I am proud to be able to present this Good Value Edition to all of you. We have had a very busy period since I took up the post of Director and for this reason there was no Bulletin last year. We aim to catch up by combining two issues in one: so there is plenty of good news to read. In the very near future you will be able to download the Bulletin from our revamped web site, on which we are currently working.

Enjoy reading it and have a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Victor van Daal
Director

Ann Cooke ‘retires’

We cannot believe that Ann has retired. Well, of course she hasn’t really (does anyone here ever really retire?). She is still running the courses and representing us at the BDA. She is updating her book, has a room here and pops in from time to time. We have a new Director, Victor van Daal, who is doing research in Psychology in addition, while the on-the-spot administration and teaching arrangements are in the capable hands of Kate Rook and Marie Jones, who have been with us a long time.

Ann joined the team in 1973, and in those days we worked for a pittance - there were no salaries - more a social service. I am sure we would never have won the confidence of the Gwynedd authorities had we not been willing to do this. We had to build up the teaching team and our methods (based on Tim’s work) from scratch, attending a few courses on the way e.g. at Alsager (Gill Cotterell and Helen Arkell), and Oxford (Alice Koontz). We were mostly University staff wives who were qualified teachers, but did not have the Welsh to teach in local schools. Some of us shared interests in tennis and music and were already friends.

As we gained experience we ‘reinvented’ ourselves, and Ann has done this ever since. She has helped with the development of the syllabus that we taught, written a book herself (Tackling Dyslexia : the Bangor Way) and many articles, lectured on courses nationally, and even in Athens, always keeping herself up to date at BDA Conferences here and in the USA. She took on first the supervision of our teaching (1985), then the direction of our courses (1992). She has acted as Educational Consultant to Xavier Software, been on the BDA Computer Committee (1987-1991), and been on the BDA Accreditation Board since 1993. That same year she became Director of the Unit and displayed her talent for management, with Kate’s help turning the Unit into a successful business. At the same time she maintained a happy atmosphere and had an open door for everyone - her experience with Relate no doubt helped there. She has given many talks to local schools, instituted some excellent mini-conferences, and helped dyslexic students through the support service run by Dorothy Gilroy. I am sure I have left out something as she has always been on the go! We salute what she has achieved and thank her, and wish her well.

Elaine Miles

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Gwynedd LL57 2DG
Tel: 01248 382203

Ann Cooke ‘retires’

Dyslexia Plus Conference 2000
Int’l Dyslexia Conference
UKRA Seminar
News from Xavier
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Dorothy’s Diary
Editing the Journal Dyslexia
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Dorothy retires - or does she?
Launch of Camu ‘Mlaen

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Elaine Miles
Ann’s Activities:

1999
Sept. - Organised Unit Conference. Contributed to two half-day Conferences for Initial Teacher Trainers at Birmingham and Reading. With Judith Gauge, attended the third annual Training for Trainers Conferences arranged by the BDA Accreditation Board.

2000
May.- Poster on the work of the Dyslexia Unit at the School of Psychology research Mini-Conference. October - Gave talk in Dyslexia conference at Yale College, Wrexham.

Oct. - Organised Unit Conference Radio Wales Phone-in discussion on children with special needs. Nov. and Jan. - Ran 2 half day courses for Gwynedd LEA, for Learning Support Assistants and Special Needs teachers. Swansea MEd course and sessions to the UWB BEd and Postgraduate Diploma Courses. Gwynedd Dyslexia Association on ‘How parents can help dyslexic children at home.’

2001
April - 5th International Conference of the BDA at York; poster on ‘A non-reader who achieved a degree’.

Courses:
Contributed to the MEd Dyslexia Modules at Swansea and the Advanced CFPS course run by Jacqui Doll at Wrexham and several lectures to the School of Education BEd and PGCE courses. Acted as advisor to teachers for new course being developed at St David’s College, Llandudno. Two INSET courses for Gwynedd and Ynys Mon special needs teachers: three linked sessions on approaches for dyslexic children; (12 teachers) an introductory morning on Dyslexia Friendly Schools (with Fiona Zinovieff) and a follow up workshop. (12 teachers) 25 teachers completed the Advanced CFPS course. 15 teachers (former students from MEd dyslexia modules) attended a one-day up-date course on Assessment. Director of MEd Dyslexia Modules and Advanced CFPS course, External examiner for Hornsby Distance Learning Course and member of the BDA Board for Accreditation of courses.

Publications:
with Nest Efans: Spelling errors of Welsh dyslexic children in Multilingualism and Dyslexia. London: Fulton 2000


Unit Conference, September 1999

The title of the conference ‘Let's Celebrate Dyslexia - the Positive Side of it’ may have seemed paradoxical, but with Tom West, author of ‘In the Mind's Eye’, as the Keynote speaker, any title suggesting difficulty or disability would have been unthinkable. In his book, and in his many lectures and broadcasts, Tom concentrates on the positives, the talents - even genius - of dyslexic individuals and stresses the contribution that their skills offer to technology, industry and the world economy.

His message is: look for what dyslexics CAN do, and work with that. Their balance of skills and their ways of working are different from what we traditionally expect in a 'bright' child or student. Their particular strengths are often to be found in technology - a powerful tool that fits the dyslexic learner's particular mode of thinking. Crucially - these are skills on which we are all becoming more and more reliant.

He explained his theories about computer graphics and visualisation techniques and showed, through slides and video, how dyslexics make use of these tools. Conventional verbal thought processes are cumbersome - even unsuitable - for the kind of thinking and problem solving needed in science, technology, and medicine. Using computers, dyslexic thinkers have the necessary techniques at their disposal. It turns on its head the conventional view of dyslexia as a disadvantage. But until the education system enables the dyslexic learners to work on equal terms with the literate, we squander and discard their talents.

Other contributors followed the same theme. Margaret Walton and Helen Vaughan Williams, both Unit teachers, looked at approaches in early reading, and at strategies for learning Welsh spellings. Neil MacKay (Hawarden High School) explored classroom techniques which target the dyslexic pupils’ skills. Dorothy Gilroy, (Dyslexia Unit) with Fiona Zinovieff (Bangor postgraduate student, herself dyslexic) took the theme forward to HE level and demonstrated how Mind Maps and similar tools can be powerful study aids. An adult focus group was led by Alan McDowell, from Fulcrum - which was set up to take the message about the skills of dyslexic people to employers.

Prof Tim Miles set the context of the conference by reviewing some recent research. He showed how newspaper reports can give a false idea of dyslexia when they take out of context isolated snippets from research papers. (A recent report had suggested that dyslexic people would be bad drivers!) Mr Dafydd Whittall, Director of Education, Culture and Leisure for Gwynedd was there to help us mark its second theme - the collaboration of 25 years’ standing between the Dyslexia Unit and the counties of Gwynedd and Ynys Mon and now extended to Conwy. Mr Whittall gave a short address, Celebrating Partnership, outlining the way the work had been set up for the benefit of statemented dyslexic pupils, and his hopes for the future.

The exhibition of books, games, software and Franklin electronic spelling aids, was supplemented by a small but outstanding exhibition of art-work by dyslexic students from the Art Foundation course at Coleg Menai organised by Mr Mansel Davies. The conference attracted interest from University staff and independent Psychologists from as far away as Kent and Northern Ireland with a total of 104 attendees.

Ann Cooke
**VICTOR’S LATEST PUBLICATIONS**


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**Dorothy retires - or does she?**

When Dorothy started to talk about early retirement we couldn't believe her. Bangor dyslexia-people don't retire!

She began to work in dyslexia because she happened to play tennis with Elaine and Tim Miles. She was then (1977) teaching English at the Bangor Technical College and Tim - pioneering - recruited her to help six Psychology students with essay writing.

From this small beginning the student service developed at Bangor and became a model for others. She and Tim first published Dyslexia at College in 1986. Dorothy showed that dyslexic students need support at a personal level, not just with academic work and her preferred title was Tutor/Counsellor.

She was ready to give whatever someone needed - even having them to stay if life got too fraught. Later she contributed a chapter on students to Dyslexia and Stress (Miles and Varma, 1993)

The number of dyslexic students at Bangor increased and so did Dorothy's hours at the Unit. She carried out a survey of institutions' policy on dyslexia and contributed to Chris Singleton's group on Dyslexia in Higher Education. She did staff-awareness work, for other HE institutions too. Her post became part-time and in 1997, full-time - and finally she gave up her FE English teaching. All the time she was aware of the needs of dyslexic adults outside education. She and Tim helped with the setting up of the Adult Dyslexia Organisation and she contributes to ADO events. There and elsewhere she is appreciated as a lively and stimulating speaker.

Is there life outside dyslexia? Dorothy has her own family here and in Sheffield and Cumbria; she keeps in regular touch with them all and with her many friends. This and her love of the countryside - especially mountains - takes her into Snowdonia, to the Lakes and the Alps as often as she can get away. As a companion on the mountains she can be exhilarating - even scary - as she finds routes down rocky paths and through thick forests. On the tennis court she is just as energetic and adventurous at the net.

Dorothy's determination and vision, and her warmth and compassion, have been given to the service of dyslexic students - and others - for a long time.

She says it is time to take breath. Happily, she is staying here - and will have a desk at the Unit! You have our love and our warmest wishes Dorothy, and we look forward to seeing what you do next.

---

Above: Dorothy Gilroy

*Ann Cooke*
The Dyslexia Unit  
University of Wales  
Bangor  

The Dyslexia Unit carries out a wide range of work in the field of dyslexia  

Specialist teaching, including teaching in Welsh; Unit Teachers provide specialist services for  
Statemented dyslexic children for three LEAs  

Support for dyslexic students at UWB  
Consultation  
Assessments  
Research  

Specialist training courses (part-time) for teachers with QTS (who may qualify for BDA  
accreditations AMBDA and ATS)  

General Director: Victor van Daal  
Director of Teaching: Marie Jones (assisted by Julia Keeves)  
Tutor for Students: Liz du Pre (assisted by Nicki Cameron)  
Student Services Consultant: Dorothy Gilroy  
Administrator for Students: Catherine Griffiths  
Educational Psychologists: Jenny Newnham and Lesley Henshaw  
Director of Courses: Ann Cooke  
Research Consultant: Tim Miles  
Consultant: Elaine Miles  
Financial Co-ordinator: Kate Rook  
Administrator: Rhiannon Rowlands

The Dyslexia Unit is a Supporting Corporate Member of the BDA

For information, phone 01248-382203 or e-mail <dyslex-admin@bangor.ac.uk>
Camu ‘Mlaen is a practical resource pack for teachers to photocopy. It is a bank of resources that is easy to use alongside the programme ‘O Gam i Gam’.

Humour and lightness are strong elements in the pack. Of course it is essential to use the pack for multisensory teaching. Nothing should be taken for granted when teaching dyslexic pupils, the teacher will need to select carefully from the pack according to the literacy level of the pupils.

The worksheets should be completed under supervision to ensure the pupils correct response.

The programme includes work units for letters such as f, ‘y’ gynffon (clear sound), ch, dd, ll, th, rh, ng, ff, si, ph, consonant blends and digraphs.

There is also an extensive selection of games to correspond with the work units.
Assessments 1999-2000

Mrs Jenny Newnham assessed UWB students at the Dyslexia Unit, also some older children and adults including students from Liverpool Hope University, Chester College and the Open University. She has also travelled to Coleg Harlech. Younger children were assessed by Mr David Ager at his home in Mold until February 2000 when he resigned due to serious illness and sadly died a few months later. Mrs Nerys Parry re-joined the Unit team from January until May when she left to take up a full-time post. 135 assessments were carried out, 33 of these for UWB students. Seven students had the diagnostic part of their assessment funded by the University’s Access Fund.

2000-2001

Dr Lesley Henshaw joined the Unit in September 2000 assessing children and adults including UWB students. She has travelled to Liverpool Hope University. Mrs Jenny Newnham has continued to see students at UWB and Coleg Harlech as well as children and adults. 172 assessments were carried out, 52 of these for UWB students.

LEA Teaching

The number of pupils being taught for the 3 local LEAs has increased over the last two years. Conwy teaching in secondary schools has been partly organised in groups. 344 pupils/groups were being taught in May 2001 (several pupils receiving more than 1 lesson per week).

Private Sector Teaching

Mr Bob Evans has taught pupils at St David’s College for the Unit. Five boys were taught.

Five children have been taught within local private schools and up to 35 children and adults at any one time outside school hours. In addition the RAF and the Snowdonia National Park Authority each funded lessons for an employee.

Donations

We have received £199 and £175 annual royalties from Ann Cooke’s book Tackling Dyslexia: the Bangor Way’. These monies have been placed in the BDA book fund at her request and are used for the purchase of books and materials for teaching. Dorothy Gilroy donated £50 towards the cost of a door person for the student group during the building of Brigantia. Elaine Miles donated £50 towards the MEd course fees of two Unit teachers. We have also received regular donations (£75 and £90) from Nannerch Parish Council which has gone into the Hardship Fund. We are very grateful for all these donations.

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 hemisphere.
Up and down College Road:
On the Move -Again

It is not just the teachers who are peripatetic: it seems that moving around is a way of life for the whole Dyslexia Unit.

When I first joined the Dyslexia Unit as a new teacher in 1973, the secretary (one morning a week) occupied the same small room as the teaching resources on the top floor of 41 College Road. Soon after that, the Psychology Department moved to 31, and we got a big resource room and the secretary (Linda Wyatt) got her own small room in the attic (4th floor!) Elaine Miles cleared out some junk from a space next door and established her base there as Director of Teaching.

We settled down and the work went on, with a growing number of pupils and new teachers joining the team. 1987 saw us moving into 43 - and more space: resource room, a good-sized office for Ann - who had just taken over Elaine’s work - (shared with Elaine) - and one for Kate, who had been appointed as secretary two years before. There was also a room for assessments. In 1989 we moved along to the Poplars - in the pouring rain - and now Dorothy got a ‘room’: a kind of cupboard next to the loo. But it was a much-needed base as student numbers were beginning to creep up.

The next major step came with the appointment of Elizabeth to share the secretarial work with Kate - who moved sideways to look after financial matters. Pupil and student numbers began a rapid increase.

We got a larger room for Dorothy, and Kate moved into the cupboard. Catherine joined Elizabeth in the office. We were settled there for 6 years but we were short of space.

In 1995, the Poplars was needed for the new Cognitive Psychology team. We could have more rooms in Maesog - so off we went to 54 College Road. It was decorated for us and the floors were ‘carpeted’. There a number of expansions took place. Marie had taken over from Ann as Co-ordinator of Teaching and now shared with Elaine. Dorothy’s post became full-time in 1997 and in 1999, Judith Brooke came in to give her some administrative help. It was now the Student Service part of the Unit that was getting short of space.

August 2000: we completed the latest move, to Bryn Deiniol - a large, Victorian solid-looking house next to the new Brigantia Building. We have enough space for everyone to have a room (though Victor and Tim have elected to stay in the College Road houses). Kate now has a pleasant office. The main office is big enough for Rhiannon and Judith to have a desk each. Marie and Liz and Catherine have good-sized rooms. Ann has a room and Elaine at last has a room of her own - with a view. There are small rooms for teaching, a room for assessments, a resource room, a social area which can double as a meeting and waiting room, a kitchen and storage space.

Bryn Deiniol: our current home

As everyone has settled, it's beginning to feel familiar - but perhaps we shouldn't get too comfortable. Who knows how long this one will last?

Ann Cooke
Dyslexia - The Welsh Dimension

On 6th May 2000 I attended a one-day conference in Cardiff organised by the B.D.A. Entitled 'The Welsh Dimension' the focus was firmly on support for dyslexic children within Welsh schools.

The opening address and welcome by Lindsay Peer, Education Director of the B.D.A, cited highly encouraging developments regarding the approach to dyslexia within Welsh Education Authorities with particular reference to the Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative adopted by a number of the local authorities.

Breakout sessions followed with speakers Nia Wood ( Provision in Welsh-Medium Schools ) Dorian Yeo ( Maths and Dyslexia) and, providing a North Wales perspective, Neil Mackay ( Supporting dyslexic children at home and school).

The keynote session was led by Neil Mackay and Trevor Payne ( Flintshire Special Education Phase Officer). They outlined the Dyslexia Friendly Schools’ initiative and reported on its introduction within Flintshire schools. The audience, a mixture of parents and specialist teachers had an opportunity to put questions to the speakers.

A considerable amount was packed into very short sessions, but the public conference was run in conjunction with local association meetings and followed by the BDA Spring Council Meeting.

Marie Jones

Staff Changes

Over the last eighteen months we have had many staff changes. Ann Cooke retired on her birthday in 2000. She has been leading the Unit since Tim Miles retired in 1989. We are all very grateful for all the work she has done for the Unit over the years. Personally, I would like to thank her for the introduction she gave me to the work during the transition period February - July 2000. But no one ever retires from the Unit: Ann will stay on as Director of Courses. Meanwhile she has finished a book entitled ‘At School in Two Languages’. She really cannot sit still!

Lynda Goold left us around the same time. She went back to her old job in Marine Sciences. In September 2000 Lesley Henshaw started to work for us as an Educational Psychologist on a sessional basis. The same sessional work will be done by Jean Robertson. A warm welcome to both of them to join the team with Jenny Newnham.

At the same time Judith Brooke came to support the administration of the Student Service. In January 2001 her son Patrick was born and recently she has resumed working for the Unit as PA to the Director. Many congratulations and welcome back!

Catherine Griffiths, who used to work for the Unit replaced Judith as Student Administrator. Again, welcome back!

In February 2001 Elizabeth Williams retired to spend time with her grandchildren and to visit her father who lives in Australia. All the best for the future.

Rhiannon Rowlands, who had worked part-time for us in 2000, now works full-time in the office. We are very pleased to have a Welsh speaker in the Unit.

Julia Keeves' hours were extended to provide assistance to Marie Jones for monitoring of teachers.

Finally, Dorothy Gilroy who set up the Unit's Student Service, retired in September 2001. She will stay affiliated with the Unit as a Consultant. Liz Du Pré took over as Tutor to students with dyslexia. She will receive assistance from Nicki Cameron. Bob Evans who worked as a Dyslexia Teacher and part-time Student Tutor has now moved on to continue his career in Ibiza.

Victor van Daal
What game are we playing today? is the question I'm most likely to be greeted with by my younger pupils, as I set out my materials for a lesson. Since beginning teaching for the Dyslexia Unit, I have become increasingly interested in the role of games as a teaching resource with primary-aged dyslexic children.

After several years using, designing and developing games, I believe that they can be powerful teaching tools for a number of different reasons: children enjoy playing games and are likely to learn most effectively if they are interested and involved with what they are doing; using well thoughtout carefully structured games can be an excellent way to reinforce, practise and revise work on phonic patterns, adding variety to lessons; poorly motivated children are likely to work harder when presented with the challenge of a game than on other more formal activities.

In addition to the teaching role of games, I feel also that playing games can help in many other important ways. Dyslexic children are often anxious when asked to complete a task, and playing a game is usually a more pleasurable, less threatening, activity for them. Often the relaxed nature of games means that they can access information more easily and efficiently, thus improving their chances of retaining information for future use. Games are also an excellent way of improving a child's self-esteem, providing a valuable opportunity for dyslexic children to experience success. Winning a game makes them feel good about themselves and improves their self-confidence and self-belief. If pupils return to their classrooms with positive feelings about their ability to succeed, it is likely to help them to cope better with other challenges that the curriculum presents for them.

Simple games are not difficult to make, and a short time spent in devising and making a game can often mean many hours of useful activity with a range of pupils. Taskmaster supply a range of components e.g. dice, spinners, cards etc. Stanley Thornes 'Blueprints' books contain a wide range of photocopiable games which, when coloured and laminated, can provide a cheap way of beginning a bank of resources.

There are an ever increasing number of commercially produced games available for teaching phonics. SWAP and FIX card games, produced by GAMZ, provide excellent practice reading different phonic patterns. The small packs are easily transported, are good value for money and the pupils never seem to tire of playing them! Crossbow Games and H.E.L.P. both produce reasonably priced games to reinforce different phonic patterns and spelling rules.

Whether you make your own games, encourage pupils to design and make them with you, or for the less adventurous, choose a selection of commercially produced games, the time and effort spent will I'm sure, be appreciated and enjoyed by your pupils.

Resources

Crossbow Educational
8, Causeway Road, Cinderford, Gloucester GL14 2BY
Tel Fax: 01594 827216

GAMZ
25, Albert Park Road, Malvern, Worcester WR14 1HW
Tel/Fax: 01684 562158

H.E.L.P. Educational Games
29, Churchill Close, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7BX
Tel/Fax:01235 817241

Stanley Thornes Ltd.
Ellenborough House, Wellington Street,Cheltenham, Gloucester
Tel: 01242 267280
Fax:01242 253695

Taskmaster Resources
Morris Road, Leicester LE2 6BR
Tel: 0116 270 4286
Fax: 0116 270 6992

‘Dyslexic children are often anxious when asked to complete a task, and playing a game is usually a more pleasurable, less threatening, activity for them.’

Julia Keeves
I’m Back!

I was delighted to be invited back to work in the Unit this year and am looking forward to working in the Student Service with Liz, this coming academic year. Dorothy’s retirement has left a big hole and we already miss her. It has been a steep learning curve to find our feet and get ready for the new students all at once, but I think we are winning.

I am also currently studying for an MA in Linguistics, which I have enjoyed very much. I am now embarking on my dissertation which will be a pilot study to investigate whether dyslexic adults are more likely to experience pragmatic impairment than the normal population. I am hoping to find some interesting results, that could perhaps lead to further research. All volunteers gratefully accepted!

Catherine Griffiths

The Student Service 2000-2001

We started the year by moving into our "new" house, Bryn Deiniol. This gave us more room for the Student Service. I feel it is very important for our students to have pleasant and relaxing surroundings. I was lucky to be allocated a large sunny room looking over the mountains and parts of Bangor. We have also got a small tutorial room, an Administrator's room and a student room for group meetings (a "cellar" but we have worked on this to make it more student-friendly.) So a good move for the Student Service!

We have had just over 200 undergraduates registered with the Unit. We also have about 20 post-grads, over half of whom have come from our undergraduate group. We have continued to provide support in maths, stats, and chemistry. We have also established Welsh-medium support on a regular basis by Ann Hughes.

As a step towards retirement, I went on to a 4 day week this year, Congratulations Tim and Elaine!

In 2001 Tim and Elaine Miles received a joint award - the Marion Welchman Lifetime Award for Services to Dyslexia.

They have also been made members of the Advisory Council of the International Dyslexia Association (formerly the Orton Dyslexia Society).

Unit Conference 2000

This year's Conference on 21st October, took the theme Dyslexia Plus - the Cluster of Difficulties. It focused on overlap between dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties, in particular Motor Coordination Difficulty (Dyspraxia), and some other aspects of difficulties with language.

After the opening by Emeritus Professor Tim Miles, Ann Cooke presented an overview of the conference theme, looking at questions that might arise if a too-rigid distinction is made between one difficulty and another. The Keynote Speaker Sharon Drew (Dyscovery Centre, Cardiff) took Motor Coordination and Fine Motor Skills as her topic and showed how difficulties here affect a child's school performance in different ways.

The afternoon sessions took the form of workshops which included 'Listening and paying attention' (Sharon Drew), ‘Surviving at school - social and personal skills' (Diana Crewdson, speech and language therapist) an adult focus group (Dorothy Gilroy and Bill Barry) and a session on early identification of Welsh dyslexic children (Nest Efans and Llinos Spencer).

There was opportunity for delegates to browse in the exhibition of books, software and teaching materials during the lunchbreak. The conference was attended by 125 people, from North Wales and beyond. Ann Cooke
and two Unit teachers job-shared on the fifth; they were Bob Evans and Liz du Pre; they seemed to have exhausting Wednesdays, but worked wonderfully hard with many of our students. We have worked on stream-lining the student applications for the D.S.A. This involves a joint study needs assessment, carried out by the Unit and our Access Centre. Almost all of our students have obtained IT equipment from their LEA’s through this process. We have for the first time also obtained money from the Irish government to help our Irish dyslexic students.

I was very ably assisted by Judith Brooke, the Student Service Administrator who helped us set up a very comprehensive student data-base, and the necessary processes for effective liaison with the Access Centre. With Judith’s help we were able to create much more effective lines of communication within the University. Judith left in mid-December (working till the eleventh hour as she had a baby in early January!) and has been replaced by Catherine Griffiths who is developing the data-base and general services.

The student work has thus evolved considerably since I started in 1977 with 6 students once a month through to my retirement in August 2001!! I have gained tremendous insights into the nature of dyslexia and its effect – often devastating – on the students I have worked with. I have worked with some wonderful students – brilliant, inventive, creative - and it is always a great pleasure to see how they are getting on in their careers. I wish the Student Service all the best for the future.

Dorothy Gilroy

Teacher News

We are pleased to welcome several new teachers to the team:

Rebecca Anderson  Roz Rhodes
Lydia Moxley     Liz Selway
Sue Peace        Janet Wright
Sally Williams   Ann Roberts
Eleri Jones      Iola Smart
Sharon Eynon     Roz Thomas

We have unfortunately lost the services of Pauline and Bob Evans who are continuing their teaching careers in Ibiza.

Unit Teacher Doreen Roberts has completed her MEd.

Unit Meetings 2000/1

1. Friday Oct. 20th.  Subject - Handwriting
   Speakers - Sharon Drew + Diana Crewdson
2. Thurs. March 29th. Subject - Maths and Dyslexia
   Speaker - Anne Henderson
3. Friday June 29th. Subject - Secondary School Support
   Speaker - Bob Evans
   Subject - Using Games with Dyslexic Children
   Speaker - Julia Keeves

Marie Jones - Director of Teaching
Forthcoming conferences at Bangor

In 2003 we will be organising a Bangor Dyslexia Conference. We expect to host some 230 delegates over a three-day period at the end of July. The last day will have an overlap with the 27th Annual Conference of the IARLD (International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities), which will last for another three days with some 70 delegates. An organising committee has been formed and has commenced the preparations for these big events. Members of the committee are Angela Fawcett (University of Sheffield), Lindsay Peer (BDA), Ann Cooke (former Director Dyslexia Unit), and Victor van Daal (Chair, Director Dyslexia Unit / Senior Research Fellow, School of Psychology).

As usual we are organising a Unit Conference (planned for Spring 2002), possibly on maths, as this is the British Dyslexia Association theme for 2002. In May 2002 we will be holding a mini-conference in Gregynog.

Special Issues
Dyslexia

The 5th British Dyslexia Association International Conference entitled 'Dyslexia: At the dawn of the new century' was held at York from 18 - 21 April 2001. A selection of papers will be published in Dyslexia, 7-3 and 7-4. A further series will be spread over Volume 8. Guest Editor for these special issues is Victor van Daal. The three main papers in Volume 7-3 are the following: Van der Leij, De Jong & Rijswijk-Prins report an investigation of three generations of a Dutch family, of which dyslexic members are compared with unaffected members. The study they present is an excellent example of how genetic and cognitive characteristics of dyslexia can be studied. Compton, DeFries & Olson present a study in which they show that phonological processing and rapid automatised naming have an additive negative influence on reading performance above and beyond that of a single deficit in either of these skills. Interestingly, they point at several statistical problems that may arise when dichotomous variables are used in defining disability subtypes. McArthur & Bishop review the popular hypothesis that specific reading disability and specific language impairment result from an impaired ability to process rapid and brief sounds. They suggest several creative improvements with respect to the methodology of future research in this area.

Research

Several students started their projects last year under supervision of Victor van Daal. Tim Miles has agreed to act as a consultant to the students. Claire Williams is working on a project which examines whether Event Related Potential can reveal similarities and differences between students with and without dyslexia in semantic and phonological processing, respectively. She will be working with students who have registered with the Dyslexic Student Panel. Leanne Beech and Stuart Mitchell will be working with PhD student Soracha Cashman, who is looking at the development of orthographic skills across languages. Lorenc Hoxhallari is now in his second year of his postgrad studies. He is looking at differences between Albanian, Welsh and English with respect to ease of learning to read in the different languages and the incidence and severity of reading and spelling disorders.

A large project will be funded by the Welsh Assembly. It is concerned with a normalisation study of reading and spelling tasks for children attending different medium schools and from different language backgrounds in North Wales. A booklet with norms is going to be produced together with a set of tests that can be administered by the teachers to screen children who are at risk for dyslexia. For the normally achieving children, this could provide a progress analysis.

A few more grant applications for other new projects are currently being reviewed.

Victor van Daal
March 2000
Conference: Dyslexia Plus - a single problem or a multiplicity of difficulties?

A two-day colloquium organised by Ann Cooke and themed “Dyslexia Plus” was held at Gregynog. The event united Educational Psychologists, teachers, research psychologists and clinical practitioners, to explore the interaction and overlap between dyslexia and other conditions leading to learning difficulties. Sixty six attended including a number of teachers from Welsh schools and research teams from Sheffield, Hull, Swansea, Surrey, Reading, Amstserdam, and Warsaw.

Victor van Daal’s opening paper ‘Cognitive Profiles of Children with Dyslexia’, proposed that dyslexia is a single disorder, characterised by problems with the development of phonological skills, and that other difficulties for the same individual are not necessarily related. Elizabeth Chacksfield (East Berkshire College) stressed the need for differentiation between difficulties noting that current practice was moving towards identifying these as separate disorders instead of including them within the dyslexia syndrome. This view generally prevailed over the course of the conference.

Colin Terrell (Cheltamham and Gloucester) argued for the judicious use of Ritalin for children with AD(H)D. The triad of impairment (social, emotional and educational) of children with Asperger's Syndrome was considered by Terri Passenger (Cheltamham and Gloucester) who presented the range of difficulties and the consequent difficulty of identification. Both Cheltamham speakers stressed the complexity of presenting symptoms and the need for a multi-disciplinary approach and open-mindedness among those carrying out diagnostic assessments.

Peter Brooks and Sally Weeks considered the inclusion of children with Moderate Learning Difficulty within the dyslexia group, presenting work carried out with John Everatt. They stressed the importance of compiling careful assessment profiles in planning appropriate intervention.

Tim Miles presented cases of individuals with Mathematical difficulties. He proposed that as such difficulties concerned the processing of symbolic information they should not be seen as a separate disorder, but that ‘dyslexia’ should be widened to include them. Alan Beaton (Swanse) opposed his view via the case of a girl with mathematical difficulties and acquired dyslexia, and identified certain features as specific to number. Dorothy Gilroy described difficulties experienced by HE students, showing how emotional disturbances produced by dyslexia can be prolonged into adulthood especially when diagnosis is delayed. Rhona Stainthorp (Institute of Education, London) also stressed the importance of early recognition and treatment in her discussion of Developmental Coordination Disorder and difficulties with handwriting. She emphasised the challenges that handwriting difficulties produced for dyslexic children, this was taken further by Sharon Drew (Cardiff) who presented a lively account of how these could be remediated.

The impact of visual difficulties on reading was discussed by Melanie Jameson who showed how coloured filters and lenses could alleviate symptoms of distortion and discomfort. Angela Fawcett considered the role of the cerebellum in the various learning difficulties discussed, proposing that while cerebellum function was important in a number of these, there nevertheless remained different kinds of difficulty with different implications for intervention. Finally, Peter Brooks reviewed the papers and showed that, while the different learning difficulties discussed might overlap and share features, they were still separate disorders. He stressed the importance of assessment to identify children's strong and weak areas, and suitable intervention to ensure they had access to the whole curriculum. Five Posters were presented by Hull and Sheffield postgraduate students.

The Unit appreciated the generous financial support for this event from the Univeristy of Wales Colloquium Fund and the Wales branch of the British Psychological Association.

Ann Cooke
UKRA Seminar
Imperial College, London
22nd January 2000

The UKRA (United Kingdom Reading Association) held a seminar on the 'Teaching of Phonics' on 22nd. Jan. 2000 at the Imperial College, London. Speakers including Henrietta Dombey, Greg Brooks, Laura Huxford and Usha Goswami who discussed the importance of developing children's phonological competence and word recognition skills based on phonics.

Several of the speakers addressed the conflicting claims made for 'synthetic' and 'analytic' phonics. There was broad agreement that both approaches have their place in the teaching of reading and are in fact complementary strategies. The consensus of opinion favoured a balanced approach that provides the learner with initial word attack strategies but also equips them with efficient skills to tackle unfamiliar words.

Marie Jones

News from Xavier

Recent Releases:

Punctuate Plus - an improved version of our punctuation practice and teaching program was released this year, to a favourable reception. A review of this program will be appearing in the December issue of Educational Computing and Technology magazine.

Chatback v2 - We have released an all new version of this simple speech therapy program. Recorded words are presented for the student to hear, and attempt to reproduce. The student may listen to both recordings to compare their attempt, and overlay the waveforms produced by these sounds.

Work in progress: We are working on a new version of our most popular program, 'Sounds & Rhymes'. This covers the short vowel sounds, isolating the vowel from CVC words, and will be extended to cover the consonant blend sounds. Expected release date will be early 2002.

Dave Lane

Unit Meetings

November 1999. Carol Forster, a teacher of the Ron Davis technique, talked about the ideas underlying the approach and how she uses it to help dyslexic children and students. Teachers were very interested in the hands-on methods and the use of clay modelling for teaching reading.


April & May 2000. INSET meetings for Unit teachers were held on 2 dates this year so that all teachers could attend. The theme was testing and writing reports. Gareth Payne, Educational Psychologist working in Ynys Mon, presented an overview of professional practice, after which teachers looked at and evaluated sample reports.
The Wrong Side of the Brain

I am the Dyslexic boy. I have been labelled, Branded with an excuse, something to hide from and to confuse. There’s not much of the mystery plague here, but the umbrella covers such, that people tend to judge. Them Knowing means that they reach, That long manicured presented reach. And now they patronise and teach It is blurted openly, not confined to staff room walls of dread and I am forced to tuck my chin into my chest and take it on the head. They cannot imagine the scratch of a pen when the the exam hall is empty. Nor the looks on their shuffling bodies, as they move as a single mass all looking back, seeping out of the room. To be consumed by shame, for that little bit of clouding in my brain. Still it cannot explain why I can’t use right-handed scissors. They’ll find something else for that.

Alex (15)

MEd Modules 99/’01

This year 27 students enrolled for the Theoretical Module and 17 also took the Principles and Methodology Module. The other 10 teachers had previously completed the Advanced CFPS Course in Teaching of Dyslexic Learners at Bangor or the Bebbington Centre, Ambleside (validated by UW Bangor.) The course members included two teachers from Greece. As they must make 10 weekend visits to UK over the two years to complete their 4 modules this demonstrates immense commitment to their work and to the needs of their dyslexic pupils. Greek teachers have attended our courses before, but the teaching practice part of the module has had to be waived because of the language difference. This year however, through the collaboration with Dr Dora Mavrommati, they have been able to carry out teaching practice at home with their Greek pupils. Dora runs a teaching and assessment centre for dyslexic children in Athens and contributes on dyslexia to courses for teachers at the University of Athens. She has published a Greek teaching programme for dyslexic children, and has just gained her doctorate (supervised by Tim Miles). She completed the Bangor MEd course in 1989.

Students this year have attended an extra day to follow the new unit on Assessment, for which they must carry out a pupil/student assessment observed by a course tutor and write a report. The addition of this Unit to the MEd Dyslexia Modules means that teachers applying to the BDA for accreditation at AMBDA level will now be recognised by examinations boards as competent to assess pupils’ needs for special arrangements (extra time).

Ann Cooke
1999

Aug. - Dyslexia Awareness lecture to careers advisors in Bangor. An outline of what dyslexia is and its effect on young people, with particular reference to Further and Higher Education.

Sept. - Visiting Speaker at a meeting of the West Surrey Dyslexia Aid Association, entitled *Dyslexia 16 Plus - Moving on in education and careers*. Followed up by an article for their annual magazine on Applying to Higher Education. Also presented a workshop on Dyslexia 16 Plus for the Gwent Dyslexia Association.

Dec. - Attended The SKILL Conference for Disability Tutors and Advisors.

2000

March - Lectured to staff at University College, Cork on dyslexia and provision for students in the U.K.
Presented joint workshops with Fiona Zinovieff at the BDA Youth Day held at St David’s College in Llandudno and lectured at the two-day colloquium held by the Dyslexia Unit at Greigynog Newtown.

April - Ran a day of lectures and workshops in London, for Cornwall Training College. These covered study skills, personal counselling, I.T. and applying to Higher Education.

May - A day's workshop on dyslexia as part of the staff development for Stoke-on-Trent College.

Also worked on the Bangor MEd course throughout the year and acted as advisor to the COBALT Team at Liverpool Hope University on their project on dyslexia friendly Web Sites.

Sept. - Dyslexia Awareness day at RAF Valley: Well attended by personnel from many sections of the Air Base and considerable interest was shown how to identify & help servicemen with dyslexia.

Staff Awareness at the Welsh School of Music and Drama: looking at the whole profile of student dyslexia, with emphasis on coping in music and theatre arts.

Oct. - Bangor Conference –I ran a joint workshop with Bill Barry on dyslexia in adults with emphasis on adults in the community.

Dec. - SKILL annual HE Conference at Warwick University. A stimulating Conference, with a highlight being introduced to Baroness Tessa Blackstone, the keynote speaker.

2001

Jan. - Staff development at Bangor

March - SKILL Conference for LEA Awards Officers at Dudley. Led a workshop on Dyslexia and its implications for Disabled Students’ Allowance awards. This was well attended and it was felt that it had enabled LEA Officers to understand some of the issues behind the complex decisions they have to make.

June - Training day at Hull University for FE and HE tutors from the North-east.

Aug. - Retired from running the Student Service!!
**On Editing the Journal, Dyslexia**

In about 1993 Michael Coombs, of John Wiley & Sons, sounded me as to whether I would be willing to edit a journal devoted exclusively to the study of dyslexia. He had done the customary market research and had reached the conclusion that there was scope for such a journal provided the readership was not limited to academics but also included practitioners. The number of academics researching into dyslexia at the time was relatively small, and his worry, I think, was that if we were simply a learned journal and if universities continued to be starved of funds, there was a risk that its expensive produced volumes would simply gather dust on the shelves of a limited number of university libraries. His stipulation was that it should be a journal devoted to research and practice.

His next move was to involve the British Dyslexia Association. It was obviously sensible that someone at BDA headquarters should be involved, and the obvious choice was Lindsay Peer. When we invited people to serve on the editorial board there was an excellent response. Members of the board include Albert Galaburda, Bruce Pennington, Uta Frith, Ingvar Lundberg, Usha Goswami, Margaret Snowling, and, nearer home, Elaine Miles and - a much valued recent addition - Victor van Daal.

The brief which I had been given appealed to me. Over the years I had seen all too many dyslexic children and adults suffering because their difficulties were not understood, and although my duty as a university lecturer was to carry out research, it would have been impossible for me to have viewed their damaged lives with indifference or taken refuge in an academic 'ivory tower'. I have always been a campaigner as well as a researcher, and at my time of life (I am now 77) I do not propose to change this. My problem, as far as the journal was concerned, was to strike the right balance. If I published only papers based on systematic experimental research backed by the appropriate statistics, the journal might have appealed to a number of academics but would not have been read by the practitioners. On the other hand, if the journal was too heavily weighted towards practice then I could not expect eminent academic researchers to contribute to it. I have, in fact, taken the view that researchers and practitioners should learn from each other: any practitioners worth their salt need to know - and will wish to know - the latest news from the research front, while researchers are unlikely to have an eye for interesting research unless they have regular contact with practitioners. Otherwise their 'discoveries' will either be too simplistic or else be things which teachers have known all along.

The other editors are Rod Nicoilson, Mike Thomson, and John Everatt. To add variety to the journal's contents, besides the experimental and 'practitioner' papers we also publish a feature which we have called 'Innovations and Insights'. It is edited by Mike Thomson, and our policy is to encourage creative thinking in dyslexia research so that, hopefully, it will branch out in new directions. The journal also reviews books, and all books for review should be sent to the review editor, John Everatt. From time to time we also run a feature called 'Dyslexia News World Wide'. Letters and correspondence are welcome.

The first issues of Dyslexia appeared in 1995 and from 1997 onwards we have published four issues per year. From a personal point of view I have found it all a really exciting challenge.

Tim Miles

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**T.R. Miles Lecture 2000**

The 2000 TR Miles lecture was delivered by Maggie Snowling, Professor of Psychology, University of York. In the lecture the phonological deficit hypothesis of dyslexia was reviewed. In particular, three recent challenges to the hypothesis were addressed, including (1) phonological deficits can be traced down to lower-level deficits in the rapid processing auditory information, (2) differences between people with dyslexia in reading and spelling cannot be explained by differences in phonological processing, and (3) the development of phonological skills in dyslexia is hampered by limited print exposure. Professor Snowling presented evidence gathered from a series of experiments in her lab at York to support the position that the phonological deficit hypothesis still provides a parsimonious account of the wide range of symptoms of dyslexia. However, much work needs to be done to specify the hypothesis to greater detail. A full article version of the lecture can be found in Dyslexia, Volume 7, Number 1, 37-46.

'I have, in fact, taken the view that researchers and practitioners should learn from each other: any practitioners worth their salt need to know - and will wish to know - the latest news from the research front, while researchers are unlikely to have an eye for interesting research unless they have regular contact with practitioners.'
Elaine’s News

September 1999: Attended the E.C. Cost Conference on Dyslexia held at St. John’s College Cambridge. This was the last of a series of small conferences involving researchers from various European countries.

November 1999 - Attended the International Dyslexia Association Conference in Chicago as an invited contributor. Elaine repeated the paper on ‘Dyslexia and Other Languages’ previously given at the ‘Multilingualism and Dyslexia’ Conference in Manchester.


Publications:


Tim’s Activities over the past two years

General:

Since 1995 Tim Miles has been editor of *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Research and Practice*. He has served on the Council of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and is on the advisory board of *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*.

In 2000 he was invited to be co-editor of a special international issue of *Perspectives in Dyslexia*.

For many years he has been a member and is now Vice-President of the British Dyslexia Association’s Music and Dyslexia Committee.

He is also a member of the council of the Royal Institute of Philosophy. At his instigation a paper written by the late Professor Gilbert Ryle, intended for delivery in Bangor in the 1970s, was published for the first time (*Philosophy, 2000, Vol. 75, no. 293, 331-344*).

He is currently supervising three Ph.D. students, two from the University of Liverpool and one from Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

He has refereed papers for *Annals of Dyslexia*, for the *European Journal of Behaviour Analysis*, and for *Brain and Behaviour*.

The Adult Dyslexia Association have appointed Tim to be their patron and also their research consultant.

Victor van Daal has now joined the team of Tim Miles, Mary Haslum and Tim Wheeler in analysing the data from the Child Health and Education Study.

Talks:

September 1999: Presented a paper to the British Psychological Society in Nottingham on Dyslexia and Mathematics.

January 2000: Talk on dyslexia to the teachers at St. David’s College, Llandudno.

March 2000: two-day colloquium at Gregynog on ‘Dyslexia Minus: Dyscalculia without Dyslexia?’

May 2000: talk on dyslexia to LEA officials in Llanelli (organised by the Mayor of Llanelli).

July 2000: Gave a talk to the Adult Dyslexia Association in Cardiff entitled ‘Other Think Positive’.

Talk to the North Wales branch of the Classical Association on Lucretius’ Theory of Perception.

‘Celebrating dyslexia’, Adult Dyslexia Organisation Conference,

April 2001: Presented the following papers at the International Conference of the British Dyslexia Association in York.

(1) Verbatim recall and gist recall (with Josie Schiffenden and Judith Roberts)

(2) A comparison of the Bangor Dyslexia Test with the DST (with Victor van Daal)


Publications


Professor T.R. Miles