

Association for a Healing Education

www.healingeducation.org

Dyslexia and the Reading Process

by AHE Board Member Mary Jo Oresti M.A.,
from a lecture

The topic of reading is to me like driving in an unfamiliar town and all the possible ways to arrive at your destination. Some people have a map that they can interpret. Some people have a good sense of direction and can almost follow their instincts and arrive where they need to be. Others take lots of different turns and streets and eventually get there. Some people get very lost and have to stop for directions. And some do not arrive at all.

Reading, writing and math for dyslexic people can be confusing and some children get lost. There is no real “north” by which to steer by. They can see things from many angles, and so like driving, there are a lot of ways “to get there,” and different ways to perceive the letters and numbers: for example: p,b,q,d.

The reason that dyslexia is a complicated phenomenon is because it demonstrates both the complexity of a human being and the complexity of the processes of perception and memory.

Let us look a little at the human being. As we know the senses receive the impressions from the outer world. We could say the senses vibrate with and imitate the outer sense world. These imitations are mirrored by the rhythmic system. Breathing which is connected to the feeling life connects with these impressions. These impres-

sions are then imprinted as memory pictures. The brain then brings the pictures to day-wake or thinking consciousness (*Foundations of Human Experience*).

The memory system, as explained in neurology, is an important factor. After information is perceived, the prefrontal cortex captures and stores it. The frontal lobe holds the information in working memory for a while. Then the hippocampus is recruited to retrieve it. When a memory is recalled it is placed back in the frontal lobe. A few years after the memory is first acquired the frontal lobe can access it directly without help from the hippocampus. Learning motor skills is different. That is handled through the striatum and the cerebellum. (*A Users Guide to the Brain* by Dr. John Ratey) However, if the frontal lobe is not functioning completely, this process is hindered.

Now, let us look again at the subtle bodies - While impressions move into the rhythmic and the memory, something else is going on,. Refracting, reflection and reversing takes place. Who is doing these movements? . The etheric, the lower astral and upper astral. Finally the ego takes hold of the physical outer impressions.

With the eye a visual input is transmitted through the retina to the visual cortex. The etheric body brings inner life to the impressions and “tones them down”. An after image is then created with the help of the astral body (if you

continued on next page

saw red and closed your eyes, then looked at white paper, you would see green) (Also see Learning to Experience the Etheric World) This is a mirroring. The astral body has this characteristic of “doing things in reverse” Then the astral body goes to work and b rings consciousness – it reflects the impression. With hearing the astral body also does an activity . When you hear a tone, the astral body produces the rest of the scale. A wonderful meditation for this is the circle - point meditation in *Education for Special Needs*.

With dyslexia there are many processes at work. Any hindrance can change the compass of the person and cause dyslexic type phenomena. And some people will have days when things “are on straight” and days when there are challenges to seeing the world as it is.

Clinically the word dyslexic encompasses a wide range of language disorders.

- Trouble processing sound – but might process whole words
- Trouble processing the visual word -but might decode
- Extract meaning from printed words
- Symptoms can worsen with fatigue (which can be just 10 minutes of work)
- 20% of United States population can be called dyslexic. There is a question: Is it a brain with faults, trying to do the best it can; or is it that a different part of the brain is trying to operate to read. (*Users Guide to the Brain*). Often dyslexia is genetic. so ask in the interviews you conduct with the parents if there is a history of reading challenges. Dyslexia is linked to 6th and 15 chromosomes. Dyslexics have a

proliferation of the same kind of cells as artist, musicians and architects.

- Cannot do quick processing such as adjacent letter sounds such as the p and a of pa Lots of studies on this.

- Less frequent in girls who generally have a larger corpus collosum and can compensate.

Activities and therapies that help

- Lemniscate to follow with eyes
- Crawling for brain integration
- Jump rope for rhythmic system and organizing
- Painting bands of color for eye tracking and soothing that sense
- Listening to tones for auditory discrimination
- Kinesthetic – write on the back
- Some brain gym for older students
- Bal -A-Vis-X program
- Immature movement integration

Healing and Balancing Work

- Extra Lesson (Audrey McAllen)
- Nutrition such as EFAs
- Flower essences and constitutional remedies.

Teaching reading itself will be explored at another time. It demands an understanding of the reading process, a clear program, a multi-sensory approach and practice. In order for these interventions to be successful, the teacher needs an understanding of the child's learning profile.