

Dyslexia WA Newsletter

harness the gift
dyslexiawa.com.au

Volume 3 Number 4

November 2014

Newsletter of Dyslexia Correction Service trading as Dyslexia WA; Contact (618) 9591 3482; 0439 698 587; 0479 121 163. email dyslexiacorrectionwa@gmail.com. Annette Johnston: Licensed Davis Facilitator

Fish Don't Climb Trees

From Annette Johnston

The intriguing title of this book comes from a wonderful quote by Albert Einstein:

"Everybody is a genius. But, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."

I have recently read this book by Susan Hall. Sue is a Davis Facilitator based in Vancouver, Canada. She is indirectly responsible for my becoming a Davis Facilitator, too... but that's another story!

Sue understands dyslexia from the inside out – as a dyslexic person with vivid recollections of frustrations experienced in primary school, as a parent who searched for and found a solution to enable a once-struggling child to learn become a reader, as a talented Davis facilitator with fifteen years of hands-on experience working with children and adults, and as the founder of a Canadian charity aimed at building understanding and raising funds to help dyslexic students.



Annette has tagged interesting parts of the book...

Sue has written this insightful and informative book which strikes a perfect balance among autobiographical tidbits, illustrative stories, direct practical advice and suggestions for recognising and overcoming problems at school and in life.

Sue's charm and whimsical sense of humour make her book an enjoyable

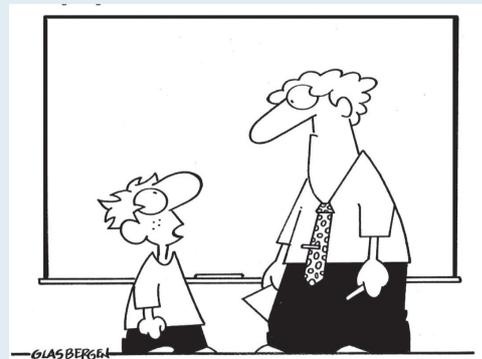
read throughout, with a heartfelt depth borne of her own life experiences and boundless compassion for others.

Sue's keen insight will be a boon for parents and teachers alike, whether they are new to learning about dyslexia or in search of a deeper understanding of the dyslexic way of thinking.



If you would like to purchase Sue's book, it is available from:

<http://www.friesenpress.com/bookstore/title/11973400009286590/Sue-Blyth-Hall-Fish-Don%27t-Climb-Trees>.



"If my mind wanders during class, think of me as part of a distance learning program."

followed this life-changing suggestion.

My journey as a dyslexic student has granted me the luxury of assimilating knowledge in different ways. After all, a curious mind can find answers in the most unexpected places. When I couldn't rely on letters to conform, I focused on words spoken, landscapes traversed, cultures observed, and teachers dedicated to their trade. While I have become a strong reader, I am fortunate to have retained the ability to look beyond text and written words to find meaning.



Go to...
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/write-for-the-future/my-kind-of-brain_b_6037972.html to continue this story...

My Kind of Brain

By Melck Kuttel

Through the human eye, letters form up at attention, their ranks splitting off to make squads commonly known as words. Most can keep these letters at attention, preventing them from falling off the line. Yet, my page differs: the letters seem to dance. My eye lacks control, and my ranks fall into disarray. Words of grotesque nature form and then split off to form other unintelligible scribbles. I try hard but can only get the letters to make simple ranks for short periods, and then the renegades resume their crazed dance, defying my authority.



A child's path to "readerhood" is crucial in helping him or her become a functioning member of society. Many children start the journey with clear skies and a calibrated GPS system, mastering key fundamentals at young ages. My journey was filled with snake pits and hailstorms. Many years went by and I was still battling the armies of vowels. After a semester of grade two in South Africa, a teacher recognized that I needed remedial help. I followed her recommendation to attend a school designed for kids confronting a difficult path to "readerhood." I doubt I would be where I am today had I not

Dyslexia isn't a disability, it's just being a little different

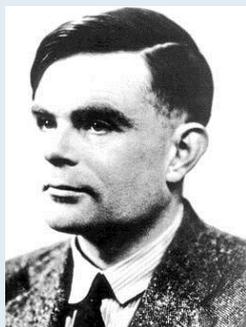
By Oliver Wright – 24 September 2014

It may have been more than 30 years ago, but the weekly misery of English spelling tests is still engrained in my mind. Nesesity. Becose. Rerly. Or, for that matter, spelling itself.

Each week we would spend the first 15 minutes of the lesson being tested on 20 random words. The papers would then be passed around for other children to mark.

Each week I would score 2,3,5 out of 20 (on one particular memorable occasion I managed zero). The humiliation was compounded by the format: everyone else in the class new (deliberate mistake) exactly how badly I'd done.

But then no one in those days knew much about dyslexia. In the words of my teachers, I was "careless", "didn't concentrate" or, if they were feeling irritated, "lazy". I had a problem without an explanation for it.



Thirty years on, I'm still dyslexic. I still can't spell, but am rather more militant about it. In fact, I think it's your problem. After all, as the dyslexic journalist AA Gill pointed out, you're the people who thought it was a smart idea to spell phonetically with a "ph".

But there's a serious point. And this was highlighted by the revelation that GCHQ is now employing 120 "neuro-diverse" intelligence officers.

These individuals, who suffer either from dyslexia or dyspraxia, are employed precisely because GCHQ has recognised what some parts of society still does not: that these conditions are far from disabilities – they are simply differences.

And, arrogantly, I may be worse than you lot at some things, but I'm a whole lot better than you at others.

Take writing, which I do for a living. I don't think I'm too bad at it – and suspect that's

because of my dyslexia.

When I stopped trying to follow the rules of sentence construction (which I didn't comprehend anyway) and wrote as I spoke, I found that I could usually explain and articulate an idea more clearly than someone who was an expert on the past participle.

Equally, I found that I could skim-read endless impenetrable documents and identify the fact or idea that was interesting. That's quite a useful skill for a GCHQ analyst.

The interesting thing is that if I am reading that document out loud, I will still miss out words and unwittingly change the sentence construction – but that doesn't really matter: I know what it means. I know what's important about it.



Read more at:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/debateni/blogs/dyslexia-isnt-a-disability-its-just-being-a-little-different-30609606.html>

Poor Speller? Relax!

By Laura Zink de Díaz

– with a lot of help from Google!

(from The Dyslexic Reader, Issue 1, 2014)

I know, I know... you have to spell right or your teacher will take points off your paper. So do the best you can, look words up if necessary, to minimize the number of points you lose. But after you've finished, remember that over the centuries there have been a lot of very accomplished people who couldn't care less about spelling. Here's a sampling:

Eighteenth Century

A gentleman received a letter, in which were these words: "Not finding Brown at hom, I delivered your meseg to his yf. The gentleman, finding it bad spelling, and therefore not very intelligible, called his lady to help him read it. Between them they picked out the meaning of all but the yf, which they could not understand. The lady proposed calling her chambermaid, 'because Betty,' says she, 'has the best knack at reading bad spelling of any one I know.' Betty came, and was surprised that neither sir nor madam could tell what yf was. 'Why,' says she, 'yf spells wife; what else can it spell?'" – Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, in a letter to his sister, July 4, 1786.

Nineteenth Century

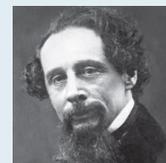
"It's a – poor mind that can only think of one way to spell a word." – Andrew Jackson (1767–1845), 7th President of the United States.



I have no respect for a man who doesn't know more than one way to spell a word. I don't see any use in spelling a word right, and never did. I mean I don't see any use in having a uniform and arbitrary way of spelling words. We might as well

make all our clothes alike and cook all dishes alike. "Anyone who can only think of one way to spell a word obviously lacks imagination." – Mark Twain (1835 – 1910), American author and humourist.

"Do you spell it with a 'V' or a 'W'?" inquired the judge. "That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my Lord." – Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870), British novelist and social critic.



Twentieth Century

"My spelling is Wobbly. It's good spelling but it Wobbles, and the letters get in the wrong places." – A. A. Milne (1882 – 1956), British author best known for his character, Winnie-the-Pooh.



"Correct spelling, indeed, is one of the arts that are far more esteemed by school ma'ams than by practical men, neck-deep in the heat and agony of the world." – Henry Louis Mencken (1880 – 1956), American journalist, essayist, magazine editor, satirist, critic of American life and culture, and scholar of American English.

There, you see – if H. L. Mencken, the 'Sage of Baltimore, and one of the most influential American writers and prose stylists of the first half of the twentieth century, can poke fun at our obsession with spelling, you're OK!



(EDITOR'S NOTE: Author Bill Bryson says spelling is 'more about fashion than science'... a lot of VERY smart people in the past couldn't care less about spelling. Here's a puzzle:... how many ways can you think of to spell 'fish' using accepted letter-sound matches, e.g. 'ph' in photo, 'ss' in mission, 'o' in women, or 'ti' in station. Try phich, ffoti, ghoti, phiss...to get you started!! Send in your results, let me know how you go.)