

**MULTI- SENSORY TEACHING TECHNIQUES  
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION  
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC  
LEARNING DISABILITIES AND DYSLEXIA**

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## Abstract

This study shows how multisensory techniques, which have been used in other learning situations, have been used successfully in teaching English as a foreign language.

This thesis discusses the problems faced by pupils with learning disabilities (L.D.) and why their difficulty in learning English as a foreign language is such a barrier to their progress in a world where English has become the global language.

It also discusses the various methods used to teach a foreign language. A detailed description of the multisensory learning technique is given and its application to language acquisition, writing and spelling. A discussion of the history of reading is followed by chapter on reading instructions for learning disabled pupils. An outline of a remedial lesson is also given.

In conclusion, a number of case histories are described in some detail to illustrate the problems faced by L.D. pupils and their struggle to overcome them successfully through use of multisensory teaching techniques.

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## Chapter One

# The Problems Faced by Pupils with Dyslexia and Learning Difficulties When Studying a Foreign Language

### 1. What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia has a wide range of symptoms which include: difficulty in learning and remembering printed words reversal of letters, uncertain laterality, confusion about directions in time and space, illegible handwriting, delayed or inadequate speech. It is estimated that these learning disabilities affect between 5-15 percent of all school children today (Nash, 1996; McMonies, 1996) Dyslexic students are slower and less accurate in naming letters, common objects, colors, numerals. They are not explicitly aware that spoken and printed words can be segmented into individual phonemes. They also have difficulties in phonetic decoding. These difficulties explain, to a certain extent, why people who are dyslexic have so many difficulties in learning to read.

No single cause for this disorder has ever been established. Vellutino (1987) refers to the work done by Defries and associates who are studying the genetic basis for dyslexia. In the same article Vellutino also refers to studies being undertaken by Galaburda for the neurological causes of this disorder. Vellutino, after extensive research, says that he and his colleagues have come to the conclusion that dyslexia appears to be the consequence of limited facility in using language to code other types of information. It seems to be a subtle language deficiency.

The Orton Dyslexia Society, which is dedicated to the understanding, prevention and remediation of reading disability on a worldwide basis, published the following operational definition of dyslexia in "Perspectives", its newsletter (1994):

“Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized development disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including in addition to problems in reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling.”

In Israel, where the native language is not based on a Latin alphabet, English is considered one of the basics of a child’s education. Most Israeli parents feel it is as important to know English as it is to be able to read in the native language and to know maths. This attitude is often shared by parents in other, non-English speaking countries (see Chapter on the Role of English as a Means of Global Communication).

### Labels and Names

For many years and in many countries children who had difficulty in learning to read/spell were not identified as having a problem. They were often labelled as lazy, uninterested or not motivated enough. Once these problems were identified and given a name, teachers, children and parents were relieved to learn that they were not the only ones struggling with a problem. Their struggles to learn and read were not some murky unknown “thing” but a condition they had in common with other people in the community.

However, the words used to describe this condition caused much debate. Learning Difficulties (L.D.), Learning Disabled (L.D.), Specific Learning Difficulties (S.L.D.), Dyslexia, are all terms that describe more or less the same phenomenon. The term Learning Differences has recently cropped up in the literature dealing with learning disabilities. This researcher does not think it is important what name is given to the difficulty of learning to read; what is important is to identify the problem and teach the

child to overcome or compensate for them. This thesis describes a method which has been developed to teach children with learning disabilities to learn English as a foreign language.

The first significant investigation of learning disorders was done by Dr. Samuel Torrey Orton, an American neuropsychiatrist, in 1937. According to Orton's theory, the left hemisphere of the brain is dominant and controls verbal skills. In a dyslexic person, the left hemisphere fails to gain dominance and the right hemisphere interferes with the sequential processing of verbal stimuli - chaos results. Orton believed that remedial education held the key to reversing the effects of dyslexia.

Orton introduced the first multisensory structured remedial reading scheme, whose underlying philosophy has influenced remedial teaching ever since. Whether it was Grace Fernald in the 1940s, the Orton Gillingham scheme developed from Orton's work in the 1960s, the Beve Hornsby remedial programme, or the Hickey Multisensory Language Course (Augur) 1992, all use the technique of multisensory learning based on Orton's findings.

### **Difficulties in Foreign Language Acquisition**

Very little seems to have been written on the problems faced by L.D. students learning English as a foreign language. Most of the literature uses the words foreign language teaching and second language teaching as though they were interchangeable. This, in my opinion, is not the case. A student who speaks a non-English language at home but lives in an English-speaking country has some basic vocabulary that students who live in a country where the mother tongue of the entire population is non-English do not have. The former student, whether s/he is aware of it or not, hears English from the radio and T.V., speaks English to go shopping, use public transport and transact business

in the bank. A student, who hears English only in the classroom or through films and news flashes, must first painfully acquire basic words (colours, numbers, food, clothes, parts of body) before any programme for reading or language acquisition can be initiated.

The basic reason that I have found so little literature may be that

“there have been no empirical studies testing the effectiveness of a multisensory approach to foreign language instruction with at risk learners”

Sparks et al., 1992.

It is almost impossible for any student learning a foreign language to acquire adequate knowledge of the spoken language s/he is studying. They hear the language in a stilted, contrived, unnatural situation. A student with specific learning difficulties (S.L.D.) must first and foremost overcome this basic problem of appropriate exposure to the language in order to have the foundation upon which to build up a reading programme. This knowledge has to be built up systematically, otherwise the student's frame of reference when reading the simplest text will be so narrow that s/he will struggle to comprehend it.

In Israel the present method of teaching a foreign language is through listening and speaking. The S.L.D. learners complain of difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of the target language (Horwitz and Cope, 1986). They cannot glean the information they need through the current methods of language teaching.

In a study done by James Javorsky et al. (1992) students with S.L.D. perceive themselves as having difficulty in listening to, and understanding a foreign language as it is spoken. These students are no less motivated than non S.L.D. students but find current approaches to second language learning a barrier to their ability to acquire language.

Anna H. Gajar (1987) gave the Modern Language Aptitude Test (M.L.A.T.) to university students enrolled in introductory foreign language classes. Students who repeatedly failed foreign language courses in spite of intensive tutoring, high academic potential and motivation, were referred to programmes for learning disabled university students. She found that students with S.L.D. exhibited substantially lower scores than non S.L.D. students and they had particular difficulties in tests that measure “sensitivity to grammatical structure” and memory. Studies carried out by Boder (1973), Denckla (1977) and Hallahan and Kaufman (1982) showed the same findings. This means that S.L.D. students are at a distinct disadvantage when trying to learn a foreign language.

In the light of the difficulties that students with learning disabilities had in fulfilling their foreign language requirements, Boston University, under the supervision of Katherine Demuth and Nataniel Smith (1987), offered an alternative sequence of courses designed to help students achieve foreign language learning success. The students were taught phonics, syntax and sociolinguistic aspects of language, first in English, and then shown how this compared to, and contrasted with the foreign language they were learning. The aim was to teach pupils “about” language without having to perform in it. The results were measured by post course M.L.A.T. scores. Of the 24 students completing the course, twenty of them increased their marks by 5-45 percentiles (Demuth, 1987).

James Javorsky (1992) studied students with and without S.L.D. who had taken foreign language courses in high school or college. No differences were found in motivation to learn between the two groups. Both groups perceived that specific non traditional instructional modifications would be beneficial in learning a foreign language. However, S.L.D. students, in contrast to non S.L.D. students, perceived themselves less capable and possessing fewer skills to master the oral and written language requirements

and content of foreign language courses. They came to college with less foreign language experience than their counterparts.

The survey also raised questions about specific learning methodologies that are necessary for S.L.D. students to succeed in foreign language courses. The students perceive themselves as having difficulty in listening and understanding a foreign language as it is spoken. The author suggests that *they may need a multisensory approach to see and hear the language simultaneously.*

Sparks (1992) speculates that a multisensory approach might benefit foreign language learners as it has benefitted those who have had difficulty learning native literary skills. He has located only two high school teachers who teach Spanish who have been using the multisensory method for a number of years for foreign learners at risk.

The article goes on to say that as recently as 1986 only one empirical study about foreign learning problems of students with learning disabilities had appeared in Language Disability literature or foreign language literature. This research was done by Gajar(1989).

Sparks adds that it was difficult to find teachers using multisensory instruction in foreign language and also finding at risk students grouped together was a formidable task. He concludes that perhaps special educators and foreign language teachers should begin to work together by coordinating efforts in both fields.

My work and that of Roffman is the pioneering research in this area. It deals with teaching a foreign language to pupils with learning difficulties where the first language is written with an alphabet other than Latin and it combines the principles of special education with foreign language teaching. The following papers reporting our research have been published: Roffman and Teitelbaum ( 1993) “ Teaching English as a Foreign

Language to Learning Disabled Pupils in Israel” *Australian Journal of Remedial Education*, Vol 25: 11-14. Roffman and Teitelbaum(1996) “Reflections of Five Years of Teaching English to Learning Disabled Pupils in Israel,” *Perspectives*, Vol 22, No.1: 20-21. Roffman and Teitelbaum (1997) “ Thinking it Over- Half a Decade of Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Learning Disabled Pupils,” *Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol 2; No1: 23-24. Another paper has been accepted for publication by *Dyslexia*.

### **Multisensory Techniques**

Multisensory teaching to pupils with specific learning disabilities has proven to be successful in a variety of subjects worldwide. It is used in England in the Hornsby Institute, in the courses given by the British Dyslexia Association. In North America, the Orton Gillingham multisensory approach is widely used. The sensory systems required for discriminations of sound symbols and for arranging these in sequential order are visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and oral kinaesthetic. They are interdependent and they must interact simultaneously. If even one is “out of step” dyslexia in some form is the result (Auger,1992). The learner’s visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and oral kinaesthetic perceptual systems must interact sufficiently to make learning so secure that s/he can produce any aspect of the phonogram(a symbol representing a spoken sound) when needed, whether for reading or spelling(Auger,1992). Therapists in the above institute have found that the multisensory system guarantees a failure- free way of learning.

The following diagram outlines the method that letters, blends, diagraphs or any new material will be taught.

Teacher says the new letter and shows the pupil the symbol on a card

Visual stimulus

Student looks at the card and repeats after the teacher

Visual and auditory response

Teacher writes the letter on a card

The pupil traces the new letter as s/he says the letter sound out aloud

Auditory kinaesthetic and tactile response

Pupil attempts to write the letter on their own besides the teacher's model

Kinaesthetic response

Both models are erased. Pupil tries to write from memory while saying the sound and name of the new letter.

Auditory/visual response

The pupil writes the letter with eyes closed feeling his/her way through the shape making the sound naming the letter as before

Kinaesthetic-auditory response

This technique is called Stimulus Response Routine (S.R.R.). This routine is used to introduce new material. It takes approximately seven minutes of a remedial session to go through this routine (see Chapter 10: An Outline of Remedial Lessons). Once the learner has gone through this routine the new letter is introduced in a list of words which the learner has to read. Sentences and short paragraphs containing these words are then given to the learner to read. The learner is told to revise the cards on a daily basis at home. At the beginning stage, when the student has only a few cards, this routine should take no longer than three minutes. But, as the pupil progresses and more cards are added, it may take up to seven to ten minutes.

### **Combining Multi-Sensory Techniques with Foreign Language Learning**

Many researchers believe that all the learning problems of students with specific learning disabilities (S.L.D.) are language based (Bauer 1979, Mann & Liberman 1982). Working on this presumption, part of every learning session is devoted to vocabulary acquisition on a thematic basis. This is done systematically and in a structured manner. New words are introduced based on a theme, e.g. clothes. Cognates are pointed out (sweater, pyjama, jacket, bikini). New words are put on cards and learned, using the S.R.R. technique described above.

Reading is not introduced until the learner has a basic vocabulary of about 200 words. The rationale behind this decision is that if a basic vocabulary is not acquired in the early stages of remediation, students may expend too much energy in trying to learn vocabulary while they are endeavouring, concurrently, to read (Roffman & Teitelbaum, 1993). A popular method of teaching a foreign language is to flood the learner with a stream of language and expect her/him to pick it up as a young child learns the mother

tongue. This method emphasises those very aspects of oral and written language that are most difficult for students who have experienced problems learning their native language.

In a survey done by James Javorsky, Richard Sparks, Leonore Ganschow (1992), students with S.L.D. perceive themselves as having difficulty in listening to, and understanding, a foreign language as it is spoken. This finding questions the current methodologies that introduce a foreign language through listening and speaking. Instead of concentrating solely on the aural/oral skills, the teacher should select words for the pupil to read and write at the level of the current reading capacity, so practising their decoding skills. Thus, the pupils are reading and writing words that will help them remember their meaning. All channels of learning are used to acquire the new words taught in a particular lesson.

James Javorsky et al (ibid) say “we infer that they (the S.L.D. students) may need a multisensory approach which enables them to see and hear the language simultaneously.”

Very little research seems to have been done on this subject. Sparks & Ganschow have reported on various efforts of teaching Spanish as a second language using multi-sensory techniques. Ganschow, Sparks and Schneider (1995) report on teaching German as a foreign language to L.D. American students using multi-sensory techniques. Mabbot (1995) describes five students who, despite their learning difficulties, have managed to learn a foreign language. Three of the students had learnt Spanish and one had learnt German, and one had learnt both German and Russian. Of the five students, three had learnt their languages while living abroad in a total immersion situation. Going abroad is not the solution that can be offered to the millions of students the world over who need to learn English.

Dyslexic students and those who have specific learning disabilities (S.L.D. or L.D. students) find it inordinately hard to acquire language, even in their native tongue. They find it almost impossible to acquire a foreign language. Many intelligent students cannot complete their formal education because of their inability to achieve adequate marks in a foreign language. Moreover, in some fields such as aviation and computer sciences, all communications are in English, as they are in many technical and medical journals, so that even in non-English speaking countries students cannot progress in their studies if their level of English is inadequate.

To the best of my knowledge, no research has been done on teaching English as a foreign language to L.D. students, nor have I found any research done on teaching learning-disabled students a Latin-based alphabet to pupils whose mother tongue is a non-Latin alphabet. In this respect, the research that I have undertaken is unique.

There are no standard EFL tests available in Israel at present. Tests from overseas are unsuitable.

### Methodology

Various methodologies have been used throughout the research which are described in detail in the appropriate chapters- class teaching and small group teaching are described in chapter 4 and 6, matched pairs and a longitudinal study in chapter 11.

I have also conducted library research, as can be seen in chapters 2, 3, 7 and 8.

## Summary

The aim of this research is to demonstrate that a multisensory approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language to dyslexic and S.L.D. students produces remarkable success rates. As has been pointed out, there is no published research on the teaching of English as a foreign language using the multisensory approach other than mine (Roffman Teitelbaum 1993; 1996; 1997) This may possibly be the first time that English as a foreign language will be taught using a multisensory approach. It is hoped that this research will show how a method was developed to enable a student to progress from learning single words to eventually participating in a regular heterogeneous class. The hypothesis is that it will show how dyslexic/S.L.D. students can reach a level of English that:

1. will enable them to communicate in English.
2. will enable the students to pass the requirements needed for college education.
3. will enable them to study the profession of their choice, since their lack of knowledge of the English language will no longer be a bar to their progress.

## Chapter Two

### The Role of English as a Means of Global Communication

“When the need for global communication came to exceed the limits set by language barriers, the spread of English accelerated, transforming existing patterns of international communication”

Ferguson, C. (1981)

The spread of English has become an interesting phenomenon of our times. In 1922, when the BBC first started its radio broadcasting services, one of its aims was for English to become a global, or more precisely, an imperial language. Its motto was “Nation shall speak unto nation” and there was no doubt in anyone’s mind that the language spoken would be English. The first director of the BBC, Lord Reith, saw in the English language “a future world language”. Gradually, the English of the airways became a vital means of communication among people without a common language (McCrum, 1986).

As the British Empire grew, so English spread all over the world - America, India, Australia, South Africa. This was the beginning of English as a lingua franca. As the British Empire declined, American English took over the airways. In 1945 America became deeply involved in the European economy through the aid it gave to Europe via the Marshal Plan. In the Far East, particularly Japan, where American soldiers were stationed, the English language infiltrated the local tongue. It is

estimated that American technology and science has introduced some 20,000 English words into regular use in Japan (McCrum et al., 1986).

The Silicon Valley in California has also had a great impact on modern day English. It has given us words such as interface, input, on-line, high tech, diskette, which were first used within the confines of the computer industry but which later became part of the non-computer language. These words were later integrated into other languages - Italian, German, Hebrew, often without realizing that the origins were English.

English today is no longer dependent on its British or American parents. It has a life of its own in non-English situations. The Thai businessman speaks English with his Japanese counterpart to make a business deal, the Italian pilot talks English to ground control in Kuwait. English is less and less regarded as a European language and its development is less and less determined by the usage of its native speakers (Ferguson, 1981).

Initially, English spread because of the influence that the British Empire had over large parts of the globe. However, Kachru (1981) claims that it is certain that the colonist's arm has not always been instrumental in the spread of English. Today, English opens the doors of technology, science, trade and diplomacy. English is also being used as a second language for creative purposes. Some of the names that spring to mind are Vikram Seth from India who wrote "A Suitable Boy", Ben Okri of Nigeria who wrote "The Famished Boy" and the Japanese writer, Kazuo Ishiguro, who wrote "The Remains of the Day." This is only a very short list of authors who write in English although it is not their mother tongue. When non-native speakers of English use English for creative purposes, they show us an aspect of modern day English not

often considered. Many non-native English speakers feel that the diversity and subtlety of the English language allow them to express themselves more concisely in this language than in their native tongue.

There are diverse reasons for the English language boom. World trade is conducted in English. Many multinational corporations do not wait for their employees to learn English on their own, they run their own classes (Treen et al., 1982). Another reason is the use of English in the world of diplomacy. In 1919, at the time of the Versailles Peace Conference, English was the first language used by the representatives of most countries (Treen et al., 1982). Today, English is used by all international bodies. The Miss Universe Pageant is compered in English, the statements at the Olympic Committee are given in English, so too are the pontifications of the United Nations Security Council meetings. Almost all political statements made for the mass media are given in English on the presumption that they will reach the biggest audience (Treen., et al., 1982).

In the world of science English is the language in which 80 per cent of scientific papers are published. Prior to World War II, most scientific articles were published in German. However, as scores of scientists fled Nazi Germany to Great Britain and the USA, English became the language in which scientific papers were published (Treen, et al., 1982).

Lastly, the influence of pop culture should not be underestimated. English pervades the rock scene. Young musicians from non-English countries add lyrics in English because they grew up on the lyrics of the Beatles, Michael Jackson and other English speaking pop stars, and they feel comfortable using the sounds of English to

their own tunes. Many TESOL teachers take advantage of this love of English lyrics and teach English pop songs as a starting out point for their lessons.

The spread of English is being fostered by the non-English mother tongue world (Fishman., 1982). In the research that Fishman conducted, he found that people were more ready to believe information given in English for science, international diplomacy and industry than the same message translated into local languages. English seemed to stand for a higher degree of integrity than any other language.

Smith (1983) claims that English should be denationalized. It should become the auxiliary language of any country that wishes to make it an additional language to the one already spoken in that country, thereby giving us Thai English, Korean English, etc. This approach may defeat its own aims. If all forms of hybrid English become acceptable, people will once again find it difficult to understand and communicate with each other and there is a danger that English will have the same fate as Latin had, that is, breaking down into various languages. As it is, young people all over the world speak what is known in France as Franglais, in Germany as Denglish, in Japan as Japlish, in Israel as Hebrish.

Israeli students will say they diskusnu (discussed) an importnaya (important) matter with their Russian friends, who were wearing dzheenzi (jeans).

There is, however, still an acceptable, standard English, whether it is American or British, for which most non-native English speakers strive. Treen (1982) quotes Burchfield, editor of the Oxford English Dictionary “The problem is not expected to get better. In fact, it could get worse - an ironic lack of communication in a language that is dominating the world.” Smith (1983) reminds us, however, that people no longer learn English in order to learn about English culture. They learn it to help them understand ALL other cultures and to better participate in the world community.

Smith maintains that more and more countries are making English the language in which they communicate with the rest of the world, so causing English to be spoken less frequently as a national language but more frequently as a means of communication on an international level.

Using English as an international language means that it is not bound to any one culture. The speaker makes no attempt to be like the native speaker, nor does he adopt a European, western slant to his ideas.

English is the native language of over 300 million people. It is the largest speech community in the world except for Mandarin Chinese. English as a second language considerably outnumbers its native speakers (Clairborne, 1983). It is used as a second language by approximately 450 million (McCrum et al., 1986).

The purpose of learning English as a foreign language is no longer in the pursuit of culture and literature, but predominantly for practical use. It is used most often as an international language, that is, people of two countries who communicate in the same language, or as an intranational language in countries such as India and Pakistan, where people of the same country use it as a common language.

English is no longer limited to the elite few who are destined for university, but it is now studied universally in almost all countries of the world. The British Council Annual Report and Accounts (1993-94) states that the British Council operates in 108 countries all over the world. It claims that by the turn of the century an estimated one billion people world wide would be learning English.

Whether English is learnt for the purpose of increasing job opportunities or to increase the possibility of higher education, whether it is used to communicate on an international level for the multi-national corporations like Kodak or Sony, whether it is

Whether English is learnt for the purpose of increasing job opportunities or to increase the possibility of higher education, whether it is used to communicate on an international level for the multi-national corporations like Kodak or Sony, whether it is the language used by the Japanese tourist to the Malaysian shopkeeper or whether it is to keep up with the latest political statements uttered by Middle East leaders, there can be no doubt that people who cannot use English sufficiently well to function at any of these levels feel isolated from the international community.

English is a billion dollar business world wide. In the British Council annual report and accounts 1993/4, the chairman, Sir Martin Jacomb, claims that the teaching of English contributes in excess of £4 billion a year to the British economy. The British Council markets and administers British examinations in seventy three countries. It helps set up English teaching programmes and generally sets up a network which it hopes will help maintain the global lead in teaching English into the next century. In this Britain faces a fair amount of competition from countries such as the USA, Canada and even Australia.

Over 107,000 students go to Britain to study every year. Desvisseaux claims that in 1994-95 there were 452,635 international students on U.S. campuses. These are the two largest centres of learning for foreign students who want to learn English. The sheer numbers tell their own story. English teaching is big business.

An in-depth study of English world wide was conducted by Fishman et al (1977). This research studied the role of English as a diplomatic and official language, its place in primary and secondary education, the proportion of tertiary level foreign students studying in English mother tongue countries.

Fishman found that English was being taught in 112 non English mother tongue countries throughout the world. Sixteen years later, the British Council annual report of 1993/4 mentions that it has offices in 108 countries which means there is enough interest in 108 countries in the world which warrants setting up a British Council branch. Robert Burchfield (1982), editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, is quoted in Newsweek as saying “Any literate educated person on the face of the globe is deprived if he does not know English” (Treen, 1982).

### **The History of English in Israel**

In 1927 when the British mandate began in what is now known as Israel, the status of English changed dramatically. English was added to Arabic and Hebrew as one of the three official languages.

English became the first foreign language taught in schools. When the British government began financial support of the schools in the settlement, it also influenced teaching methods and the number of English hours taught in government schools.

The mandatory government allowed the Jewish population to have Hebrew language public schools, but English was a compulsory subject, beginning in Grade 5, with four hours of instruction per week from grades five to eight. It was also a compulsory high school subject.

The rejection of the English language was a reflection of the political attitude of the Jewish population. Many young people of the 30s and 40s refused to speak any language but Hebrew and adamantly opposed their English lessons.

After independence in 1948, English as an official language was abolished. Arabic remained by law the second official language alongside Hebrew (Brosh 1993).

With the establishment of the State, a great deal of emphasis was put on Hebrew. Hebrew was considered one of the corner stones of the new state. Much emphasis was put on teaching Hebrew both in its oral form and in its written form. Not only was Hebrew encouraged but the use of mother tongues brought from the Diaspora was greatly discouraged. English, however, was never dismissed from the curriculum. English continued to be taught as a first foreign language although there was a decrease in the number of hours studied per week. However, the amount of English spoken between independence in 1948 until 1967 was low. An American sociologist, Isaacs (1967), found in a survey that only 4 out of 1000 Jews spoke English as their main language. Children of English speaking parents were reluctant to speak English, even though they were capable of doing so and English speaking parents found it very difficult to raise their children in English.

In 1967, the Six Day War brought about some significant changes in the life of Israel and its use of language. Firstly, there was a significant rise in the immigration from western countries. Many Americans came to live in Israel, bringing with them imported products which included American journals, books and pop songs. American backed companies sprang up and the economy boomed. As a result, Israelis began to travel abroad more frequently.

Thousands of volunteers from all over the world came to the kibbutzim, the common language among them and the kibbutz members was English.

Since 1960 it has been compulsory in all government recognised schools to begin the study of English in Year 5, on the basis of 4 hours per week. Over the last 10 years, all schools have started teaching English in Year 4. Due to parental pressure, the Ministry of Education have allowed English to be introduced in some schools in

Year 3 on a two hours per week basis. Children continue to learn English up to year twelve, when it is compulsory to pass English in order to graduate from high school.

The Ministry of Education stresses that the goals of English studies are for international communications. Less emphasis is put on writing skills and more on oral comprehension and communicative English. There is a genuine need for communicative English in Israel. The average Israeli wants to be able to communicate with the volunteer on the kibbutz, with the tourist in the street, with the business associate from the USA or Europe, with the visiting professor from the university. As the acquisition of English is emphasised by the Ministry of Education, so English is no longer the privilege of the educated class but part of the basic education of the population as a whole.

### **The English Media in Israel**

Israel broadcasts in a number of languages in addition to Hebrew, to cater for its many immigrant groups. It broadcasts in Arabic, Yiddish, Ladino, Russian, Amharic, French and English. The radio provides a daily half hour news programme in English in the late afternoon and a two minute news flash at 1 p.m. A fifteen minute English news programme is shown on TV on a daily basis in the early evening. It is very easy to receive both the BBC and the Voice of America in Israel, both of which have a popular following. Sixty percent of the households in Israel are connected to cable TV, which is a rich source of English for its viewers (Gordon, 1996). These stations include CNN, Skylines, BBC World, Discovery. All these stations broadcast in English. The viewer can of course switch to watch German, Turkish, Russian or

any other European language programme, but there is a vast opportunity for listening in English if one so desires.

In comparison to the seventies (Fishman, 1977), Israel TV now has a number of Hebrew language talk and entertainment shows. There are many imported serials, detective, drama and soap operas from the USA, England and Australia. They are shown with Hebrew and Arabic subtitles but the original English is always heard. as a result every child from pre-school age and up is exposed to some form of spoken English on an almost daily basis before he studies English formally in the classroom.

### **Films**

Subtitles are provided for all commercial films in two languages, whether Hebrew, English or French. Therefore, the choice of an English language film poses no problem for the Israeli viewer if he can read Hebrew. At the time of writing this research, it was found in the "Jerusalem Post" cinema listings that only one in ten movies was in a non English language film (March 1996).

### **Books**

Government statistics do not list the number of books imported annually. However, every shopping mall has a book store whose major display is in English and every town has at least one and often more than one second hand English book store. In 1977, English speakers were less than 1% of the population of native speakers (Fishman). They now number approximately 150,000 people, making them about 3% of the population.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The breakdown of these numbers was obtained from the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, the British Olim Society, The South African Zionist Federation and the Australian desk in British Olim Society.

The small number of native English speakers does not warrant the massive support that these English language book stores have. This can only be explained by the fact that many Israelis read English for pleasure. English textbook publishing has become a flourishing business in the last ten years. There are at least two publishers who print only English language text books. Between 10-15 new titles are published annually.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

The locally published English daily newspaper The Jerusalem Post has had a steady rise in the number of daily copies sold. In 1962 it sold 17,850 copies, in 1972 31,500, and the number sold in 1996 was 100,000 daily newspapers and 150,000 weekend copies.<sup>2</sup> The Jerusalem Report, a fortnightly news magazine, sells just over 50,000 copies per issue.<sup>3</sup> Time, Newsweek and the International Herald Tribune are easily available at major newspaper stands and have a wide following in Israel.

In contrast to the attitude of Israelis in the 30s and 40s, English is no longer regarded as a sign of colonialism. Although English is a compulsory subject both in high school and at tertiary level, it is studied for a number of other pragmatic reasons:

1. The rapidly growing tourist industry needs many English speaking workers.
2. Israel now trades with countries all over the world, including China, South East Asia, Russia, Europe and the USA. English is the only language which the representatives of all these countries have in common. A businessman who

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<sup>2</sup> These numbers were provided by "The Jerusalem Post" office.

<sup>3</sup> This number was provided by the "Jerusalem Report" office, which was unwilling to give more precise figures.

needs the services of an interpreter will make the dealings with an associate cumbersome and time consuming.

3. Israel has a highly developed computer and electronic industry whose language is, essentially, English.

An individual learns English because the knowledge of English helps him communicate in contexts in which, for economic, or educational, or emotional reasons, he wants to communicate and because the opportunity to learn English is available to him (Fishman, 1977). It is therefore not surprising that Israelis are so anxious to learn English.

### **English in Israel in the 1990s**

A study of the status of English was conducted in the early sixties by Isaacs (1967). He found that children of American parents were unwilling to use English even when they spoke it fluently and that parents were finding it very difficult to maintain a satisfactory level of English skills.

By 1977 Fishman found a change in attitude to learning and maintaining English. Fluency in English was viewed as a valuable asset and mothers who were English speakers felt that they would be doing their child a disservice if they did not keep up their children's English. Parents were prepared to go out of their way to exchange books in English language libraries and to organise their children in small English speaking play groups in the afternoon in order to keep up their language skills.

Israelis associate English with science and technology. It is often an important job requirement and is viewed as a bread and butter skill. As Israeli mothers saw the

importance of English in the job market, they too started organising their children into afternoon study groups.

Despite all the efforts made in widening their children's knowledge of English, the end of high school examination results were still discouraging. Fishman reports that 43% failed to pass high school matriculation exams in 1972. More pupils failed this subject than any other required subject. There are no recent numbers available for the percentage of passes in English.

This researcher tried to update the figures on the percentage of passes in English over the past five years. This, however, seems to be a politically sensitive issue. When I first asked for this information, I was told point blank that I would never be given the numbers and the secretary of the English inspectorate said that this kind of material was not published. Despite repeated requests over a three month period, I did not receive information to the following questions:

- a. What percentage of students pass English exams at the end of high school?
- b. How many students are given concessions because they have a learning disability?
- c. What percentage of LD students pass the end of high school exams?

Over the years, as the Israeli economy has improved, so too has the ability to pay for extra English tuition. Israeli parents are obsessed with teaching English to their offspring from as early an age as possible. After-school private English schools have opened up to fulfil these demands. Some have a pupil enrolment of 200 pupils who come for enrichment programmes in English. Parents who are financially well off send their children to England to summer school at a cost of \$1500-3000 US dollars for a three week course.

The following are some of the advertisements in the national newspapers the weeks prior to the summer holidays inviting children to summer programmes over the vacation.

Figure 1. Advertisements for summer camps.

A Summer Experience on Kibbutz Tzora

# CAMP SAMSON

For English-speaking youth aged  
12-15 from all over the world.

- Unique educational programs and activities.
- Between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.
- Choice of over 25 workshops.
- Exciting trips all over Israel.
- Full-time supervision.

REGISTRATION  
IS NOW  
OPEN!

Two Sessions:  
July 16 - 28  
July 30 - Aug. 11

For information call:  
02-9908-222 (days); 02-9908-363 (eves., Zvi Herr)



MEDIAWISSE

Petah Tikvah runs an English-speaking day camp at the Yosef Tal Community Center. The camp for children in grades 4-7 is run by counselors from Petah Tikvah's American sister city - Houston, Texas, who have specially come to Israel for the program. The three-week session kicks off on July 4 with a big Independence Day celebration that continues through out the

program. The camp runs from 8 am-1 pm with activities such as swimming, sports, trips and arts and crafts. Children are provided with snacks, fruit, milk and cookies throughout the morning. A special highlight is the "English Hour" where children are encouraged to increase their vocabulary and fluency in the language. The camp also offers some evening activities such as a disco and sleepover at the center. The camp runs from July 4-27 and costs NIS 510 for the first child. Special rates are available for families with more than one child. Costs include a camp t-shirt and hat.

"Jerusalem Post", 16.6.1995

Figure 2 Advertisements for summer camps.

# Summer Camp Options

## Arts and Crafts

The Ein Yael Living Museum located on the site of an ancient farm in the Refaim Valley near Malcha, Jerusalem, was set up to study, reconstruct and preserve traditional methods of arts and crafts used in ancient times. The site includes the ruins of a Roman villa, including a beautiful floor mosaic and the only complete roof found in Israel.

Throughout the year, groups of students of all ages visit Ein Yael to participate in workshops in pottery, weaving, mosaics, basketry, cooking, building, stone cutting, paper making and agriculture – in the way that it was done in this part of the world

centuries ago.

The Ein Yael philosophy is that only hands-on experience enables people to get a true sense of the ancient way of life and the evolution of ideas.

This year, in addition to its regular Traditional Arts and Crafts day camp, Ein Yael is having a special Indian Crafts camp (both sleep-away and day camp), directed by a group of native Americans. Campers will learn Indian basket making, ceramics and weaving, horseback riding, tracking, archery, building (and sleeping in) a teepee and much more.

Only a limited number of places are left. Parents interested in reserving slots for their children should call 02-344154 (evenings) or 050-271614.

ings) or 050-271614.

## CAMP TAPUZ

AN UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER EXPERIENCE IN ISRAEL, WITH CHILDREN FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

- ★ Tapuz - ages 6-12
- ★ Tapuz Seniors - ages 12-14
- ★ ISA Travelers - ages 14-17
- ★ The Scouts - ages 15-18

For detailed brochure, contact Telefax 06-380394/5, or write to P.O.B. 78, Givat Ada 37808.



**CAMP TAPUZ**  
INTERNATIONAL  
SUMMER CAMP



## Camp Oz

**Language Through Adventure in**

A program with Jewish students from Mt. Scopus College and high school students from Japan.

*IMAGINE YOURSELF on a Journey through Australia, while skiing in the Australian Alps; throwing a boomerang on an outback farm, snorkelling off the Great Barrier Reef, and rafting in a World Heritage tropical rainforest.*

**When:** July 25 - August 12 (3 weeks)

**Where:** Melbourne, Sydney and Cairns

**Ages:** 14-16, boys and girls

Sponsored by  
for Cultural Exchange  
For Information  
brochure, call

Figure 3. The Hebrew version of this advertisement is seen below:

### Camp Ariel

Camp Ariel is an orthodox American sleep-away camp for boys and girls entering grades 4-11. It offers the best of American camping experience in an Israeli environment. Camp Ariel's full range of camping activities includes daily *shiurim*, sports, swimming in a private pool, creative arts, computers, tours and much more.

Located at Kfar Silver near Ashkelon, Camp Ariel is directed by two veteran camp families Reuven (Roy) & Deena Angstrom and Arthur & Linda (Seniff) Paleyeff.

אירל איז א אורתאדאקסישע אמריקאנע שליפ-אױױ קאמפ פאר יונגען מיט א גראד פון 4-11. עס אפיסלעך די בעסטע אמריקאנע קאמפ ערפארונג אין אן איזראעליסע אומגעבונג. אירלס גאנצע רענג פון קאמפ אקטיוויטעטן איזלעך טעגליכע שיעורים, ספארטן, שווימען אין א פריוואטן פול, קראייט ארץ, קאמפיוטערס, טורס און פילע אנדערע זאכן.

אירל איז אונטערהאלטן דורך צוויי וועטעראן קאמפ פאמיליעס רעווען (רוי) און דענא אנסטראם און ארתור און לינדא (סניף) פאלעייף.

## זנה אריאל

### קיימפ אירל

חצי יום : מסלול לימודי אנגלית עיני מורה מוסמך כולל שיעור תורני וטיוולים מיוחדים.  
 חצי יום : פעילות מלאה של מחנה קיץ, עם חברת אמריקאים וישראלים דוברי אנגלית.



- ▶ שחיה נמרדת
- ▶ ספורט / טניס
- ▶ חוגים במחשבים
- ▶ אומנות קרמיקה
- ▶ ריקודי עם ועוד

לבר, על זה אשקלון  
 י הקוטנה:  
 א- 25 ליוני-3 לאוגוסט  
 ב- 3 לאוגוסט-14 לאוגוסט  
 מחיר למחזור 1200 ש"ח  
 טובה לנצל  
 עת חימים ללימודים ופעילות  
 ס: דינה אונגסטרייך  
 66954, בקס: 02-665113  
 חל עיי תבחן פרטית, דחית סאומית  
 רחוקות או תעשה

Figure 4. Advertisements for summer clubs.

This was a full page advertisement appearing a number of times in Hebrew daily newspapers. It invites pupils to attend summer English clubs under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

“Maariv” daily newspaper, 9.6.95

ת.ישראל  
ה.חינוך  
ת.והספורט

החברה למהתנ"סים  
מרכזים קהילתיים בישראל בע"מ

# פה עושים כי הרבה FUN הקיץ?

יש קלאב של המתנ"סים!

נ"ס ליד הבית כדי שלא תחמיצו את קייטנות האנגלית (English Club) בילכם. שלושה שבועות של FUN אמיתי עם מדריכים מגויבים מחו"ל ויותר! לא תשתעממו אפילו רגע אחד והכל באנגלית!

מתנ"ס נופש פעיל מסודללים  
צריגת סחיה  
סדנאות האטרון

ספורט  
מחנאות וטוילים מרתקים  
טבע מחטבת אמוץ  
יסוד

אירועים מיוחדים והפתעות ועוד ועוד  
לזיחה ודאן וכתיבת עתון

יש קלאב ולשאר פעילויות הקיץ ולקייטנות - עכשיו בכל המתנ"סים.  
רד החינוך, החובות והספורט כביצוע החברה למתנ"סים.

Parents allow children to attend “English courses” given by people whose sole qualification is the ability to speak English, not necessarily on a native English speaker level. These courses sometimes start at the age of three.

In an effort to try and stop this uncontrolled flood of teaching English, the Ministry of Education has taken the following steps (Information for English Teachers, 1995):

A. English is now taught in year three by English teacher specialists. Schools must receive permission from the English inspectorate and the books used must be ones that have received approval from the Department of Coursebook Approval.

The following are some of the basic principles for teaching grade three English as laid down by the English inspectorate (English Teachers’ Journal, 1995):

1. Teaching English in Grade 3 should be based on activities that are stimulating and appealing to young learners. The programme should provide a foundation for further development on which the pupils will be able to build and enlarge their knowledge of the language in the coming years.
2. The teacher needs to create a learning environment which facilitates language acquisition and communication by providing contextual support such as stories, games, video, songs, etc.
3. The Oral/Aural approach is recommended for young learners. Pupils should be able to understand and speak English at an appropriate level, in a relevant context.
4. Since children learn by doing, a topic centred, activity-based language teaching approach is recommended. Children should use language communicatively. Learning English should be a positive enjoyable and successful experience.

Every lesson should include games, songs and chants in English. The child's lack of inhibition at this age should be exploited.

Pupils should learn vocabulary and expressions that relate to them. Wherever possible, English should be the means of communication within the lesson.

English should be taught at least two hours per week, divided into four half-lessons (20-25 minutes each).

At the end of the first year of learning English pupils are expected to:

follow instructions

make requests

sing songs

play games

give simple commands

take part in a conversation

participate in story telling.

B. In 1995 summer camps in English were organised by the Ministry of Education. These took place in community centres throughout the country. There were approximately 100 camps for pupils between the ages of twelve and sixteen. A sleep away Summer Village was also offered. In order to attract the children, huge full page advertisements were placed in the national and local press (see example p.29).

The idea behind these camps was to expose children to English on a daily basis in a wide variety of activities. The camps provided a total English environment, counsellors were chosen from volunteers from Great Britain, North America and the local English speaking community. Over 100,000 Israeli youth took part. The British

Council assisted this project by helping provide English speaking counsellors and in the general organisation of the project. At the same time, private camps which tried to lure campers by promoting English language skills did not fall behind in their advertising campaign. (See samples of ads found in the local press during the months of May and June 1995. pp26-28 Summer holidays start July 1st.)

Overseas summer schools were still well attended. Whether or not these summer camps had any influence on the standard of English is hard to judge after only one year's experience. It will be interesting to evaluate the results of this project in a few years' time.

The number of Israelis studying abroad or taking courses which are taught in English in Israeli institutes is also on the rise. Competition for a place in Israeli universities is fierce. It is often easier to find a place in a foreign university. This could possibly be another reason for the unbounded popularity of English in Israel in the past few years. Fishman (1977) quotes from the UNESCO Statistical Year Book (1972) for data of Israeli students in English speaking countries. In 1972, there were 1418 Israeli students in English speaking countries which include Australia, Great Britain, Canada, USA and Ireland. In 1994-95 there were 2692 Israeli students studying in the USA alone (Desruisseaux 1995). There were another 1000 students studying in the UK. British universities, such as Knightsbridge University, Middlesex University, to name but a few, are giving complete courses in English to Israeli students in local Israeli colleges. Approximately 1000 students attend these courses and the numbers are continually growing (Shuldenfrei, 1996).

Israel is one of the top ten countries where American students come for a two year study period. In 1993-94 these numbered 2049 students (Desruisseaux,

1995). Many more come for a shorter time span but these numbers are not available. All these English speakers on campus encourage students to become more fluent in English.

Although English speakers are only 3% of the general population, they play a very prominent role in Israeli society. Many doctors, psychologists, scientists and university professors come from their ranks. Even in politics native English speakers are well represented. Haim Herzog - past president of Israel - is Irish-born. Abba Eban, past foreign minister, is British, and the late Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was American. Therefore, speaking fluent unaccented English is a source of envy for many Israelis.

Some schools have a small number of "English speakers" in their student body. This can mean children who have only just arrived in Israel, it can mean Israeli children who have spent a year abroad with their parents who were on sabbatical, or it can mean Israeli-born children who speak English at home to their parents whose first language is English.

Over the past two years teachers have noticed that these children are not embarrassed to speak English to each other, even in the playground. Moreover, they are often joined by Israeli pupils and their play is conducted in English.

This is a total about-face of the attitude that children had to English in the '60s. In Isaacs (1967) study, even children who spoke English well were reluctant to do so. In 1996, 11 year old children play unselfconsciously in English if their playmate cannot speak Hebrew.

A short while ago, an eleven year old girl who had severe learning difficulties confided to this researcher that "children don't like me because I can't learn English."

At face value that seemed a gross overstatement. However, after studying the importance of English in Israel, where children go to English speaking play groups in the afternoon, and use it to play video games, and may often go to summer camps or clubs in order to improve their English, and watch movies, it is not difficult to understand her sense of isolation. Her inability to learn English made her very different from her peers.

## Chapter Three

# Acquiring a Foreign Language - A Discussion of the Methods Currently Being Used to Teach English

### Background

Over the centuries there have been many approaches to teaching a foreign language. These go from one extreme - The Grammar Translation Approach, to another - The Communicative Approach. The former method usually resulted in students being unable to speak the target language although they could often read fluently and comprehend well. The goal of the latter method is the ability to communicate in the target language, which is sometimes done at the cost of accuracy. Fashions in foreign language teaching change radically and are often a strong reaction to the then current method being used. Changes in approach to language teaching also occur as the needs of the times change - examples will be given below.

Over the past fifty years there have been many fluctuations in the methodology of teaching English. A small example of this is the use of the mother tongue in foreign language learning. This has sometimes been banned entirely, as in the Direct Method, sometimes encouraged as a quick way of giving information, as in the Reading Approach, but rarely tolerated. Foreign language teaching seems to swing from one doctrinaire approach to another. Instead of extracting the successful aspects of a technique and building and developing new ideas from the partial success which teachers report in the field, methods are radically changed. The rationale behind some of the new "revolutionary" ideas is to be as different as is possible to what has gone before. This

may sound extreme but on closer look at the various approaches in foreign language teaching, this claim, I feel, is not exaggerated.

All teaching situations are based on three elements: 1. The subject matter; 2. The learner, 3. Aims of the instruction.

### 1. The Subject Matter: Language and Linguists

The subject matter in the teaching of a foreign language is of course the target language. Linguists wield a great deal of influence on how a language is taught. Over the years, linguists have tried to force their knowledge into the classroom situation with little attempt to understand the needs of the learner or the teacher. Linguists often develop their theories without reference to the classroom. They incorporate drills in meaningless sounds, use sentences unrelated to real situations and are often indifferent to communication (Prator, 1991).

Teachers have, however, resisted the dogmatism laid down by the linguists who have urged that their techniques and principles of language teaching be taken directly into the classroom. Good linguists are not necessarily good foreign language teachers and though some theory may look brilliant on paper, it does not necessarily work in the classroom where the human factor also plays a role in language acquisition. Linguists do not often work with children in the classroom, and sometimes their theories do not stand up to the rough and tumble of the classroom situation, where there are, at times, forty pupils with their wide-ranging abilities, who are trying to learn a foreign language. As a result linguists and teachers do not always cooperate willingly in the field of foreign language acquisition. However, as Prator (1991) states “What can safely be asserted is that teachers who have the firmest grasp of the fundamentals of linguistics will probably

be the most effective in their work". Researchers (Moats, 1994) writing about remedial teaching, support the idea that good remedial teachers must have a wide knowledge of linguistics in order to teach L.D. pupils successfully.

## 2. The Learner

Psychology studies the process of learning. As psychologists are becoming increasingly interested in language learning, so the relationship between teachers and psychologists is becoming more cordial.

In the fifties Chomsky's (1957) "Syntactic Structures" appeared, Carroll's (1955) "The Study of Language" and Berko's (1958) "The Child's Learning of English Morphology" were published. These works started a trend in which the speaker was considered as having "a significant role in the generation of speech" (Prator, 1991). It was slowly being realized that it was not sufficient to teach the rules and drill the sounds. The learner was a rational being with needs and desires and attitudes which would influence his success or failure in language acquisition.

## 3. Aims

The third element of foreign language teaching is the aim of the instruction. This too has changed over the years. Whereas it was once thought that the cultural background and literature of the target language were an important aspect of foreign language learning, this is no longer true. The aim of foreign language teaching has become more specific. Learning English as a foreign language has become the aim of millions of people the world over (see Chapter "The Importance of English as a Means of Global Communications"). The reasons for studying English have become more focussed. The language may be needed by a scientist to read scientific papers, a business

person to transact a business deal, or a student who needs it to further his /her studies.

The teacher must be flexible in his/her methods and materials to accommodate these needs so that the objectives of the learners are successfully met.

## **A Brief Description of Some of the Approaches to Teaching a Foreign Language**

### **The Grammar Translation Approach**

This approach was used to teach classical Greek and Latin. The focus was on grammar and a typical language exercise was to translate from the target language to the mother tongue. The teacher was not necessarily fluent in the target language and at the completion of the language course the student could usually not speak the language either. In contrast to contemporary emphasis on oral communication, speaking the language was not the goal.

### **The Direct Approach**

This was developed by a Frenchman called Gouin who published his theories in 1880 (Celce Murcia, 1991). The teacher using this method must be a native speaker of the target language and use of the mother tongue is not permitted. Actions, pictures and dialogues are used to make meanings clear. Despite its idealistic aims this method was not entirely successful because there were not enough language teachers available who were fluent in the target language (Celce Murcia, 1991). The limitations of the time table should also be taken into account, as in all approaches, when weighing the success or failure of a method.

### **The Reading Approach** (circa 1930s)

This method was developed as a reaction to the impracticality of the Direct Approach where not enough teachers were found to implement it. In the 1930s few people travelled abroad and it was thought that the most useful skill a foreign language learner could acquire was the ability to read in the target language. Hence translation once again became a legitimate classroom exercise. Vocabulary and grammar were taught for their usefulness in reading comprehension and neither the teacher nor the student had good oral proficiency.

### **Audio-Visual Approach**

In the 1940s the U.S. military, as a result of World War II, had to teach many of its men to speak a foreign language quickly and efficiently. The U.S. government turned to linguists to help them develop a method.

The rationale behind the audio lingual approach is that language is habit formation. In the audio-visual approach, grammatical structures are sequenced and in the initial stages vocabulary is strictly controlled in order to prevent learner errors as much as possible. Language is often used without regard to meaning and content. Reading and writing are postponed while listening and speaking are initially emphasized.

### **The Situational Approach**

This was developed to get away from the rigidity of language in the audio-visual approach. In this approach, lexical and grammatical items are taught and practised situationally, e.g. at the shopping centre, in the restaurant, etc. All reading and writing is done only after the student has practised it orally. The emphasis in this method is on the

spoken language (Celce Murcia, 1991). This approach is still used in some classrooms in Israel.

### **The Cognitive Approach**

This was developed as a reaction to the audio-lingual approach. Reading and writing are considered as important as speaking and listening. Vocabulary and grammar instruction are considered important. Errors are viewed as part of the learning process.

The cognitive approach believes language is rule governed, cognitive behaviour.

### **Affective Humanistic Approach**

As its name indicates, there is as much emphasis on human relationships in this method as in the material learnt. The feelings of each individual student are respected and the class atmosphere is viewed as important as the material being taught. Pair work and group work are an important part of the lesson, while the teacher's role is viewed more as a counsellor than as an instructor. In this approach it is thought that foreign language learning is a process of self-realization.

### **Comprehension Based Approach**

Some language methodologists assume that second language acquisition is similar to first language acquisition. Based on this assumption it is thought that listening comprehension is the basic skill from which the learner will eventually speak, read and write. This assumption does not take into account the fact that when the learner studies a second language, s/he already knows that one cannot only hear and speak in a language, but can read and write in it as well. A second language learner expects to do

this early in the process of acquiring a second language. A child of two or three (when s/he learns the native language) is satisfied, one can even say delighted, in just being able to speak and make themselves understood. They are only vaguely aware that words can be read and written. When a foreign language is learnt, particularly in a formal classroom environment, there is interference from the first language that the learner already speaks. Whether the interference is in syntax, pronunciation, spelling or other factors that make up a language. I feel that the assumption that foreign language learning is similar to native language acquisition is erroneous and leads to much frustration for both the pupil and the teacher.

### **The Communicative Approach**

This approach presumes that the aim of language learning is the ability to communicate in the target language. Any given activity integrates all four skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking, from the beginning stages (this approach assumes that the learner is able to use the alphabet of the target language).

### **The Whole Language Approach in Foreign Language Learning**

The method began as a holistic way of teaching reading to native speakers of English and has turned into a movement for change in education. The key aspect of this approach is to respect each student as a member of a culture and as a creator of knowledge and the respect for each teacher as a professional.

One of principles of the whole language approach is that tasks must be real and authentic. The student does not write a letter in order to practise letter writing - s/he writes a letter, sends it and receives an answer.

The student chooses his/her goal and evaluates his/her achievements.

In recent years there has been an attempt to use a holistic approach to English foreign language learning but its implementation has been limited by a number of factors:

The teacher is faced by curriculum demands and standardised tests and cannot give the pupils the lee-way to make whole language learning as accessible as it is L.I. or second language learning. The English teacher as a specialist teacher meets each class between 2-4 times per week (depending on the level), s/he may teach between 150-200 pupils per day as s/he moves from one class to the next. All these factors undermine the teacher's ability to implement the philosophy behind whole language teaching.

Nevertheless an endeavour is being made to incorporate authentic material into the classroom and to make reading and writing a natural part of the learning situation.

Despite the diverse approaches to teaching a foreign language, Robert Blair (1991) states that there is not yet a single comprehensive formula for foreign language teaching which, if followed, can bring uniform success for all teachers and all learners. The teacher should adopt techniques and ideas from all approaches and blend them into a workable formula that suits him/her and the particular learning situation.

In addition to the above approaches to foreign language teaching, Blair (1991) lists a number of unconventional and innovative methods which have won publicity and the support of teachers in the field of foreign language teaching. The following is a brief description of a number of these approaches.

### 1. **The Total Physical Response**

This was developed by James Asher, a psychologist. He observed that children respond meaningfully to directives, that is, when the learner is told to open the door s/he does so immediately. Asher hypothesized that a kinetic, physically active response was a contributory factor for the rapid language acquisition of children. The criticism that has been voiced against this method is that because of its limitations it cannot teach language beyond the beginning stage.

### 2. **The Natural Approach**

This was developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). This approach assumes that the learner discovers the underlying system of a language without having it broken down. It expects speech to develop from single word responses to more meaningful dialogue without emphasis on correct grammar. Critics of this method claim that the learner's language patterns become "fossilized" at a low level and it is difficult to eradicate it and move the learner to a more complex use of language.

### 3. **Diglot Weave Input**

One of the problems of foreign language learning is providing sufficient material for oral comprehension at the level comprehensible to the learner. Blair (1991) describes Rudy Lentulay's experiment in teaching Russian to kindergarten children in the U.S.A. Each week he told a different story sprinkling Russian words wherever the contents made the meaning clear. Once the expression was used in Russian the children were expected to use it instead of the English equivalent. The children were expected to catch the teacher using an English word when they knew its Russian form. At the end of one

term *Lentulay* was telling stories mostly in Russian. Pedagogues have mixed feelings about this method. Some fear that it may lead to pidginized corruptions of the authentic language, others see this method as a way of providing beginners with a great deal of easily understood oral language.

There are a number of other approaches used to teach a foreign language - many go under the heading of humanistic and psycho suggestive approaches. The following is quoted from Blair's article (1994):

**Teacher:** "You are the focus of my mind's eye. What do you imagine I am seeing?"

**Pupil:** "My face smiling at you."

**Teacher:** "What else am I seeing?"

**Pupil:** "'My pink sweater and brown shirt."

**Teacher:** "What kind of person am I seeing?"

**Pupil:** "A teenager who is a little shy but full of fun."

This sophisticated dialogue can surely not be the introductory steps of any foreign language scheme!

Another totally different approach to language learning has been developed by Giorgi Lozanov (1978). This is described in brief in Blair's (1991) article "Innovative Approaches." As its name implies, teaching is done in unconventional ways using musical therapy and relaxation and other suggestological means to foster hope and trust in the learner's power to learn quickly and easily. This method has been developed and called by various names - Right Brain Learning, Accelerated Learning, and others.

In one of the variations of this method the learners gather together for three hourly meetings - they change names, identities and clothes and function within their new identities. Their learning is done in the form of concerts, choirs and dramas.

Some of the methods described are truly revolutionary in their approach and in the results achieved. However, till the framework of an ordinary school day can be changed to accommodate them, it does not seem possible that they will be introduced into schools.

Foreign language teaching is a field where much experimentation is occurring, where innovators are challenging conventional thinking about foreign language teaching and in which we can expect more changes to take place as teachers, psychologists and linguists learn how a foreign language is acquired.

### **The Immersion Method**

This method takes various forms. It may be done for a short time span, as in English summer camps, where, for a number of weeks, children hear only English as they go about their daily activities. Sometimes pupils are sent to English-speaking countries so that they are totally immersed in the language they want to acquire. Another possibility is where schools decide that all, or some of the subjects, will be taught in the target language. The rationale behind this method is to flood the child with the target language in a natural situation. However, I feel that once the Immersion Method is used to teach a foreign language, it can no longer be called "foreign" language teaching, as it has become second language teaching.

### Another Look at the Communicative Approach

Twenty years after the communicative approach was introduced to the world of foreign language teaching it is still widely used and its influence is widespread. The principle behind Wilkin's (1976) book "Notional Syllabuses" is that people do not only produce sentences to communicate but "express concepts and fulfil communicative functions". Language courses are therefore based not on elements of syntax and lexis but on concepts and functions that Wilkins called "notions". At the time Wilkins claimed that the notional syllabus is potentially superior to the grammar-based syllabus because it will produce communicative competence.

At first it seemed that the grammatical syllabus would be replaced by the notional or functional syllabus but Wilkins himself (1974) cautions against this, saying "such a suggestion is decidedly premature." Wilkins adds that the "notional syllabus takes the communicative facts of language into account without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors."

Teaching of lexis has changed since the communicative approach was first used to teach a foreign language. Teachers and course designers have become more aware of the range of conventional and idiomatic expressions there are in a language and vocabulary is taught more systematically.

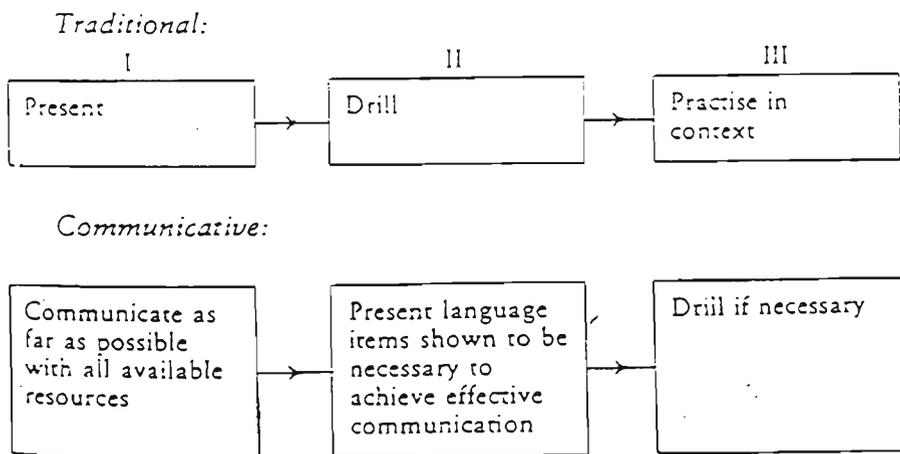
However, the application and development of these idealistic principles were left, as is often the case, to the teachers in the field. Widdowson (1979), in his chapter "The communicative approach and its application" intersperses his writing with phrases such as "I shall not come up with any definitive answers"; "I give here only a sketchy and imprecise idea"; "Obviously I do not have the time here and now to work out in detail the kind of syllabus I am proposing"; "I am aware this is all sketchy and imprecise".

With advocates like this it is little wonder that the practical application of this approach has led to exaggerated claims of its success.

### A Critical Look at the Communicative Approach

One of the principles of education is to proceed from the known to the unknown. In the communicative approach this procedure is reversed as Brumfit (1979) shows us in the diagram below which illustrates how the communicative approach presents material

Figure 5. Diagram illustrating traditional and communicative presentation of material.



In the Communicative Approach, the student is expected to glean information from the teacher's repertoire by guessing, by picking up key words, learning to function, even if parts of the whole are not entirely understood. Some learners feel uncomfortable and insecure when faced with this flood of incomprehensible material and stop listening altogether.

In the traditional method new material presented is followed by a drill and only then is the learner expected to practise what s/he has learnt. This allows these learners to feel more in control of the learning situation.

One of the tenets of communicative teaching is that the foreign language learner must be taught the hidden meaning of words and their appropriate use. Swan (1985) claims that this knowledge is universal in all languages. The following is an example quoted from Swan's article:

“If you indicate that you are hungry and receive the answer ‘there is stew in the fridge’ the interpretation is that food is being offered”. The listener will understand even if s/he has not learnt the language communicatively. Swan concedes that there are certain phrases and utterances that are accepted in one culture and not another but this does not justify the announcement “of a whole new approach” (no longer so new) to the teaching of language.

In a second article, Swan (1985b) throws a somewhat sarcastic look at the communicative approach. Swan claims that many of the skills taught under the name of communicative teaching are skills that foreign language learners bring with them from LI - predicting, guessing and negotiating. It would be wiser to encourage the learner to transfer these skills from the mother tongue to the foreign language rather than relating to the foreign language learner as though s/he were a “linguistic idiot” (Swan 1985).

Five years after his enthusiastic support of the “notional” idea of teaching English, Widdowson (1984) acknowledges that the learner will benefit greatly if s/he is made to realize that the foreign language operates by means of the same communicative principles as their own. Widdowson concedes “that the pedagogic presentation of

language necessarily involves methodological contrivance which isolates essential features from their natural surroundings”.

One year later Widdowson (1985) moves even further away from his initial enthusiasm for the “notional” approach saying that an “exaggerated striving for authenticity in the classroom may lead to the abandonment of activities which could be put to effective use for authentic communication outside the classroom”.

Bumfit (1979) too points out that all foreign language learners already speak another language. This may help or hinder the acquisition of a foreign language but it should not be ignored as is done in the communicative approach.

## **The Student With learning Differences vis a vis the Current Approaches to Foreign Language Teaching**

The majority of foreign language approaches described above lean heavily on the oral/aural methods of teaching. In the research done by Javorsky (1992) he found that the emphasis on the oral/aural skills are the very ones that lead to the LD learners' disability to acquire the target language. Horwitz and Cope (1986) found LD learners complained of difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of the target language and claim they cannot glean the information they need through the current methods of language teaching. In Javorsky's et al (1992) research, the students perceive themselves as having difficulty in listening and understanding a foreign language as it is spoken.

It would be beneficial to LD students if teachers could incorporate the physical and kinesthetic actions of Asher's total physical approach, the techniques for teaching lexis of the communicative approach and the use of the four skills as is done in the holistic approach. When this mixture is rewritten into a new methodology we get something that is very close to the multisensory approach of teaching English described in this thesis.

It is unfortunate that policy makers in the educational system as well as teachers in the field are so adamant in keeping whichever approach is currently in favour in its pure form. Students have different learning styles and would benefit if some of the techniques that work well in one approach were integrated and developed within a new framework.

## Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Israeli School System

A number of approaches are used to teach English as a foreign language. These change as the pupil progresses through the school system.

### First Year of English Studies - Year Three

Teaching English as a foreign language is usually started in year four but due to parental pressure some schools have been allowed to start teaching English in year three (age 8+). English is taught on a twice weekly basis. Each lesson lasts between 45-50 minutes and is given by a specialist English teacher who has been trained to teach English as a foreign language. The first year of foreign language teaching is devoted entirely to the oral/aural approach. Absolutely no reading or writing is allowed. The course ware is based on a coloured "text" book which consists of pictures suitable for picture discussions, a work book in which the pupil cuts out, sticks in and follows oral instructions, e.g. "draw three green elephants". The course ware also includes songs, stories and dialogues on a taped cassette. These are all related to exercises in the "text" book or work book. Each child receives a "text book", work book and cassette. One of the course wares includes a video cassette as well.

The comprehension based approach assumes that foreign language learning is similar to first language acquisition. It is thought that listening comprehension is the basic skill that will allow speaking, reading and writing to develop spontaneously.

Even though the supporters of this approach may not wish it to be true (see p.49), every learner of a foreign language already knows how to use at least one other language - his/her mother tongue. This knowledge may help or hinder their capacity to

acquire another language but it cannot be ignored. By the time the Israeli learner has the first formal English lesson s/he is somewhere between the ages of 8+ or 9+. These students know what they can do with the target language - communicate with other English speakers, not necessarily native English speakers, understand T.V. programmes, use a computer more effectively. These young learners know that in order to function in a language they must be able to read and write in it. They have been doing so in their native language for a number of years. They view with great impatience the fact that they are not given the tools to learn these skills. Teachers in the field report that they are constantly nagged by these youngsters who want to be taught the alphabet so that they can get on with the real business of language learning - the ability to function in all four skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Pupils who need visual clues as well as auditory clues in order to learn (not necessarily only LD pupils) find this method of learning English very frustrating.

### **The Introduction of Reading and Writing**

Irrespective of whether the class started English in year three using the Comprehension Based Approach, all pupils in year four are taught to read and write English. The Situational Approach is most generally used. Lexical items and grammar are taught around a theme and reading and writing are taught after the theme has been expounded orally. The emphasis in this approach is on the oral work.

Reading is generally taught phonetically, the lexical items that are taught are based on the "situation" or theme that is developed in the oral part of the lesson.

By the end of this year children are expected to read short stories based on simple (not compound) sentences using two/three syllable words: grammatical structures are

not taught; when the children come across them in the text they are taught as lexical items.

### **The English Curriculum in Israel**

The official syllabus now in use was written in 1988. It was approved by the English Advisory Committee and the Pedagogical Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Israel, 1998).

The syllabus came out in book form of approximately 150 pages. It states its aims and objectives, and explains the communicative methodology. It also has a recommended list of core vocabulary and explains the place of writing, grammar, how to evaluate the pupils and contains a differential syllabus for the "Less Able Learner".

The aim is to teach English as a world language. English is to be taught for practical communication purposes rather than the purposes of cultural integration or appreciation, in contrast to English as a foreign language, where "cultural/empathy is the major motivation for teaching the language rather than language proficiency, e.g. Spanish in the U.S. schools". Communication is seen as the major aim of teaching English in Israel. The syllabus is now nine years old. There is currently a committee of English inspectors and linguists working on a new one. The new syllabus will emphasize a whole language approach to teaching English as a foreign language.

### **Passing on the Message**

The official syllabus no longer reflects the reality in the classroom. Directives from the Chief Inspector of English are published regularly in the Director-General Bulletin (December 1994, June 1996, December 1996, March 1997, April 1997), to mention just a few. Sometimes the changes are printed in the English Teachers' Journal.

For example, the May 1991 English Teachers' Journal discusses the ban on teaching English in years 1-3. On occasion, adjustments to the curriculum are announced at in-service training courses. The Director-General Bulletin of January 1995 gives dates for regional meetings to the changes in the matriculation exams.

As can be seen by the number of directives that have been issued from the offices of the Chief Inspector of English, the teaching of English in the school system is in a state of flux. Some of the directives officially recognise the de facto changes in the classroom. For example, in 1988, when the curriculum was first published, it laid down guidelines for teaching English in years 5-12. In practice, however, the majority of schools were starting to teach English in year 4 and, in fact, a separate book of suggestions for teachers in grade 4 was published in 1979 by the Ministry of Education (nine years previously).

Despite the ban on teaching English in year 3, which was communicated to English teachers in May 1991, by 1993, due to parental pressure, the Ministry of Education is allowing English to be taught in year 3, if a programme was submitted to the Chief Inspector of English for approval.

District English inspectors visit the classes to see that the principles of the curriculum are being carried out, and woe betide the teacher who is not following the directives laid down. Teachers, however, circumvent this by teaching what the Inspectorate demands when the inspector is present, and using other techniques when there are no "visitors" in the classroom. As a result, grammar, spelling and syntax are taught and tested beyond what is expected by the curriculum.

## **The Primary School**

By the second or third year of learning English (depending on whether they started in year 3 or 4), children are expected to communicate in English within the framework of the lexical items taught. The primary school learner meets new lexical items and grammar in a structured, controlled manner and is tested on material taught in the classroom. Very little open-ended written work is expected from the children.

## **Post Primary School**

Upon reaching junior high school the situation changes. The learner is now expected to read more extensively and so pick up vocabulary not just from the narrow confines of the classroom. As his/her knowledge of English increases, teachers endeavour to use some of the aspects of the holistic approach. That means that students are expected to write from their personal experience and this is considered a legitimate basis for reading and writing.

## **Secondary School**

Throughout secondary school, that is from year nine to year twelve, there seems to be a conflict between the theory, the practice and the testing of English. In theory the communicative approach is the one that teachers are told by the English Inspectorate to use in the classroom and in fact learners are encouraged to communicate as freely as their ability allows them to do so. However, the exams pupils are expected to pass are in written form with strong emphasis on correct grammar and syntax.

In the last five years the Inspectorate of English has changed the final exam format three times.

## The New Format for the Final Exams (1997)

The Inspectorate of English gave the following directives for the final end of high school exams which will come into effect from 1997:

Students will be given three reading comprehension passages of different genres.

Students will be expected to write two different passages, one of which will in some way refer to one of the reading comprehension passages. For example, the contents of one of the reading passages may be an article about pollution, and the student may be asked to write a letter to a newspaper complaining about a local pollution problem.

A cloze passage.

Listening comprehension passage which will be broadcast on the national radio - 10 points.

The points for the written work add up to 90. The listening comprehension passage is given a point of 10.

### Oral Exam - 20 points

The student will have read at least six books and be able to discuss them with the examiner.

The student will be expected to hold an interview with the examiner.

The student will be expected to discuss current events.

The one hundred and twenty points are then re-calculated to give a percentile mark.

As can be seen by the description of the format, only a small percentage of the final mark is given for oral communicative competency. In order to comprehend different written genres and to be able to write correctly in two different styles, one must

be very proficient in the syntax, grammar and sentence structure of the language which, officially, are never taught.

The final exams do not mirror the philosophy that directed the teaching of English from its earliest stages where no letters were even allowed to be introduced. This dichotomy reflects the ambivalency that exists despite the time, money and thought invested in teaching English as a foreign language. The perfect formula for teaching English as a foreign language has not yet been developed, neither in Israel nor, it seems, anywhere else in the world where English is taught as a foreign language.

## Chapter Four

### Multi-Sensory Learning

Multi-sensory learning can be described as the deliberate use of three or more sensory channels in the teaching/learning process.

The primary sensory systems concerned with language perception and development are the auditory, visual and tactile-kinaesthetic. A difficulty in these sensory systems results in language disability. A faulty system causes the child to fail to recognise whole words easily but also causes difficulties in learning and blending sounds and phonic units in sequential order (Waite and Coxdale, 1969).

Success in reading skills can only come when the learner achieves harmonious interaction of all the senses, i.e. when the learner sees, hears, speaks and writes simultaneously. That is, as the writer looks at the letter or word, s/he says it out loud and so hears it being said as the letter or word is written. This is called multi-sensory learning.

Traditionally the auditory and visual channels have been found to be the most effective for teaching children to read. However, kinaesthetic and tactile abilities have often been ignored and the sense of taste and smell have rarely been harnessed for learning purposes. In the majority of multi-sensory methods the kinaesthetic and tactile channels are used to support the visual and auditory modalities.

Samuel T. Orton (1937), a paediatrician and neurologist, was one of the first people to recognise and research the phenomenon called dyslexia. He developed a remedial programme based on multi-sensory teaching. Orton found that most dyslexic

children could recognise individual letters and even copy some three letter words correctly. They failed, however, to recognise words as meaningful symbols connected to the spoken language.

### **Orton's Multi-Sensory Teaching Method**

Orton (1937) and his colleagues decided to capitalise on the child's ability to say the words that s/he could not read. Children were taught the phonetic equivalents of the letters so that they could produce for themselves the spoken form of the word from its graphic counterpart.

The kinaesthetic pattern for each letter was established by having the child trace over a pattern drawn by the teacher, at the same time giving its sound or phonetic equivalent. For example, the sound of the letter "b" was produced simultaneously with the movement required to draw this symbol.

Graphemes in lower case form were hand-printed on cards bearing a single letter, digraph or diphthong. The cards were exposed to the pupil one at a time with instructions with "what it says" as well as its name, until the pupil could give either the sound or the name of the letter on the card by sight. This method was initially used to eliminate the confusion caused between "b" and "d", "p" and "q", "f" and "t". Orton found that by using the above technique the child could differentiate the reversible pairs by using motion long before he was sure of them by using visual inspection alone. Orton avoided giving exact details of the procedure employed in establishing the phonetic basis for reading to "avoid overstandardization lest the procedure become too inflexible and be looked upon as a routine method." He warned that no general

formula could be given which would be applicable to all cases of any of the syndromes. Any attempt to do so would be misguided and lead to error.

Both Fernald (1943) and Orton (1937) began working with children who had learning difficulties in the 1920s. However it was only some time later that they published their findings - Orton in 1937 and Fernald in 1943.

### **Fernald Simultaneous Multisensory Approach**

This approach was developed in the clinical school at the University of California in the 1920s. It served children with severe educational problems who were of normal or above normal intelligence.

In Fernald's system, a balanced use of the Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic and Tactile is featured and is sometimes referred to as the VAKT approach.

The following features are unique to her method:

1. The student must undergo "positive reconditioning" before starting the remedial programme. Fernald assumes that all children who have experienced school failure have developed a low self concept, particularly to anything connected to school or formal education. The student should be told that others have had the same problem and have learnt through the new method.
2. The child is asked to select ANY word s/he wants to learn. The word is then taught using the following method:
  - a. The word is written down in crayon in blackboard size cursive script.
  - b. The child traces the word with his fingers in contact with the paper saying the word as s/he traces it. This is done as many times as necessary till he can write without looking at the copy.
  - c. S/he writes the word on a scrap of paper proving that it is now "his/her" word. This is done with a number of words.
  - d. The child is encouraged to start writing stories and the instructor gives the words needed to complete the story.
  - e. After the story is written it is typed and the pupil reads it in typed form while it is still fresh in his mind.

- f. After the story is completed the new words are written on cards that are filed alphabetically in the student's individual word file box.

This procedure is often called the "tracing method" as tracing is a feature not generally found in other multi-sensory techniques.

Aside from tracing the words there are other unique features in this method. The approach is highly student-centred. The student selects the words s/he wants to learn and the student writes the stories s/he reads initially.

After tracing a word a number of times the student is encouraged to write the word without looking at the copy and to remember it as a unit. A child must always say the word aloud or to him/herself as s/he traces it and writes it.

According to Fernald, the tracing period or stage one continues for a number of weeks, perhaps months, but eventually the pupil will get to stage 2 where he will be able to look at a word, say it to himself and write it down without looking at the copy and without the need to trace the word.

Fernald felt that one of the main blocks to reading skills was the use of an extremely visual method of teaching while suppressing or omitting kinaesthetic factors.

It should be noted that though her method of teaching to read is totally unstructured, it is a truly multi-sensory approach using feeling, seeing, saying and hearing simultaneously. Fernald's program was based on a full day, 8 month school year. Twenty pupils were taught all subjects by a number of teachers. The pupils in fact dropped out of the regular school system while being given remediation. Many of her techniques have been adapted and incorporated into the mainstream learning

situation (whole language learning has adopted many of the above-mentioned features). It would, however, be rather impractical to use this intensive student-orientated method in the 27 million Americans who are functionally illiterate (Ellis 1993).

### The Orton Gillingham Structured Multisensory Approach or The Gillingham-Stillman Approach

This approach was developed by Gillingham as a result of her contact with Orton (1935) and based on his theoretical ideas. Stillman became acquainted with Gillingham and together they published a handbook for teachers (1965) which describes their method for reading remediation.

This technique uses simultaneous stimuli - visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. In her remedial classes, individual letters and phonemes are first taught, then blends and finally words. Much emphasis is put on saying and writing the letters simultaneously. By using this technique the child learns what the letter looks like, what it sounds like, how the speech organs work to pronounce the letter, how the arm moves to produce it. As this is still one of the most accepted multi-sensory techniques, it will be described in detail.

- Step 1.** The child is shown a printed letter, the teacher names it, the child repeats the name.
- Step 2.** The teachers says the sound of the letter, the child repeats it.
- Step 3.** The child watches the teacher write the letter which s/he then traces.
- Step 4.** The child copies the letter.

- Step 5.** The child writes the letter or word from memory.
- Step 6.** The child writes the letter in the air with his eyes closed.
- Step 7.** The child writes the letter on a piece of paper.
- Step 8.** The teacher says the name of the letter (stimuli). The child responds with the sound of it.

Over the years, teachers have added to or slightly changed the above pattern, but it has remained basically the same and is recognised as one of the most effective remedial techniques used today (Simpson 1994).

Briggs (1992), in her introduction to the Hickey Multisensory Language Course, states that this course was inspired by the Gillingham-Stillman-Orton team. It was changed to suit the British Educational System and became more child-directed than the Gillingham technique, which is more teacher-directed.

Multi-sensory learning allows the learner to use his/her own approach to the learning task by utilising strong areas, at the same time exercising faulty ones. The aim is for the pupil to acquire permanent, automatic response, the names - sounds - shapes of phonograms and the ability to put them in the correct sequential order. His/her visual, auditory, tactile-kinaesthetic and oral-kinaesthetic perceptual systems must interact sufficiently to make learning so secure that any aspect of the phonograms can be produced when needed, whether for reading or spelling - Augur 1992).

Orton states that any form of learning presupposes the storage in the brain of some sort of a stimulus which will permit recognition when the same stimulus is encountered again. The hallmark of the specific reading disability is a failure in recognition of a printed word, even after it has been encountered many times.

Augur and Briggs (1992) developed the Stimulus Response Routine (S.R.R.), which helps the learner become aware of all the senses for learning and remembering. The description of this technique is given below.

The S.R.R. was used and adapted in teaching English as a foreign language. The stimulus response routine was used in teaching reading and spelling and adapted for second language acquisition and grammar, as will be described in the following chapters. This is possibly the first time that the S.R.R. has been used for second language acquisition and it has been found to be very effective. The L.D. learner is able to broaden L.2 vocabulary by seeing (visual), listening (auditory) and cutting out, pasting, drawing (tactile-kinaesthetic) and revising the words through the use of cards (tactile, kinaesthetic) in a truly multi-sensory technique.

### **The Stimulus-Response Routine**

The following is a description of the Stimulus Response Routine (S.R.R.):

The teacher says the new letter and shows the pupil the symbol on a card (visual stimulus).

The student looks at the card and repeats after the teacher (visual auditory response).

The teacher writes the letter on another card.

The pupil traces the new letter as s/he says the letter sound out loud (auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile response).

The pupil attempts to write the letter beside the teacher's model (kinaesthetic response).

6. Both models are erased and the pupil tries to write from memory while saying the sound and name of the new letter (auditory, visual response).
7. The pupil writes the letter with eyes closed, feeling his/her way through the shape, making the sound naming of the letter as before (kinaesthetic-auditory response).

This routine is used to introduce new material. Once the learner has gone through this routine the new letter is introduced in a list of words which the learner has to read. Sentences and short paragraphs which incorporate the new material are given to the learner to read. The learner is told to revise the cards on a daily basis at home.

Over the years variations of the multi-sensory approach have been developed and described in a number of articles (Gearheart [1981], Ellis [1993]). The common factor in all these approaches is the use of more than one modality for learning.

### **The Use of Gustatory and Olfactory Modalities in Foreign Language Learning**

Even in the best multi-sensory programmes the sense of smell and taste are not often employed in the learning process. However, this researcher became intrigued by the use of the gustatory and olfactory modalities that were used in the Apples, Bananas, Candy programme as described by Brown (1975).

The following approach was first used on a group of 93 pupils who were divided into three classes of similar size. The pupils in the school come from a middle class background. The parents are mainly professionals or academics. They are very involved in their children's schooling and want their children to start learning English

as a foreign language in year three instead of year four as is done in the majority of schools in Israel.

English is taught in two fifty-minute lessons by a qualified English teacher who has specialised in teaching English as a foreign language.

The various programmes currently used at this level are all based on the aural/oral approach. The Ministry of Education does not allow writing or reading to be taught the first year of foreign language learning when it is introduced in year three. The children whose aural skills are not well developed find this method very frustrating. Rivers (1981) writes that teachers have found that some students feel insecure when they are forced to depend on the ear alone. They find it hard to remember all they hear in a situation where all the sound clues are unfamiliar to them.

Many of the pupils in year three were uncomfortable with the strictly aural/oral approach. Time and again they would approach the teacher and show her a letter and ask “does this make the sound of .....”. (Rivers, 1981) reported that students from whom all graphic presentation of the foreign language is withheld “make their own imperfect notes surreptitiously thus learn incorrectly”.

After four months of growing frustration by the pupils and the English teacher, the school principal suggested to this researcher to introduce the alphabet. This the researcher decided to do on a one letter a week basis (there being only two English lessons per week), using multi-sensory techniques incorporating the sense of smell and taste. As each letter was introduced, an appropriate food was brought into the classroom. Each child was offered to taste it - “would you like some”, refuse or accept it - “yes, please, no thank you”. The name for the food was a cognate so that the learner did not have to remember the meaning of the word, s/he could focus on the

grapheme/phoneme relativity and its place in the sequencing of the alphabet. At the end of the lesson there was a lively discussion about what food would be appropriate for the next letter of the alphabet. The pupils stated all the foods that they knew that start with the coming phoneme and so learnt which words are cognates and which are Hebrew. For example, the letter "P" - the children mentioned pizza, popcorn, pilpel. The latter is not acceptable, it means pepper in Hebrew.

Although English lessons took place only twice a week the children sought out the English teacher on the days they did not have lessons in their curiosity to know what food would be brought into the class the following lesson.

### **Outline of the Procedure for Teaching a New Letter (M)**

The teacher asks the pupils which letter is next on the A B C.

The pupils are asked to guess what food they were going to eat that day (marshmallows, mango, milkshake, melon, margarine).

The teacher shows food.

The teacher writes the letter on the blackboard (M).

The pupils write it in the air, on the back of their hand, on each others' backs.

Prewriting exercises based on the letter are done on a sheet of paper. This is to encourage fluency and to remind them that English, unlike Hebrew, starts on the left side of the paper. The pupils are told that their pattern does not have to be perfect but it should be fluent - no erasing and no going over.

The pupils are asked to try and copy the letter from the blackboard. As this is done on a piece of paper and not in a note book, the children don't feel pressured into rubbing out if the letter is not perfect.

8. Each child is given a work sheet. This sheet contains a sample of the upper and lower case letter being taught and pictures of words that children know that begin with that letter.
9. The children are asked to cut out the pictures and paste them under the appropriate letter in their notebooks, colour and cut out the capital and small letter that they had learnt that day. While the children were doing this, the teacher or a pupil goes round the classroom and offers the food “would you like a ..... (marshmallow)?” “Yes please,” “No thank you,” are taught from the first lesson as appropriate responses.
10. When the children have completed the above tasks they are asked to put the letters in sequential order, separating upper and lower case letters.

With the letters spread in front of them, the children are given a variety of tasks. Here are some examples of the language used by the teacher:

1. Show the letter at the beginning of these words “bank, balloon, beer, bingo” (all are cognates).
2. Show capital D.
3. Which letter makes the sound “f” (this helps children recognise both the sound and the name of the letter).
4. Stand up if your name starts with “L”.
5. The teacher holds up a letter and asks “which of your friends’ names start with this letter”.

There are many variations of these games. The idea behind these activities is to familiarise the child with the grapheme/phoneme correspondence.

In these lessons virtually all senses are used to stimulate learning. The sense of smell and taste when the food is introduced, the audio/visual senses are involved in the

A.B.C. activities and the tactile/kinesthetic while cutting out the letters and spreading them in sequential order on the desk.

**The food cognates used for introducing the alphabet**

A - avocado	N - nescafe
B - beigel	O - orange
C - cornflakes	P - popcorn
D - danona (A Swiss sweet yogurt)	Q - quaker oats
E - egg (they all know egg rolls)	R - Rosemarie chocolates
F - fish - gefilte fish, an ethnic food	S - sandwich - sardines
G - granola	T - tuna
H - hamburger	U - ugh, draw something you don't like
I - Israeli salad (tomatoes, onions, cucumbers cut into tiny pieces and sprinkled with salt and olive oil)	V - vanilla sugar (smell)
	W - wafers
	X - XXX-sugar free chewing gum
	Y - yogurt
J - jelly	Z - zip - local fruit juice
K - ketchup	
L - lemon	
M - marshmallows	

Teachers from different cultures will find different cognates to use when introducing the letters of the alphabet.

Ninety three children in three parallel classes (aged 8+ - 9+) participated in the project. Ten of the children had been assessed and were known to have Learning Difficulties. At the end of the school year, except for two pupils with severe learning difficulties (one was unable to read in LI, the other was reading LI with great difficulty), all children could recognise and sequel correctly the letters taught using the above method.

### **The Use of Multi-Sensory Techniques in Group Remediation**

The Haifa District English Inspectorate has over a number of years tested children at the end of year six to see what level of English has been achieved before the children go to Junior High School. At the end of year six the pupils disperse to various Junior High schools in the district and it is difficult to remediate and follow up individual pupils who are found to have problems.

In 1996 the Haifa District Inspectorate decided to test pupils at the end of year five when they still had another year of schooling to complete in the same primary school and when it was still possible to give remediation to pupils who were having difficulty learning English. This remediation was done in the same school mentioned earlier in the chapter.

In the school where this research took place, the standardised test identified fifteen pupils who were having difficulties in English. These pupils were tested again by the school at the beginning of year six after the summer vacation. This test was based on the curriculum for year five and was given in order to indicate if above pupils needed to be placed in the remedial group. Two of the pupils had had tutoring over the summer and had no need to participate in the remediation class.

The test that was given in September, at the beginning of the school year, showed that the thirteen children who had remained in the group had received marks ranging between twenty and forty percent. In other words, they were failing within the classroom situation.

Remediation lessons were given twice a week an hour before school started. The lessons began at 7:15 a.m. and went on till 8:00 a.m. Coming to the lessons was a real sacrifice on the part of the children who had to get up some time between 6:30 a.m. and 6:45 a.m. in order to get to school on time, as none of them lived within walking distance.

The lessons were given by this researcher. There was a real dilemma about the structure of the lesson. It was obvious that no one-to-one tuition could be done within a group of thirteen pupils. Was the aim to help these pupils integrate in the home classroom or to endeavour to teach them to read - devoting a few (very few) minutes to each child per lesson?

This researcher felt that it was of the utmost importance to help the pupils function within the classroom situation. No child likes being different and if they were to feel a sense of accomplishment the children would have to feel that they were narrowing the gap between their knowledge and that of the other pupils in the class. Therefore, the pupils were told that these remedial lessons would not be able to teach the complete non-readers to read. They would need to get help on a private basis to catch up on their reading but would attend the remediation lessons at school which would help them integrate in the classroom.

## Outline of a Lesson Given to Group Remediation

### General Background

In the initial stage of the remediation process, LI was used extensively. This was to make the remedial sessions as non-threatening and comfortable as possible. The remedial teacher kept in close contact with the home room English teacher so that the children were working on the same text as their classmates. At one stage the home room teacher was sick for a number of days. During her absence the children continued to come for remedial lessons. During a brainstorming session following her return the children contributed more to the lesson than the rest of the class. This earned them the admiration of the home room class teacher and gave them a tremendous sense of pride and achievement. They were not only narrowing the gap, they were overtaking some of the children in the class!

Over the first few weeks four of the pupils dropped out of the remedial sessions. They were total non-readers who were not getting any help at home and felt uncomfortable working even within this small group. Two children refused to participate, saying it was beneath their dignity to do so. It must be emphasised that the pupils were not pulled out of their regular classes and in fact these lessons were called "booster" English lessons. In this school children have been getting "booster" maths lessons by a specialist maths teacher for a number of years so that the concept was not unknown. One child asked permission to join the lessons. He felt very insecure with his reading and wanted to improve his grade which was then around the sixty percentile. His request was granted.

## **Phonics**

At the beginning of each session the teacher revised one of the phonemes that occurred in the text studied in the home room class. For example, the first text the pupils studied contained the following words: Venice, palace, prince, city, centre. The teacher taught the ce, ci, cy rule. The children started a ce, ci, cy page in their notebook to which new words were added as they appeared in the texts.

## **Vocabulary**

New words were isolated from the text and the pupils were asked to make their own flashcards using these words. The Hebrew translation was written on the back. The pupils were asked to revise these words at home on a daily basis and this was the only homework the children were expected to do. The teacher would say the word in English, the children had to find the flashcard with the word on it. Sometimes the cards were placed face down with the Hebrew translation showing. The teacher would say the English word and the children would have to show the flashcard. This entailed silent translation as the children had the Hebrew version facing them. The teacher would then say a sentence, pausing where one of the new words was missing. The children had to find the missing word on the flashcard.

## **Texts**

The texts that the children were using in the classroom was rewritten by the remedial teacher in a much simpler version and in larger print than found in the book. The new vocabulary appeared in much higher frequency within the revised text than in the original. The children were taught skimming and scanning techniques, the focus once again on the new words taught at the beginning of the lesson. Word mapping was developed for the text sometimes by the pupil sometimes by the teacher.

## Grammatical Structures

These were taught as they arose from the text. Once again the rules were written out on cards by the pupils in Hebrew. The pupils were encouraged to use these cards whenever they had a grammar exercise to complete in the homeroom English lesson. Rules were taught cumulatively - one form per lesson. For example, the use of "s" in the present simple. This grammatical rule is very difficult for Israeli pupils to grasp, as they mix it up with the "s" of the plural and the apostrophe "s". The teacher first explained the use of the present simple in LI. Time expressions for this tense were introduced. In the next lesson sentences with I, You, We, They pronouns were presented, i.e. the "s" was not yet introduced. The third session the use of "s" in the third person singular was taught. In the fourth session, the pupils were given a mixed sample of sentences where all pronouns were used. In the following session the use of "es" and "ies" as suffixes was taught. Then another group of sentences with all the above rules was given as an exercise. The teacher was careful to introduce the rules cumulatively, endeavouring not to overload the memory. The pupils added each rule to the grammar card which they used as they worked their way through any exercise in grammatical structures.

## Results of Six Months of Remediation

Ten students (five boys and five girls) completed the first semester of remediation. Of these, seven had been assessed by a qualified psychologist and were found to have learning difficulties. It was not known if the other three were L.D. students or were finding it difficult to learn English for other reasons.

The mark given by the English home room teacher was the average obtained for a number of tests over the six month first semester period. These tests included a

reading comprehension passage, grammar, cloze and spelling tests. This researcher explained to the teacher that it was unreasonable to expect L.D. pupils to spell correctly in a foreign language as most were incapable of correct writing in LI. The English teacher insisted that this was part of the English lesson and had to be considered as part of their marks. The following is a breakdown of the marks obtained by the ten pupils who came on a regular basis:

80 percent	1 pupil	- girl
70 percent	3 pupils	- 1 boy, 2 girls
60 percent	4 pupils	- 2 boys, 2 girls
under 50 percent	1 pupil	- 1 boy

one pupil's mark was unavailable.

None of the pupils who had dropped out received a pass mark (60 per cent).

### End of the Year Results

Eight pupils stayed in the remedial group till the end of the academic year. The following is a breakdown of the marks obtained by the pupils who came on a regular basis:

80 percent	3 pupils	2 girls	1 boy
70 percent	1 pupil	1 girl	
60 percent	4 pupils		4 boys

One girl dropped out because she started receiving private remedial lessons given by a specialist foreign language teacher who taught her using multi-sensory methods. Her final mark was 70 percent. One boy stopped coming to the remedial group when he received a mark of 84 percent in one of his tests. However, his end of

year mark was only 60 percent. It should be noted that **ALL** pupils received a pass mark at the end of primary school.

### **Conclusion**

The use of multi-sensory techniques was described in three different learning situations:

1. **One-to-one remediation.**

As a classroom technique to teach the grapheme/phoneme relationship and the correct sequencing of the letters of the alphabet.

As a technique for group remediation for pupils with reading difficulties.

Success was achieved not only when pupils were taught individually but even when taught to a class of 30 pupils in a regular classroom or to a group of ten pupils with reading difficulties.

Fads in teaching may come and go but multi-sensory techniques have remained the one constant factor from when they were first introduced by Orton (1935), to the work of Fernald in the 1940s, through the sixties in the work done by Gillingham and Stillman, to the work of Briggs in the 1990s.

This researcher, too, adapted the principles of multi-sensory learning to teach English as a foreign language successfully (see Chapter Case History). As Watkins (1994) wrote, “the multi-sensory approach has not changed because the philosophy and practice has proved to be fundamental in solving the puzzle for dyslexic children with regard to the inherent misunderstanding of another language. Like the North Star, the multi-sensory approach holds fast in an otherwise drifting universe.”

## Chapter Five

### Language Acquisition

#### Current Methods of Teaching a Foreign Language

The "natural approach" is currently the most accepted method of teaching English as a foreign language in Israel. The natural approach of learning a foreign language is based on the manner children learn their native language, first by listening and speaking, then reading and writing.

In effect, in the initial stages of learning, the pupils are exposed to a stream of words in the target language, irrespective of whether or not they understand what is spoken, in the belief that the immersion in a flood of words will somehow enable them to pick up the language as they hear the sound.

#### The Learning Disabled Pupil and Current Methods of Teaching a Foreign Language

Students with learning disabilities are no less motivated to learn a foreign language than non L.D. students but find current approaches to foreign language learning prohibitive. They perceive themselves as having difficulties in listening to and understanding a foreign language as it is spoken (Javorsky et al., 1992).

In a survey carried out by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), L.D. students reported difficulty in listening to and understanding a speaker in a foreign language. Magnum and Strickhart (1988) and Vogel (1986) found that L.D. learner's aural skills were so poor that even audio tapes were not seen as beneficial by these students.

Pimsleur (1964) discovered that auditory ability was found to be a critical factor which differentiated underachieving students from those who exhibited no difficulty in learning a foreign language. At a later date he speculated that this lack of skill, rather than intelligence or poor motivation, was often responsible for the inability to learn a foreign language (Pimsleur, 1968).

In the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (1994) it was reported by Glen Rosen that evidence had been found that dyslexia arises from abnormalities in a part of the brain that processes sounds. Dyslexics, it seems, cannot sound out many words for the simple reason that they have never clearly heard what sounds certain letters make.

In light of the above findings, it is not difficult to understand why L.D. students fail to pick up even the most basic words in the foreign language being taught, Horwitz et al (1986) reported that "the anxious language learners complained of difficulties discriminating sounds and structures of the target language". Javorsky et al (1992) found that children with L.D. had significantly greater difficulties in the foreign language when learning vocabulary and understanding grammar. He suggests that the "typical approaches to foreign language instruction emphasises those very aspects of oral and written language that are most difficult for students who have experienced problems learning their native language". These are the "at risk" pupils when learning a foreign language.

The correlation between a student's native language ability and their success in learning a second language have not yet been explored. However, it has been found that the areas that cause the most difficulties in foreign language learning (phonetic coding

and syntax) were areas which caused the most difficulties for poor readers attempting to learn their native language (Javorsky et al, 1992).

Sparks et al (1992) suggests that the time has come for foreign language and special educators to begin to work together co-ordinating methods in both fields towards the joint effort of teaching basic language literacy in a foreign language.

Leonore Ganschow et al (1991) sums up her article by saying "it would be intriguing to speculate whether teaching methodologies that have worked for students with native language L.D. would also prove successful for students with foreign language L.D."

A method has been developed (Teitelbaum & Roffman, 1993) to help pupils with learning disabilities achieve language acquisition competence in a foreign language - in this case, English.

### **Second Language Acquisition Studies**

In 1991, the director of the British Dyslexia Association instructed a group of teachers in Israel in the principles and practice of teaching pupils with specific learning disabilities along the principles set out in The Hickey Multisensory Language Course. The first group of pupils (who were taught along the principles laid out in the above course book) learnt to read three letter words and even two syllable words. However, they failed to integrate into their home class and never achieved more than a pass mark in their exams. It was obvious that the multi-sensory method was working as this was the first time these children learned to read, something that had not been achieved previously, even using remedial teaching methods. However, their progress halted after

reaching a plateau where, it seemed, they could advance no further. They could not reach a level of competence that would enable them to function well in their home class.

Teachers working with these children went back to the theory of teaching children with learning difficulties in an endeavour to try and solve this problem.

Myklebust (1954), Johnson and Mykleburst (1967), Wiig and Semel (1976, 1980) had found deficits in oral language and communication associated with learning difficulties. Blalock (1982) and Morris and Leuenberger (1990) suggest that often these language deficits persist and create learning problems in college. These findings all suggest that oral language disorders play a role in later reading and writing difficulties associated with learning disabilities (Perfetti, 1985; Vellutino, 1979). The fall edition of Perspectives 1994, brought out by the Orton Dyslexia Society, defined dyslexia as a "specific language based disorder.... it is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language."

The conclusion was reached by teachers in the field of foreign language instruction to L.D. pupils that not enough emphasis was put on language acquisition when teaching a foreign language. It was therefore decided to teach a basic vocabulary of approximately 200 words before embarking on a reading scheme. These words would be taught thematically and systematically as an integral part of each remedial session. Multi-sensory techniques would be utilized and cognates pointed out and used as extensively as possible. No attempt at reading would be started until the pupil had a vocabulary of at least 150 words. As the learner's vocabulary broadened, the lessons would begin to incorporate the language used in the course books in the student's home class. The remedial teacher would prepare individual activities for each pupil, based on the course books used by the teacher in the regular lesson. The remedial session was to

be divided into segments - part of which would be devoted to systematic language acquisition and the other part to teach reading using a multi-sensory reading scheme.

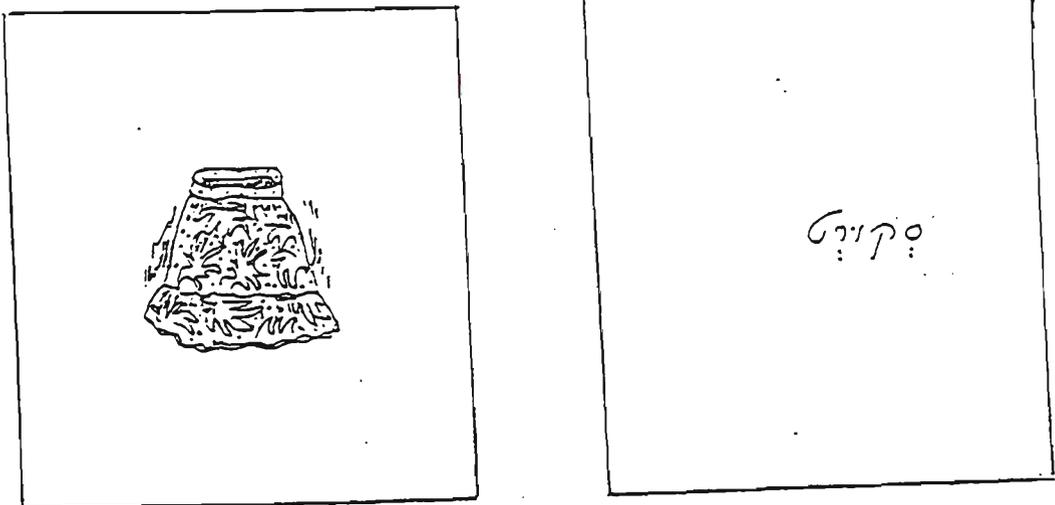
It was found that pupils began to participate effectively in their home class once this remedial system was used. It answered the needs of the children and they found they could participate in the oral work done in the classroom because of the help they were getting from their remedial teachers who isolated the vocabulary and taught it in small units, not as one long flowing sound. At the same time the pupils were getting help in learning to read at their own pace.

## Pre-Reading Vocabulary Acquisition

### Method

The same method, that is The Stimulus Response Routine (discussed in Chapter Four), is used to teach letters and reading is introduced to teach vocabulary. Each new word is first isolated and introduced on a card exactly the same way as new letters are isolated and printed on a card. A picture of the new word is drawn or cut out and glued onto the card. The transliteration of the word is written on the back. Many pupils in Junior High School (12 years and older) feel it is below their dignity to cut and paste pictures of new words. Instead of a picture the translation of the word is given on one side of the card and the transliteration on the other. The aim is to isolate the new words and ask the child to repeat them over and over again until the words are internalised.

Fig. 6. Language acquisition card



The learner revises these cards in the same manner as the letters are revised in any multisensory reading programme (Roffman, Teitelbaum, 1993).

In order to overcome the non correspondence of certain sounds between the English and Hebrew, the teacher and pupil agree on certain symbols making certain sounds. For example, the "w" has no equivalent in Hebrew. The sign for transliteration is "ו" double "v" sound in Hebrew. Another problematic sound is the "th" which also has no equivalent in Hebrew. The symbol "o" or soft "s" sound in Hebrew is used. Transliterations are gradually phased out as the child progresses with his reading.

As the topic is developed, the new vocabulary items are introduced using as many sensory channels as possible. In other words, new vocabulary items should be drawn, cut out and coloured (tactile, kineasthetic senses are used). Songs, games, puzzles, that are connected to the topic being taught are an integral part of the lesson.

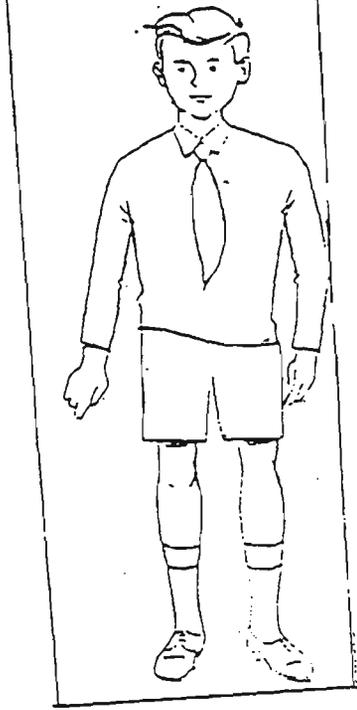
The following exercise is another example of an activity which strengthens the learner's aural skills while revising the lexical items of the topic - "clothes".

The pupil is presented with the pictures below. The teacher describes the boy/girl and the pupil is expected to colour the drawing as s/he listens to the teacher.

For example:

**Figure 7. Picture of boy used for listening comprehension exercise**

This is Tom. He has a red tie. His shoes are green, etc.



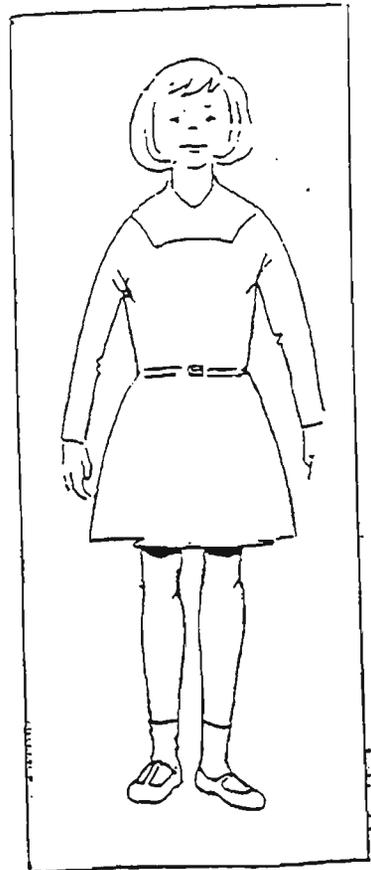
**Figure 8. Picture of girl used for listening comprehension exercise**

Here is Helen. Her skirt is red.

Her socks are yellow, etc.

This exercise has two aims:

- 1) It revises the lexical items taught in connection with the subject.
- 2) It enables the learner to do a listening comprehension exercise based on vocabulary with which he is familiar, so ensuring a high degree of success.



### Cognates and Compound Words

An important source of painless word acquisition is cognates and compound words. There are literally hundreds of these words common to all languages. These are words that are used in both native language and target language having the same meaning and pronunciation. They are pointed out whenever a new topic is introduced.

A part of the first three remedial lessons should be devoted to going through the alphabet and pointing out the cognates found, beginning with each letter. This also helps to clarify the sound of each letter in the foreign language through the medium of the native language.

For example: a - ambulance, avocado

b - bank, banana

c - coffee, coca cola

d - domino, doctor

e - eskimo etc.

The learner discovers that s/he has a potential vocabulary of hundreds of words that have been acquired effortlessly. This is a great source of comfort to the L.D. student who struggles so painfully to acquire and internalise new words

Compound words also enrich vocabulary and do not need a great deal of effort to acquire. Once the learner has knowledge of the two words in a compound word, s/he can be shown how these two separate words are joined together to make a new one, e.g. book + shelf = bookshelf, post + man = postman.

## A Practical Guide

The following is a development of the topic "Clothes" as it would be taught orally to L.D. students using multi-sensory techniques for language acquisition.

Cognates: Cognates should be introduced at the initial stage. Knowing which words are cognates extends the learner's vocabulary, giving a feeling of language acquisition without overloading the memory (Roffman, Teitelbaum, 1993). In the topic "Clothes" the cognates in Hebrew are

pyjamas	bikini	sweater	vest
jacket	sandals	jeans	

Lesson 1: **Step 1**: Cognates are pointed out to the pupil(see above)

**Step 2**: Six new words are introduced by the teacher either in picture form or as real items of clothing,

e.g.	shirt	dress	shoes
	hat	socks	coat.

**Step 3**: The teacher says the new words and the pupil is asked to repeat them.

**Step 4**: Pictures of the above lexical items are either drawn or cut out from magazines and pasted onto coloured cardboard by the learner. The size of the cardboard should be 6 cm x 8 cm. This makes the cards big enough to handle comfortably but small enough to put in a pocket.

**Step 5:** The new words are once again said by the teacher and repeated by the pupil.

**Step 6:** The new words are recorded onto a tape. The learner is expected to review the cards twice a day before the next session. The pupil is encouraged to use tape recorders and "walkmen". These modern inventions will help the learners have more control and independence in their learning.

Lesson 2: **Step 1:** All lexical items taught in previous sessions are revised at the beginning of each session. A routine is developed for revising materials taught as this facilitates memory.

**Steps 2-6** are repeated as for lesson 1 on the topic.

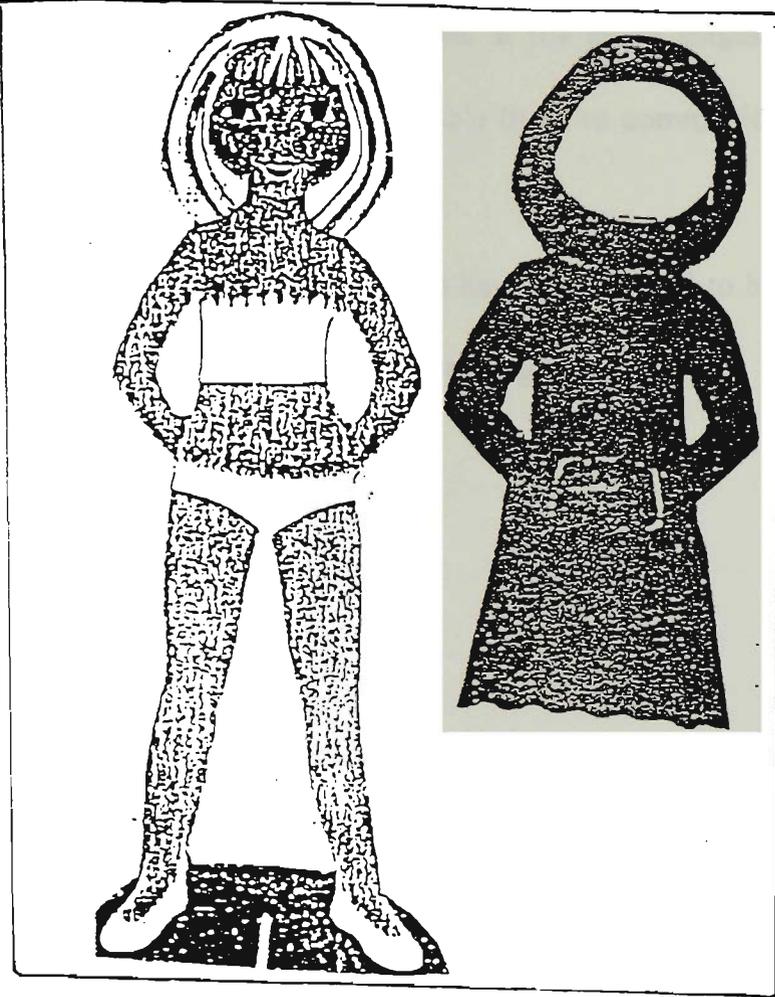
The new words are introduced using the pattern established in the previous lessons, e.g.

trousers	shorts	apron	belt	pocket
blouse	tie	uniform	button	sleeves

Words like "apron" and "uniform" are taught because they will be needed as examples of the long "a" in "apron" and the long "u" in uniform. Once the word coat has been taught, the word compound "raincoat" can also be introduced.

The following are examples of activities that children enjoy doing and which help them remember lexical items more easily.

**Figure 9. Picture of paper doll used for listening comprehension.**



Old fashioned paper dolls with cut out clothes which are now available in both feminine and masculine versions. The pupil cuts out items of clothing and verbalises the items as the doll is dressed, e.g. The doll has a blue coat.

When teaching new vocabulary items, it is useful to incorporate words that come up in the early stages of the reading scheme. The lexical items in the reading scheme should be taught wherever possible as part of the oral language acquisition stage so that once the child starts the reading programme, s/he can concentrate on acquiring reading without having to waste energy learning new words concurrently.

The lexical items learnt at the beginning of any foreign language programme are the ones remembered the longest and the most easily internalised. It is therefore important to choose these words wisely. For example, when teaching the topic "Professions", there is no need to introduce a word like "cobbler". Very few people at the end of the twentieth century will ever have the need for its use.

The vocabulary taught at the initial stages should be meaningful to the learner's environment and should enable them to communicate on a rudimentary level after 10-15 sessions

The following topics have been found to be most useful in covering lexical items needed for most beginning reading schemes:

Colours

Numbers 1-12

Parts of the Body

The Farm - animals

Food and Meals, including fruit, vegetables

The Family

Adjectives - the following adjectives are sufficient to

enable the learner to use the above topics

effectively - tall, short, fat, thin, hot, cold,

big, little, sad, happy, old, young.

e.g. Mr. Black is my father

He is tall

He has brown hair

He is a farmer

(Roffman, Teitelbaum, 1993)

The Clock - telling the time

Numbers - 13-100

Days of the week

Months of the year

Numbers till 1000

Date - Today is Sunday 5th July 1994

Seasons

Professions

The House - various rooms, furniture and functions, e.g.

We cook in the kitchen

The Town - public buildings - bank, post office, etc.

The Zoo/Circus

The Post Office

Hospital

It may be surprising that "The Farm" is included in this list of basic topics. However, farm animals are mostly three letter words with short vowel sounds and are used in the first stages of many reading schemes,

e.g. cat, dog, pup, duck, pig, rat, hen.

The words kitten, rabbit, chicken are convenient for syllable division, which appears fairly early in The Hickey Multisensory Language Course (1991).

Word acquisition is continued steadily and systematically even after starting the reading programme and is an integral part of every lesson. At the beginning of the remedial programme, the pupil is taught topics that will enable him to acquire enough basic vocabulary that will help him start on a reading scheme. At a later stage, the language acquisition is done on an individual basis to answer each student's individual needs based on the course books used in the classroom. Once the remedial teacher isolates and teaches the lexical items used in the home class, the L.D. pupil becomes more aware of what is going on and the class lesson will no longer flow past in a torrent of words. It is at this stage that the class English teacher often reports that the L.D. pupil has started to participate in the oral work done in the home class.

The learner can physically see the pile of cards with the new lexical items growing bigger. These cards can be touched and counted. The pupil gets an immediate tactile feedback for the effort that s/he has invested. This is very encouraging for all learners, but especially the L.D. learner who needs the multi-sensory techniques to enable him to function successfully.

### **Summing Up**

In order to succeed in teaching a foreign language to dyslexic and students with learning disabilities, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. The current, conventional way of teaching a foreign language, i.e. listening to the language and picking up the words from oral exposure, does not work for these learners.

2. Language can be acquired by using multi-sensory techniques. Specific language aims have to be defined for each remedial session. Nothing should be presumed known, or left to inference. Even cognates should be pointed out.

It is felt that the key to success of this method is the isolation and teaching of each individual item in the same manner that letters and sounds are isolated and taught in the multisensory reading scheme. This method helps the learner overcome the sense of helplessness felt when trying to pick out words in the stream of language in the present methodology of teaching a foreign language.

## Chapter Six

### Writing

#### Introduction

Writing is one of the areas in which learning disabled children have much difficulty. Some find the physical task of holding a pencil, placing their bodies comfortably opposite the page and starting the process of writing a great hurdle that has to be overcome each time they put pen to paper. Others have no problem with the physical task of writing the letters but have poor co-ordination between eye and hand and find it difficult to copy, especially from the blackboard, where the head has to move from the horizontal plane to the vertical plane and back again. This is a difficult task for all beginning learners, which they eventually overcome. However, it causes much confusion to the L.D. student and the inability to overcome this difficulty should be a warning sign to the teacher that the child may have other difficulties in the learning process. Those who have poor short term memory skills do not have the ability to remember the correct sequence of letters and so copy incorrectly.

Handwriting problems can lead to underachievement in all written work and can influence children's attitude and behaviour throughout their school career [Sassoon 1990a]. It is no longer necessary to have beautiful copperplate handwriting as the typewriter and word processor have taken over much of the functions that clerks once did. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to have flowing, legible handwriting in order to take notes and function as a pupil [Sassoon 1990a].

The purpose of writing is to be able to communicate efficiently in accepted symbols. Writing is actually speech written down. The symbols must be accepted and recognized by both reader and writer.

### When Should Writing Be Taught?

1. When the child can distinguish between similar things, e.g. O o.
2. When the differences between b d p q n u etc. are easily discernible.
3. When the learner has the power of auditory discrimination to distinguish between p b m n.
4. When there is an assurance of a greater degree of success than of failure.

It becomes obvious that a learning disabled child is at a disadvantage in a class situation because the powers of discrimination and detection are, in many cases, less developed, sometimes almost non-existent, and must be developed over a far longer period of time than a non-L.D. learner.

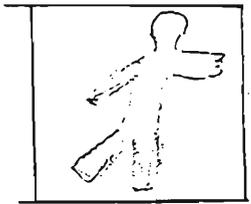
A child, in order to be able to write, must have developed both large and small muscles, eye and hand co-ordination, and laterality.

### Gross Muscle Development

Large muscles are developed by the every-day play of children, climbing, playing on monkey bars, using big wooden building blocks, playing ball and the ever popular games that children enjoy, such as catch, skipping and hop-scotch. In order to write fluently, a child must have co-ordination of the gross muscles.

To test this co-ordination, ask the child to star jump.

Both arms and legs should be equidistant and the same height. If, for instance, one arm is lower than the



other or if the legs are crossed at the completion of the jump, the child does not have complete gross muscle control. [Hazel McKay, 1994]

The child should be able to do sit ups with all parts of the body moving in co-ordination. As s/he sits up one shoulder should not be lower than the other, nor should one leg be straight while the other is curled up. The ability to do this is an indication that the shoulder and neck muscles are well developed. If they are undeveloped the pupil will sit scrunched up in the chair with tense shoulder muscles, resulting in fatigue in the writing process. It is possible to strengthen these muscles by practising situps and exercises that strengthen the shoulder muscles. For example, letting the fingers climb the wall, starting from the waist level and going up the wall till the fingers are over shoulder height.

### FINE MOTOR MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT

Fine motor muscles of the hand must be developed enough to be able to hold a pencil, control its movement and use it without tiring. A child develops these muscles over the years by painting, cutting out, drawing and tracing. If, by the time a child reaches grade one, s/he still cannot use these muscles efficiently, s/he will have difficulty learning to write.

It is possible to strengthen fine motor muscles by specific exercises. For example, asking the child to pretend to play the piano or squeeze a soft squishy ball for a few minutes every day. In extreme cases it is best to turn to experts such as physiotherapists or occupational therapists.

### **Body Awareness**

Physical education classes can also build up an awareness of the body and the use of its muscles. The following are some examples:

1. Run, when the music stops turn any part of your body into a bridge.
2. Lie on the floor, use one leg to paint the ceiling. What movements do you have to make to cover the largest area?
3. Your friend has to climb a high wall. Which part of your body will help him get over (hand, knee, rounded back)?
4. A cardboard arrow is placed in front of the pupil. The pupil is asked to move the arrow so that it is behind him/her, to the left, at the back of him/her. As an alternative, ask the pupil to move that the arrow is to the left, in front, behind, etc.

This exercise helps to remediate problems of laterality.

These exercises and others that are similar are best given by a trained phys-ed teacher or physiotherapist who have specialised in the field of helping children with specific learning disabilities. These trained experts can do a more efficient job of helping children in this field than a remedial teacher.



## Auditory Discrimination

Before being able to write, children must have the ability to distinguish the sounds they hear in order to translate them into correct symbols. The following games help develop auditory discrimination:

1. The game "I Spy".

The first player says

"I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ..... "T"".

The second player has to guess what was in the first player's mind. Meanwhile, s/he has to sort out in his own mind the objects in the room that start with the chosen letter.

2. What sound do all these words start with?

ten telephone tall.

3. All these words start with the same letter. Stop me when I get to one that doesn't belong.

pink panther blue pen.

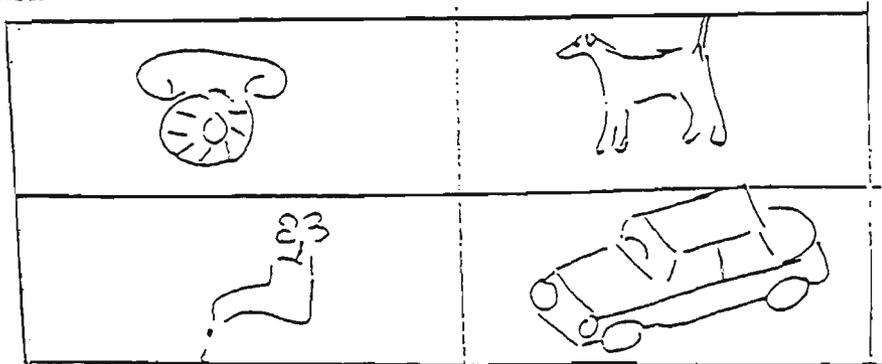
4. Copy the rhythm of someone's clapping,

e.g. 3 short claps - pause -

one long clap.

5. Sound lotto: cassettes are available with various everyday sounds emitting from them. Children have a lotto card in front of them. They have to point to the picture that suits the sound that they hear.

Figure 11. Auditory discrimination exercise.



In short, in order to write legibly the writer must have:

1. visual  
auditory  
motor skills;  
perceptual
2. control of both fine and gross motor muscles;
3. sequencing and directionality skills, to be able to recall the movement pattern of letters.

### Posture and Equipment

Students should be seated at a table and chair appropriate to their height. Both feet should rest on the floor and the desk should be spacious enough for writers to use their arm freely and to rest their page without being cramped. It has been found that a sloping writing surface encourages good writing posture [Sassoon 1990] - but these are seldom found in schools today.

Another factor that influences posture is light. A good light which is suitable for both right handers and left handers should fall in such a manner that the hand does not create a shadow as it moves along the page.

For the right handed writer it is best to place the page slightly to the right and for the left hander slightly to the left so that the line of vision is clear.

It has been suggested by Sassoon (1990a) that children should be provided with a variety of pencils in different shapes and sizes so that they can choose which pencil feels most comfortable.

The classic grip is to hold the writing instrument between the thumb and forefinger. However, modern pens and pencils have a different elevation to traditional fountain pens and pencils [Sassoon, 1990a] and holding the pen between forefinger and ring finger and controlling the pencil from the side by using the thumb seems to be more effective.

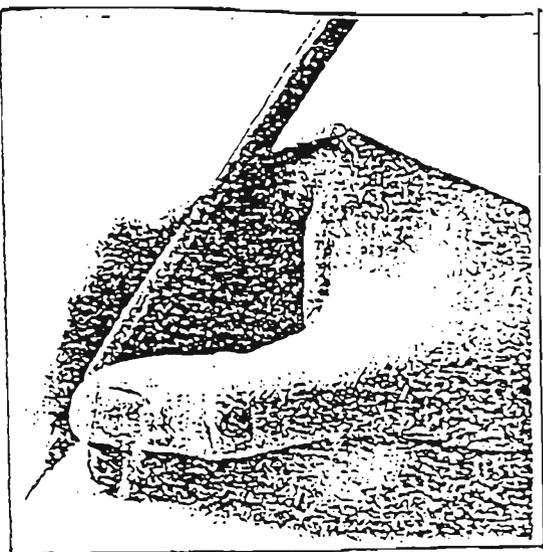
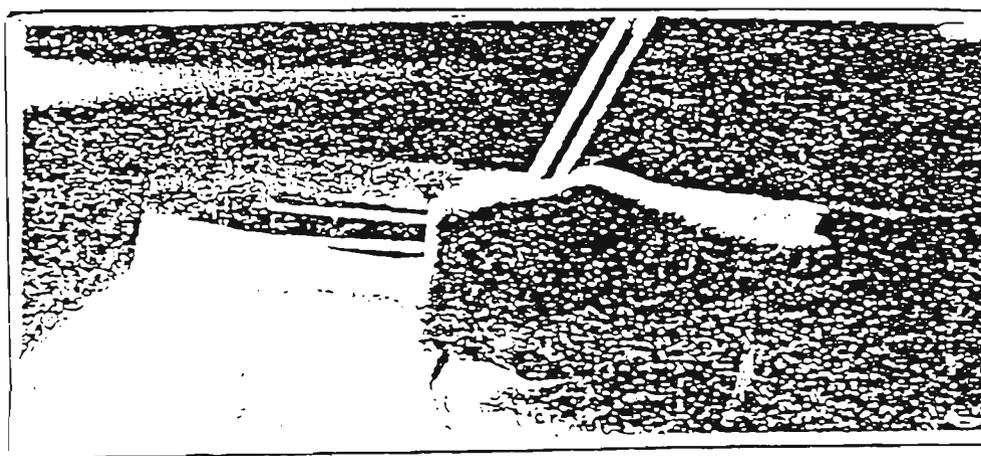


Figure 12. The Classical Grip



An alternate penhold that seems to work well for modern writing equipment

### Left handers

Many dyslexics and learning disabled students are left-handed and special provisions should be taken to ensure their physical comfort and ease their problems. In all languages letter writing and the flow of writing are presumed to be carried out by the right hand (Linksz 1975). The special needs of the left hander should be provided for. That means seating, lighting and space for paper are to be taken into account. Sometimes the chair may need to be heightened so that the left hander can see over the hand that is writing. Spacing may be a problem for left handers - letters being either too far apart or

squeezed tightly together. This often occurs because the writer does not see what s/he is doing.

### **Writing and the Dyslexic/Learning Disabled Learner**

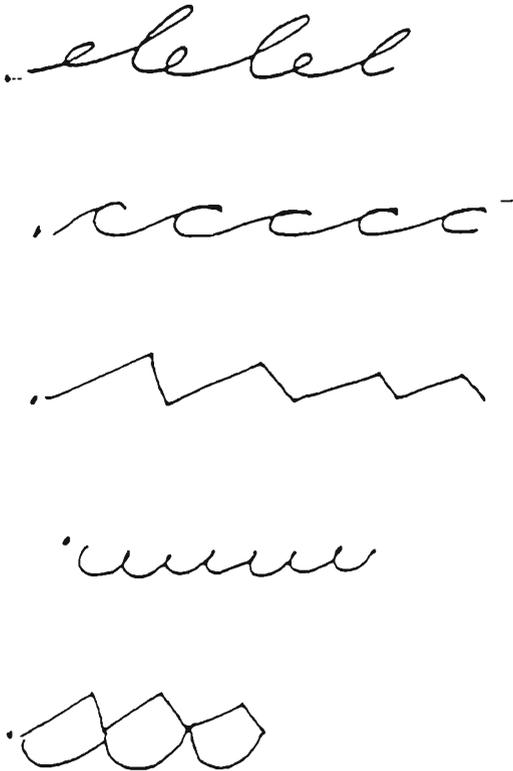
With the above description of the pre-requisites of all learners to succeed in the writing process, it takes little imagination to realise why the L.D. pupil finds writing so difficult.

Before starting the writing process, time should be invested in developing visual and aural discrimination, and understanding of directionality is to be developed.

Learning English as a foreign language, particularly where the native language does not have a Latin alphabet, brings with it a whole range of additional problems. In this research paper, I will discuss the problems of Hebrew-speaking learners of English. The Hebrew/Arabic speaking child's first barrier is the laterality of both the flow of the writing and the individual letter forms. English is written from left to right, across the page from the top to the bottom. Hebrew and Arabic are written from right to left.

In order to overcome the problem of laterality for all pupils learning English where LI does not have the Latin based alphabet, it is worthwhile to invest time in the pre-writing exercises that are based on the flow and letter formation of the English alphabet. The dyslexic pupils will find the new laterality even more confusing than the non L.D. learner and they will need more time to overcome their initial confusion.

Figure 13. The following exercises are examples of pre-writing activities.



the dot indicates the starting point (Go).

The starting point and flow of each letter must be taught systematically. It is to be emphasised that the flow and direction are more important than the rigid and precise copying of each letter.

Where LI does not have a Latin based alphabet, it should be pointed out to the pupils that notebooks open differently in the English language, that the margins are found on the left side of the page (in Hebrew they are on the right side). At the beginning stages children often write English in notebooks where the flow of the letters are mistakenly written from right to left instead of left to right. It is worthwhile to mark with a coloured dot the beginning of each letter formation

### Specific Problems for Hebrew Learners of English as a Foreign Language

The English alphabet has 52 letter symbols (small and capital letters), while the Hebrew alphabet has 27 basic consonants including five final symbols which appear only at the end of words. As a result, the learner has to learn almost double the amount of symbols plus the use of capital letters. There are no letter symbols for vowels in Hebrew. These are represented by dots and dashes above or below the consonants. The concept of vowel sounds being represented by letters is alien to a Hebrew speaker learning English. It sometimes may take months to internalise this idea and at the beginning stages the vowels are sometimes deleted.

Linsz (1975) devotes a large part of chapter 8 in his book proving that the Latin/Greek alphabet are based on the Hebrew and other semitic alphabets. When we take into account the different directionality of the flow and formation of the letters, we will see how similar they are to each other and realise the root for the confusion the Israeli learning disabled child has in trying to sort out the English writing process (Teitelbaum 1989).

The very name for the group of symbols which are the basis for reading and writing are the same.

#### Greek-Latin

alphabet

first letter    a alpha

#### Hebrew

alephbet

aleph

Linsz traces the formation of many letters in the Hebrew and Greek/Latin alphabet to prove his theory. Here are a few examples:

<u>Greek-Latin</u>		<u>Hebrew</u>
C	sound c	כ
K		ק
MN		מ
r		ר
z		ז
L	as in lemon	ל
Mr.	=	מר

In the latter (Mr), even the meaning is identical in both Hebrew and English.

If we write these letters in their correct directionality, we find that they have almost the same sound and formation in both languages.

On the other hand, the following Latin based letters have equivalently shaped letters in Hebrew, although the sounds are different:

<u>English</u>		<u>Hebrew</u>
O as in orange		ו - s sound as in sun
e as in egg		ע - sh sound as in shop
i as in ink		י - vi sound as in victor

If we accept the above premise that many of the Latin letters are basically the same as Hebrew ones, only directionally different, we see that the dyslexic child faces a real problem. Unless taught the correct directionality from the first lesson, their writing becomes a mixture of Hebrew and English.

For example: when a child was asked to write yes-no answers of a reading exercise, it looked like this:

ON

SEY

Many children out of sheer frustration write English letters in the directionality of Hebrew ones. They get tied up in the writing process because their writing instrument at the end of each letter formation is pointing in the wrong direction [Teitelbaum, 1993].

Here is an example of how an Israeli L.D. pupil with directionality problems will write the word 'pen':

The image shows the word 'pen' written in a cursive style. Each letter has a small dot at its terminal end, indicating the direction the writing instrument is pointing after the letter is completed. The 'p' has a dot at the top, the 'e' has a dot at the right, and the 'n' has a dot at the top.

The dot indicates where  
the letter ends.

This child will fall more and more behind in any writing task that has to be undertaken. The writing instrument points in the wrong direction at the completion of each letter and must be lifted and consciously put in the L-->R directionality in order to continue the writing process. This is very time consuming.

Sassoon [1990a] writes that the hand has to be trained in the correct movement of each letter. The motor memory controls movement and soon automates the motion of the hand.

In order to make the automation efficient, the teacher must invest the time and energy in the writing process at the beginning stages.

It is possible to overcome the majority of the problems faced by the new learner if the teacher is aware of the problems the pupil has to face and shows him ways to solve them.

### A Case Study

This study took place in Haifa in 1997 in the same elementary school described in the chapter "Multisensory Learning". Eighty two pupils in year four who had completed one year of oral work in English participated. The children started the reading-writing process in September of year four. In June (10 months later) they were asked to copy as many words as they could within a ten minute period. The story was taken from their text book and they were familiar with the context.

Forty two girls and forty boys participated, of these eight pupils had been assessed as having learning disabilities - six girls and two boys. The teacher was not given details of their disabilities, but these were children who had attended or were still in the process of attending remedial sessions to overcome the disabilities in language one. Four children were English speakers, that is, they had one year of formal English tuition in an English-speaking country. There are possibly more pupils with learning disabilities but they have not been assessed.

### Results

All children, without exception, started writing on the left side of the page. There was no confusion of laterality. This, in a country where language one is written

from right to left, is very impressive. The average number of words that the pupils wrote within a ten minute period was fifty-eight. The writing was, on the whole, flowing and legible. The main difference in the achievements between L.D. pupils (51 words) and non L.D. pupils (62 words) was the amount they managed to copy in the allotted time. There was a high degree of accuracy in the work done by the L.D. pupils. Most pupils only had one mistake.

Table 1, A Partial Breakdown of Mistakes

	Boys	Girls
<u>No Mistakes</u>	3	13
<u>Capital Letters</u> This includes forgetting to start sentences with capital letters, or confusing capital and small letters	17	14
n/m confusion	5	3
b/d confusion	3	4
reversals of ir for ri	4	2
confusion in the use of y	6	6

Table 2. A Breakdown of the Mistakes Made by the L.D. Pupils

	Boys	Girls
<u>No Mistakes</u>	-	1
puppy - pyppy	1	-
dog - doy	1	-
capital letters	-	1
"d" left off "bird"	-	1
you spelt yoy	-	1
"tree" spelt without the "r"	-	1
you spelt yon	-	1
incorrect spacing	-	1
the word "baby" illegible	-	1

Some of the pupils obviously made more than one mistake.

The average number of words that the L.D. pupils wrote was fifty one. This does not fall far below the achievements of non L.D. learners.

In the breakdown of errors that the L.D. pupils had, there was no confusion in the letters that L.D. pupils usually write incorrectly. For example, they did not confuse b/d nor m/n. Most encouraging of all was the fact that they all wrote in the correct laterality. This is probably due to the fact that time is invested in doing prewriting exercises and emphasising fluency at the beginning stages. As can be seen from this study, the time is well spent.

### Cursive script

All research done in the field [Auger and Briggs (1992), Sassoon (1990a), McKay (1993)] to name just a few, point to the fact that it is easier for a L.D. child to learn cursive or joined up writing. When writing in the cursive the shape is more flowing and the pencil is lifted less often from the page, thus eliminating many of the problems of reversal. In Israel, too, L.D. pupils were initially taught cursive script. The children found this quite difficult. However, the real snag was that they could not read it back. They could not distinguish the separate letters as they flowed into each other. The reason for this difficulty lies in the fact that Hebrew - both print and cursive - is written as separate letters. Our Hebrew speakers found it very difficult to overcome this hurdle. As one of the requisites of writing is the ability to read back what you have written we do not force the issue of cursive writing [Teitelbaum].

There are various schools of thought on grouping letters and teaching them in groups based on their forms. For example, teaching all oval shaped letters as a group (o,a,c,d,g,e). Here is an example of one of the groupings [Sassoon, 1990b]:

l	t	u y j
r	n	m h b p k

c      a      d g q o e

sf              vwxz

However, as this is a multisensory programme and the learner reads, writes and articulates each letter as they are introduced to it in the reading scheme, it is thought best to teach the correct writing of each letter when the pupil meets it for the first time in the reading scheme.

Handwriting is one of the most easily taught skills, even for dyslexic pupils, if it is begun early and regular practice is given (Augur, 1992).

### Summing Up

1. In order to write efficiently and successfully, the learner must have developed aural and visual skills as well as control over gross and fine motor skills.
2. Equipment - desk, chair, light, pen and paper, must all be suitable for the learner, otherwise posture will suffer and affect their writing.
3. The needs of left handers must be taken into account.
4. Writing and the dyslexic learner:
  - a. Problems of directionality and letter formation are overcome by prewriting exercises and by emphasising correct letter formation from the first letter that the child writes.
  - b. Where LI is based on a non-Latin script the pupil is shown the differences and similarities between English and LI.
  - c. The pros and cons of teaching cursive script should be weighed carefully when introducing it to pupils whose LI does not have a Latin alphabet.

Figure 14. The following examples of transcriptions done by some of the L.D. pupils mentioned in the study.

~~the baby bird is looking~~  
~~for its mother~~  
 Are you my mother?  
 No I am a dog  
 My baby is a puppy  
 Are you my mother?  
 No I am a cat  
 My baby is a kitten  
 Are you my mother?  
 No I am a woman  
 My baby is a girl  
 I mistake  
 puppy - puppy

1. Mother bird, is not on the  
 tree. The baby bird is  
 looking for its mother.  
 2. Are you my mother?  
 No, I am a dog.  
 My  
 bird - d incomplete  
 you - you  
 tree - r complete

T

sample of non L.D. pupil

The bird is not on the  
 tree. The baby bird is looking for its  
 mother.  
 Are you my mother?  
 I am a dog.  
 My baby is a puppy.  
 Are you my mother?  
 I am a cat.  
 My baby is a kitten.  
 Are you my mother?  
 I am a woman.  
 My baby is a girl.  
 The little bird is sad  
 Are you my

~~the baby bird~~  
~~looking for its mother~~  
 Are you my mother?  
 No, I am a dog  
 My baby is a puppy  
 Are you my mother  
 No I am a cat  
 My baby is a girl  
 Are you my mother  
 No I am a woman  
 My baby is a girl  
 The little bird is sad  
 Are you my mother

## Chapter Seven

### English Spelling

#### The Origins of English Spelling

Up to the sixteenth century approximately, English words were spelled the way they were pronounced, which meant that as the dialect of each area varied, so too did the way words were written (Ellis 1984). According to Stubbs (1980), irregularities in spelling were first introduced by scribes who disliked the confusing repetition of up-down strokes in words like “wumin” and “munk”. To facilitate rapid writing, the scribes changed the spelling to “women” and “monk”. More irregular spellings were introduced after William Caxton brought the first printing press to England and gradually standardised spelling, which no longer reflected regional variations in pronunciation.

In the 15th and 16th centuries there were influential spelling reformers who wanted to alter spelling so that the words would reflect their Latin and Greek origins, sometimes at the expense of sound-letter correspondence. “Dette” became debt, to reflect the Latin “debitum”, “sutil” became subtle, based on the Latin “subtilis”.

By 1650 English spelling was more or less standardised and this process was completed by the production in the eighteenth century of the first dictionaries, among them Dr. Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language (1755). The concept of “spelling error” hardly existed prior to 1770 - if it sounded right, then it was right (Stubbs 1980).

The pronunciation of English words has changed over the last three hundred years. For instance, the “k” in words such as “knife” and “knit” was once pronounced.

Their spelling, which was once regular, has now become irregular because unfortunately, no adjustment has been made to the change in pronunciation.

### **Spelling and the Pupil with Learning Disabilities**

Spelling is the dyslexic's main difficulty. People do not necessarily learn to spell when they are taught to read. They may be avid readers and still produce work which is indecipherable (Augur and Briggs, 1992). Rawson (1975) states that poor reading appears to be more correctable than poor spelling.

Spelling requires more auditory and visual discrimination, memory, sequentialisation, analysis and synthesis and integration simultaneously than perhaps any other skill (Johnson D, Myklebust H, 1967). It is particularly difficult to master the complexities of the spelling of the English language. Many languages are what Ellis (1984) calls "transparent", that is, the writing system of each word conveys the word's pronunciation clearly and unambiguously, e.g. Finnish, Italian, Romanian and, to a great degree, Hebrew. English, on the other hand, has twenty-six letters in its alphabet which produce 44 sounds. Some letters have more than one sound. Combinations of letters produce additional sounds. Furthermore, the 44 different sounds may be spelt in 100 or so different ways (Augur, Briggs, 1992).

Each individual tries to recall a word for spelling in different ways. One person might try to see it in the "mind's eye", relying on visual perceptual ability. Another individual will try to sequence the sound s/he hears into syllables and build them into whole words. In doing so, s/he is relying on auditory perceptual ability. Both learners

must use kinaesthetic or motor ability to get the letters and syllables in the correct sequence on to paper.

Visual spellers may “see” all the letters but confuse the order when writing them down. It is not unusual for them to write “gril” for “girl”. Auditory spellers may use the sounds and even sequence them correctly but still make incorrect choice of phonograms (sound-spelling equivalents) because they may not visualise them. They may write “jiografi” for “geography”. The sounds and the order are correct but the word is spelt incorrectly.

### The Link Between Spelling and Reading Difficulties

Reading and spelling are related skills and it is not surprising that people who have difficulties with one have difficulties in the other skill as well. However, spelling difficulties are found in people with apparently normal or even superior reading ability.

Jorm (1985) contends that in order to be able to successfully handle the irregularities of English spelling, i.e. those words that cannot be spelt by sound to print rules, the human brain must use some sort of mental lexicon. This helps the writer choose the letters c-a-t and not k-a-t-t- or c-k-a-t or other various combinations which would be plausible if English were written by sound-print rules. In English spelling there are certain guidelines that influence the way a word is written:

1. The position of a sound in a word, for example, no word starts with ss - it would be unacceptable to write “ssat”.
2. The grammatical function of a word in a sentence dictates its spelling. For example, the word “picked” is not written “pickt” which might be

phonetically more accurate, because it wants to convey the past tense in the sentence.

3. The historical origin of the word, whether it is Greek - giving us words like telephone or Norman - giving us words like pork.

Jorm (1985) divides people with spelling difficulties into two groups. He calls those who have difficulties in both reading and spelling, reading and spelling retardation and those who are excellent readers but have problems in spelling he calls spelling only retardation. These two groups of poor spellers make different kinds of errors. Spelling only retardates make phonetically accurate errors, whereas reading and spelling retardates are impaired in their ability to spell using sound to print conversion rules.

Uta Frith (1980), who is quoted extensively by Jorm, observed that good spellers are in remarkable agreement when writing nonsense words. Spelling retardates agree to some extent with these choices. They choose phonetically accurate but unusual responses. Reading and spelling retardates make phonetically inaccurate choices even in nonsense words 33% of the time. Normal spellers make phonetically accurate choices 90% of the time. Even in spelling nonsense words there seems to be a mechanism which allows the speller to select one spelling as preferable to another. How this skill is developed in poor spellers who have not picked it up by themselves will be discussed further in the chapter.

In order to spell a word correctly, each letter must be produced in its correct order. This is a sequential activity which requires knowledge of the word's construction. While partial cue strategy seems to be adequate for reading, it does not work when the pupil wants to spell. Efficient readers, when reading a familiar word, can identify it even if some of the visual information is missing. For example "welcme" is recognisable as the

word “welcome”. However, poor readers and spelling-retardates cannot cope with this lack of information.

An interesting parallel situation arises in the process of reading development in Hebrew. Between the third and fourth year of primary school the visual props of the vowel sounds, which occur either above or below the letter, are dropped. The reader is expected to recognise the word by its context. Children with learning disabilities are unable to do this. Children who have a mild learning disability and have been able to cope with their school work up to this point, find that they cannot overcome this hurdle of recognising a word without its vowels. This is often the first indication that these learners have a learning difficulty. So long as they had vowel signs in the highly “transparent” Hebrew writing they were receiving enough cues from the text to enable them to read and write at a satisfactory level - from the school’s point of view.

### Why Johnny Can't Spell

Grace Fernald (1943), one of the pioneers of teaching learning disabled children, claimed in 1943 that “the present day methods of teaching writing and spelling are so limited that even those children who have no special difficulty in learning do not like to write”. She says many children fail to learn to spell because the methods used by schools actually prevent them from doing so. The first part of her statement is still correct today. Many children spell incorrectly but not for the reasons that were pertinent in 1943.

There have been various fashions in teaching spelling, ranging from the strict formal presentation of a fixed word list to the informal choice of words as the need comes up with the learner’s writing. Spelling can be tested by various methods:

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There have been various fashions in teaching spelling, ranging from the strict formal presentation of a fixed word list to the informal choice of words as the need comes up with the learner's writing. Spelling can be tested by various methods:

1. The formal written test where the words previously chosen are dictated within a strict time limitation.

2. Spelling bees - where the child spells out the letters of given words.

3. Work sheets based on spelling rules taught previously. For example, after the child has been taught the spelling rules for the "k" sound, which are:

- a. "k" comes before "e" or "i"

- b. "ck" comes at the end of a one syllable word with a short vowel sound

- c. "ic" comes at the end of a word that has 2 or more syllables.

The child is then given a work sheet where he is expected to complete words using the above rules, for example -

-itten, -up, s-in, ca-e, mus-, du-, -at.

4. A deliberate decision not to test spelling at all.

Many educators feel that children become emotionally upset when they receive their written work with misspelled words marked in red usually with a few disparaging remarks concerning their attempts to write added on. It is also thought that formal spelling periods with their emphasis on testing within a limited time period causes many children to become confused and to write incorrectly. Moreover, the words tested in these sessions are usually a list of disconnected words which fail to arouse the interest

rules as well as not correcting them. As a result, even children who have no learning difficulties leave school unable to spell.

There are conflicting views on whether or not spelling is a skill that can be taught or whether the inability to spell is a hereditary trait. Stevenson et al (1987) conducted a study of 285 twin pairs. This study showed that the heritable proportion of variance for spelling ability is 73%, while only 18% is due to environmental factors. The study also showed that “for specific spelling retardation there is a clear and consistent result of greater monozygotic (mz) pair similarity than dizygotic (dz) pairs.”

An extensive study was undertaken in the University of Minnesota to test whether heredity or environment influence the ability to spell correctly. Forty four sets of M.Z. twins and 24 pairs of D.Z. twins participated. These twins had been separated at, or shortly after birth and were later reunited, so it was possible to investigate the role of heredity and environment. M.Z. twins showed a higher correlation ( $r = .67$ ) than did D.Z. twins ( $r = .49$ ) in CAB spelling test scores. It was also found that 55% of the M.Z. twins made the same mistake while this only occurred in 35% of the time for D.Z. pupils. These findings provide evidence that there is a genetic factor in spelling ability (Samuels & Flor 1990).

This finding, however, does not justify the fact that spelling is taught so haphazardly at school. Even today, in the computer age, accurate spelling is still considered an indication of the writer's educational level. Correct spelling is also a vehicle for communication. Incorrect spelling sometimes conveys incomprehensible information. English spelling is rule-based and these rules should be taught systematically. When computers were programmed with English spelling rules they were

able to spell 50% of a 17,009 corpus of words without any error and another 36% with only one error (Samuels & Flor 1990).

While some pupils learn to spell more easily than others because of a genetic advantage, all students should receive appropriate instructions to learn this skill. Even if pupils continue to write with some spelling mistakes by learning spelling rules, they will learn the intricacies of the language which will help them with their reading.

None of the above studies indicate whether the pupils were taught spelling rules and then tested. Both the research by Stevenson and that done at the University of Minnesota tested a given situation, that is, whether or not the ability to spell is inborn. It did not study (nor was it its aim to do so) whether this tendency can be improved by learning spelling rules.

### **Spelling and the Multisensory Teaching Techniques**

Orton (1937) used a technique which he called Simultaneous Oral Spelling (S.O.S.) in his clinic. This expects the student to focus on the correct spelling of a word (visual) while simultaneously naming the letters (auditory) and writing them (tactile, kinaesthetic). Teaching in this fashion allows teaching through the strongest modalities while strengthening the weaker pathways (Storer 1995).

The S.O.S. strategy has been incorporated in many programmes such as Alphabetic Phonics, Slingerland, Spalding, Hickey. Students using this method attain high level of spelling ability when the procedures are carefully followed (Storer 1995). This method will be described in more detail further on in the chapter.

Fernald (1943) too used a kinaesthetic technique to teach spelling though it was based on treating words as whole units. The words that the students learnt were the ones they needed to write on any subject of their choice. In Fernald's clinic the learner was not given systematic instruction of spelling rules or sound letter equivalents. Words were selected from words the students had misspelled from work they had written. However, a multisensory method was used to learn to spell these words.

Fernald's method: The teacher wrote the selected word using crayons in big letters. The student traced the letters with his finger, at the same time saying the letters out aloud. This process was repeated until the student could write the word correctly without having the model in front of him. These words were used by the student to write on any subject that he chose. This was then typed for the student to read, the words were filed alphabetically in each individual's file. Fernald claimed that eventually the students reach a point where they no longer need to trace a word but knew how to spell it, by looking at it, saying it and writing it.

The case histories described in her book are very convincing. She achieved outstanding results using this method. However, it must be borne in mind that her work was done in a clinic where the student spent the entire learning day for weeks and sometimes months on end. Most remedial teaching is done in hourly sessions sometimes on a daily basis but usually no more than two or three times a week. However, even in Fernald's method of teaching the kinaesthetic method of teaching spelling proved itself to be efficient.

The multisensory approach to teaching spelling has been used successfully to improve spelling even at college level. Thirty college students who were enrolled in

Marshall University, West Virginia, were the subject of a study conducted by Guyer B, Bank S and Guyer K. These students were divided into three groups:

**Group 1:** This group consisted of ten Higher Education for Learning Problems (H.E.L.P.) students who selected “no intervention in their learning”.

**Group 2:** These were taught spelling by using the Wilson Reading System (W.R.S.). This is an alphabetic-synthetic and multi-sensory method (Wilson, 1988). It concentrates on fusing smaller units such as letters, sounds and syllables, into more complex wholes. It reduces English to its basic elements of 26 letters and 44 sounds. The first half of the programme limits the learner to sounds so that s/he can establish a solid foundation before proceeding. The student is then taught syllable division rules, minimising the need to memorise or guess. The second half of the programme presents sound options and rules for adding suffixes. The students are taught to associate a concrete object with each sound they do not know digraphs, diphthongs and suffixes. For example “wh” - wheel, “str” - street.

**Group 3:** This group was taught spelling using a non-phonetic approach called Spelling Power (Goodman 1987). In this method, students are told there is no one best way to study spelling and different approaches suit different students. Goodman recommends the following technique:

Look at the word, write the word over and over again, divide it into syllables, identify the difficult parts, focus on these, say the word, spell it out and visualise it. Keep a list of the words you often misspell.

The basic difference between Wilson’s system and Goodman’s is that the latter does not give any rules.

When the data was analysed there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievement in groups 1 and 3, but there was a significantly improved performance, 18½%, by the group that had been taught using the Wilson's Reading System.

This study, like others before it [Enfield and Greene (1983), Traub (1982), Wilson (1988)] has proved that a multi-sensory phonetic method of teaching reading, spelling and written language can successfully be used by a variety of learners (Guyer, et al, 1994).

## The Practical Application of Teaching Spelling Using The Multi-Sensory Technique

The multi-sensory technique used in this study is based on The Hickey Multi-Sensory Language Course (Augur, Briggs 1992)

Reading and spelling are taught concurrently. As each letter is introduced in the reading scheme, so the pupil is taught its sound. The child looks at the symbol, listens to its sound, traces it, repeats its sound and names the letter simultaneously. S/he is taught any rules connected with this symbol and the rule is written on a coloured card and added to the pack of cards that are revised on a daily basis. This is known as the Simultaneous Oral Spelling (S.O.S.) technique. The first four letters of this reading scheme are p-t-i-s. When the child has mastered these sounds, s/he is expected to blend them and read them as a word, e.g.

it      sit      it's      sits

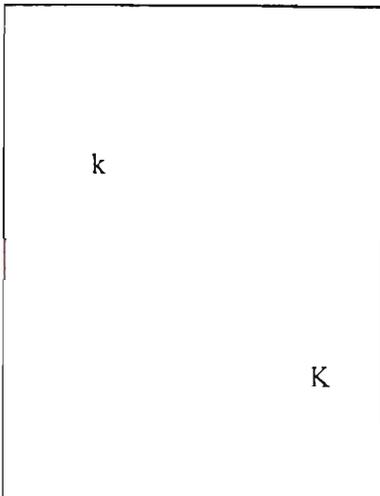
pit      spit                  spits

Once the pupils can join the letters to make a word, they are also expected to break down the sounds in order to spell the word. Let us take as an example the word "sit". The word "sit" is seen in its written form. The teacher says the word, the pupil listens and repeats it slowly. S/he spells the word out loud. The word is covered and dictated to the pupil. The pupil rereads what s/he has written. The word is uncovered and the pupil corrects him/herself. Self correction is encouraged so that the pupil learns to become an independent learner.

As the pupil advances in the reading s/he comes across phonograms that have rules to facilitate spelling. Let us take the letter “k” as an example. When a child is introduced to the letter s/he receives a white reading card.

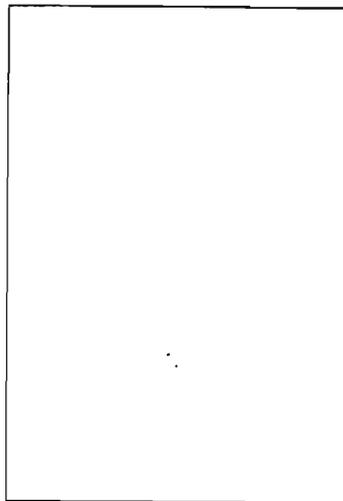
**Figure 15. Reading card.**

**Side A**



Side A has the letter printed on it by the teacher in both capital and small lettering.

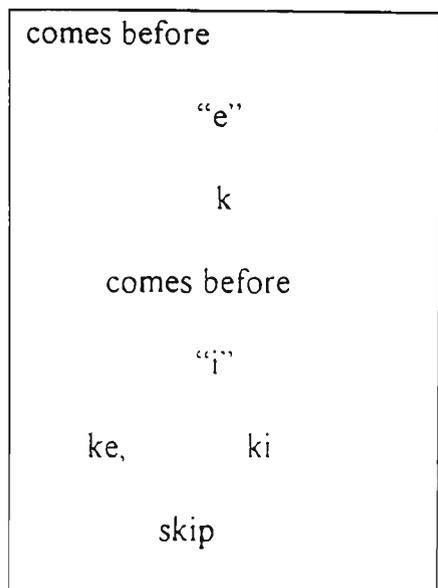
**Side B**



Side B has cue word that the child has chosen.

The child is then presented with a different coloured card. The following statement is written on the card usually in Hebrew, sometimes in English, according to the pupil's choice.

**Figure 16. Spelling rule card.**

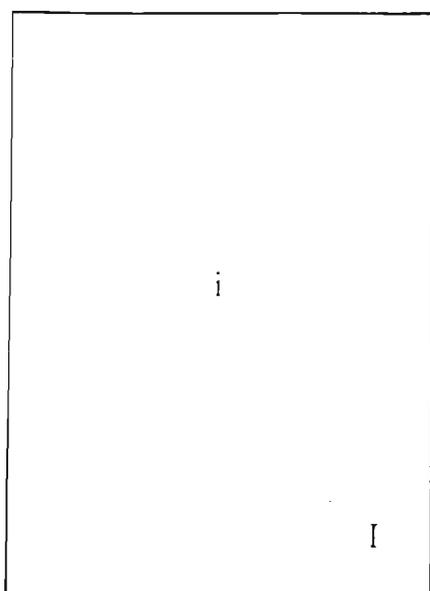


At the end of each remedial lesson, the teacher dictates the sound of the symbol learned that lesson. The child repeats the sound, names the letter and writes it simultaneously. The teacher also dictates a number of words that incorporate the new sound, using the process described above.

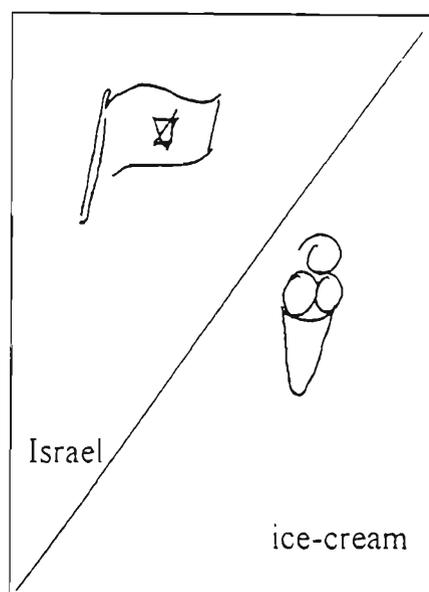
From the very beginning the pupil is taught that vowels have two sounds - a long sound and a short sound. These appear on the reading card in the following manner:

**Figure 17. Reading card for vowel.**

**Side A**



**Side B**



As the ability to recognize short vowel and long vowel sounds is important to spelling, these concepts are introduced from the first vowel the pupil is taught. S/he is taught the long sound in open syllables like “he” but the long sound in the vowel-consonant - e or magic “e” pattern are not taught until after the pupil knows the “th” “sh” “ch” phonogram. The concept of magic “e” is difficult for Hebrew speakers to grasp and it is often pronounced for some time even after its role has been explained.

As the pupil advances s/he is introduced to more long sounds. For example long “a” has a number of letter combinations:

- a - apron
- a-e - cake
- ay - day
- ai - train
- eigh - weigh

The pupil is taught that “ay” usually comes at the end of a word, that “ai” is followed by n, l, r,. Each individual rule is written on a card and repeated on a daily basis as mentioned earlier. At each dictation session the pupil is expected to write all the possibilities of each phonogram so that s/he can see the choice there is. In this manner the pupil learns that certain sounds can be written with a variety of letter combinations. These choices are presented over a period of time together with an explanation of where and why each one is used. They are also presented according to the frequency they appear in the language. For example, in the long “a” sound the combination “a-e”, and “ay” are introduced long before the “eigh” combination. By being made aware of these

choices and the rules that govern them even poor spellers will develop the mechanism which will allow them to select the more accepted writing of sounds which normal spellers and spelling-only retardables do with greater frequency than poor spellers. Though this method does not guarantee written work that has no spelling mistakes, it does eliminate some of the bizarre spelling that can be seen without these guidelines.

In order to be able to read and spell correctly, the pupil must have some knowledge of syllable division. S/he must be aware that each vowel sound represents a syllable. The Hickey Multisensory Reading Course (Augur, Briggs, 1977) divides syllables into six groups:

1. Syllables that are also words, e.g. port.
2. Closed syllables - the short vowel sound is followed by a consonant - "hip".
3. Open syllables - the vowel sound ends the word and is usually long - "he".
4. Regular final syllables "sion" - mansion.
5. Suffixes - wanted.
6. Prefixes - deport.

Probably because most Hebrew words have no more than four syllables and usually less, Israeli children find it difficult to read words that are multisyllabic (4 syllables or more). They cannot seem to divide into manageable portions words such as "refrigerator".

A number of reading schemes concentrate on first teaching three letter, one syllable words at the beginning stages. However, Israeli teachers found it best to teach the VCCV pattern early in the reading scheme to introduce the pupil to the concept of syllable division from the early stages of the reading scheme.

## **Spelling Rules**

Moats (1994) writes that students with reading and spelling difficulties must be taught the concepts of linguistic structure. They must know the phonological structure of words. This means that they must know how to count the phonemes (how many sounds) in a word, they must be able to identify the phoneme (what is the last sound in “dig”) and they must also know how to delete or substitute a phoneme (say the word “break” without the “r”).

Students should also be taught the morphemic structure of words. These are the smallest meaningful units in a word. The word “help” is a whole word morpheme. The word help-less-ness has three morphemes, made up of help, less and ness. The student should be taught the plural concept represented by the “s”, the past concept by the “ed”.

At a more advanced stage of reading and spelling the learner must be made aware that even if the pronunciation of a word changes the root word remains constant, for example, “sign” and signature, “pirate” and piracy; diplomat and diplomacy (Moats and Smith, 1992).

Moats (1994) states that poor readers and spellers benefit from intensive, systematic exposure and explicit teaching of linguistic concepts. However, teachers must themselves have this knowledge so that they can present the material unambiguously and with all the necessary information needed to explain it.

Moats (1994) conducted a survey of 89 teachers from various backgrounds, graduates from a variety of universities. They were graduate teachers, classroom teachers, speech language pathologists, special education teachers. They were self selected and motivated individuals. These teachers were tested for linguistic knowledge.

They were given 15 questions in which they had to complete various tasks among which were the following: syllable division, morpheme division, recognising constant blends, the rules for “ck”, the rule for adding a suffix when a word ends with “y”.

The results were amazingly poor. Only about 30-40% of the questions were answered correctly, proving without doubt that teachers themselves needed a far deeper knowledge of language than they have presently. These rules seem to be one of the best kept secrets of language teaching. One can read through tens of articles and books on language acquisition and the importance of teaching spelling rules, suffixes, prefixes, morphemes, etc., without coming across even a short list of them.

The following rules are based on the Hickey Multisensory Language Course. Some rules may be missing, recognising the “shwa” for example. However, once the student has acquired the following knowledge, s/he will become an efficient speller.

### A Short Summary of Spelling Rules

1. ck, ss, ff, ll appear after the short vowel sound at the end of a one syllable word, e.g. tall, boss, stiff, clock.

Exceptions: nil, pal, plus, yes, if, of, gas

bus, us, this.

Note the special sound of -all-.

2. “q” is always followed by “u” - quack.
3. “v” at the end of a word is always followed by “e”, e.g. give.
4. The sound k can be written as c, k, ck

k comes before e or i - kettle, skin

it is written at the end of a word after a consonant or a long vowel, e.g. “park”.

c followed by e, i or y, has an “s” sound

exceptions: soccer, sceptical

“ck” - comes at the end of a one syllable word following a short vowel sound

black, deck, stick, clock, duck (as in rule 1).

5. “y” at the end of one syllable words gives us an “i” sound - fly.

“y” at the end of two syllable words gives us an “ee” sound - baby.

No English words end in “i” although words borrowed from other languages may, e.g. spaghetti.

6. “j” (a) this sound at the end of a word is written as -ge, e.g. page.

(b) ge, gi, gy also give us a “j” sound

exception: girl, get, give, begin, gift, tiger.

When the “all” sound is the initial sound of a two or more syllable word we drop one “l”: almost altogether. Note the spelling of all - right.

8. When the suffix ‘ful’ is added to a root word it loses an “l”, e.g. “restful”.

9. The “e” is dropped from a root word when suffixes beginning with a vowel are added, e.g. give - giving.

The final “e” is kept if a consonant is added, e.g. bake - baked.

10. Words that end with a single vowel and a single consonant double the last consonant when suffixes beginning with a vowel are added, e.g.

big - bigger

sit - sitting.

Exceptions: listening.

If a word ends with a consonant plus “y”, the “y” is changed to an “i” before adding the suffix

cry - cries      happy - happiness      study - studied

However, if the suffix is “ing” the root word keeps the “y”

e.g. dry - drying.

12. “i” comes before “e” except after the letter “c” or when it has a long “a” sound

e.g. chief - (“i” before “e”)

receive - “i” before “e” except after c

eight - i before e except with a long “a” sound.

13. Vowel combinations with “w”

“w”+“a” sounds like “wo” - was

“w”+“ar” sounds like “wor” - war

“w”+“or” sounds like “wer” - work

Exceptions to this are worry, wore.

14. ph=f. This is often used for scientific words or new technologies where words are created from a Greek root, e.g. telephone.

15. Plurals:(a) Most frequently written by adding “s”, e.g. books.

(b) “es” is added to words that end with s, ss, sh, ch, x, z, o,

e.g. buses, dresses, brushes, watches, boxes, tomatoes, quizzes

exceptions to “o” plus “es”

radios, Eskimos, pianos,

(c) Nouns ending with f change to “ves” in the plural form

shelf - shelves

exception - chief - chiefs

Words ending with y - see rule 11,

e.g. boy - boys; city - cities.

The above spelling rules are also applicable for verbs when the “s” is added to the third person singular in the Present Simple tense.

16. -dge, -tch are used after short vowels, e.g. bridge, catch

exceptions: much, such, rich, which.

17. “c” - this letter has a variety of sounds depending on the letter that follows it:

(a) c = k when it is followed by the vowels a, o, u, e.g. cap, cot, cub.

(b) c = s when followed by “e”, “i” or “y”,

e.g. centre, pencil, cycle.

Words of more than one syllable and that end with an “is” sound are often spelt “ice”, e.g. police.

We use “ce” after long vowel sounds, e.g. mice, grace.

(d) c+h = ch, as in chip.

(e) ch = ish, as in “champagne”. These words are usually taken from the French.

(f) ch = k, e.g. orchestra, school. The words with this sound are often Greek-based.

18. Final Syllable Endings

ble, dle, cle, kle, fle, ple, tle, stle, zle

these sound as if the “e” comes before the “l”.

19. Silent Letters

The silent “k” is followed by “n”, e.g. knit.

The silent “w” is followed by “r”, e.g. write.

The silent “g” is followed by “n”, e.g. sign.

The silent “b” usually follows “m”, e.g. lamb, the exception being “debt”.

The silent “l” comes in four groups:

- (a) walk, talk, chalk
- (b) calm palm
- (c) calf, half
- (d) could, should, would

The silent “gh” comes in five groups:

- (a) light, bright, fight, right, might, fright, delight
- (b) caught, taught, naughty, daughter
- (c) eight, freight, weight
- (d) thought, brought, bought
- (e) though, through, height (these do not fit into a pattern).

20. The following sounds are written differently, depending on their position in a word:

Beginning or Middle Position

ai (rain)  
 ou (house)  
 oi (toilet)  
 u-e (cube)  
 au (because)

Word Ending

ay (day)  
 ow (cow)  
 oy (boy)  
 ue (blue)  
 ew (new)  
 aw (saw)  
 -tion - nation  
 -sion - television  
 -y (baby)

## 21. er, or, cian

These suffixes are often used to form professions,

e.g. farmerer, doctoror, politicianian

“or” is added to words that end in “ct”

“ian” is added to nouns that end with “ic”.

“ed”. Except for irregular verbs, “ed” at the end of a verb indicates its past tense irrespective of its pronunciation

e.g. walked (“t” sound)

needed (“id” sound) usually after “d” or “t”

called (“d” sound).

These rules are taught as an integral part of the reading scheme. They teach not only the correct spelling of a word, but also facilitate comprehension and grammar. For example, if the reader knows that “ed” endings indicate the past tense, s/he will better understand the passage s/he is reading.

### Suffixes and Prefixes

A suffix may be used as part of the reading scheme once the letters that contain them have been taught. The concept “basic” word and “suffix” must be taught and understood by the pupil before the suffix is introduced.

This concept is easy for a Hebrew speaker to comprehend as it is such an important part of the Hebrew language. The plural, feminine, causative, passive, reflective are all variations of base words. New words, to accommodate new technologies, are also formed from base words e.g. תשובה means answer, תשובות - answering machine. Hebrew speakers, however, find it difficult to remember all the

spelling rules involving prefixes and suffixes, for instance when to drop the “l” in a word such as also, when to choose “im” instead of “in”, e.g. invaluable.

The following suffixes and prefixes are taught for spelling. A more complete list is given in the chapter on reading where they are taught to facilitate reading comprehension.

### Suffixes

1. Plural “s”.
2. “ing” added to verbs in the present tense.
3. “ed” added to verbs to indicate the past tense.
4. “ful” meaning full of - restful.
5. “ly” changes an adjective to adverb, happily.
6. “er” has 2 functions (a) gives us a profession - driver  
(b) gives us the comparative form of an adjective - smaller.
7. “est” gives us the superlative of an adjective - tallest.

### Prefixes

dis	discontent		dis
im	impossible		im
in	in	invincible	} shows us the negative of the base word that follows
ir	irreplaceable		
un	unusual		un
mis	misplace		mis
re	again - redo		
de	carry away - deport		

trans across - transport

sub under - subway

anti against - anti-aircraft.

Most other prefixes when added to the base word change it to a multisyllable word which Hebrew learners find quite difficult to read and even more difficult to write. This “phobia” of multisyllable words (4 syllables or more) probably stems from the fact that Hebrew rarely has words with more than four syllables and the Hebrew reader finds it difficult to cope with this phenomenon when s/he comes across it in a foreign language.

The question arises - how do pupils choose the correct spelling from the variety of choices they have for a particular sound? The reading scheme, which is based on the Hickey Multisensory Language Course presents these alternatives so that the pupils can familiarise themselves with each sound before a new one is introduced. As the pupils progress, the teacher dictates phonemes in the remedial session and the pupils write the choices they have for that phoneme in the order of frequency they appear in the English language. For example, when pupils learn the long O, he will write

O

As they progress in their reading and are asked to write the long “o” they will write

o, o-e, oa, ow (grow) oe

Pupils learn, as they progress through the reading scheme, that the same sound is covered by a variety of combinations of letters. As this happens gradually (over a period of approximately two years) and cumulatively they learn to make the correct choices without having to guess what combinations of letters form different sounds.

It is difficult for dyslexics to learn English spelling even if it is their native language. It is even more difficult when trying to learn to spell a foreign language. The Israeli Ministry of Education recognises how hard it is for L.D. pupils to learn to spell and is willing to overlook spelling errors if pupils can show, after official assessment, that they are incapable of writing without mistakes. Consequently, not too much time is spent per remedial session on spelling. It is felt that the time can be spent more usefully in improving reading fluency, comprehension or other aspects of language learning instead of investing too much effort in a skill which very often a pupil will be unable to master “and is intended mainly as a courtesy to the reader” (Hillrich, 1985).

Nevertheless, pupils must gain some level of competence in spelling to be able to function on a basic level. They should be able to write all words with short vowel sounds including two syllable -VCCV- words, such as *picnic* or *into*. They should be able to write one syllable words with long vowel sounds, for example “*play*”. They should be able to use prefixes and suffixes correctly (this will also help them in their comprehension). Pupils should also be able to spell the 200 basic words which are found on lists such as “Key Words to Literacy” (. McNally and Murray, 1962). Once they have mastered these words, they can be called “functionally literate”.



One of the first primers was known as “hornbooks”. These books were used in England in about 1450. They contained the alphabet in upper and lower case letters, the vowels and their combinations with consonants and they were covered with a transparent horn, hence the name.

Thomas H. Gallaudet’s “Mother’s Primer” 1835 is considered the first “look-say” primer. Its author was the founder of the Hartford Asylum of the Deaf and Dumb (Boatner, 1959). The “look-say” method was originally developed for deaf mutes who have no conception of a spoken language and could not learn a sound symbol system. They were taught to read by way of a pure sight method consisting of pictures and whole words. As far as the deaf pupil was concerned, the written language represented ideas only, and had nothing to do with sounds made by the tongue and vocal cords.

In 1836 it was decided to try this method on an experimental basis by the Boston Primary School Committee. Horace Mann, who was the secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, gave this method a great deal of backing, probably due to the criticism of attempting to teach reading by the Bumstead Primary Readers which were then in vogue.

Josiah Bumstead, the author of the above readers, said “Never require the pupil to spell a word before he has so far learned it as to be able to read it”.

Reading was learned in the following manner:

“Man” = em ai en - man; “no” = en o - no.

It is little wonder that the “Look-Say” method was taken up so enthusiastically when compared to the Bumstead method of reading.

In 1839 Mann and a number of associates established the first state-owned and operated college for teacher training. Mann also published a teachers’ journal - Mann’s

Common School Journal - which “became the propaganda medium of the whole word method” (Blumenfeld, 1983).

In the same year a group of Boston schoolmasters published an attack on Mann and the whole-word system of reading. The method of learning to read by phonics was returned to the primary schools although the whole-word method was considered a legitimate alternative.

By the mid 1800s three distinct methods were being used to teach reading:

The alphabet methods, wherein the names of the letters were spelled out and the words were read only after they were spelled out (the Bumstead method).

The phonic method: where the sounds of the letters were taught and the children were shown how these sounds were combined to make a word.

The “look-say” method, where the child would be able to pick up reading by the global look of a word. This method is often called the global method or the whole-word method of reading.

At the turn of the century, John Dewey caused the whole-word method to make a comeback. John Dewey ran the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago 1896-1904 and the Teachers’ College at Columbia University (1917-1946). Dewey wanted to change the focus of education from the development of individual academic skills to the development of co-operative social skills.

The men who ran the teachers’ colleges from the beginning of the twentieth century till the mid forties had a great deal of power in their hands. William Scott Gray joined the faculty at the University of Chicago in 1914, was the dean of its College of Education while at the same time he was chief editor of Scott Foresman & Co “Dick and Jane” basic reading programme until his death in 1960.

Gray was instrumental in organising the International Reading Association which has become the world's largest and most influential professional organisation devoted to reading instruction.

Arthur I. Gates, who was the professor of education in Columbia Teachers College, was at the same time chief editor of MacMillan's basal reading program till well into the '60s.

These few men, in fact, monopolised reading instruction in the U.S.A. The professors of education in the teachers colleges were also the editors of the professional journals, as well as being editors of the publishing houses bringing out the "look and say" readers. They had strong economical and professional interests in pushing this methodology in the schools. In addition, professors of education are organized professionally along national lines and can therefore exert national influence over the teaching profession as a whole.

As early as 1937, Orton published an article in Educational Psychology that reported that many children could not learn to read using the whole word method. The educational circles, however, disregarded the warning. By the 1940s remedial centres and remedial clinics were set up everywhere in the U.S.A.

### **Reading Techniques**

Every conceivable technique of teaching children to read has been tried over the ages. The visual methods of earlier times were combined with the auditory method, by having children recite letters, words and prayers while they were looking at a copy of these. In recent years, methods of teaching reading have become more and more visual. Present methods are so exclusively visual that they are poorly adapted to the child who

tends to use auditory or kinesthetic techniques. Children are supposed to learn to read before they learn to write, possibly because it is thought that it is easier to read than to produce, that is, write. As a result, even this kinesthetic experience of writing the word they are learning is denied them during the early learning process.

### **Auditory Methods**

This method was used from the early Greek and Roman times. It consists of saying out loud the letters of the alphabet, spelling out and sounding out the words. This approach is still used in traditional religious schools to teach Hebrew reading.

### **Kinaesthetic Methods**

This method employs the whole body to learn and to read and write, including the hands and lips, and the use of touch and smell which are so rarely used. This method too has been used over the ages. Horace, 65 BC, speaks of giving a child tit-bits of pastry made in the form of letters. Seveca (3 BC-65 AD) suggests that the teacher place his hand on that of the child to guide his fingers. Tracing on wax or ivory tablets was used in Greek and Roman education and continued over the centuries till the look and say method took over.

Huey (1908) quotes Basedow 1723-1790 in his description of learning to read using the method called “the gingerbread method”:

To Master John the English maid  
 A hornbook gives of gingerbread  
 And that the child may learn the better  
 As he can name he eats the letter

Proceeding thus with vast delight

He spells and gnaws from left to right.

Basedow suggested that the children must have breakfast, “and it is not necessary for any child to eat the alphabet more than three weeks. The cost of shaping the dough into letters is less than one half penny daily for each child. The acquisition is possible even to the poor children.”

Gearheart (1981) describes the remedial method “Apples, Bananas, Candy” developed by Rita Brown. This remedial program utilises the senses of smell and taste that are rarely used in any learning process. The child is taught the alphabet by something edible being provided as each new sound and letter are introduced. Hence the name Apples, Bananas, Candy.

In the ultra-orthodox Jewish schools, pupils are taught to read at the age of three using the sense of taste. On the first occasion that a child comes to school, he is given a slate with the Hebrew letters covered with honey. The child traces the letter with his finger and licks off the honey as he repeats the name of the letters. This is to associate the learning of reading as a sweet and happy occasion.

Even the look-say method when it was first introduced used elements of the kinesthetic multi-sensory technique. Flesh (1955) writes that “The words were printed on hard cards. The children read them in and out of school. They read them anywhere and everywhere one would listen. They took their cards with them to table - to bed”.

Nowadays when children are taught using this method of reading, they no longer use cards and so do not have the opportunity of revising the words they have learnt anywhere except in the classroom. Possibly, the first enthusiasts of global reading were successful because they used so many multi-sensory techniques to learn to read the new

words. The children copied them onto the cards, they said the cards out loud and repeated them on all occasions.

### **Combination of Various Methods**

Various combinations of the methods have been used over the years. Fernald (1943) quotes McGuffey, 1879, the author of the "Eclectic Reader". "The plan of the book enables the teacher to pursue the Phonic Method, the Word Method, the Alphabet Method or any combination of these methods". How convenient.

### **Phonics - Versus Whole Word Reading**

As has been noted above (p. 141) in 1839, four years after Gallauder's first "look and say" primer was printed, a group of Boston schoolmasters published an attack on this system of reading. The controversy has not ceased to rage over the years. A continuing war has gone on for about one hundred and fifty years, each side trying to prove the supremacy of its method.

The "look-say" or whole word method teaches beginning readers to recognise words as complete units. Syllable division is considered irrelevant and the length of a word is considered important only inasmuch that it gives clues or helps the reader recognise the word by its shape. Phonics teaches how to "decode" the written word, that is, how to translate the letters seen in words into speech sounds. The learner progresses from single letters to blends, then words. In global reading these steps are considered irrelevant.

In the initial stages, children take naturally and easily to the whole word method and show great achievements (Gosnami, Bryant, 1990). Vellutino (1986)

supports this claim that initially the whole word/meaning based approach appears to facilitate rapid and integral learning, quite likely because it capitalizes on the child's natural inclination to lean heavily on meaning in learning new relationships. This initial success may explain why some teachers support the "whole word method" of reading with such vigour.

Their joy, however, is short lived. Children who have learnt to read globally cannot attack new words and read words with no phonological relationship between them. For example, these children may say "water" or "milk" for the noun "drink". This, says Flesh (1955), quoting Gates, is "the keen use of the device of guessing words from context", and is permissible in the whole word method of teaching reading.

By the late 1920s intelligent children who could not read were being seen by Orton in his clinic. In his book (1937) he stated that many children were unable to learn to read using this method. The children who came to his clinic had been exposed unsuccessfully to the look-say method. In these children, repeated exposure to the above method "was not effective and in certain children even increased the tendency to confusion and failures of recognition."

This was already the second attack on the whole word or global method of teaching reading. The first one being the anger of the Boston schoolmasters four years after the method was introduced into the schools. Over the years as more and more children who finished school were unable to read, research was carried out to explain why this was happening.

By 1955, when Flesh's book "Why Johnny Can't Read And What You Can Do About It" was published, the public was ready to identify with the anger expressed in the book. Flesh blasts at the academic establishment for continuing to use the "look-say"

method despite all the evidence that it was not successful. He also points out the strong conflict of interests of the professors of reading (Dr. Gates of Columbia University, Dr. Gray at the University of Chicago) who were also editors who published the basal readers used in the whole word method. They had strong financial reasons not to change the mode of reading instructions.

Flesh was so outraged by what he saw in the schools he visited that he said ‘we have thrown 3000 years of civilisation out of the window. Reading has become a study of hieroglyphics to the modern child instead of an alphabet based reading system’.

Armstrong (1989) was the chairman of a U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee which investigated the large number of people (27 million adults) who could not read. In Armstrong’s report “Illiteracy, an Incurable Disease or Education Malpractice” gives a list of research that has been carried out over the last forty years. The findings, some of which are summarised below, all support the early systematic instruction of phonics as the key to literacy.

In 1979 Resnik and Weaver edited a collection of papers entitled “Theory and Practice of Early Reading”. Of the 59 contributors, 53 (about 90%) were in favour of systematic phonics instead of the prevailing “look and say” method. They conclude “This is the only place in which we have any clear evidence for any particular practice”.

Chall (1983) reaffirmed her research findings of 1967 that reading should be taught by the use of “intense, systematic phonics, essentially the same approach that had been successfully used before the “look-say” method was introduced”.

In 1989, another major study on reading by Adams at the University of Illinois reaffirmed “the need to teach the English language as a system”.

The war of words between the supporters of the two methodologies has gone on unabated. Here are some of the claims and counter-claims that each side makes against the other.

### **The Opponents of the “Look-Say” Method**

1. Children memorise sight words and do not learn to decode or unlock the meaning of words that they have not been taught. The inability to read usually only shows up in fourth grade when the volume of new words and reading material increases and when children are introduced to literature, history, etc. Guessing or memorising new words no longer works.
2. No research was ever done to support the “look and say” method.
3. The rigidly controlled vocabulary of the basal reader emphasises memorising whole words.
4. Children trained by the “look and say” method are deaf to the sounds of the printed word as a deaf person is to the sounds of the spoken word. This is probably due to the fact that the whole word method was initially developed to teach deaf children to read. It has long since been disregarded by the teachers of the deaf as inadequate.
5. Learning to read by the “look-say” method is big business. Mr. H. Marc Mason, the Principal of Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Mesa, Arizona, reported in 1978 that his school spent \$23.42 per student per year when they were using

the whole word method. When they switched to phonics the expenditure dropped to \$8.50 per student per year.

6. Children cannot read books that are appropriate to their age. Classics like “Little Women” and “Tom Sawyer” were not written with the limited basal reader in mind.
7. All alphabetic systems are phonic based. English is an alphabetic language with irregularities in only approximately 13% of its words (Moats, 1995).
8. The whole word training causes the learner to think in a non-analytic way.
9. Children taught by the “look-say” method spell incorrectly because they have not been taught to look at the individual letters that make up a word. They do not sound out the letters that make up a word and they themselves do not “see” the spelling mistakes that they make.
10. Although in the initial stages of reading (the first two-three months) children read more slowly than global readers, they are, however, more accurate and in the long term (four-five years later) they read more fluently.
11. The word method is destroying democracy. “Public education was supposed to create equality but public education is falling down on its job” (Flesh).

Naidoo (1981) summarised the most widely used teaching schemes for dyslexic children.

He found that they had several features in common:

1. They teach reading, writing, spelling and all relevant skills at the same time.
2. The methods of teaching are all highly structured and take the learner slowly and cumulatively through a series of tasks and exercises.
3. They all employ a phonetic approach.

## **The Opponents of the Phonic Method**

The opponents of phonics claim that:

1. English is not a phonetic language and therefore should not be taught phonetically.
2. The inability to read is not a reading problem, it is a psychological problem.
3. It is more stimulating and there is less drudgery and repetition in using the “look-say” method.
4. Children read more slowly learning to read through phonics.
5. One of the easy ways to make things difficult is to ensure that phonic skills are learned and used.
6. Learning to read using phonics is reactionary and undemocratic.

Huey (1908), one of the initiators and most persuasive advocate of the whole word method, said “Inaccuracy in reading is legitimate so long as it conveys the general meaning of the page”. This philosophy is still upheld by the supporters of the look-say method 90 years later.

The standardised reading tests results all support the phonic method of teaching to read. Groff (1989) claims that adversaries of phonic teaching call for an end to the administration of such tests.

It would be simplistic to say, as Flesh does, that if all children were taught using the phonic method there would be no non-readers. Over the centuries, there have been reports of people who have been unable to read despite efforts made to teach them. Defries 1991 quotes CJ Thomas, the assistant medical officer of London City 1905, describing congenital word blindness “There are a number of instances of more than one member of one family being affected and the mother often volunteers the statement that

she herself was unable to learn to read, although she had every opportunity". Tarnapol (1981) also mentions cases found in medical literature of the inability to read dating back to 4000 BC.

In Jewish history, there is the case of the renowned Rabbi Akiva, who lived in the first century AD and was unable to read until he was over forty years of age. He decided to learn to read when he noticed a hole had been formed by the constant drips of water onto a stone. He declared that if letters were repeated to him often enough, they could make a "hole" in his brain and he would eventually learn how to read. He went on to become one of the greatest Jewish scholars of all times.

It would be wisest not to be dogmatic about using only the whole word approach or only phonics in teaching reading. Although only about 13% of English words have irregular spelling, these words are also the ones used often in the language. These words such as "buy" or "said" are best taught globally. There is no escaping the fact that English does have a number of high frequency irregular words.

Vellutino (1986) recommends the complementary use of the whole word method and the phonics method. He suggests that this would be a more effective approach than the use of either one or the other of these methods exclusively.

Briggs and Augur (1990) also introduce irregular words globally. In fact, there can be no other way in introducing words such as "one".

In 1997, the Orton Dyslexia Society brought out a position paper which discusses how to overcome the problems of illiteracy in the U.S.A. (Brady, Moats, 1997). They also come to the conclusion that "phoneme awareness is necessary but insufficient for becoming a reader".

## Chapter Nine

### The Instruction of Reading

#### Whole Word, Whole Language or Phonetics - Is There a Move to Consensus?

Over the past decade a number of researchers have tried to find the answer to the ongoing argument whether whole-word reading instruction is more effective than the teaching of phonics or whether the teaching of phonics is the exclusive answer to the problem of reading difficulties.

The adversaries of the whole language approach and the phonics approach have, according to Stanovich (1995) more in common than is thought. Both the advocates of the phonic and the whole language learning agree on the importance of presentation of good literature to the learner. They also agree on the importance of early writing experience for children. They disagree, however, on the necessity of explicit analytic teaching of decoding skills and syntax.

The basic argument between the two camps is whether reading is a natural task (Goodman 1986, 1992), or whether it is something that has to be specifically taught (Byrne et al, 1992 ii).

There now seems to be a convergence of opinion in which both sides are beginning to realize, however reluctantly, that neither approach has the perfect solution and that this long-standing debate has had a detrimental effect on the teaching of reading to children.

In order to read effectively and fluently, the reader must acquire permanent automatic response to the graphemes and phonemes and put them in correct sequential order. The reader's visual, auditory, tactile-kinaesthetic, and oral-kinaesthetic perceptual

systems must interact sufficiently to make learning so secure that s/he can retrieve aspects of the phonograms when needed (Augur & Briggs, 1992).

### **An Outline of Some of the Findings of Whole Word and Phoneme Techniques**

In 1986 Vellutino, together with Scanlon, sought to evaluate the idea that whole word and code oriented methods of instruction used as complement of one another would be more effective in teaching word identification skills than would either of these methods alone. Each of these approaches, phonetic analyses and whole word reading has both positive and negative features as an instructional method and combining them would capitalise on their strengths while compensating for their weaknesses.

Vellutino et al. found that the whole word/meaning approach appears to facilitate rapid learning at the outset. However, if only the whole word approach is used the learner risks fostering difficulties when visually similar letters occur. There is also a greater load on the child's visual and verbal memory, making learning to read extraordinarily difficult. If a child is taught only the strategy of whole word reading s/he will not have to become sensitive to the fine-grained differences in similar appearing words, nor become attuned to the grapheme/phoneme variance. The student will also remain unaware of the function of the alphabetic principle for "decoding" new words.

Children who receive both types of training performed better than those who received only one or the other and they did better than the control subjects.

The real merit for the combined approach is that it facilitates the development and use of a variety of strategies for word identification. Flexibility in word processing is the mark of the mature reader, it implies a comprehensive and functional knowledge of all the visual and linguistic information contained in a word.

Vellutino (1987) wrote that studies seem to indicate that dyslexia is, amongst other things, closely aligned with the cross referencing of the retrieval of coded information already stored in the memory as it is with the storing and coding of new information. Vellutino claims that the process of information storing proceeds in stages:

Stage 1: This takes place in the sensory storage system where a replica of a given stimulus is held briefly.

Stage 2: Is believed to take place in a short term “working” memory in which a transformed version of the stimulus is available for no longer than 30 seconds.

In this working memory physical information is transformed into a more abstract symbolic representation for storage in long term memory.

Stage 3: The encoded form of the stimulus is either categorized and stored in long term memory, discarded or inadvertently lost from working memory.

In the above research, Vellutino and his colleagues found a dysfunction during the storing and retrieval of linguistic information. In an experiment on poor readers from grades two to six, it was found that these children could copy the word “was” correctly but insist on calling it “saw”. These children could produce the letters in a stimulus word in the correct sequence even if they could not name the word accurately. The inference from this experiment seemed to indicate that the difficulties lie in storing and retrieving the names of printed words, rather than a dysfunction in visual and spatial processing.

This may explain the phenomenon of pupils who, despite their ability to say the names of the A.B.C. in correct sequence and recognise their phoneme/grapheme relationship, are still unable to read.

Vellutino (1987) writes that printed words can be identified either through whole-word processing based on visual features, their meanings and the context in which they appear, or through alphabetic mapping, i.e. breaking down words into letter sounds. Learning to read is a difficult task and Vellutino suggests that the beginning reader must adopt both strategies to identify words. The reading programme should make use of both holistic/meaning and analytic/phonetic approaches. The teaching of reading should be supplemented with enrichment activities to foster language development.

Vail (1996), in her article, claims that whole language by itself does not do the whole job of teaching to read, neither, on the other hand, does phonics when taught in isolation. Language, according to Vail, is made up of both texture and structure. In structure language finds its reliability and applicability. In texture language finds its beauty and music. Students need both. In practice this means that in order to become an efficient, fluent reader, the pupil must have the ability to decode the words that are possible to break down phonetically and to recognise globally the ones that cannot be broken down phonetically.

Westwood (1996) writes that current thinking supports the notion that a balanced programme is more likely to enhance the learning of all students by combining the best features of the whole language approach with appropriate amount of direct and explicit teaching of word attack, spelling and comprehension strategies.

There are, however, still many advocates of a totally phonic approach. One example is the work done by Pikulski.

**Pikulski** (1994)

Pikulski studied five programmes of early intervention for the prevention of reading problems. These were 1) The Winston Salem Project; 2) Early Intervention in Reading (EIR); 3) The Boulder Project; 4) Reading Recovery; 5) Success for All.

Pikulski found that all these programmes included deliberate instruction of phonemic awareness ensuring that children develop conscious understanding that spoken words are composed of identifiable sounds (Pikulski 1994). All five programmes prominently included writing activities and all included “little books” written specifically with vocabulary that focuses upon word patterns that children are first taught.

When one considers the fact that English is not a transparent language, i.e. graphemes/phonemes do not have a one to one relationship this argument seems irrelevant (see Chapter: The History of Reading). In the English language thirteen percent of the words are not phonetic (Moats, 1995). These words will have to be taught globally, no matter how strictly one insists on teaching phonics only.

Groff (1989) claims that once a learner is able to identify and produce English speech sounds, there is no need to devise a special phonics programme even when English is a foreign or second language. Therefore, the techniques that are used to teach reading to L.D. pupils where English is the first language are also used to teach reading to L.D. pupils where English is a foreign language.

## Learning to Read English as a Foreign Language Based on the Hickey Multi-Sensory Language Course

The Hickey Multi-Sensory Language Course (Augur & Briggs, 1991) is essentially phonetically based. It teaches phonetics in ascending stages of difficulty (see the list of sequence of letters further in the chapter). The phonics instruction in this scheme is direct, systematic and intensive. It teaches the pupil to “decode” the written word into speech sounds. However, irregular words are introduced as soon as the learner is familiar with the phonograms found in the word. For example, as soon as the learner has learnt the letters t - e - h, s/he is introduced to the word “the”. The pupil is encouraged to read as soon as s/he knows enough letters to form words. For example, the first three letters that a pupil is taught are “t”, “i”, “p”. These give us the words “tip”, “it”, “pit”. The command “tip it” can now be read. By the time a child reaches the eighth grapheme/phoneme, that is the letter “h” s/he can read the following words and the short story on page 159..

**hat**

**hands**

**hit**

**sand**

**pit**

**sandpit**

**ants**

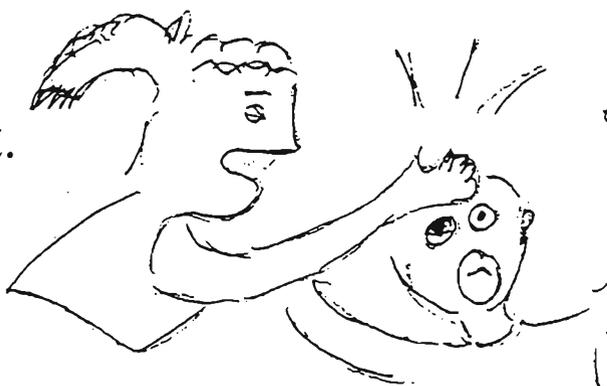
**pants**

**isn't**

**sad**

## Dana and Stan

1. Dana had a hat.
2. Stan hid his hands in it.
3. Dana hit Stan.



4. Stan sat in a sandpit and hid.
5. The sandpit had ants in it.
6. Stan spat at the ants.
7. The ants sat in Stan's pants.



8. Stan is sad.

Dana isn't



This is certainly not classical literature and the language is stilted but there is a story line which is written in sequence. It is hard to describe the incredulous joy that many an LD learner has when s/he discovers that s/he has read a page of print. This is a real turning point in their progress.

### **Syllable Division**

To be productive a phonics system requires a credible system of syllabifying words and recognition of the difficulty of reading multi-syllabic words (Groff, 1989). The ability to reduce words to manageable size, that is, the knowledge of how long words are broken down, is of major importance to a beginning reader.

As soon as the pupil has learnt the “c” grapheme, s/he is taught the “ic” rule, that is the sound “ic” comes at the end of a word with two or more syllables. At this point the student has learnt a sufficient number of letters, so that s/he can be introduced to words of more than one syllable, e.g. picnic, attic, dentist, napkin, panic. The remedial teacher may find that the concept of syllables and syllable division is unknown in the native language and may first have to explain in LI. It is important for the Israeli learner to be introduced to the words with two or more syllables as s/he finds syllable division a difficult task.

Open syllables in one syllable words such as he, be, we, etc., must also be taught early in the reading scheme, in order to enable the teacher to incorporate these words in the simple stories that are written in the beginning stages of the reading scheme. The VCCV (vowel consonant consonant vowel) pattern is taught early in the reading scheme as many of the 2-3 syllable words the learner meets at the beginning of the reading programme are based on this rule (rabbit, fantastic). Regular endings such as the “ing”

and the “ed” are pointed out not only for reading purposes but also as the indicator of the tenses.

Prefixes and suffixes should act as a guide to comprehension, not only for reading. For example, the prefixes “dis”, “un”, “ir” usually mean the negative of the base word that follows. The suffix “ly” usually gives us an adverb, the suffix “cian” often denotes a profession based on the root used, e.g. musician, technician. Thus, learning to read, comprehend and spell are part of an integral “whole” and are not separate aspects of the language that are taught on different occasions. Some foreign language learners may be able to pick up these linguistic patterns but the L.D. student learning a foreign language has to have them pointed out.

It is suggested that not too much emphasis is put on these language patterns. They are not the ultimate goal of the learner. However, a broadening of the knowledge of how the English language “works” will make the learner more efficient and confident in his/her approach to the task at hand.

### Automaticity

Grabe (1991) found that a number of factors contribute to automaticity in reading. In order to obtain fluency the reader needs a wide range of knowledge, not merely the technique of matching sounds to forms. The fluent reader has a sound knowledge of the structure of the language, the understanding of how a text is organised and familiarity of the vocabulary in the text. The ability to recognise words rapidly and accurately is an important predictor of reading ability (Grabe 1991). This researcher has found that pupils with learning disabilities find it hard to achieve automaticity, particularly with words that have an irregular grapheme/phoneme relationship. After the

pupil has learnt the phonemes in the word list, this researcher has found it beneficial to introduce the two hundred most frequent words in the English language, for example the Dolch word list, and teach them as a global unit, so integrating both the phonetic and whole word approach. The student is encouraged to achieve fluency when reading these words by increasing the number of words s/he reads within a given time limit.

### **The Tape Recorder**

The L.D. pupil should be taught how to use a walkman or tape for his/her learning process. Texts can be recorded and then re-played at the learner's convenience, not necessarily in the home or the classroom. With the help of a walkman, the L.D. pupil can revise material even in unconventional places, for example going or coming from school, in a doctor's waiting room, without being embarrassed.

It has also been found beneficial to ask the pupil to read the text along with the tape. This helps the pupil to get a feel for the stress and rhythm of the language.

In Israel, as part of the allowances granted to L.D. pupils, some of the pupils are given taped tests. The pupils should be given ample opportunities to use the tape recorder as a learning tool and not try to figure out how to use it for the first time on the day of the test.

### **Never Presume**

Teachers should always check with their pupils to see if the assignment as a whole, and the specific aims of a task, are understood. Sometimes the lack of success may be based on the lack of comprehension of the instruction and not on the text.

Samuels (1986) found that sometimes children do not understand the language of instruction. They may not know what a paragraph, a sentence, a word, really mean. When asked to find the meaning of the third word in the second paragraph, they may not know what this terminology means though s/he may know the correct answer.

### **Meta cognition**

This refers to the awareness of one's own thinking processes and the ability to use this awareness to govern and control one's activities.

Samuel (1986) claims that good students know how to use these skills. The good students know how to break down an assignment, they are capable of asking themselves "what does the teacher want, a general overview or a specific answer?" Does what I am reading fit in with my prior knowledge, do I reject this knowledge, or change my previously held opinions?

The poor comprehender lacks these monitoring strategies (McCowan, Bell, 1992) and must be taught how to develop them.

## **The First Steps Towards Reading and Writing**

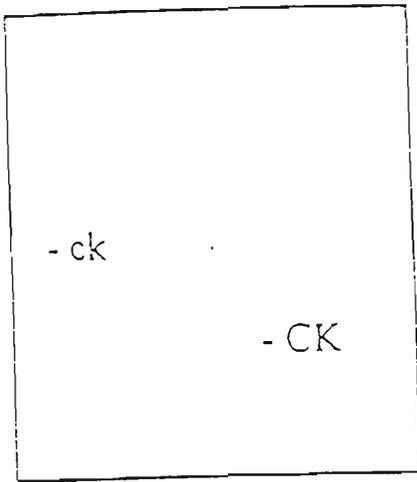
### **The Instruction of Reading**

Many pupils need a structured, cumulative approach in which reading, writing and spelling are taught simultaneously. The pupil needs to be taught blending sounds into syllables, syllables into words, words into sentences and sentences into paragraphs (Briggs 1992).

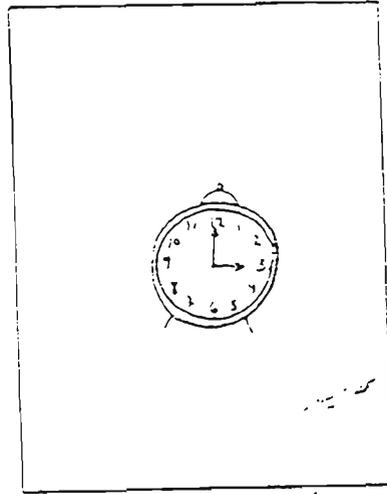
Each remedial session includes sequencing activities, revision of spelling rules connected to the phonemes learnt, dictation of sounds and words based on material learnt, grammar rules, word acquisition (see Chapter: Outline of a Remedial Lesson). The following is, however, a step by step outline of the introduction of the grapheme “ck” and how it is blended into the reading scheme.

- Step 1: The child revises all cards s/he has learnt up to that lesson
- Step 2: Introduction of a new letter or phoneme. The teacher introduces new letter or phoneme (-ck).
- Step 3: Teacher writes this letter on a white card and asks the child to choose a cue word which the pupil draws at the back of the card.

Figure 19. Letter card for "ck".



front of card

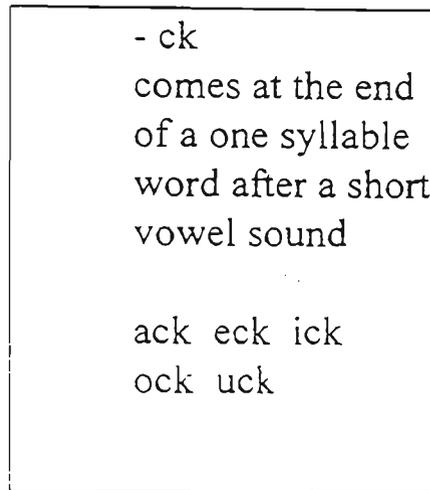


back of card

- Step 4: The pupil practises writing the phoneme on a small blackboard or paper.

Step 5: The teacher tells the pupil the spelling rule, which is written on a different coloured card. This is usually done in language one but some children prefer the rules in English

**Figure 20. "Ck" rule card.**



Step 6: (word level). The pupil is asked to read a list of words which all incorporate the "ck" but do not have any letters that the child has not learnt. For example s/he has not yet learnt the letter "j" so s/he will not be expected to read Jack.

Step 7: Sentence level. The child is presented with a work page where s/he is asked to join sentences with a suitable picture.

Step 8: Paragraph level. The student is asked to read a story in which most of the words incorporate "ck".

Step 9: Oral comprehension questions are asked based on this story.

Step 10: The teacher dictates 4-5 words with the "ck" spelling.

A list of the sequence of letters as they are introduced to the learning disabled learner is shown on the following two pages:

i		o	
i	long sound	o	long sound
t		g	
p		-ng	
n		verb ending ING:	
s		1. Just add	
s	"z" sound	2. Double last letter	
a		u	
a	long sound	u	long sound
d		j	
h		w	
e		v	
e	long sound	x	
open syllables		z	
c		qu	
k		ee	
use of k before e, i		oo	
b		th	
r		sh	
m		ch	
-ck		a-e	
-ic		i-e	
syllable division vc/cv		o-e	
l		u-e	
ll		er	
y-		ar	
f		ay	
-y	one syllable word	ir	
-y		or	
-ss		ur	
-suffix "es"		ce, ci, cy	

## Regular final syllables

-ble -dle -cle -kle	igh
gle ple tle stle	cian
zle fle	ous
ea	ey=e
ou	ie
ow	ei
ai	ui
oa	syllable division vv
ow=o	silent letters
ea=e	kn, wr, pn, gr, mb, gu
ge, gi, gy	gh, mn, rh, sc, ps
wh	
ow=ou	
ew	suffixes
suffix -ly	ed, al, ment,
aw	hood, etc. taught
au	when they appear
oi	in text
oy	
ph	
old	prefixes dis, ex,
ind	sub, re, un, etc.
-ire	taught as they
-ore	appear in text
-are	
-ure	
tion	
sion	

### Summing up

The learner moves from introduction of a new phoneme, using the sound at a word level, moving from word to sentence level and then to a paragraph. This is done both orally and in written form while endeavouring to incorporate all the senses in the learning process.

As the pupil works his/her way through the reading scheme, the texts become more difficult and sophisticated. Eventually, the majority of the pupils become part of the English home room environment (see Chapter on Case Histories). Some pupils never reach the fluency in reading that is required in the classroom. These are the pupils who will need to have the texts recorded and given a time extension for their exams. Others will never achieve the fluent, error free writing that is needed for higher learning. These pupils will have to be given appropriate concessions. However, all L.D. pupils can, to some degree, learn a second language by using multi-sensory techniques and many become fluent speakers/readers of the second language (see Chapter on Case Histories).

## Chapter Ten

### An Outline of Remedial Lessons

Over the years researchers working in the field of learning disabilities have agreed that individual tuition is the key which opens the door to literacy for the students with learning difficulties.

Vellutino (1979) says that the individual child's deficiencies should be assessed and an attempt should be made to remediate them on an individual basis. In 1987 Vellutino's recommendations are expressed even more strongly. In his article he writes that early remediation should be based on intensive one-to-one tutoring, saying "there is no substitute for direct remedial instruction in reading". Tarnopol and Tarnopol (1981) state that the best method for teaching remedial reading is "individual instruction, prescriptive teaching based on differential assessment". Ellis (1993) claims that one-to-one teaching allows the student to hear the material once again, gives him the opportunity to ask questions and receive immediate helpful feedback about his learning habits.

Orton (1937), "the father" of remediation, cautioned, from the initial cases that he remediated, that no two students with learning disabilities have the same syndromes. Each child forms an individual problem in which factors derived from neurological status, emotional reactions, educational needs and facilities available must be evaluated and a suitable highly individualised programme devised.

There is no doubt that this is a costly form of education but in the long run may prove to be less costly than repeated failures and the heavy emotional toll that this involves (Orton 1937).

There are no miracle cures in which the child will learn to read fluently in a few weeks or even months. Guthrie (1977) wrote that the length of a remedial programme was a crucial factor in producing long term advantages. He found that remedial instruction is more likely to have long-term effects if it is distributed over a long period, with a few hours instruction per week, rather than massed into a short period of intensive instruction. The programme should be planned for two to three years of individualized help (Orton 1937). This is the prognosis for native language instruction, and certainly holds true for foreign language teaching, as well.

A number of problems have to be overcome by the foreign language teacher who teaches a student with learning disabilities. The instructor must overcome the problems that the L.D. student faces when learning to read and write, even in L.I. Secondly there are, the difficulties faced by all learners of a foreign language, regardless of whether or not they have a learning difficulty. In addition the foreign language teacher of an L.D. pupil must find ways to help the pupil acquire language, that is, vocabulary and correct syntax, which the L.D. learner finds difficult, even in the native tongue.

Hornsby and Shear (1974) state that only a highly structured programme which teaches the language skills was found to be effective. Each step of the reading scheme should lead naturally and logically one into another. At no point is the pupil required to read or write any spelling pattern or language structure which has not been specifically taught. Everything the pupil is asked to do is completely comprehensible, failure is eliminated and errorless learning takes place. The above advice is given to the acquisition of learning in the mother tongue, and this step-by-step method is also used to teach L.D. pupils a foreign language.

Pupils with learning difficulties are advised to first undergo a remedial programme in L.I. before commencing a remedial programme in a foreign language. They must be able to read and write in their own language before undergoing the arduous task of learning a new language. Sparks & Ganschow (1993) also recommend teaching the phonology of the student's native language before foreign language instruction begins.

Summarising the latest findings on the development of the mind, Nash (1997) claims that the lessons that can be learnt are: a) foreign languages should be taught in elementary school, if not before, b) that remedial education is more effective at age three or four than at age nine or ten. Teachers working in the field agree with these statements. They have found that the earlier intervention is started, the bigger the chances for the pupil to integrate into the English home-room class at the end of the remediation process.

Broadly speaking there are three different stages in the remedial scheme:

Stage 1: Pre-reading, pre-writing and word acquisition.

Stage 2: Acquiring the target language and learning to read and write.

Stage 3: Becoming an independent learner.

#### **I. The Pre-reading, Pre-writing and Language Acquisition Stage**

The pupil attends twice weekly sessions which last between 25-30 minutes. These sessions are deliberately kept short in order not to overload the memory skills of the L.D. learner and to give the learner a feeling of accomplishment and a desire for "more" at the end of each session. These sessions are used to build up the trust and confidence of the pupil who is receiving the tuition. Many of these pupils have a history of failure and doubt their ability to succeed. It often takes months for the teacher to

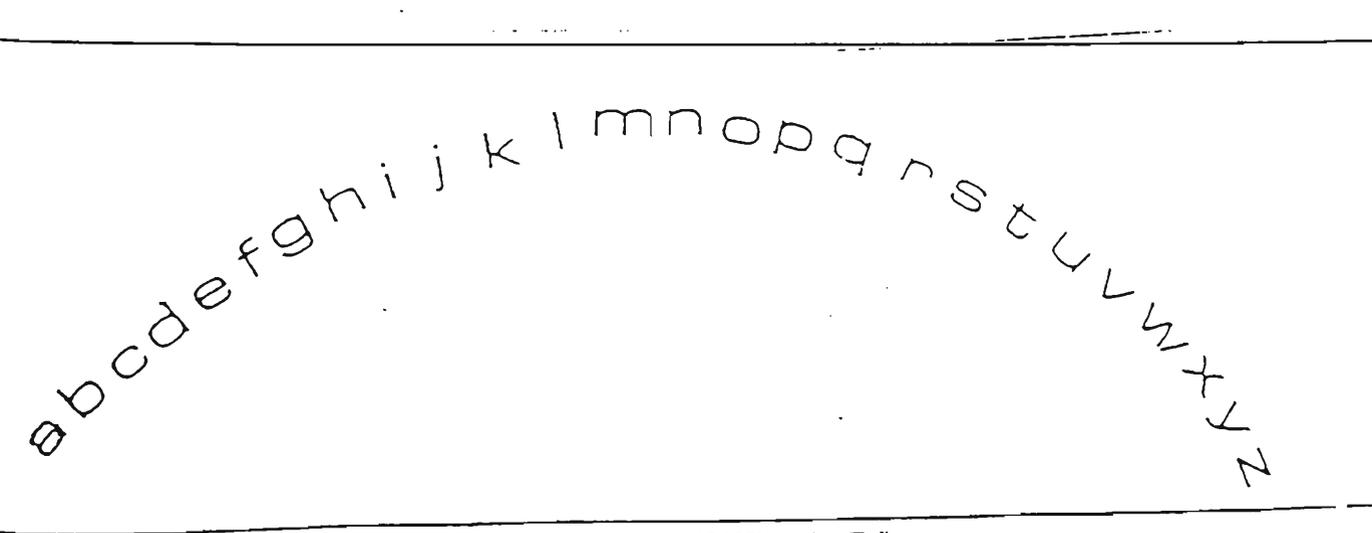
break through the barrier of expectant failure. It is only through repeated success in the remedial sessions and positive feedback in the classroom that the L.D. student sees a glimmer of hope that s/he may eventually succeed.

In order to build up and to maintain an atmosphere of achievement and success the learner is given non-threatening tasks which will help build up readiness to learn a Latin-based alphabet. The majority of students turn to remediation after they have tried to cope with learning English in the classroom. Surprisingly the pupils are able to sequence the alphabet orally because they sing the universally known A.B.C song at the beginning of each English lesson in the home-room class. They rarely know the grapheme/phoneme relationship but knowing the sequence of the alphabet they sing their way through the letters and this is a good start for teaching the sequence of the letters. In the first session the student is given a set of alphabet cards in cut-out form and asked to spread out as many letters as s/he knows in a semi-circular fashion

e.g. A B C D.

Based on this knowledge the teacher adds new letters (never more than three per session) till the pupil is able to sequence the letters in the following manner:

**Figure 20. Sequencing the alphabet.**



Pre-writing exercises (see chapter on Writing) are also part of these first remedial lessons. No more than five minutes of each session are devoted to these exercises but they teach the student the laterality of the English alphabet, i.e. that it runs from left to right, that books and notebooks are opened from the left hand side and margins are found on the left side of the page.

One of the aims of these first remedial lessons is to build up a basic vocabulary of approximately 150-200 words in order to form a basis on which to start the reading scheme. Vocabulary is taught systematically on a thematic basis (Roffman, Teitelbaum, 1993). Another source of vocabulary is the acknowledgment of cognates. In the first session the teacher asks the student whether s/he knows any words that are the same in both Hebrew and English that start with the letter A. If the student is unable to think of a suitable answer, the teacher points out the cognates (these will differ depending on the age of the learner - an eight year old will hopefully not be interested in the word "whisky" as a cognate for "w"). These words are written down in list form and numbered so that the student can literally see that his/her knowledge of English is greater than was thought previously.

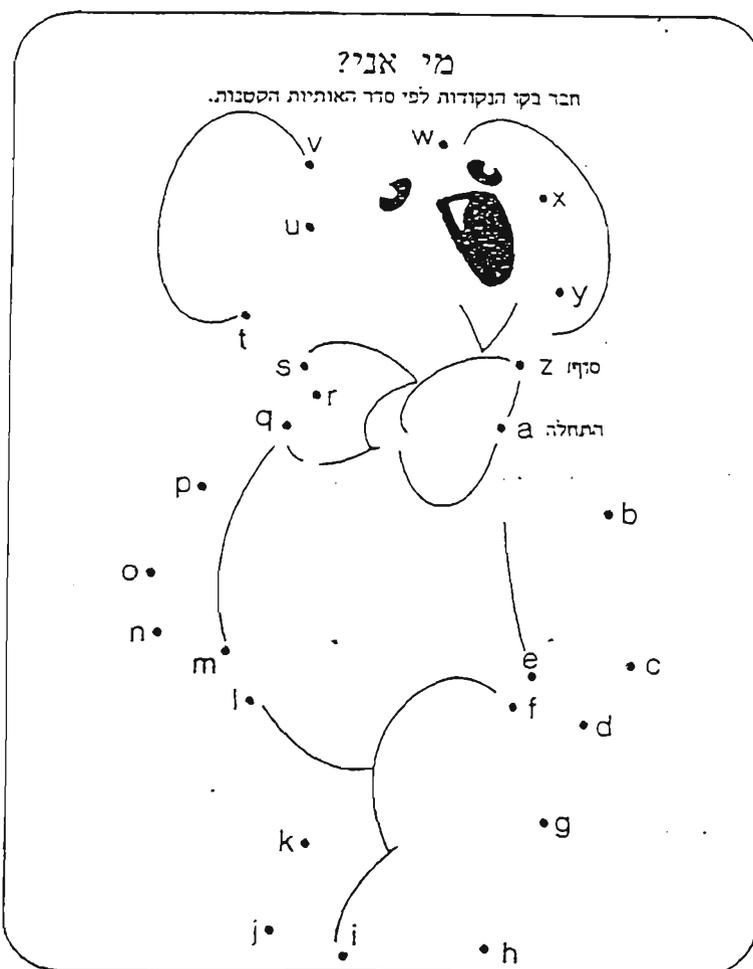
Below is a partial list of cognates and new words as they are introduced in the pre-reading sessions:

<b><u>Numbers</u></b>	45	cocoa	69	short
1-20	46	corn flakes	70	young
<b><u>A</u></b> avocado	47	crackers	71	old
22 ambulance	48	concert	72	happy
23 acrobat		<b><u>Parts of the body</u></b>	73	sad
25 album	49	hands	<b><u>E.</u></b>	cognates
<b><u>Colours</u></b>	50	legs	74	eggroll
26 red	51	fingers	75	encyclopaedia
27 black	52	foot - feet		<b><u>The Family</u></b>
28 green	53	neck	76	mother
29 yellow	54	mouth	77	father
30 blue	55	back	78	brother
31 orange	56	nose	79	sister
<b><u>B</u></b> cognates	57	ears	80	baby
32 bank	58	eyes	81	parents
33 balloon	<b><u>D.</u></b>	cognates	82	grandma
34 beer	60	domino	83	grandpa
35 bus	61	doctor	<b><u>F.</u></b>	cognates
36 ballerina	62	diet	84	filter
37 beigel	63	deodorant	85	football
<b><u>Colours (cont.)</u></b>	64	dinosaur	86	freezer
38 brown	65	delete		<b><u>Food</u></b>
39 pink			87	bread
40 white		<b><u>Adjectives</u></b>	88	butter
41 black	66	fat	89	meat
42 beige	67	thin	90	eggs
<b><u>C.</u></b> cognates	68	tall	92	cheese
43 coca cola			93	milk
44 coffee				

Five to seven new words are introduced each session. (See chapter on Word Acquisition). These words are in fact the only new material that the learner is expected to remember.

It is at this beginning stage that the learner is introduced to the concept of cards with which s/he revises new material. The use of cards is shown and explained and the learner is told that s/he is expected to revise them at home on a twice daily basis (see chapter on Language Acquisition). Forming the habit of revising the learning cards is very important as all new material is learnt using the same routine. These sessions are usually concluded with a game which is based on ABC sequencing or some other aspect of language acquisition. It is advisable to end each session pleasantly so that the student is sorry to have to go home and eager to come again.

Figure 21. A sample of a fun activity:



### **Step by Step Summary of a Pre-Reading Remedial Session:**

1. Short chat about what has been happening in the student's life since the last remedial session.
2. Sequencing of ABC.
3. Pre-writing activity.
4. Discovering the cognates.
5. Revision of vocabulary through the use of vocabulary cards.
6. Introduction of new words.
7. Fun activity.
8. Recapitulation of material learnt in the session.

Approximately twelve half hour sessions are needed to acquire 150 words that will enable the student to embark on a reading programme.

### **II. Acquiring the Target Language and Learning to Read**

After the student has internalised approximately 150 words and found cognates for the letters of the alphabet, s/he is ready to start the reading programme. The student often pleads with the teacher to start the reading scheme before s/he has acquired enough vocabulary but it is inadvisable to succumb to this request as this usually leads to frustration in the reading program when s/he meets with too many unknown words.

This part of the remedial programme lasts about eighteen months with the student attending twice weekly 50-60 minute remedial sessions. These lessons are divided into two parts. One part of the lesson is allotted to progressing through the reading scheme (see chapter on Acquiring Reading). The second part of the lesson is devoted to broadening vocabulary and orally revising the texts used in the classroom. This is to help the student eventually integrate into her/his home-room English class

(Teitelbaum 1996). This aspect of the lesson is as important as acquiring reading skills because it will enable the L.D. student to understand what is happening in the classroom. In fact, the classroom lesson is the second time that the pupil hears the vocabulary and the text, and so is able to follow the flow of the lesson.

Each remedial session includes sequencing activities, revision of spelling rules connected to the phoneme learnt, dictation of sounds and words based on material learnt, grammar rules, and word acquisition. As in the pre-reading session, sequencing exercises are continued but they now become more sophisticated. In order to use a dictionary, encyclopaedia or telephone directory, the students must be able to find their way backwards and forwards within the alphabet. They should know which direction to go when going from "J" to "M" and, from "K" to "E". The students should be made aware of the four quarters of the dictionary and asked in which quarter they would expect to find the word "starfish" (the last quarter). The students can be asked to look up names in a phone directory or the name of a street in a street directory, thus showing them the practical, everyday need for correct sequencing. The students should also be given exercises which help in the recognition of the relationship between upper case and lower case letters. This is a foreign concept to Israeli students. Below is an example of such an exercise:

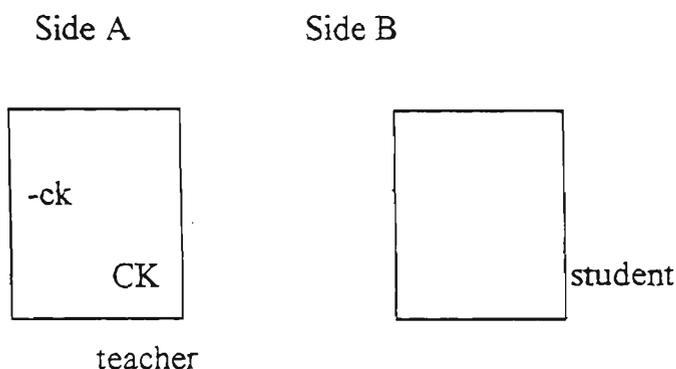
*Draw a line connecting the upper case letter with its lower case equivalent:*

G	h
N	t
T	g
B	n
H	b

These activities take no longer than five minutes per session.

All cards are revised at the beginning of each remedial lesson, whether they are the reading cards, irregular word cards or grammatical rule cards.

A reading passage which revises all the phonemes learnt up to that lesson is also given in order to revise what was taught in previous lessons. The teacher introduces a new sound by saying the sound and writing the grapheme on a card, e.g. "ck". The student draws a cue word on the other side



(see chapter: Reading English as a Foreign  
Language, Roffman & Teitelbaum, 1996)

The pupil is then given a list of words which incorporate the new sound:

<b>-ck</b>	black	deck	
	stick	back	
	sick	neck	

The pupil then goes from words to sentences which incorporate the new words and a short paragraph with simple comprehension questions.

The teacher dictates all the phonemes learnt till that lesson, including the new sound. Five words using the new sound are also dictated (see chapter on Spelling).

These steps are very similar to the technique used to teach reading in LI. However, it was found that though L.D. children learnt to read using this technique, they never really integrated into their home room English classes (Roffman & Teitelbaum, 1994).

In order to prepare the L.D. learner to function in the classroom, the teacher has to specifically prepare for the coming lesson. This means that the remedial teacher is expected to prepare simplified texts for each pupil, taking into account what the pupil is able to read, depending on how far s/he has advanced in the reading scheme.

With the oral vocabulary the pupil has built up, s/he is expected to say a few sentences connected to the material being learnt at school. This is summed up by a written sentence. In this way the whole language approach and multi-sensory techniques are blended together to help the L.D. learner achieve success in his/her foreign language acquisition.

The student is asked if there is any aspect of his/her school work which s/he would like to revise with the teacher. The teacher then introduces new material for the coming school lesson. This may be new vocabulary, a grammatical structure or reading a passage that the student is as yet unable to tackle, and would like taped, so that it can be referred to again, at home independently. The pupil and teacher recapitulate and evaluate what has been learnt at the session.

### **Step by Step Summary of a Remedial Session**

1. A short chat about what has been happening in the class. The student may request to have a specific difficulty explained.
2. Sequencing exercise.

3. Short reading passage to summarise what has been learnt to date.
4. Revision of all cards.
5. Introduction of new grapheme.
6. Student reads list of words which incorporate new grapheme.
7. Student reads sentences based on new sound.
8. Student reads short paragraph which is based on new sound - oral comprehension questions based on this paragraph are asked by the teacher.
9. Dictation: 1) of all phonemes learnt up to and including that learnt in the current remedial session; 2) five new words that use new sound; 3) sentence incorporating new sound.
10. Revision of vocabulary connected to school work.
11. Introduction of vocabulary, syntax, or grammatical structure learnt at school.
12. Write at least one sentence connected with school work for the English class.
13. Recapitulation of new work learnt in the session.

As can be seen, thirteen activities take place within a remedial session. Some may take no more than two minutes (introduction of a new phoneme, recapitulation at the end of the lesson). The short chat which usually takes about five minutes may extend to ten if the pupil has had a difficult time at school. The instructor should be flexible when allocating time for each activity, depending on the needs of the pupil in each remedial session.

### **III. Becoming an Independent Learner**

As the student progresses through the reading scheme less time is devoted to the mechanics of reading and more to the requirements of the class.

At this stage the Dolch vocabulary list or any other list of the most frequent words in the English language is introduced. The words on this list are taught globally. The aim is to improve automaticity and so speed up the reading process. The reading texts are now based on the texts used in the classroom. The pupil is taught to transfer the reading comprehension skills s/he has learnt in LI to the foreign language situation, i.e. skimming and scanning techniques, and understanding implied information. Gradually, the student will start doing class tests and succeeding.

### **Developing Reading Techniques**

The following short story is taken from a TESOL reader currently in use in Israel in the third year of learning English as a foreign language (Teitelbaum, 1992). The L.D. learner should be able to read this passage in the second year of remediation. The exercises listed below help the learner develop reading techniques which will facilitate reading - predicting, skimming, scanning and understanding hidden implications.

#### **Teacher talk before reading**

Before you start reading, look at the heading and look at the pictures, what do you think this story is about?

Look at the first paragraph. Find a word or phrase that tells us that the teacher won't be at school. Are Gadi and Eyal going to stay together? Can you think of a reason for this?

After reading

How do you know that Eyal and Gadi are brothers? How do you know that they often get into trouble? Complete the chart (taken from the textbook).

Figure 22. Sample of text from TESOL reader used in Israel.

### In Trouble Again

**Y**esterday, the twins' class teacher, Nina Evron, came into the room. She said, "Elana, the English teacher, is sick today. I am going to divide you into two groups. One group is going to go to Mr Gold, the music teacher. The other group is going to come with me. Eyal and Gadi, you are not going to stay together."

All the pupils were happy. It was fun when there wasn't a regular lesson. The children liked to work in groups. Then there was no homework and no tests.

Gadi went to the music teacher's room. His friends from Grade Six-2 were there. Gadi sat next to his friend Dan. Gadi told jokes and the children laughed. He also made funny faces and the children laughed even more.

Mr Gold was angry. He said, "Gadi, if you disturb the class again, I am going to send you out of the room."

Gadi sat down quickly on his chair, but the chair was not strong and it broke. Gadi fell onto the floor. The class laughed and laughed. Now Mr Gold was very angry. "Go into the Grade One classroom right now and stand in the corner," he shouted at Gadi.



Gadi left the room, but two minutes later he was back. The teacher asked him, "Why are you back? I told you to leave the room."

"I'm sorry, Mr Gold," answered Gadi. "I can't stay in the Grade One classroom. My twin Eyal is already standing in one of the corners."

When the children heard this, they laughed and laughed. They couldn't stop. Even the teacher smiled and said, "You really are the terrible twins of Carmel School."



### activities

**TALK** about the question.

Why do you think the teacher said "Eyal and Gadi, you are not going to stay together"?

**COMPLETE** the chart. Not all the information is in the story.

Teacher's Name	Class
1. ....	music teacher
2. Elana	.....

## **Learning to Work Independently**

After approximately eighteen months of remediation and success in the English class tests, i.e. when the pupil receives a mark of 70% or more on a number of tests, the remedial sessions are reduced to one a week. After about three months these are reduced to once a fortnight where the teacher revises or explains any difficulties that have come up over the past fortnight. Some students become panic-stricken at the thought that they have to cope by themselves but as they continue to succeed they realise that they have the capability to work independently. The pupils who complete the reading scheme over a period of two years find that they have developed the skills to cope and succeed in the foreign language class and they decide that they no longer need remedial sessions. Occasionally, pupils ask to have a single lesson particularly when a grammatical structure is not understood but on the whole the majority of pupils learn to work independently and with great success (see chapter on Case Histories).

In 1989, the Israeli Ministry of Education granted various concessions to L.D. pupils which included an extension of time, having spelling mistakes disregarded, having exam questions taped, and being allowed to answer orally. These concessions are granted after suitable assessment by a recognised educational psychologist. These allowances are given for the final exams at the end of secondary school and are set by the Ministry of Education. Teachers are expected to adopt these guidelines to testing L.D. pupils throughout their school careers.

This usually means much extra work for the homeroom teacher - preparing a tape, giving extra time, testing orally, etc. Many teachers resent the fact that these children have to be tested out of regular school hours. In order to do this, teachers have to give up their break, or stay back at the end of the school day. Some teachers are not

prepared to do this. Parents, or the remedial teacher, may have to negotiate these concessions with the school principal. However, with the cooperation of the school and the homeroom English teacher, most L.D. pupils can, after remediation, function within the framework of the regular foreign language class (see Chapter on Case Histories).

## Chapter Eleven

### Methodology and Case Histories

#### Background

Since 1989 close to 200 teachers have participated in the in-service training course which combines the multi-sensory teaching techniques with foreign language teaching described in the previous chapters. As a result, it is becoming more and more difficult to compare matched pairs of children based on age, sex and socio-economic background, who have not been taught using this technique. In most cases where children are receiving remediation in English, they have turned to a teacher who has completed this course.

Beve Hornsby, with all the resources of the Hornsby International Dyslexia Centre at her disposal, claims that in her research “it was not considered practical to provide a control group but simply to report on single case study” (1995).

Therefore, this author allows herself to follow the example of the above, well-known authority, using the same methodology of reporting the progress and achievements of individual pupils and comparing them to a matched pair based on age, sex, socio-economic background and identical English class teacher. All pupils start remedial teaching in English after they have been assessed by psychologists and institutes officially recognised by the Ministry of Education and after they have completed remedial work in Language I. It is difficult enough for pupils with learning disabilities to learn a second language, it would be an unfair burden to expect them to learn a foreign language if they could not read or write in their mother tongue.

Each case study will include a description of the pupil, the school he or she attended, and the attitude of the school authorities to the child and his/her problems.

Except for the first case history, the pupils discussed in this research all live in Haifa, Israel. Haifa is a city with a population of approximately 250,000 inhabitants. The pupils attend neighbourhood elementary schools whose size ranges from 150 pupils to 750 pupils per school. By law the number of pupils per class is not allowed to exceed forty and in practice many classes hold forty pupils. As early as year one children have specialist teachers for music, physical education and arts. As the child progresses through the school, more specialist teachers are introduced. In most schools, English is first taught as an official school subject in year 4, at the age of nine. However, in 1994, due to parental pressure, schools, with the permission of the Ministry of Education, introduced English on an experimental basis in year 3. Israeli parents feel that the two most important subjects in the curriculum are English and maths. They go to extraordinary lengths to allow their children to learn English. They often send them to English speaking play groups from as early as two/three years of age. The sole qualifications of many of these "teachers" are that they come from an English speaking country.

In order to graduate secondary school in Israel pupils must pass a number of subjects which include Hebrew Grammar and composition, history-civics, maths, English, and various other subjects. Each subject is given a point score according to the depth of study done in that particular subject. Each pupil must study at least one subject which is studied in depth at a five point level. The pupils must accumulate at least twenty one points in order to graduate. Pupils must succeed in English at a minimum three point level.

The examination for three point level English is composed of two reading comprehension passages, a passive recognition of grammar, a listening comprehension and an oral examination lasting approximately 10 minutes.

The four point level of English is similar to the three point English. However, the reading comprehension passages are more difficult and pupils are expected to reproduce correct answers in the cloze texts, not just recognise them as in the three point English exam.

In order to pass the five point English exams, the students must be quite proficient in the language. They are also expected to write a composition of approximately 150 words.

A new English curriculum is being planned. It will come into effect in 1997/98. There will be more emphasis on reading and writing. Pupils will be expected to have read six English books and be able to discuss them. Pupils in four point English will be expected to write one composition while pupils of five point English will be expected to write two compositions. The remedial English teachers feel that pupils with learning difficulties will have great difficulties in the extensive reading and writing they will have to do in the new format of the English exam.

More male pupils than female pupils are discussed in this chapter. Orton (1937) first noticed that there were more dyslexic boys than girls. This finding has been supported by a number of studies over the years (Finnuci & Childs, 1981; Miles, 1991). More boys than girls are assessed as having learning disabilities and therefore more boys than girls receive tuition.

## The First Case

The first case of dyslexia that this researcher came across was in Australia about thirty-five years ago. I met Julie in my first teaching assignment. Julie was a bright, creative, intelligent child. However, by the age of eight, she still could not read, despite all my efforts to teach her. At the time, it was thought that children who could not read by the end of Grade 2 were in some way retarded. The principal decided in the light of the fact that Julie could not read to have her transferred to a school for retarded children. As Julie's teacher, I pleaded her cause saying, that though she was unable to read she had interesting answers and comments in discussions in nature studies and social studies. She was also very creative in her art work. She could not possibly be retarded. I was then a young and inexperienced teacher, I did not know how to fight Julie's battle. Julie was transferred to a school for retarded children.

Julie haunted me for thirty years. At a later stage of my teaching career, I came across the terms "dyslexia and learning disabilities", but I had left Australia and even though I tried to find Julie or her family on my return visits, I was unable to do so. Five years ago when I started studying in depth the problems of learning disabilities, I realized that Julie was very probably dyslexic.

It would be nice to say I met Julie and she had somehow overcome her difficulties but unfortunately this is not true. What is true, however, is that the injustice that was done to Julie has spurred me on to dedicate a large part of the past few years to helping children with learning difficulties overcome their problems and find their rightful place in society.

### **The Alliance High School**

This school is a branch of a chain of schools that have been operating in various parts of the world for over 100 years. It is partly supported by French benefactors and caters to pupils from year seven to twelve. All children who attend this school must study both English and French up to year twelve and graduation. Until approximately five years ago, when the whole education system in Israel became more aware of the problems facing pupils with learning disabilities and dyslexia, it was compulsory to receive a pass mark in French in order to graduate from the school. Pupils who failed in French at the end of Junior High School (grade nine) were asked to leave the school. It was not unknown for pupils who were doing badly in French to be asked to leave at the beginning of year twelve, irrespective of all the trauma that involved.

About five years ago pupils who had been assessed and found to have learning disabilities were allowed to drop French or even not start it at the beginning of their studies at the school in year seven. English, however, remained compulsory as this was, and still is a requisite for graduating from secondary school.

The English teachers at the school were expected to accommodate children with learning difficulties by giving them extra time, disregarding spelling mistakes or testing them orally according to their disability. Oral testing became a bone of contention among the teachers, because it was so time consuming. Some teachers taped the exams and allowed the pupil to do it in a separate room, others sat with the pupil and personally read out the questions to the pupil who answered orally, or in writing on the test paper.

At the beginning of 1995, the English teachers as a body refused to do this any longer. As this is a big school with approximately 1500 pupils, the English Inspectorate

then allocated three weekly hours for the English co-ordinator at the school to tape the tests for the children with learning disabilities in the school. This researcher taught three children attending the Alliance School.

### Case Number One

O.A. -Age: 17 years. Sex: male. Level: 11th year.

O.A. was one of the first pupils to be taught using the multi-sensory technique. Tutorial sessions began at the end of Grade 6. He was very ashamed of his lack of knowledge in English and his difficulties in school. If there was a knock on the door during his remedial sessions, he would dive under the table so that no-one should see him. O. disliked revising the cards and constantly asked rhetorical questions such as "Why am I doing this, I'll never pass anyway?" His parents tried to make life as pleasant as possible for him outside school hours. He was a competitive swimmer and often went on jeep treks and hikes in the Sinai desert. His parents felt that this relaxed him and enabled him to get away from the pressures at school.

O. attended two hourly sessions per week for eighteen months. At the end of this period he could read, not fluently, three letter words and two syllable words. The final mark for year seven was 60%, which is considered a pass mark. O. was too embarrassed to talk in class and never participated in oral work. O's parents decided to send him to Canada for the summer vacation, in fact a total immersion situation. He came back with a great deal of confidence and from year eight was tested orally. O. continued to have remedial teaching once a week and spent his summer vacations in Canada, thereby strengthening his oral knowledge of English. O. is currently in year eleven. He is studying for what is known as a four point English exam. This means that most of the

comprehension and grammar exercises test knowledge passively where little reproduction is required. Most of the exercises are multiple choice type.

O's current English class teacher refuses to test him orally. She cannot comprehend why "he can't circle the correct answer, he doesn't have to write anything". O. has become very upset with this attitude and often skips her classes. The English coordinator now tapes O's tests and his mark for the first semester was 90%.

The school counsellor matched up another boy with learning disabilities in O's class (B1). The boy is not receiving any remedial help. The teacher had no information whether he had previously received any remedial help.

The boys were matched by age, sex and socio-economic background. They are both in the same English class. B1's mark at the end of the first semester was 60%. The end of the year mark was unavailable for both boys.

### Summing up

O.A. can function at the level required at school because he has continued with remedial sessions and was in an English speaking milieu for two months of the year over a period of four years. His reading and writing are still not fluent but because he is allowed to take his exams orally he is able to show his competence in the subject.

### Case Number Two

N.R., age 16 year. Sex: male. Level: year ten.

N.R. was also among the first pupils who were taught using the multi-sensory technique for teaching English as a foreign language. NR was a well adjusted boy who accepted his learning difficulties with understanding, so much so, that in year seven he gave his classmates a lecture on learning disabilities and dyslexia.

NR started remedial sessions in Grade 6. He attended twice weekly lessons for two years. NR was a steady, conscientious worker. He always revised his cards, and knew what his class was doing at school. In short, he had well-developed study skills.

At the end of two years remedial work he could read at the level required for the class he was in. He took tests without getting any concessions. He was not tested orally, nor was he given a time extension, his teacher "didn't believe in it". Even with these disadvantages he was achieving marks in the seventies. At the end of two years remedial work it was decided to allow NR to work without receiving any tutoring.

NR never needed remedial teaching again. Because the school system is now more open towards children with learning difficulties, NR is given allowances which help him. He is given an extension of time and his spelling mistakes are disregarded. He, too, is going for a four point English exam. His mark at the end of the first semester was 70%.

NR was matched with a boy in his class who also has a learning disability (B2). In this case the counsellor knew that the boy had started receiving remedial teaching based on the multi-sensory technique. The mark B2 received at the beginning of the

school year was 40% before starting remedial work using the above method. His mark at the end of the first semester, after three months of tutoring, was 59%.

The end of the year marks were unavailable.

### Summing up

With the concessions granted to him, NR can function at the level required in his English class. After completing the two year reading scheme, NR has the tool to continue with his progress in English language learning without the need of further help in English.

### Case Number Three

AY, age 14 years. Sex: male. Level: year eight.

AY started remedial work in grade five. He was having great difficulty in all school subjects. He had a severe behaviour problem and suffered from attention deficit syndrome. He was also very distractable. His parents tried to find outlets for his excess energy by allowing him to go to swimming training twice a week and weekly bicycle tours organised by a bicycle club. AY also took Ritalin to help him get through the school day, which in Israel is from 8 am to 1.30 pm.

AY had twice weekly remedial sessions using the multi-sensory technique. At the end of eighteen months he could read, not fluently, but sufficiently to cope with the material in his class. In that particular year the local English inspectorate gave a standardised test for all Grade six pupils. AY's mark was 73%.

AY did not complete the reading scheme. His behaviour was so erratic that the remedial teacher did not want to take responsibility for his safety. The following incident is an example of his restless behaviour. AY would sit on the window sill of the

tutor's first floor apartment and throw lighted matches onto the lawn below. His remedial teacher suggested that he might do better with a change of teacher using the same method. However, he did not last longer than a few months with the new teacher either. At the moment AY is in year 8. He is in the middle stream in English. AY has his tests taped for him, his spelling mistakes are disregarded and he is given a time extension. At the end of the first semester his mark was 60%.

The school counsellor matched AY with another boy in his class (B3) who has a learning disability. The counsellor did not know whether B3 had had any remedial teaching at an earlier stage but was definite that he was receiving no help at the moment. His mark at the end of the first semester was 57%.

#### Summing up

AY's behavioural problems severely interfere with his ability to progress in his studies. He has been to a number of psychologists and remedial centres. AY did not complete the reading scheme. In light of all these facts, his mark in English is in itself an achievement.

#### Yavneh Boys' Religious High School

This is a religious high school for boys only. It goes from year seven to year twelve. It was established about fifty years ago and has a student body of approximately 600 pupils. Pupils come here from all parts of the city and even from outlying villages and townships. The pupils come from various economic backgrounds and ethnic groups. The emphasis in this school is on religious studies. The boys attend school from 7.00 a.m., when prayers start, until 5.30-6.00 p.m. The religious studies are taught in the

morning, while secular studies - English, maths, physics, etc., are taught after the lunch break at 12.30. English and Maths are streamed.

#### Case Number Four

Age: 14 years. Sex: male. Level: year eight.

When SG started year seven, that is Junior High School, he found himself in the lowest stream for English. This upset his parents a great deal and they were determined to give him all the help he needed to get into the middle stream. Remaining in the lowest stream also had some social stigma attached to it and SG wanted to move up.

SG started his remedial sessions after the first semester in year seven. Because of the long school day in his school he was tutored on a once a week basis. He was very unenthusiastic about the whole learning process and imagined he would be able to move to a higher stream without investing too much effort. He did not believe in revising the cards and he had to be convinced in almost every session that he was capable of succeeding. In order to move from Group C to Group B, he had to receive a mark of 80% in three consecutive tests. He achieved this goal before the end of the school year and was moved from Group C to Group B six weeks before school ended. It took two weeks to work out the bureaucratic details of upgrading him to a higher level. SG participated in his new group's end of year test and received a mark of 70%, although he had only just joined the group.

SG worked steadily during the summer vacation, coming for remedial lessons once a week. As he became more successful in his studies so his antagonism faded. He came well prepared to his remedial sessions, having gone over his cards and knowing what was going on in the class-room. In year eight his marks never dropped below 70%. In his final end of year exam he received a mark of 75%. Although the school knew he

had a learning disability, he was given no concessions. His tests were not taped, marks were taken off for spelling and punctuation mistakes, he was given no time extension. SG was expected to function just like the other students in the B stream where he was studying. SG has completed two years of remedial work. He will probably be capable of continuing his studies on his own now.

When the school counsellor checked the records, she found that no other child had moved from Group C to Group B. She knew of no child in Group B who had a learning disability. To the best of her knowledge, there was one other child in Group C who had a learning disability. He was receiving no tuition. His mark while still remaining in level C was 45%.

#### Summing up

Success breeds success! Once SG saw that the multi-sensory method of learning brought him success he settled down and progressed steadily, moving from the lowest stream to the middle stream, while holding his own with the respectable mark of 75%, which was his end of the year mark.

#### Case Number Five

YF, age 14 years. Sex: male. Level: year 8.

YF also attends Yavneh Boys' School. YF had severe difficulties in all subjects. He was extremely disorganised, often forgetting his cards and notebooks. He had a very poor short term memory, particularly for nouns. For example, he could not remember his class teacher's name, even at the end of the school year. He went on an overseas vacation with his parents and could not remember the name of the resort where he had spent fourteen days.

YF started remedial sessions twice weekly from the middle of the fourth grade till the end of the sixth grade. At the end of this period he could read, though not fluently, the material required in his English class. Language acquisition was an uphill battle. He had poor auditory skills. It sometimes took him three sessions to remember and internalise five new words. YF's mark at the end of Grade 6 was 60%.

Before beginning Junior High School, YF's parents sought the advice of a psychologist. They were told to drop English and to concentrate on other subjects.

Y is now in year eight. He does not study English or any other foreign language. Y receives tutoring in various subjects while the rest of the class learns English. His mother reported that he accepts his learning difficulties with more understanding now than when he was younger. She is not sure how he will handle the problem of his lack of English, but thinks it will be wiser to wait till he finishes high school and then concentrate solely on achieving this goal.

### Summing up

Although YF has severe auditory and memory skills he managed to learn to read after 18 months of remedial sessions. At that stage, YF could function in the English class at a passable level. YF did not complete the reading scheme and did not continue with English studies at all and at this stage there can be no follow up.

### Haifa High School Number Five

This is a local high school which also incorporates a Junior High School. There are about 2000 pupils in its student body. All the pupils study English as a foreign language. They are also expected to study either French or Arabic in Junior High School, the choice is left to the pupil.

Case Number Six

MP, age: 14 years. Sex: female. Level: year 8.

MP started remedial sessions at the beginning of Grade Five. She had completed one year of English studies at school, but was unable to recognise even one letter of the alphabet. Interestingly enough, she had managed to pick up some vocabulary which seemed to indicate good auditory skills.

MP attended twice weekly sessions for two years. She was a very conscientious pupil. She had good study habits and was always well organised. She never forgot her cards and was always prepared for her remedial session. At the end of two years she completed the reading scheme and could read and write fluently at the class level. Her end of year mark was 90%. Enclosed is a copy of the end of the year project she was assigned in class six.

MP has now completed year 8. Her final mark was 90%. She has had no remedial teaching after completing the reading scheme.

At this school, exams are not taped for the pupils nor are the pupils given an opportunity to answer orally. MP is given a time extension and her spelling mistakes are disregarded.

The school counsellor matched MP's achievements with another girl in her class who has learning difficulties (G1). The counsellor had been advised that G1 was not receiving any help in English. Her mark at the end of the school year was 50%. This is not considered a pass mark.

Summing up

MP is a conscientious, organised student with good study habits. She also has good auditory skills which helped her acquire vocabulary fairly easily. This is probably the reason for her astounding success.

Haifa High School Number 6

This high school is a religious high school for girls only, it includes the Junior High School and goes from year seven to year twelve. The students come from all over the city and are made up of many ethnic groups, including immigrants from Russia, Ethiopia, U.S.A. and South Africa, Morocco and Iraq.

Case number seven

T.T. Age: 15 years. Sex: Female. Level: Year 9.

TT's parents migrated from an English speaking country and the language spoken at home by all members of the family is English. TT is bilingual; she was born in Israel and attended Hebrew speaking schools but English was her first language and it is the language in which all members of the extended family circle communicate with each other.

TT had learning disabilities and attended a tutorial centre for learning difficulties for two years to overcome them.

TT started remedial sessions in English at the end of class six. Although she spoke English flawlessly, she would make the most elementary mistakes in her written work. For example, she would write the following "He is play outside now" (omitting the "ing" in the verb). TT's reading was slow and monotonic and she wrote with many spelling mistakes.

Because of her fluency in English, it was decided that weekly sessions were adequate. TT attended her remedial sessions regularly. She was always prepared. After the first few weeks of remedial work her marks shot up to 90%. This high level of achievement continued throughout years seven and eight. TT insisted on continuing her remedial sessions into a third year. She felt very comfortable with her remedial teacher and because the family had been struck by a deep personal tragedy, it was decided to let her continue. TT continued her remedial sessions for another six months but stopped before the end of the school year. At the end of that particular year, Year 9 were given a standard English test by the district inspectorate. TT's mark was 84%.

It was impossible to compare TT's results to anyone else in her class. Her parents did not want the school to know that she needed remedial teaching in English and TT's tutor has never been in touch with the school. TT does all her exams without any allowances.

### Summing up

TT is functioning well at the level of her home class in English even though she is receiving no concessions in her written work.

### The Carmel Primary School

The Carmel Primary School is the local religious primary school. It caters to both girls and boys from Grade One till Grade Six. There are approximately 450 pupils at the school.

### Case numbers eight and nine

NB, age: 11 years. Sex: female. Level: Grade 5.

RA, age: 11 years. Sex: female. Level: Grade 5.

RA and NB are both in the same class in the same school. They have both attended twice weekly remedial sessions with the same teacher and have the same English teacher at school. The similarity ends here.

NB commenced remedial sessions in English shortly after she began learning at school. She had picked up a few words from the lessons at school, indicating good auditory skills. She could not remember a single letter, no matter how hard she tried. When NB came with her mother to meet the tutor, it was difficult to say who was more upset, her mother or NB. She had had a difficult time acquiring reading in L.1 and now faced the same tedious process in a foreign language.

NB was a conscientious, well organised learner with good study habits. She had no difficulty acquiring vocabulary and she progressed steadily with her reading. At the end of the second year, NB completed the reading scheme and could read fluently and clearly. Her end of year mark was 100%.

RA is a perfectly matched pair with NB. They are the same age and sex and share the same socio-economic background. They have the same class teacher and remedial teacher, they are friends after school.

RA's progress has been painfully slow. From the first remedial session, it was possible to see how poor her auditory skills were. In the two months she had attended school, before starting remedial sessions, she had not managed to pick up a single word or letter. One of the first letters taught in the reading scheme is the letter "T". RA chose the word "ice-cream" as a cue card. For months she could not remember to end the word with an "m"

It often takes more than one session for RA to learn and remember new words. She also has a poor short term memory. Occasionally she reads a word whose meaning is lost to her even though she had learnt it 2-3 weeks earlier.

RA tries very hard and does not give up easily. Her mother is a remedial teacher in L1 and works with her at home. She said it took RA three years to learn to read in L1 and she is sure RA will succeed in L2 acquisition. The process will just take longer.

RA's mother, despite her being a remedial teacher (perhaps because of it) did not let the school know that RA had learning difficulties. As a result, RA was given no concessions when tested. She was often in trouble with the class English teacher but the mother refused to discuss the problem at school. She claimed it would have social repercussions! Despite all the time, effort and money invested, RA was just scraping by in English. She was never quite sure what the class was doing, nor did she always know what homework she was supposed to be doing.

Approximately a month before the end of the school year, RA's mother was called to the school to discuss her daughter's progress. It was only then that she told the school English teacher that RA has a learning disability. It was, however, too late to change the situation for that year. Her end of year mark was 55%, barely a pass mark.

### Summing up

The external factors influencing the achievements in cases 6 and 7 are identical. If we compare NB and RA by age, sex, class level, home-room English teacher, remedial teacher and social-economic background, we find that they are the same. The achievements of both are totally different. Two factors seem to influence the success or failure of the learning process.

NB had good auditory skills. She picked up vocabulary without too much effort and because so much teaching is done orally, she knew what was going on in the classroom, even though she did not participate actively. NB also had a good short term memory. Once NB had internalised any knowledge she remembered it on later occasions.

RA's auditory skills were poor. She could not manage to pick up much of what was going on in the class room. Sometimes she was not even sure of the instructions the teacher had given in Hebrew. RA had poor memory skills, on more than one occasion she could not retrieve a word whose meaning she had learnt a few weeks earlier and which the remedial teacher and RA thought had been internalised.

### Haifa Elementary School

This is a suburban elementary school with approximately 400 pupils. It is situated in a modest, lower middle class area.

#### Case number ten

OA, age: 12 years. Sex: male. Level: grade 6.

OA started remedial lessons at the beginning of Grade 6. He had undergone remedial tutoring in L1 and his mother thought it was time to bring his English up to standard before he entered Junior High School. OA attended remedial sessions on a twice weekly basis. He knew his alphabet and could read haltingly on a grade 4 level. He had picked up quite a good vocabulary from school and also on his trips overseas with his parents. His father's job entailed much travelling and he was occasionally allowed to take his family with him. OA's auditory skills were good.

OA's parents wanted him to attend a private, prestigious secondary school when he completed his elementary schooling. This school's entrance exams demand knowledge of a wide range of English grammar, which includes all the tenses, plus the ability to write a short composition. OA's remedial teacher did not have time to prepare him for the exam and she told OA's mother that he would find it very difficult to learn so much grammar in 4 months - the time left before the exam - even if he worked intensely. OA worked with another remedial teacher who used multi-sensory techniques on a twice weekly basis. She was expected to cover all English tenses plus other grammatical points within an eight week period. This was an impossible task and OA was not accepted at the school. Whether this was due only to his low mark in English or his low average on other subjects was not made clear.

Over the school year OA had managed to antagonise his English class teacher, who also happened to be his principal. When the remedial teacher asked her to test OA orally, she point-blank refused, saying "I don't give prizes to pupils who make a nuisance of themselves in class". The principal refused to give him extra time to complete his tests or any other allowances. OA's behaviour did not improve over the year.

Two months before the end of the school year, OA returned to his first remedial teacher as the district inspectorate of English was giving a standard English test that year. OA's mark in this test was 93%.

When this researcher contacted the principal to confirm the mark and compare it with the achievements of other children with learning disabilities, she was told that this was impossible. The principal maintained that it was impossible to compare OA's achievements with those of other pupils for the following reasons:

- a. OA had had his test read out to him

b. He had been given unlimited time to complete it.

When it was explained that these were legitimate allowances given to children with learning disabilities, she was not convinced, adding that he had been given an unfair advantage. The principal went on to explain that it was impossible to compare OA with any other pupils in his class because the socio-economic status of his parents was much higher than others in the school. Furthermore, OA's parents were fighters who fought his battles, whereas the other parents accepted things as they were. OA was also extremely intelligent whereas the other two boys with learning disabilities in his class were less so. To sum up, the principal did not give me any information on other pupils with learning disabilities because she felt it would be an unfair comparison. OA's mark at the end of the year was 60%. The principal refused to take into account his achievements on the standard test given by the Ministry of Education.

### Summing up

It is difficult to compare OA's case history to those of other children in his class. OA had good auditory and memory skills as can be seen by the vocabulary he had managed to pick up before he started remedial sessions. Unfortunately, he was in conflict with his class English teacher who was also his principal throughout the year and who refused to grant him the concessions that were his due. Nevertheless, his achievements were impressive, as shown by the mark he received in the standard English test given by the district inspectorate.

### Neve Shaanan Primary School

This is a suburban primary school with about 450 pupils. Most of the children come from middle class families.

Case number eleven

E.Sh. Age: 12 years. Sex: Male. Level: Grade 6.

E.Sh. began his tutorial sessions at the end of grade five. He had been given a “summer test” which he had to pass before being promoted to grade 6. These tests are given on the last day of the summer holidays and children do not receive their report card unless they have passed this test.

E.Sh. was still having trouble writing correctly in L1. After two months of tutoring on a twice weekly basis, E.Sh. passed the summer test with a mark of 70%.

E.Sh. was a quiet, withdrawn child, almost never joining in any oral work in English lessons, although when spoken to on a one to one basis, his English vocabulary was sufficient for any discussion that was carried on at the class level. E.Sh. had difficulties in other subjects and needed remedial tutoring in maths as well. He was often involved in fights in the school yard and he was not very happy at school.

E.Sh. failed the first test he was given in grade six, as no compensation had been made for his disability. His remedial teacher asked his English class teacher to test him orally because of his disabilities. His marked jumped to 90%. At the end of the first semester the class English teacher gave him a mark of 80%. The principal argued that this mark was not a true reflection of E.Sh.’s capacity as he had gained it by having concessions. The English teacher managed to convince the principal of the justice of giving him concessions and the marked remained 80%.

At the end of the school year the district inspectorate for English gave a standardised test for all grade 6 pupils. E.Sh.’s mark was 89%.

E.Sh. applied to attend a junior high school which specialises in teaching drama and music. The enrollment is opened to all primary school leavers. The competition is

fierce as this is a very prestigious junior high school. E.Sh. was the only child from his school who was accepted. The principal did not even bother to congratulate him.

The English teacher compared E.Sh.'s standard English test results with those of another boy from the same class (B4). Both boys are the same sex, age, come from the same socio-economic background. B4 was receiving help in English from his mother. His mark in the standard test was 69%.

### Summing up

E.Sh. had good study habits and auditory skills. He too had managed to pick up some vocabulary before starting remedial work. He received a lot of encouragement from his class English teacher and his final marks reflected this.

### Ahuza School Number 1

Ahuza school is a suburban elementary school with approximately 600 pupils. It serves an academic middle class and many of the parents are lecturers at the nearby Haifa University and Technion.

### Case number twelve

K.Y. Age: 11 years. Sex: Female. Level: Grade 5.

KY is a Russian immigrant who started her schooling in Israel. She speaks Russian at home with her parents, studies in Hebrew, and learns both English and Arabic as second languages at school. She has to contend with the Cyrillic, Latin and Hebrew alphabets. Luckily at this stage of her schooling Arabic is taught orally and therefore she does not have to know the Arabic alphabet.

KY is excellent at sport. She is so good that she is often asked by older children to join in their games. On the other hand, she finds school so difficult that she is totally

withdrawn from discussions, group work or other activities in the class room. Except with her peers, she never talks above a whisper. K has recently started attending a state-run remedial centre for learning disabilities in L1. The first thing she said to her teacher was “You are my last hope. I don’t know what I’ll do if you can’t help me”.

When KY first starting learning English at the beginning of Grade 4, her mother spoke with the English class teacher and told her that KY had a learning disability. KY managed to hold her own during the first semester when most of the learning was done on an oral basis. However, when the class was introduced to letters and starting to combine these letters to make words, KY started to founder. KY’s English class teacher gave her twice weekly tutoring sessions and she managed to pass Grade 4 with a mark of 70%.

KY continued remedial sessions on a weekly basis in Grade 5. She found no great difficulty in language acquisition and though she could read, she found it hard to reach automacity. Towards the end of Grade 5 KY’s reading improved and she received a pass mark in English. KY did not complete the reading scheme as her family moved away from the area where she was getting remedial tutoring.

When her remedial teacher asked her to explain how she picks the correct sound for the symbols she sees, she wrote the teacher a short note which in translation read “I used to become confused with all the letters in English, Hebrew and Russian, but suddenly I succeeded in reading in English and now I rarely become confused. At first it was difficult to remember what each word meant in each language. There are words that have the same sounds, mean different things, but in different languages.

Summing up

It was impossible to compare KY's achievements to any other child with learning disabilities in her class. No other child in her class has such a babel of languages floating in their head, nor did they have the same economic problems of a migrant family such as KY's. Despite all these problems, she eventually learnt to read and received a pass mark at the end of the year.

### The Hawthorne Effect

It might be argued that the above results are due to the Hawthorne effect. This criticism can be said of all research done on human beings, whether in the fields of education, psychology or medicine.

Borgotta and Borgatta (1992) claim that

“The Hawthorne effect refers to confounding influences on research outcome caused by subjects' reactions to being studied.”

The specific elements of the Hawthorne effect are not well understood.

Adair et al (1989) reviewed eighty-six educational studies in an attempt to identify what is known as the Hawthorne effect. The researchers came to the following conclusion. The three most common explanations of the Hawthorne effect were:

1. The subjects' reaction to the novelty created by the study procedure.
2. The subjects' awareness of participating in a study affects the performance of the participants.
3. The special attention accorded to the subjects by the mere fact that they were part of a study.

The children in this research were not chosen to participate. They had to learn English and their parents chose what they thought was the best way of achieving this

aim. The students' sole reason for coming to remedial sessions was to learn English, they were totally unconcerned and unaware that they were part of a study. Initially some of the activities may have seemed novel to the children but novelty becomes habit over a two year period. Special attention may also influence the success or failure of a student but as can be seen by the following case histories, special attention and private one-to-one tuition does not necessarily lead to success. Moreover, the pupils in the school environment (see Chapter on Multi-Sensory Learning) were not given individual attention. Their participation was part of the school day and certainly not regarded as a pleasant diversion.

This study shows that multisensory teaching adds a new dimension to a student's learning which enables him/her to acquire knowledge through channels that have not been utilised to the full.

### **Ilanot Primary School**

The Ilanot Primary School is a suburban primary school on the Carmel Mountains. It caters to both girls and boys from grades one to six. There are approximately 450 pupils at the school.

#### **Case number thirteen**

Y.S. Age 12. Sex: Male. Level: year six.

After completing year four in primary school, Y.S. could not recognise a single letter nor had he picked up any vocabulary from the lessons he had attended. He was very distractible and found it hard to concentrate.

Y.S. started remediation on a twice weekly basis. When he came to the letter "H" (see letter list) he suddenly realised that he could read. He went literally wild with

joy. He jumped out of his chair and started shouting “I can read, I can read, I don’t believe this is happening to me.” This success gave him a great incentive and he began to work with less distractibility.

In the meantime his parents divorced and his mother, who received custody, could no longer afford to send him to remedial English lessons. She sent him to a qualified foreign language teacher (whose tuition fees were lower), where after three months of twice weekly tutoring he hadn’t learnt “one letter” (the mother’s cry of desperation).

Y.S. was also having difficulty in maths and was receiving tuition in maths by a qualified remedial maths teacher. The mother and the maths teacher decided that they would drop his English lessons that a regular English teacher was giving him and the maths teacher would help him with his English using multisensory techniques she used to teach maths. With the use of these techniques Y.S. progressed in English, not as fast as with the remedial English teacher, but certainly more than with the non-remedial English teacher then teaching him.

Y.S. was a gifted football player and at the age of twelve represented Israel in international football matches for youth. His father suddenly became interested in the boy and promised to pay for all remedial lessons on the condition that the father chose the teachers himself. As a result this researcher lost touch with Y.S.

### Summing up

Y.S. succeeded in learning English when he was tutored using multisensory techniques. Interestingly, this technique worked even when he was tutored by a maths teacher.

When he received tuition on a one-to-one basis by a qualified English teacher using other (non M.S.) techniques he was unable to progress. It can be seen from this case that multi-sensory techniques influence the learning process irrespective of the person teaching it.

### “Leo Baeck” School

The “Leo Baeck” school is a suburban high school whose framework is similar to Haifa High School Number Five.

#### Case number fourteen

B.B. Age: 15. Sex: male. Level: year 8.

B.B. has poor eyesight and severe kinaesthetic disability. He cannot judge distances correctly and often bumps into things. This problem was diagnosed by a paediatric neurologist at the age of two. B.B. is very disorganised, forgetting or losing his possessions. He has almost given up the battle, he attends school without notebooks and somehow functions from scraps of paper that he has around him.

When B.B. commenced twice weekly remedial sessions at the beginning of year seven, he had already had tutoring in English with a number of qualified foreign language teachers. They had not succeeded in teaching him to read and he was unable to participate in the English lesson. After the second lesson using multi-sensory techniques, B.B. said “If somebody had taught me like this two years ago, I would now know English.”

B.B. found it very hard to integrate in the home room English lesson. The remedial teacher would contact this homeroom teacher every few weeks to find out the lesson plans for the coming weeks. Although B.B.’s homeroom teacher tested him

orally, he was unable to “catch up”. At the end of year seven, he was not given a mark because his teacher felt the gap was too large to compare his achievements with those of the class. However, B.B. was not despondent. He said “I may not be getting a mark but I have come a long way this year.”

In year eight B.B. started “to get his act together”. He could follow what was going on in the class; he sometimes even participated and he could now read some of the shorter passages in the text book. But the most wonderful thing that happened to him was his new English teacher. She allowed him to do the tests in the remedial sessions. She gave him the test paper sealed in an envelope and after completion it was returned in a sealed envelope. B.B. was beginning to pass English tests. The tests that were grammar-based gave B.B. an opportunity to show his analytical thinking and he received high marks - once even 100%. The tests involving reading comprehension and cloze he found more difficult to complete because of his inability to remember new vocabulary. His end of the year mark was 65%.

Although most pupils start phasing out their remedial sessions at the end of the second year of tuition, B.B. has still not become an independent learner, he will need at least one more year of remediation before he will achieve this status.

### Summing up

B.B. tried a number of foreign language teachers and did not succeed with any of them. It was not till he was taught using a multi-sensory approach that B.B. felt that he was making progress. Although his progress is slow, it is cumulative and constant. Most important of all B.B. feels that he is progressing and is willing to invest time,

money and energy to achieve his goals because he feels this method of teaching will help him accomplish this.

Case number fifteen

Y.K. attends **High School number five** described in case number six.

Y.K. Sex: male. Age: 13. Level: year seven.

Y.K. had completed three years of primary school English and had been tutored by four qualified English teachers before starting remedial lessons with this researcher.

At the beginning of year seven, Y.K. did not know the letters of the alphabet, he did not know their sequence. He had not picked up any vocabulary. He was a frustrated teenager.

During the first year of tuition Y.K. learnt to read and at the end of the year he could read texts from year six readers. He was closing the gap but had not yet caught up to the class. Unfortunately, Y.K. had a very uncooperative home room English teacher. She point blank refused to test him orally, saying that she was not going to give one minute of her time if she was not paid for it. Occasionally she shouted at Y.K., saying that he was lazy. When she returned his tests there was usually a comment on them to the effect - you didn't study enough, your poor marks are a sign that you are not trying. Y.K.'s remedial teacher spoke to the school English teacher, saying that Y.K. was probably working harder than anyone else in the classroom - it was just taking longer to see results.

Y.K. was not given a mark in English at the end of year seven. Nevertheless, Y.K. ended the year pleased with his progress using almost the identical words used by B.B. two years previously: "I've come a long way in this one year." Considering the fact that he had started the academic year in September without knowing the correct

sequence of the letters of the alphabet and finished it in June by being able to read a year six reader, he was certainly right - he had come a long way in the ten months of remediation.

### Summing up

In ten months, Y.K. progressed from learning the ABC to reading one year below his English home room class. It will take a year of remediation for him to be able to participate fully in the regular class. It is to be hoped that he will have a new English teacher.

### General Summing Up

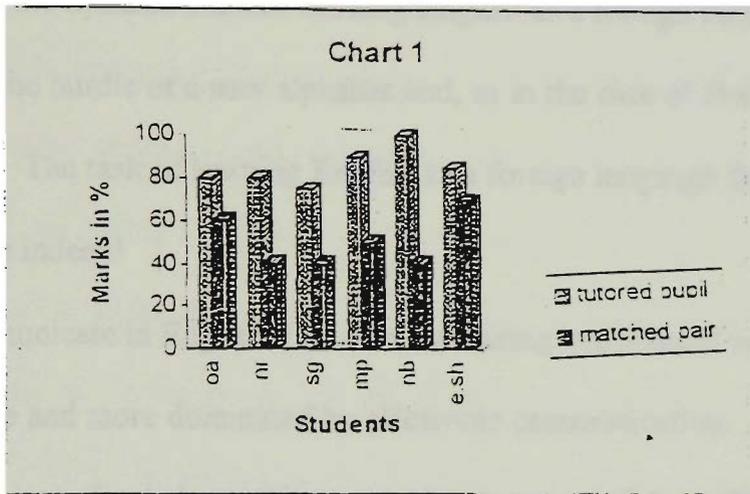
All the children who completed the two year reading scheme were able to integrate in their regular English class and function well. A long term study showed that these achievements remain constant over a two-three year period (see the graph below). Even those pupils who did not complete the reading scheme learnt to read although they did not achieve the desired fluency or competency required in the home English class. They did prove, however, that using multi-sensory techniques in second language acquisition leads to success.

The children who found it most difficult to acquire a second language were those with poor memory skills and poor auditory skills (YF and RA). supporting the findings of Howitz & Cope, 1986 and Javorsky et al., 1992 that show that L.D students have difficulty in listening to and understanding foreign language.

All the above pupils are still attending school. It will be interesting to see their high school graduation results but judging by their achievements three and four years after completing the remedial program, it can be said with confidence that they will pass and in all probability do well.

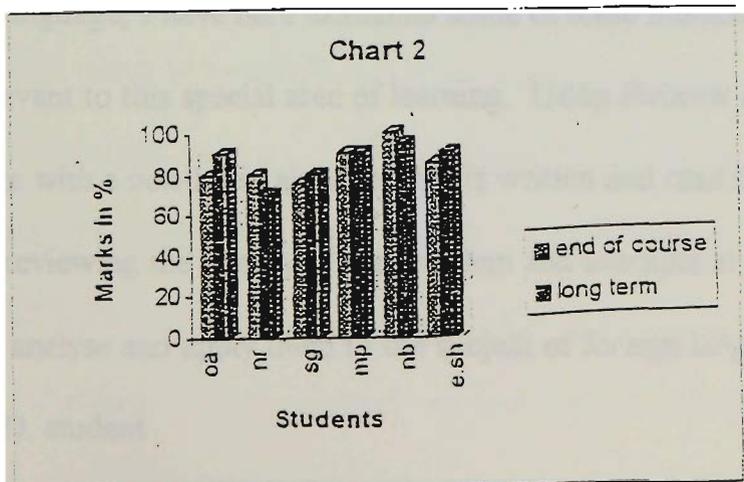
Performance of L.D. pupils learning English as a foreign language using multi-sensory technique and comparison with LD pupils who have not had remedial tuition.

Chart 1



Performance of pupils on completion of reading scheme and comparison of long term effects

Chart 2



## Conclusion

A significant percentage of the population of the world has learning disabilities in general and dyslexia in particular. These individuals find most learning difficult, and foreign language acquisition especially challenging.

In some countries, the dyslexic student learning English as a foreign language must also overcome the hurdle of a new alphabet and, as in the case of Hebrew, even a reversal of laterality. The task of learning English as a foreign language for these students is formidable indeed!

The ability to communicate in English is of ever increasing importance in a world that is becoming more and more dominated by electronic communication. People with learning disabilities in non-English speaking countries, because of their difficulties in acquiring English, find it ever more difficult to complete secondary school studies or integrate into the work force later in life. Even the simple pleasure of international travel becomes a struggle for those who cannot communicate in English.

In recent years educators have become aware of the problems faced by the L.D. students, and have tried a number of methods to help them cope. As a teacher of English as a foreign language, I have here examined some of these methods, particularly those relevant to this special area of learning. Using Hebrew as an example of a language with a non-Latin alphabet that is written and read from right to left, this paper, after reviewing the history of the problem and attempts at various solutions, goes on to analyse and apply them to the subject of foreign language instruction for the L.D. student

However, since the whole learning process itself is influenced by many socio-psychological factors as well, this thesis first recounted the history and status of the English language in Israel. This is a tale of a wide swing from a reviled, colonialist means of communication, to a technically required and culturally admired international language - all within a span of fifty years. Today, the average Israeli parent, and even the students themselves, demand earlier, more, and better instruction. The dyslexic and L.D. students increasingly insist on their right to receive suitable instruction as well.

Having given the background for, and the nature of, this problem and indicated its extent and world-wide scope and significance, I turned to foreign language teaching in general and English in particular to find effective methods of teaching English to dyslexics and students with a learning disability in the non-English speaking world.

Particular attention has been given to several multi-sensory approaches and modalities, and after examining the particular problems of language acquisition for L.D. pupils, this thesis describes the application of these methods to the teaching of language to this problematic group.

Since language acquisition usually requires writing skills both during the writing process and, at a later stage, for communication, the special difficulties faced by L.D. students in acquiring and using writing skills is also examined at some length.

English is a language whose correct spelling is a requisite for proper communication. This presents yet another hurdle for non-English speakers and especially dyslexic and L.D. pupils learning the language. As can be seen from the complex and quirky rules here set out in detail, correct English spelling requires the constant use of those very skills and abilities that are especially weak or completely

lacking in L.D. pupils. This paper examines some of the existing methods of teaching spelling with special emphasis on the multi-sensory techniques.

After reviewing the history of reading and the past and current controversies round the teaching of reading, this thesis describes the tendency to consensus, which includes multi-sensory programs, and sets out in some detail the first steps in teaching the L.D. and dyslexic pupil to read.

Finally, I have outlined several remedial lessons to guide the teacher adopting this approach, first at the preliminary stages of reading, writing and language acquisition. I have also shown how, once the student is on the way to mastering the language, the instructor can guide the student to become an independent learner.

The methodology I have used to present the findings from the case histories of L.D. students who make up the trial group of this study is presented in the closing chapters.

Not only does this study demonstrate that all the pupils benefitted from the multi-sensory learning experience, but it was found that the majority of them were eventually able to integrate into the normal English lessons of their home room class. This is of course the ultimate goal of remedial teaching.

In view of the fact that more than half the children of the world learn a non-Latin script in primary education, the success of this method is of significance in foreign language teaching throughout the world. These principles can be adopted to teach all foreign languages, but particularly English, to non-English speakers.

The study suggests that English teachers in other parts of the non-English speaking world would do well to follow the principles developed in this research. It

would surely be of benefit to those people who have for so long struggled with the frustration of trying to communicate in the present day global language which is English.

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