

Learning Strategies Centre

The purpose of the Learning Strategies Centre (LSC) is to assist teachers and students with learning strategies. Currently there are approximately 30 students presently in the program. The LSC team consists of our coordinator, Jayne Dold and our support teacher, Jan Potter. The individual needs of each student are discussed with the teachers and the Primary Leadership Team.

Testing by professionals is arranged by the LSC team and Funding applications are prepared on behalf of the students and parents. The team endeavours to keep abreast of any new developments or programs that may advance the learning of their students by regularly attending professional development sessions.



Meet Jayne Dold

Coordinator Learning Strategies Centre
Taylors Hill & Mernda campuses
Gilson College

Jayne has taught for over 20 years from Prep to Year 9 in NSW, QLD, Vic and USA, in both the private and public school systems.

**Motto – Reach for the stars!
With the right attitude
everyone can achieve his or her
God-given destiny**

Dip Teach (Primary)
Dip Special Education
Grad Dip Reading and Language

Students with Individual Learning Needs

No two children are exactly alike. Each one is different and each has a preferred way of learning about the world around him or her. Some are primarily auditory learners, others visual, while still others prefer to explore the world by means of touch. Most use a combination of all three modes. The way some students learn best does not fit with how the curriculum is structured. These students may fall into the special needs category. Teachers are increasingly challenged to provide for the diverse and complex needs of all students in their classes.

Today so much is known about a variety of learning difficulties, and with each type of difficulty comes a different set of recommendations. Additional information is being discovered all the time about different types of special needs and the remediation required. While this information is welcomed and helpful, it can also overwhelm a busy teacher with up to 25 individual student needs to meet, with only so many hours in the day. Parents must come to recognize their very important role in assisting the teacher with the education of their child.

Common special needs include challenges with learning, communication, emotional and behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, and developmental disorders. Students with these kinds of special needs are likely to benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching, use of technology, a specifically adapted teaching area, or resource room.

The opposite of special education is general education. General education is the standard curriculum presented with standard teaching methods and without additional supports.

Students are referred to LSC by the class room teacher in consultation with the Primary Leadership Team (PLT). Speak with your child's teacher if you have concerns.



Dyslexia Basics

Dyslexia is the most common cause of learning difficulties in the classroom.

The word comes from the Greek and literally means *difficulty* (dys) with *words* (lex). Medical doctors originally coined the word '*dyslexia*' well over 100 years ago when they began to develop a scientific interest in why some, otherwise intelligent children, had unusual or unexpected difficulty in learning to read. (Until recently educators have preferred to use the term '*learning disabilities*'.) Since then over 70 sub-categories are being used to describe its various aspects.

The most common characteristic is difficulty with reading, spelling and writing for no apparent reason. It can also cause problems with numeracy (*dyscalculia*), and handwriting (*dysgraphia*).

A dyslexic person may have problems with putting things in order, finding things and following instructions. He or she may confuse left and right, and reverse numbers and letters. The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions. Dyslexia often runs in families and can be acquired through early hearing loss caused by 'glue ear.'

The good news is that dyslexics can achieve spectacularly if they develop the special abilities and talents that God has blessed them with.

History gives us a long list of people who have achieved great and lasting success in varied fields (such as Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci) despite extraordinary difficulties in reading, writing, memory, speaking, mathematics and other areas.

The 8 Basic Abilities of Dyslexics

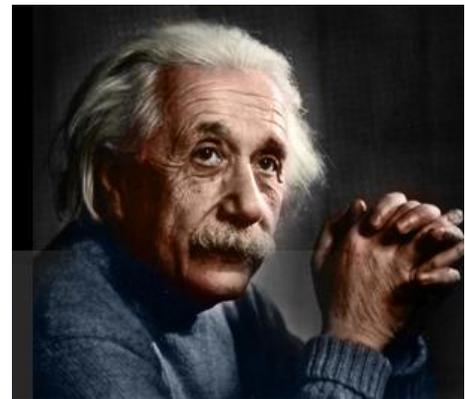
(From "*The Gift of Dyslexia*" by Ronald Davis)

1. They can utilize the brain's ability to alter and create perceptions
2. They are highly aware of their environment
3. They are more curious than average
4. They think mainly in pictures
5. They are highly insightful
6. They think multi-dimensionally (using all the senses)
7. They can experience thought as reality
8. They have vivid imaginations

In our next newsletter I will provide a simple checklist, to help you identify if your child, spouse, self, or other family members has, or may have, dyslexia - *Jayne*.

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

Albert Einstein - famous dyslexic and theoretical physicist who developed the general theory of relativity.



For Dyslexia assessments, parents can contact either:

1. Jane Metcalf, Learning Difficulties Assessment Centre, 82 Stud Road, Dandenong.
Phone – 0419 927 096 or Web address - www.learningandmemory.com.au
2. Jayne Pivak, Dyslexia Australia.
Phone 0420 305 450 or Web address - www.dyslexiamelbourne.com





Meet Jan Potter

Support Teacher
Learning Strategies Centre
Taylor's Hill Campus
Gilson College

Jan has been teaching since 1970, generally in small, one teacher sized schools within Australia, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati.

Jan has experience in various denominational and non-denominational schools, including working with learning disabled adults and children.

During a fifteen year stint away from teaching she taught folk and decorative art to adults, opened an art gallery in the Hunter Valley and published two embroidery books.

Jan says, "I understand there is an imaginary line of average intellect, but everyone spikes above and below it to some degree. That's why learning is a lifelong occupation, there's always something to learn."

Dip Teach (Primary)

Brain Gym

What is it? Can anyone do it? Does it work?

Many people develop only one side of their brain, in fact some people are right brained, right handed, right footed, right eared and eyed or left in all or most of these. Some operate equally from both sides of the brain.

To have access to both sides of your brain your body becomes more useful, giving a person greater ease of crossover or connection between the two differently aligned parts of the brain. Brain Gym helps restore the balance between the left and right brain bringing the whole body along with it.

Brain Gym exercises have been gradually developed through Movement-based Learning and Educational Kinesiology both of which pursue the idea that learning new physical skills leads to new thought structures thus creating new learning opportunities. The gentle movements employed in the exercises are easy for any age and have been "designed to enhance personal development and diverse fields of learning."¹

Consistent daily use of the exercises has bought dementia sufferers back into the real world and enabled many students to increase fluency in reading, handwriting and other areas of schoolwork. "Movement bestows the natural, lifelong adventure of learning... This ordering of the world in memory needs movement and input for stable references."²

"The visionary educator, Maria Montessori (1955, p.167) commented that the senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge."³

Can anyone do it? Yes. Does it work? Definitely, tried and tested. Have a go!

Jan



1: Brain Gym: Teacher's Edition, Paul E. Dennison and Gail E. Dennison p. xvi

2: Brain Gym: Teacher's Edition, Paul E. Dennison and Gail E. Dennison p. 3

3: Brain Gym: Teacher's Edition, Paul E. Dennison and Gail E. Dennison p. 3



Working Collaboratively

One of the best ways parents can help teachers with their child's learning is to understand what inhibits learning and what enhances learning, and to monitor these things in the home. Some changes are simple to implement, other much harder.

This month, something simple - **drink more water**. Evidence from medicine, sport and education shows that drinking plenty of plain, un-iced water is essential for brain fitness. Brains dehydrate rapidly and, even before we begin to feel thirsty, our concentration lapses, and boredom, drowsiness and confusion can take over.

Teachers have found that in classrooms where students replace commercial drinks with water, behaviour has improved, conflict has reduced and work levels have increases. Where water is the only drink allowed in pre-schools the children are better behaved and more focused on learning.

Students do better in tests and examinations when they drink water through study sessions. Schools and universities now allow students to drink water in examination rooms for the same reason that long distance runners and cyclists are encouraged to take water during racing.

- Ward and Daley, Learning to Learn, p.23

Helping the Students

Psychologists

Cathy Catroppa,
Dept. of Psychology
Royal Children's Hospital

Speech

Georgina Lemke
Lemke Speech Pathologist

Mina Pastori,
Speech Pathologist

Occupational Therapy

Louise Ogilvie
Carolyn Ash
Everyday Independence

Reading Recovery

Sharon Vodell

Brain Gym

Jan Potter

Did you know:

Scientists, writers, artists, poets, politicians have all been identified as having some form of dyslexia or learning disability. This includes notables such as Michael Faraday, Hans Christian Andersen, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Gustave Flaubert, Harvey Cushing, Auguste Rodin, Leonardo da Vinci, General George Patton, William James, King Karl of Sweden, Prince Charles of England, President Woodrow Wilson, Nelson Rockefeller and William Butler Yeats.

We are limited only by our attitudes.

"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Prov 23:7.



48 Ways to Improve Your Child's Attention Span and Behaviour

(Dr Ian Lillico, former principal and international educational consultant)

1. Provide a Balanced Breakfast

Include a balance of complex carbohydrates such as whole grain cereals, bread and pasta. Proteins like milk or soy milk, yoghurt, nuts and eggs. Fresh fruit and fruit drink.

2. Consider the Feingold Diet

Limit your child's intake of synthetic food dyes, artificial flavours, flavour enhancers and preservatives. After a period of total abstinence from food with additives you can begin reintroducing foods one at a time while looking for behavioural reactions to specific additives.

Learning Activity

Lazy 8s improves visual attention and eye mobility needed for reading.

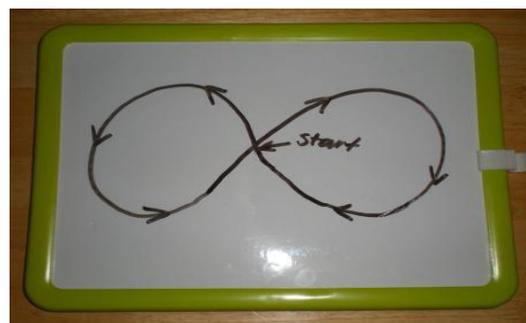
You are basically writing the number 8 on it's side. That's why it's lazy .

Align yourself with a point at eye level. This will be the midpoint of the 8. Pretend you have a large sheet of white paper or a white board in a landscape position in front of you.

Place it in front of you so that the middle of your page is parallel to the middle of your body, your belly button.(You want to be crossing over your belly button to get to the left and right of your page as you draw).

The aim is to keep your hand steady and let your eyes follow what you are doing. Start on the midline and move counter clockwise first: up, over and around. Then move clockwise: up, over and around.

As the eyes follow the Lazy 8, the head moves slightly and the neck remains relaxed. Three repetitions with each hand separately and then both together.



Useful Resources

Have you tried accessing information from the Internet to help your research? There are many different ways to gain support through the Internet such as:

1. **Blogs** – these are discussion or informational sites for people with common interests
2. **Internet Forums** - a discussion board
3. **Websites** – is a set of related web pages served from a single web domain. Websites have many functions and can be used in various fashions; a website can be a personal website, a commercial website, a government website or a nonprofit organization website. Websites can be the work of an individual, a business or other organization, and are typically dedicated to a particular topic or purpose.
4. **Web search engines** – software system designed to search for information on the world wide web. Common search engines include Google, Yahoo, Mozilla Firefox, Bing

Some Useful Websites

Health Information

Better Health Channel 1800 126 637
<http://raisingchildren.net.au>

Early Intervention

Early Childhood Intervention Australia
<http://www.eciavic.org.au/>

Advocacy

Association for Children with a Disability
<http://www.acd.org.au/>

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria – Supporting family carers
<http://www.carersvic.org.au>

Creating and Sharing Knowledge

Parenting Research Centre
<http://www.parentingrc.org.au/>

Amaze (formerly Autism Victoria)

Autism Victoria
<http://www.amae.org.au>

Your Kids Your life

Kidspot (check out learning & behaviours)
<http://www.kidspot.com.au>

Factsheets and medical research

Royal Children's Hospital (search function)
<http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo>

Research health and wellbeing

Better Health
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

Education Resources for special needs

Do 2 Learn
<http://www.do2learn.com>

Funding Opportunities

The school will pursue opportunities with government where possible to assist and support your child's education learning needs, however government funding can be hard to obtain. Discuss any funding opportunities with the LSC team. Key dates are typically end of February for new students and end of August for existing students. This means all assessments and forms need to be completed and submitted by these dates.

It is good for parents to stay active in research and to share any opportunities and/or new information with other parents. For example, did you know that you can access 5 free consultation sessions through Medicare for your child's needs if they meet certain criteria. This can help with support such as Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy. Speak to your doctor if you think your child suffers from a condition that might gain access to a Team Care Arrangement (TCA) care plan (entitles you to 5 free consultations).

