and indeed pun intended) onto my daughter’s PRIMARY (or at least a significant contributing factor) driver of her struggling to read. What this is in layman’s terms: getting both eyes to have the same precise focal point when reading. What it might mean in scientific eyes: definitely something to do with visual processing and the visual cortex. The treatment plan has been scheduled. I am hopeful. Time will tell the significance of all factors in my daughters dyslexia. This thing called Dyslexia is indeed a messy thing.

This written document is a homage to my “perfect” daughter, Lexie. I am a mother. Through this written document, I want to ask all of us in the Dyslexia community to read, hear and understand my mother’s ramblings and think. A very special woman along this journey said (taking liberties with phraseology) “as much as we desire to create nice and neat subcategories of this thing called dyslexia, it can not be done (at least in this time period); Dyslexia is messy.

I would like to thank all of those I have met along this journey. EVERYONE has been helpful. I share this so that maybe we can all do our jobs better. I will be continuing to take this message forward in a variety of ways. To this end, I have drafted a framework to the solutions (in the shape of business models and processes) I believe are needed to “fix” the inefficiencies I encountered. I welcome any and all participation/interest in my further delving in this shared Dyslexia space.
Meet our New Educational Advisors

NAME: Ainsley Robertson
QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor of Teaching, Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), Graduate Diploma - Teacher Librarianship, Graduate Certificate - Autism Studies (currently completing).
WORK HISTORY: Sixteen years primary school classroom teaching (yrs 1 - 7), classroom learning support teacher, ROLE M mathematics project research assistant with Australian Catholic University.
INTERESTS: Reading, cooking and spending time with my two children who have learning differences.

NAME: Tanya Forbes
ROLE IN THE SPELD OFFICE: Educational Advising and Advocacy
QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor of Science, Graduate Diploma in Education, Orton Gillingham Multisensory Structured Language Specialist Teacher
WORK HISTORY: Ten years secondary science and maths teaching (Grade 7-12) in NSW and QLD, both in state and private schools. Four years as a dyslexia advocate and education campaigner with the Gold Coast Dyslexia Support Group. Independent filmmaker and producer of Outside the Square: dyslexia education films.
INTERESTS: Design, Nature and Reading

NAME: Renee Kenning
ROLE IN THE SPELD OFFICE: Educational Advising, grant submissions
QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor of Education (Middle Years of Schooling), Bachelor of Behavioural Studies, Master of Education – Guidance Counselling (currently completing)
WORK HISTORY: Seven years of teaching experience, including; all KLA’s for years five to seven, Science and HPE with years eight to ten and Mathematics with years eight to twelve.
INTERESTS: Outdoor physical activities, spending time with friends and family.

NAME: Ruth Hammond
ROLE IN THE SPELD OFFICE: Educational Advising, Marketing,
QUALIFICATIONS: Graduate Diploma Early Childhood Education, Bachelor of Business (Communications)
WORK HISTORY: Over ten years experience in marketing communications in Sydney, Brisbane, and London. Skilled in media relations, production of marketing material such newsletters and annual reports, and event management. Re-trained as an early childhood teacher and continue to work as a casual relief teacher.
INTERESTS: Reading for pleasure and children’s literature.
Assistive Technology

Kate Hutchison is the winner of the Snappy Learning Apps Competition. The following is her wonderful review. Congratulations Kate your $30 iTunes Voucher is on its way.

Snappy Learning Apps Competition!
My name is Kate Hutchison and I have just turned eleven and have just started grade six in 2015. I discovered I had dyslexia at the start of grade five. I felt so much relief when I learnt I had dyslexia. I started going to a tutor specialising in helping students like me. Going to my tutor has helped me understand how I can do things better and in a way I understand. I also had an understanding and wonderful teacher in grade 5 who understood me and my dyslexia which made school a better place. I have a wonderful supportive best friend who puts a smile on my face everyday. All these people but especially my tutor has given me my confidence back. Here are some great apps and my favourites at the moment are; “One minute reader” for helping me increase my reading speed, “Spellosaur” for my weekly school spelling words, “Targeting Maths” (not the same as the school one), because it was challenging but fun, and I have a lot of trouble remembering my times tables so Zombie vs Maths is fun for that. My first ever app that was fun to do was Dyslexia Quest. It’s totally cool.

Hope this helps other kids.
Kate Hutchison
Aspley East State School, Brisbane

Dyslexia Quest Review
In the ever-expanding domain of Assistive Technology (AT) and educational apps, it can often be a daunting task to find where the right place is for your child or student to start. There are countless spelling, reading and writing apps which are all worth being explored in your own time but the best place to start, is with an app called Dyslexia Quest. Dyslexia Quest is another product which has been created by The Nessy Learning Company with the Dyslexic learner strongly in mind – and it’s only $3.99! Two problems which generally underlie Dyslexia are slow processing speed and an inability to retain information in the working memory.

Dyslexia Quest assesses these difficulties across six fun games which test visual memory, auditory memory and sequencing skills. This app provides a very useful snapshot of a student’s individual abilities without the stress or pressure generally associated with formal academic testing; once the games have been completed there will be a number of suggestions on how to make the most of that student’s learning strengths and how to identify areas of difficulty for the student based on their learning weaknesses. The games are short, a little bit quirky and very engaging, with settings to easily adjust the level of difficulty for children aged from 6-16 years of age. The process of identifying a specific learning difficulty can often be a long and tedious one for the child experiencing it; this app is a seamless and fun way for children to improve their memory and sequencing skills while also pointing teachers and parents in the right direction when deciding – where to next in the world of i-Pads, Assistive Technology and Apps?
Book Reviews

Basic Facts about Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems
By Louisa Cook Moats & Karen E. Dakin

This book is a must-have guide for any parent or teacher of a child struggling to learn to read. ‘Basic Facts about Dyslexia’ is an essential resource that begins by answering the question “What is Dyslexia?” and defining exactly what it is. The authors have masterfully selected and combed through the most significant research in the field to provide clear and detailed explanations of the:

- Widely accepted research-based definition of dyslexia;
- Identification and treatment of dyslexia at various stages of development;
- Emotional consequences of reading difficulties;
- Current research on the role of genetics and the brain;
- Essential elements of effective reading instruction; and
- Treatment options for the most severe cases of dyslexia and other reading problems.

Whether you are a parent of a child, or the teacher of a student with dyslexia, this book will help you to identify, understand and support them using effective methods.

Available for purchase from Speld Qld for $50.00 and also available from our Library for Members.

Expert Perspectives on Interventions for Reading
A Collection of Best-Practice Articles from the International Dyslexia Association
Edited By Louisa Cook Moats, Karen E. Dakin & R. Malatesha Joshi

This new book brings together for the first time the most requested and timeless articles on key literacy related topics over the past decade from IDA’s Perspectives on Language and Literacy. Inside you will find a solid foundation of research-based, classroom-tested principles in a practice-ready format that is ideal for teachers, administrators, graduate and undergraduate students of education, and policy makers who are seeking gold standard solutions to the intractable problems of illiteracy.

This anthology contains the wisdom of over 50 reading experts and is a handy reference when you need to translate research into effective instruction. This collection holds information areas that include: Multi-component/structured language teaching, differentiated instruction, early intervention, spelling/word recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary instruction, fluency, comprehension, writing, writing instruction, adolescent/adult reading/writing/language difficulties.

Available for purchase from Speld Qld for $60.00

Totem Series Readers Review
by Evan Biddle (aged 8 years)

The Totem Series is about Zak and his goat and Mim and a Totem staff that has magic powers to help them get back home.

When I first started reading, I didn’t think I was going to like the stories. It looked boring because Zak was just laying in bed, but when I turned the next page, it got super exciting!

I liked how Zak had a goat who he took everywhere. In every single book they were in a different place, having a different adventure. There was always a different cool monster in the stories. I liked the pictures too. The totem staff had a different power each time Zak raised it to help rescue them.

It was helpful to have the hard words in chunks at the bottom of each page to help you read them. I also liked doing the comprehension questions in the big book after each story. Doing the questions made you think more about the story. I always wanted to start the next book.

I think year three to six boys and girls would like the books. They are way cooler than ordinary readers!

The Totem Series are available to borrow from the Library along with other phonic books and resources.
Invest in our children’s intellectual future

Do you or anyone you know work for an organisation that would be keen to support our outreach activities to assist students with learning differences? You may be taken aback to learn that around 6.5 per cent of Grade 3 children in Queensland do not reach the national minimum standard for reading and over 5 per cent do not reach the minimum standard in numeracy (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014). Early intervention for dyslexia or dyscalculia is crucial to avoid future anxiety, low self esteem, and school reluctance. Speld Qld is asking for financial support or donations of in-kind materials such as stationery to raise awareness and provide support to Queensland students in urban, rural, and remote regions. Please help us invest in our children’s intellectual future.

Benefits of sponsorship
Speld Qld assisted over 1000 students throughout Queensland in 2014 in addition to supporting teachers, principals, and guidance officers. We have a database of specialist teachers throughout Queensland and a panel of highly qualified academic assessors and psychologists.

Platinum
Cost: $20,000 and above per year
Your sponsorship will provide flights and accommodation for two specialist teachers to fly to a remote Queensland community to provide a full day workshop on learning difficulties and practical teaching strategies. Funds will enable Speld to provide copies of the AUSPELD Understanding Learning Difficulties guide to all workshop participants in addition to covering any venue costs.

Your donation will also enable Speld to invest in the latest literacy and numeracy resources for our library. These resources are often quite expensive and allow all our members to access the best programs free-of-charge.

Benefits:
• Logo appears on Speld Qld website.
• Logo appears in printed newsletter.
• Logo appears on all workshop promotion.
• Naming rights at the Speld annual cocktail party.

Gold
Cost: $10,000 - $20,000 per year
Your sponsorship will purchase between 150 – 300 AUSPELD Understanding Learning Difficulties guides to provide to principals, teachers, psychologists and parents. This handbook provides an overview of learning difficulties and lists practical resources and strategies that can be used in the classroom. This invaluable resource is particularly beneficial to those in rural and remote regions of Queensland.

Benefits:
• Logo will be printed on guides and cover mailing costs.

Silver
Cost: $2,000 - $10,000 per year
Speld Qld produces a comprehensive online guide to the latest assistive technology, from apps to text prediction and note taking software. Apps are a valuable multisensory method for students to learn and revise academic work. Some students find the physical skills involved in handwriting immensely difficult or have issues with expressing themselves in a written form. Utilising a keyboard can greatly benefit these students and enable them to express themselves in a timely way.

By sponsoring our Speld Qld “It’s appening guide”, you will be helping students access the best in research based assistive technology. Your donation will cover our advisor’s time in addition to assistive technology workshops and printed copies.

Benefits:
• Logo on Speld Qld “It’s appening guide”.
• Logo at assistive technology workshops.

In-kind Materials
Like any non-profit organisation, Speld Qld incurs fixed and variable operating costs. If you are able to assist in donating in-kind materials, we are keen to talk! Our needs range from photocopying paper through to flights and accommodation to reach our remote students and teachers. Alternatively we have a list of expenses that monetary donations can fund. Depending on the size of donation, you are entitled to the benefits of the relevant sponsorship package of Platinum, Gold, or Silver.
Who’s who at Speld Qld Inc …

**STAFF**

Marion McMahon  
Executive Officer  
Dip.T., B.Ed., Grad Dip aSpec Ed, Cert IV WTA  
Monday - Thursday 7am - 3pm

Melinda Goopy  
Office Manager  
Monday - Thursday 8am - 2:30pm

Megan Smith  
Assistant  
Monday - Thursday 8am - 2:30pm

Emily Thompson  
Administrative Assistant  
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm

Cathy Gardner  
SpaCARE Teacher Adviser  
BA (JntHons), PGCE (UK), Grad Dip SLD (UK)  
Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm

Ainsley Robertson  
Education Advisor  
Assistive Technology  
Monday 8am – 2pm

Tanya Forbes  
Education Advisor  
Advocacy  
Tuesday 8am – 2pm

Renee Kenning  
Education Advisor  
Grants  
Wednesday 9am – 3pm

Ruth Hammond  
Education Advisor  
Marketing  
Thursday 8:30am – 2:30pm

Emily Thompson  
Administrative Assistant  
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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President

Eduarda Van Klinken  
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Treasurer

Shaun Ziegenfus  
Treasurer

Tracey Lennon  
Denise Mehmed  
Jutta Dempsey

**PATRON**

Jackie French  
Australian Children’s Laureate 2014-2015  
Senior Australian of the year 2015

**SUPPORTERS**

Clem Jones

Dick Smith

Variety Qld

Paxton Hall Lawyers

Mayor Paul Pisasle

Gold Coast Dyslexia Support Group

**VOLUNTEERS**

Anne Moran

Carole Petersen

**HOURS OF BUSINESS**

Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 3pm (during school term)  
Telephone: 3394 2566 and 1800 671 114  
Fax: 3394 2599  Email: speld@speld.org.au

**LIBRARY FACILITY**

Email: library@speld.org.au. Postage costs will be added.

**Speld QLD ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Individual/Family: $77.00  
Concessional: $55.00  
Professional / School: $198.00

www.speld.org.au