



MDA Newsletter

Vol. : 23

No : 1

An MDA Publication

April 2012

Madras Dyslexia Association

15, Sambasivam Street, Behind Jeeva Park, T.Nagar, Chennai-600 017. Tel: 2815 6697 / 2815 7908 Email : ananyamdachennai@gmail.com
Website : www.mdachennai.com

IN THIS ISSUE ...

Art and Dyslexia

Page 1 to 4

Some activities for Second language teaching

Page 5 and 6

News at MDA/ Ananya

Page 7

MDA News Snippets

Page 8

**Mainstream Teacher
Training programme
from April 23rd to 27th.
Contact MDA Office for
details.**

Art and Dyslexia

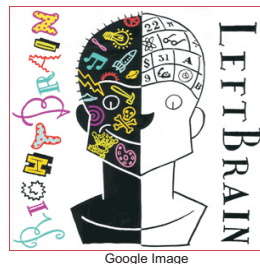
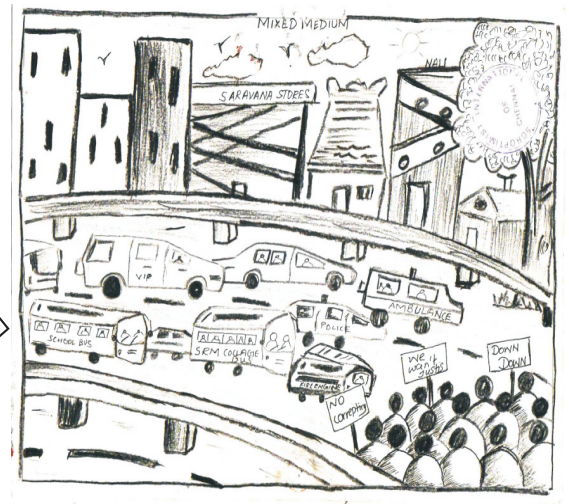
Watching many batches of children through the years at Ananya, we realized that in every batch we have had students who have been very talented in art. They have held their own exhibitions of paintings, sold paintings and won accolades for their works of art. They have taken part in art competitions winning them with ease. Whether it was art from scrap, or making innovative Ganeshas from clay or the pookolam for Onam, their work was outstanding. Their creations inspired us to make an address book which has been making good corporate gifts and is the pride of possession of many. When they had to make a choice of courses, they again moved on to Fine Arts or Visual Communications and today are working in the field of Visual Media.

Painting, is today part of the National Open School curriculum and even the CBSE. Many of our students choose to do this course as it comes naturally to them. Teachers have come in to teach them theory and practicals in Painting. One such teacher got very interested in the cause of dyslexia. In February "Different Strokes"- Art for a Cause, the group she was part of decided to have a painting exhibition and donate the proceeds to MDA. Many of the paintings of our alumni as well as present students were showcased and sold as part of this event.



There was a time when only the educational side of a person was looked at to call him/ her successful. We are now in an era where the creativity and individual strengths of a person are recognized and fostered in order to make a person realize his/her full potential. This could be in any area and not necessarily in academic work alone. This term we were fortunate to have a series of events which made us sit up and think more about it. We had the unique privilege of attending the flagship tour of Howard Gardner and his wife, Ellen Winner who gave us very enlightening talks on Multiple Intelligences and Giftedness. Attending these as well as the Art exhibition got us to probe more into the relation between art and dyslexia. We have put together here the various researches and perspectives about the connections between dyslexia and art.

Looking at the list of famous dyslexics we find that there are a number of artists and photographers as well. While the list is a long one the notables in the list are Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Chuck Close, August Rodin, Andy Warhol, and Robert Rauschenberg. No talk on art and dyslexia can be complete without discussing Leonardo DaVinci who was a great painter, designer, scientist, futurist and thinker.. Leonardo was constantly sketching out his ideas for inventions and wrote his notes backwards and wrote from right-to-left, in mirror image. Leonardo's spelling was also considered erratic and quite strange. It is implied that he could have had A.D.D as he started many projects which he never completed. Despite all his difficulties, his art work is detailed and precise indicating that he possessed the *gift of dyslexia*.



Google Image

Is there a gift of dyslexia? Ron Davis in his book "the gift of Dyslexia" explains that for dyslexics multi-dimensional thinking (using all the senses) takes place much faster than verbal thinking. He feels compared to the average, dyslexics are more curious, creative, and intuitive. They tend to be highly aware of the environment, inventive, and good at real world tasks. Once they have learned something experientially, they understand it on such a deep level that they know how to do things intuitively without thinking about how.

Brain research has thrown light on the specialization of the two hemispheres of the brain. Sperry, the Nobel Prize Winner for Physiology, in his research has shown that the right brain is visual and processes information in an intuitive and simultaneous way, looking first at the whole picture then the details. The left brain is verbal and processes information in an analytical and sequential way, looking first at the pieces then putting them together to get the whole. While we have a natural tendency towards one way of thinking, the two sides of our brain work together in our everyday lives.



"The wiring of the dyslexic's brain is surely different as it seems to lack efficiency in the left brain hemisphere which relates to language ability and instead there is increased efficiency in the side of the brain which dictates spatial ability." -West, who is the head of the Visualisation Research Institute in Washington, and author of "Mind's Eye". Our educational system at the moment is based on words, books and lectures and this is often considered synonymous with the concept of intelligence. Time has come to acknowledge that there is a whole new field of intelligence among many dyslexics who see the world visually which is not yet fully tapped. In the fields of art, computer graphics and design, the dyslexics are surely going to be in the forefront.

Geshwind, a neurologist, also found in 1982, a relationship between dyslexia and visual spatial talent and called this association of a deficit with a talent as a pathology of superiority. Geshwind and Galaburda suggested that individuals with dyslexia excel in areas such as art, engineering, and architecture.



In another research, Dr Beverley Steffart, a psychologist at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, London, made a study of the link between dyslexia and creative ability. She found that a majority of the 360 foundation-year students had good academic grades as well as visual spatial skills but had many problems with reading, writing and spelling. According to her, these students seem to struggle with reading and writing but could see the world in a three dimensional way. As reported to Jane Graves, a college's specialist dyslexia tutor- "From the first moment, I see every detail of the final product; I don't see words as "words" but as symbols of what they mean. It conjures up an image immediately, and that is very distracting when you're writing" - were some of the answers she got. Most dyslexics think in pictures not in words. A picture thinker, could think a single picture of a concept that might require hundreds or thousands of words to describe. In the mind of a dyslexic "a picture is worth a thousand words".



If we look at Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory, Visual-Spatial Intelligence is defined as having the following criteria: sensitivity to the relationship between line, color, shape, space, and form, an ability to manipulate and mentally rotate objects and the capacity to create a graphic likeness of a real object the ability to understand the components of visual and spatial displays within the graphic arts. It includes our capacity to visualise, dream and imagine.

Children with high Visual-Spatial Intelligence are the artists who think in pictures and images. "They tend to perceive the environment holistically, storing information in a non-sequential fashion, revealing the strength of their right-brain processing. Their rich internal imagery makes them very imaginative and creative. They are the visual learners. They like posters and pictures and movies and other visual presentations of new information. They are daydreamers, sometimes becoming so engrossed in their own internal "movie" that they don't seem aware of the external environment. They are also keen observers of the world around them, noticing subtleties and details that most of us miss." says [Kimberly L. Keith](#) in her article Nurture Your Child's Visual-Spatial Intelligence. She reports that in her experience she has seen many children with learning disabilities to have significant strengths in visual-spatial intelligence.



We acknowledge - the Art of being dyslexic, The Independent, Education supplement, about.com and other internet sources.

We asked some of our students who are talented in art and photography, a few questions on art and dyslexia, here are some of their responses-

I have been running around with a camera from 12. I was reading an article about a brand and I was finding it difficult to read the name of the brand at first, so just went on with the article and soon I realized that the brand was "cadbury", I instantly was able to write Cadbury in its own font , and it's the same with Reynolds, Baskin Robbins...



I could express myself better through art , relate well visually. Working in SONY PICTURES proved this.



Its much easier to remember and retain information for long if there is an image to relate to, and this I remember from my early school days. I can quickly associate images with anything I hear or read. Its happens all the time. ... despite being dyslexic I have ventured into many professions and I have left a mark.

Art was one thing that never let me down and I felt completely relaxed, happy doing it. if some one is talking to me I see it in my head as cartoons.

Art for a Cause: fund raiser by a group of artist philanthropists

Different Strokes — Art for a Cause, partnered with Sheraton Park Hotel and Towers, for an exhibition and sale of paintings by artists Padmini Vasudevan, G. Hariharan, Anita Hariharan, Divya Hariharan, Pavithra Prasad and Surya Ramkumar - wrote the Hindu- Metro Plus.

In order to pay tribute to their dyslexic brethren, a group of artists from Chennai have come together and have put up about 60 paintings at an event called "Different Strokes" - Art for a Cause. The proceeds will go towards the Madras Dyslexia Association reported the Deccan Chronicle.

Padmini spearheaded this event. She specialises in wildlife and portraits, and her works are inspired by how the eyes can be powerful indicators of emotions.

With artist Elango, being the chief guest and also donating a painting of his, the 'Shivathandavam', the evening was indeed a colourful one. The 'Greenways' took a very festive look with paintings adorning it and a food counter put up by the Sheraton serving a scrumptious high tea. Our students' paintings were also on display and the proud artists were there in person.

Thank you Different Strokes!!



Some activities for Second language teaching

In the last issue, we saw some second language related learning issues and as mentioned there, we will be looking at some fun ways of learning it now. When language is learnt in a play way method, it surely excites the learners and is more permanent. Both Hindi and Tamil can be taught in such ways and we would like to present a few such methods to you. Many of the skills have to be given so that two skills or more can be built up with one activity.

Reading of Tamil and Hindi can pose problems and this can be helped in the following ways:

Word slide: for blending of sounds

A rime is written on the sheet and the slide will be different onsets.

The onset is changed and blended with the rime and read.

Sorting and Matching:

Here reading and cognitive skills are built up in one activity . It's a fun activity which involve both the visual and kinesthetic modes and children learn by doing.

Matching activities are placing the matching cards like what each animal does. While examples have been shown in one language the same can be done for the other as well.

For beginning readers:

Pictures and words are used so that they learn the names of birds, vegetables, fruits, colours and are able to sort them under the appropriate heads- colours, vegetables, fruits, animals etc.



A lot of flash cards can be made and



used in a variety of ways. Rhyming words can be arranged, or they can be sorted according to animals or actions or family members.

Some children have a problem with the short sounds and long sounds in both reading as well as writing. The grapheme changes a lot and cards such as these are very useful.



Rhyming Words:

This is again a rhyming word activity, where the decoding unit is given in the middle and the words that end with that are chosen and kept. This is a visual discrimination activity as well.



Synonyms:

In Hindi, a wheel can be used. The wheel has 3 layers all of which can be moved. If the dial points to a word then the child has to adjust all levels so that synonyms are got for it.

Grammar:

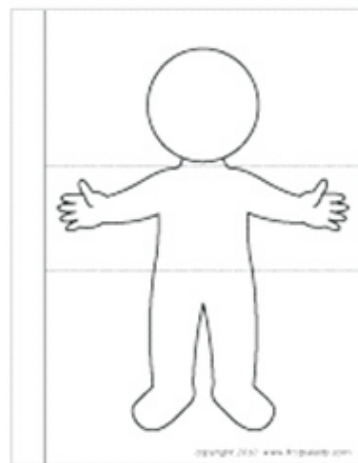
After grammar is taught it can be reinforced with a game with pictures and words which they



sort into nouns, verbs and adjectives.

A cut out of a child is used and then these words are put on small cards and can be used and they keep the name beside it.

head सर
face चेहरा
eye आँख
ear कान
nose नाक
mouth मुँह
teeth दाँत
tongue जीभ
hair बाल



The child has to keep the card in the appropriate part of the body

Substitution tables like this help in teaching the syntax and subject - verb agreement.

So we hope you are going to enthuse your children to enjoy their second language learning too!!

मैं	जाता	है
वे	जाते	हो
आप	जाती	हैं
राम		हैं
सीता		
तुम		

NEWS AT MDA/ ANANYA

Howard Gardner's talk at IIT

All roads seemed to lead to IIT Madras. Date 25th January. Time 3pm. The mood was set even as we drove in, with the bigger than life cut-outs of Professor Howard Gardner. We were going for the public lecture of Dr. Howard Gardner, the father of the theory of "Multiple Intelligences" and the professor of Cognitive Psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education organised by idiscoveri Education. We were among the 300 odd participants- corporates, teachers and educationists of the city who had this rare opportunity of listening to the giant in the field of multiple intelligences. For more than 3 hours everyone in the audience was kept enthralled as he spoke about his work for the past 30 years and the findings of his research. The lecture titled "Multiple Intelligences and Child-Centered Education" was an interesting mix of theory, with his own work and case studies showing us how applicable and practical the theory was. Professor Gardner also spoke about goodness and ethics especially in the context of children. In the second half of the session there was a discussion between Ashish Rajpal, founder CEO of idiscoveri Education, Prof. Gardner and his wife Ellen Winner on a wide variety of topics, including Gandhi, which was indeed very interesting and informative.

Workshop on how Art and Music help improve Education, at Kalakshetra

This program was again organized by i Discovery, X seed and Multiple Intelligence Foundation and delivered by Prof. Dr. Ellen Winner (Professor of Psychology – Boston College). It was an interactive session attended by a group of us as part of about 70 people from various walks of life. Prof Dr. Ellen Winner covered a variety of topics and showed how spatial reasoning, observation skills, verbal outcomes and aptitude test scores tend to increase with association of visual arts and music. Her research work with children in various parts of the world was also presented.



Revival of the Parent Support Group

At the one-day seminar on parenting organized exclusively for parents of dyslexic children in December 2011, the dormant parent support group was revived. Few parents joined the group right there. As a move to support and empower parents, decision to have regular meetings with talks by specialists was made.

As the first step, a meeting of parents of Ananya students was organized on 18th of February. Nearly 50 parents attended. Our trainee and a parent Anne and her team put up a puppet show reflecting expectations and anxieties of parents of dyslexics and the way it affects the child who is already facing his own set of difficulties. Thanks to Thomas and Anne for the wonderful ideas, script and the enacting, parents were able to identify themselves with the characters in the show. A few parents shared their worries and difficulties about handling the children. They also expressed their interest in having such a platform to share and care.



Parents can use the following email address specially created for the support group:
parent.dyslexia@gmail.com

MDA News Snippets

- 03.01.12 Consultative meeting of Indian Academy of Pediatricians and UNICEF attended by Ms.Subha Vaidyanathan
- 25.01.12 Professor Ellen Winner's work shop at Kalakshetra and Professor Howard Gardner's programme at IIT, attended by Ananya staff and others at MDA
- 28.01.12 Consultation meeting on "Reading Skills of Children in Tamil Nadu – Exploring Avenues for Improvement" , attended by Geetha Raghavan at Damien Foundation India Trust.
- 30.01.12 Inauguration of 8-week teacher training programme at MDA
- 04.02.12 Ananya Annual Day, chief guest Professor L.S.Ganesh, Dean and Professor, Management studies, IIT Madras, at Infosys Hall, RKM school,
- 17.02.12 Art for a Cause, Different Strokes Show at Greenways Hall, Park Sheraton, Chief guest Mr.A.V.Elango
- 18.02.12 Parent Support Group Meeting at the Tag Hall at RKM, Thanikachalam Rd, T.Nagar.
- 24.02.12 Awareness talk at the Madras School of Social Work by Ms. Geetha Raghavan
- 25.02.12 One-day workshop on Math techniques for teachers of Spastic Society of TamilNadu conducted by Mrs.R.Sujatha
- 03.03.12 KG teachers training at Hindu Colony Chellammal Vidyalaya, Nanganallur conducted by Geetha Raghavan
- 20.03.12 Visit of Saraswathi Balavidyalaya Teachers to Ananya
- 22.03.12 One-day workshop to teacher trainee students of Ramakrishnanchandra Colleges of Education at G.K.Patti, Theni District, conducted by Geetha Raghavan and Visalakshi Iyer

Our editorial team - Indu Ramesh, Kamala Ramaraj, Shanthi Gopalan

For Private Circulation only

BOOK POST

If undelivered please return to:
Madras Dyslexia Association
No:15, Sambasivam Street,
Behind Jeeva Park, Off GN Chetty Road,
T.Nagar, Chennai - 600 017.