

necessary for numeracy to make a similar distinction between the qualitative and quantitative, often referred to by Steve Chinn as grasshoppers and inchworms.

An educational psychologist may be invited to assess a child's learning difficulties and will give a series of tests resulting in an IQ score. This score should be considered to be a rough yardstick; the sub-test scores are always of interest. The SEN teacher - if trained - will be able to interpret these scores with relevance to the child's remedial strategies. Where a child's IQ is average or above and there is a seriously low score in reading and spelling, a statement of Special Educational Needs may be recommended for out of county schooling. But this can take a long time to produce and the years may be slipping by. It is not unusual for intelligent teenagers to be faced with GCSEs without having the basic skills for the examinations. This is a cruel situation. It should have been pre-empted by the right tuition in the infant and junior years. With the right tuition one boy - who at 7 years was written off by his Primary School as ineducable - obtained 8 GCSEs at 16, all As, Bs and Cs.

Links between the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the SEN teacher and class and subject teachers on particular difficulties any child is experiencing are of vital importance, as indeed are the links between school and Language and Learning Units. Such communication will, in the long run, save teachers much time and frustration as their teaching will be more effective.

Recognising that there are different ways of learning is fundamental. Understanding that there is no one best way of teaching all children is the way forward. This implies a different attitude on the part of teachers, but is already being applied where there is enlightened thinking in the teaching profession.

Further information for dealing with dyslexia in the classroom can be found in the book *Day-to-Day Dyslexia in the Classroom* by Joy Pollock and Elisabeth Waller, ISBN 0 415 111323, Published by Routledge. Orders may be made via the BDA.

They Can Learn if We Know How to Teach Them

by Joy Pollock, Dyslexia Schools Consultancy Service, Berks.

All over the country - and not only in the UK - the cry goes up in schools "How can we be expected to teach children with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties? There are insufficient resources. We haven't got the equipment. We haven't got the time."

However, for a start, class teachers would be helped if they understood the mere basics of dyslexia - that we all function differently and therefore that not all children learn in the same way. Some of us, for instance, visualise words in the mind's eye and can therefore read and spell without difficulty. For those who may see a **picture** in the mind rather than the letters of the word, the spelling of that word may well pose a problem; these children will usually prefer drawing to writing. They are often very practical, knowing instinctively how mechanical things work and may not even need to refer to the instructions. Many architects function like this; they can visualise a whole building in 3D and know where everything will go. Fashion designers and interior decorators may also visualise in a similar way. In their work this is an enormous advantage. How the mind is working is a very important aspect in a person's way of learning. Teachers in training should be made aware of this.

A similar situation occurs in learning numeracy. As those of us know who have heard Mahesh Sharrna or Steve Chinn talk on this subject, by and large some learn numeracy on a step-by-step or quantitative basis and others are quick to see relationships in numbers, a qualitative approach. Teachers need to be aware of this too, because if a teacher automatically works in a quantitative way, he or she will tend to teach that way and may not realise that the qualitative thinkers in the class are not necessarily able to follow the line of argument. Both approaches should be taught so that the whole class will be included in the lesson.

In any class not all children can learn to read by Look-and-Say.

Reproduced, with permission, from:
"The Dyslexia Handbook 1996"

1.

Those who have no mental recall for the letters in the word will only learn through phonics and word-building. Phonological links may be poor, too, so tuition will have to be implemented slowly and with considerable reinforcement.



Workbooks and computer programmes are now available in plenty for this purpose and these develop kinesthetic techniques which are also important. For these children extra reading by

parents and helpers with Look-and-Say reading books are liable to be a total waste of time. Moreover, through listening to others, a child may learn to recite a reading book by heart, giving a completely wrong impression of his or her ability.

"Teachers, as well as parents, need to understand that whether a child learns to read by Look-and-Say or phonics - or a blend of both - eyes must converge correctly on the words. The simple test of distance vision on a chart of letters, taking each eye separately, is **NOT** adequate for reading and writing at a point of approximately 12 inches (30 cm) distance. This is also a test of letter recognition - it would be a pity if a child were to be prescribed spectacles for not **knowing** the letters! Children may be noticed in class where the angle of the head to page indicates that they are trying to occlude one eye because the letters appear to be jumping around. Anybody dependent upon spectacles and deprived for some reason of their use will have some idea of the discomfort and difficulties daily experienced by these children. This is not the cause of dyslexia, but often an additional difficulty which may well be alleviated, and in some cases cured, by some simple eye exercises. If there is cause for concern, a GP's referral will be required for a check for eye

convergence by an orthoptist at a local hospital. Direct appointments can also be made under the NHS with an optometrist at the local Optician's. In some instances the initiative for an appointment may be taken after the usual eye test by observant school nurses.

If there is any doubt about clarity of hearing, this, too, should be checked - possibly by an audiologist for high and low frequency deficits.

Speech and language therapists are still often considered to deal primarily with articulation problems, whereas these days they are also qualified to evaluate and give their attention to speech and language processing problems. In the past it has generally gone unnoticed that there are children (and adults) who have difficulty in either expressing their thoughts or comprehending language, or both. It is as though their mother tongue is like a foreign language to them and they cannot use it with facility. Dr Mel Levine, professor of pediatrics at The University of North Carolina School of Medicine, during a recent conference in Cambridge, mentioned that some violent crimes are committed by people who cannot express themselves and their feelings are locked inside them. Indeed, how often do people then remark with amazement: ".... and he was such a quiet man!" Understanding and help by parents and class teachers could always do much to enable such a person express his feelings at an early age.

"Yes, but with a class of 35 children, how can I possibly attend to the needs of an individual child?" say class teachers. It must now be recognised that although there may be at least one severe dyslexic child in every class, there will probably be three or four moderately dyslexic children and several more who are mildly dyslexic. It then becomes a question of organisation. Perhaps if the good 'word-visualisers' were in one group and the good 'picture-visualisers' in another - making absolutely sure there is no stigma attached - this would enable the teacher to be clearly aware of the differences and to develop work programmes specifically targeted to build on the strengths and weaknesses of each group. A non-teaching assistant could supervise the phonics group while the class teacher supervises the Look-and-Say and vice versa. A change of group may be