Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom

Newsletter ISSUE NO 3 • APRIL 2005

Making progress

Our previous Newsletter was published just after the Medical Research Council’s Institute of Hearing Research published its first APD pamphlet. APDUK was given permission to publish the text of the pamphlet on our website and include a downloadable file version as well. Together with our second Newsletter the pamphlet galvanised interest in the APDUK website from home and abroad, as can be seen from the statistics on page 2.

The MRC have informed us of a range of APD related research projects being carried out in the UK, hopefully this co-ordinated effort will provide the diagnostic tests, support programs, and a re-evaluation of existing labelled disabilities; so that all children and adults with these disabilities can look forward to a true and accurate description of their problems, and have a realistic chance of finding ways to understand their problems and develop realistic coping strategies.

Just after the Christmas holiday we launched another downloadable article to the APD section of the website, by Rosalie Seymour “Central Auditory Processing Disorders as a key factor in Developmental Language Disorders” which provoked further interest and discussion regarding APD. Another stream of interest has been our Visual-Spatial Learner and Auditory / Visual Dyslexia web pages. The website has had visitors from most countries around the world now, or are our professionals making interesting trips abroad.

Telephone Helpline
The New APDUK Telephone Helpline (01442 214555) started very slowly, but has been fairly active in recent weeks (please remember there is an APD at the other end of the telephone taking your calls). As soon as it is practical we would like to have a more comprehensive service and extend the time from the current 6.00pm -10.00pm (GMT) by having one line open to more than one operative (funds permitting).

Projects in progress (PIP)
The first PIP is the APDWales. Aly has found time from all her other workload to develop links in and around Wales to bring together a Welsh APD lobby group. And there is going to be, as you would expect, a Welsh section of the APDUK website. Aly has been making contacts with Welsh Dyslexic organisations, and making contacts in the Welsh Assembly.

The second PIP is a new section of the APDUK website. We have been researching and developing a Multiple Intelligence Section of links and information. Coping with APD like all information processing disorders depends on developing alternative strategies to meet the challenges that life throws at us. So we have to use other senses or intelligences to develop the skills we need to survive.

Identifying and understanding our own natural dominant Learning Style is important. But it may conflict with our processing deficit, so we may have to develop one of our less dominant learning styles, which can take longer to achieve.

On a personal note I would like to thank Lesley Sword for her contribution to this newsletter, and for her article “I think in Pictures, You Teach in Words……” When I read the article I recognised myself for the first time in my life. Thank you.

Graeme Wadlow, Executive Chairman APDUK
www.apduk.org
### APDUK website downloads

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GRAND TOTAL OF APDUK DOWNLOADS FOR THIS PERIOD - 7936

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### APDUK website visits

These figures are provided by ADDFREESTATS. We have used ADDFREESTATS since we launched the APDUK web site, and therefore provides historical continuity. But we do not have an ADDFREESTATS counter on all pages of the APDUK web pages.

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|      | March   | 2069 | 4906 |
Welcome to Issue No.3

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Learning differently

Welcome to the third edition of the Auditory Processing Disorder in the UK (APDUK) newsletter, the only newsletter in the UK devoted to the issues affecting those with APD, and providing information and support for children, adults and parents.

The main theme of this newsletter is Learning Differently, the diversity of learning styles and compensatory gifts that often accompany APD and other learning difficulties and disabilities. We also have a selection of other articles relevant to those with APD. Thank you once again to everyone who has contributed their time and effort.

Alyson Mountjoy, Editor
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What is Thinking?
Thinking is taking in information from the outside world and from within ourselves and processing it with our brain.

The Three Ways of Thinking
There are three main ways of thinking that correspond to the senses:
- **Hearing** – auditory thinking
- **Seeing** – visual thinking
- **Feeling** – kinaesthetic thinking.

Auditory thinking uses sounds, conversations, melody etc.
Visual thinking uses pictures, colours, abstract plans, diagrams etc.
Kinaesthetic thinking uses information of a feeling nature - balance, weight, temperature, emotional state, ‘gut’ feeling, intuition etc.

The words people use when speaking can indicate which thinking style they are using.

Auditory thinkers use words such as: hear, sound, rings, talk, listen, tune, ask, clicked.
Visual thinkers use words such as: see, look, clear, bright, picture, image, perspective.
Kinaesthetic thinkers use words such as: feel, touch, handle, grasp, rough, heavy, weigh.

How Visual and Auditory Thinking Works
Auditory thinking is sequential thinking i.e. step-by-step

Auditory-sequential thinkers learn most efficiently, when material is presented to them in a logical, ordered progression.
They will often attack problem solving with a series of ordered steps.

Auditory thinkers have a good sense of time.
They often will understand in part before understanding the whole.
They prefer to start off with the simplest concept or part of a problem, and work through to the more difficult parts until the whole solution is found.

Many teachers and instructors are sequential thinkers.

Auditory thinkers think most efficiently when material is presented to them audibly.
To retain information they often repeat it out loud to themselves.
They would rather have someone explain in detail how to accomplish a task, rather than view a physical, visual demonstration.

Visual thinkers think most efficiently, when material is presented to them using diagrams, flowcharts, time lines, films and demonstrations.
Visual thinkers tend to be spatial and have an eye for size, space and relationships.
To retain information they often draw it as a diagram.
They would rather view a physical, visual demonstration than have someone explain in detail how to accomplish a task.
Visual Thinking is Holistic.
Holistic thinkers work through material most thoroughly and efficiently in ‘fits and starts.’

They may often feel overwhelmed with confusion for a while, but understanding will often suddenly click.

When the material does suddenly click in understanding, the holistic thinker will usually not only see the big picture, but with a more clear and creative perspective than other thinkers.

Often, holistic thinkers will take more time to understand information than other thinkers. However, their final understanding is more extensive.

Here are some basic distinctions between visual-spatial thinkers and auditory-sequential thinkers.

**Two Types Of Visual-Spatial Thinkers and Learners**

There are two types of visual-spatial thinkers: those who have a preference for visual thinking and those who must think visually, usually because of an auditory-sequential weakness.

The first type of visual-spatial thinkers can use both auditory-sequential and visual-spatial thinking. They prefer visual-spatial thinking as it is a powerful way to think and they will tackle problems using this mode of thinking first. However, they can ‘switch their brains’ to auditory-sequential thinking when necessary.

The second type of visual-spatial thinker must think visually and cannot switch to auditory-sequential thinking. These people often had illnesses that blocked conductive hearing during early childhood. Examples of such illnesses are:

- ear infections
- allergies
- asthma
- eczema
- tonsillitis
- sinusitis.

Poor auditory sequential information processing is common in children who have experienced early childhood illnesses that have adversely affected conductive hearing during the developmental period. While their hearing is not permanently affected by these illnesses, the development of auditory information processing is impaired and these visual-spatial learners commence school with a learning difficulty: a language based auditory-sequential information processing weakness that makes school learning, following instructions, concentrating and paying attention very difficult.

**Visual-Spatial Thinking is Powerful and Fast**

Visual-spatial thinking is complex, rich, textured, detailed and imaginative.

With visual thinking the information is processed instantly, just by looking at a picture. Auditory thinking is much slower as each word must be processed separately and the information cannot be understood until the whole sentence is heard.

Try this out at home: Look at a picture and capture the image in your mind. Now describe it to yourself out loud. Which takes longer?

**Visual-Spatial Thinking Is Both Problem Finding And Problem Solving**

If I was explaining an issue to a visual thinker, they would immediately tell me the inherent problems they could see. A few minutes later, they would tell me how to solve these problems or several better ways to do it. This is what is meant by problem finding and problem solving.

**Visual Thinking is Creative**

Visual-spatial thinkers see the big picture with a more clear and creative perspective than other thinkers. Visual-spatial thinking is associated with inventiveness, intuition and divergent thinking. These characteristics are essential for creative thinking.

Creative thinking is the process of sensing difficulties, problems, gaps in information, missing elements, something askew; making guesses and formulating hypotheses about these deficiencies, evaluating and testing these guesses and hypotheses; possibly revising and re-testing them; and finally communicating the results, often incorporating images, shapes, models, colour, melody allegory and allusion.

**The Creative Process**

The creative process incorporates problem awareness, information gathering, idea development, planning and production.

**Strengths of Visual Thinking**

Visual-spatial thinkers excel at:

- using images and pictures

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISUAL-SPATIAL</th>
<th>AUDITORY-SEQUENTIAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thinks primarily in pictures</td>
<td>Thinks primarily in words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relates well to space</td>
<td>Relates well to time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a whole-part learner</td>
<td>Is a step-by-step learner</td>
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<td>Learns concepts all at once</td>
<td>Learns by trial and error</td>
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<td>Hard concepts are easy; easy is hard</td>
<td>Progresses from easy to hard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sees the big picture; may miss details</td>
<td>Attends well to details</td>
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<td>Reads maps well</td>
<td>Follows oral directions well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learns sight words easily</td>
<td>Learns phonics easily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does well at math</td>
<td>Does well at arithmetic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prefers keyboarding to writing</td>
<td>Has neat handwriting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has ‘unique’ methods of organization</td>
<td>Is neatly organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrives at correct solutions intuitively</td>
<td>Can show working-out easily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent long-term memory</td>
<td>Excellent short-term memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finds unusual solutions to problems</td>
<td>Finds one right answer</td>
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*Source: Dr Linda Kreger Silverman*
• knowing where they are in space eg driving, parking, going places without directions
• getting the whole idea at once and then filling in the parts
• working with complex issues
• bringing together a range of disparate ideas
• abstract mathematical concepts
• visual spelling
• working with computers
• using intuition
• creative problem solving
• memory for places, events, people
• geometry, physics, graphics
• using metaphors – verbal images
• three dimensional thinking
• seeing patterns
• visualising rhythm, melody and harmonies

Strategies For Using Your Strength In Visual-Spatial Thinking

• recognise and accept your strengths
• do things visually whenever possible
• develop and use the skills of visualising e.g. holding pictures still in your mind’s eye, manipulating your images
• use graphic organisers when studying
• use mind maps to bring ideas together and highlight relationships
• set priorities by making more important items bigger in your mind map
• use timelines to help with planning and sequencing
• set small deadlines within the larger timeline
• get the big picture first and then move to the details
• watch others before attempting new tasks
• brainstorm an idea to generate pieces of information
• use categories to organise or bring together pieces of information
• ask for things to be repeated when you need to write them down – be upfront and say ‘I remember things better when I write them down’.
• ask a person to write down what is required e.g. ‘please send me an email confirming...’
• ask for time to consider when making important decisions
• in meetings use an electronic whiteboard
• doodle while listening – incorporate what you hear into the doodle

Careers for Visual Thinkers

Here are some careers that use strength in visual-spatial thinking:

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<td>SPORTS-PERSON</td>
<td>COACH/TEACHER</td>
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<td>ARCHITECT</td>
<td>MATHEMATICIAN</td>
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This article encourages us to focus on our strengths and not on our perceived deficiencies. When we do this, we are able to accept, explore and extend ourselves and to live life to its fullest with joy in being.

E. Paul Torrance, the “father” of creativity gave us this manifesto:

Don’t be afraid to fall in love with something and pursue it with intensity.
Know, understand. Take pride in. Practice. Develop.
Exploit and enjoy your greatest strengths.
Learn to free yourself from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games they impose on you.
Free yourself to play your own game.
Find a great teacher or mentor who will help you.
Don’t waste energy trying to be ‘well rounded’.
Do what you love and can do well.
Learn the skills of interdependence.

To this, I would simply add:

**We are visual-spatial thinkers – let’s celebrate!**

Gifted & Creative Services Australia Pty Ltd
Email: enquiries@giftedservices.com.au
www.giftedservices.com.au

Details of the services offered by Gifted & Creative Services Australia Pty Ltd, also available to overseas clients not just those in Australia, will soon be available on the APDUK website.

In the meantime, please contact olanys@aol.com for details.
Children with listening problems learn and cope better at school when teaching styles match their preferred learning styles. If the teaching styles do not match their learning styles, children with listening problems often experience stress and anxiety in classrooms where the focus is on auditory teaching. The school experiences of children with listening problems who are not given the opportunity to learn in the ways most comfortable for them are discussed in this article.

Children with listening difficulties often experience stress at school. Firstly, noise itself can be stressful and schools are inevitably noisy places because they bring many children together in the same place. School rules restrict children’s capacity to escape from what they experience as excessive noise. High noise levels increase stress hormones for those without auditory processing problems. Those with auditory processing difficulties can often be more sensitive to noise, in addition to this they have trouble with speech perception when it is noisy, so they experience more stress. Because they have to work harder to follow what is said, they often tire quickly or don’t cope. The challenge of coping with spoken instruction means that at the end of a lesson, or by the end of the day, children may be exhausted and emotional. For some children, this may lead to behavioural problems, poor school performance, or shyness and reluctance to participate in lessons or other class activities. These responses may represent strategies to avoid obviously failing the listening challenges at school.

FRUSTRATED

Kids can be very smart at finding ways to avoid being seen to fail the listening challenges in auditory focussed classrooms. On the other hand, some children may be quiet and compliant at school but go home frustrated and upset, and it is the parents who have to work out what the problem is and manage it, or manage their tantrums. Unfortunately, many teachers find it hard to believe that ordinary classroom experiences can have such an impact, especially if the problems are not evident at school.

It is not only in classrooms that children with listening problems face difficulties. For children with poor listening skills, playground noise levels can often inhibit their participation in the normal social interaction. They may feel that they are being excluded, or that others don’t want to play with them. For these children, managing social interaction is already stressful enough before some teachers’ highly verbal teaching styles exacerbate the challenges at school. The anxiety created by these challenges may lead them into fights, or they may withdraw and become socially isolated from their peers and teachers.

Moreover, as children progress through school, teaching becomes increasingly dependent on aural language and literacy skills. Children with listening problems may have experienced difficulties with the phonics skills that are important when they are learning to read. The pressure of the growing demands on their listening and literacy skills in schools with high levels of background noise, in buildings that often have poor acoustics, and in noisy playgrounds, fosters further stress, anxiety and self-doubt. It is all too easy for them to misunderstand what is said and they may have difficulty explaining themselves.

JUDGEMENTS

Children’s verbal and listening performance is the basis for judgements about many things; for example, their intelligence, their capacity for learning, their social skills and their personality. Children learn early the consequences of not understanding, of misunderstanding, and of being slower than others in their ability to process what is said. They get things wrong, appear stupid, and are all too readily shamed and teased by others. The challenges they face are usually invisible to their teachers and peers. Others may not realise that situations, where they themselves feel quite comfortable, may be highly stressful for someone with listening problems.

Other articles in this newsletter describe how visual teaching strategies can help children with listening problems and limit the extent to which auditory focussed classrooms can often undermine their confidence. Part of the process is as follows.

Children who have difficulties learning through listening may use observation of others to know what to do.

As well as observing what they need to do they also see that others can cope better with verbal instructions. This fosters a cognitive style where they constantly compare their performance with that of others and reach the conclusion that ‘I must be dumb’.

This is a very damaging self-belief that undermines their confidence and capacity as learners. In reality, it is the auditory focussed classrooms that are ‘dumb’, not the child, because, in these classrooms, the children with listening difficulties are not being given the learning opportunities that they need to succeed.

MINIMISE

Teachers can do a number of things at school to minimise the stress on children with listening difficulties. If you are a teacher you can:

- use the type of teaching styles that are outlined in articles in this newsletter;
- manage the listening demands in your classroom by using
  - alternative visual information sources and
  - activities that provide a break from the need to listen;
- consider using a classroom sound field amplification system - see article on my website www.eartroubles.com;
- foster predictability so children can rely on routines to reduce the listening demands they face;
- prepare children in advance for any change, or for the unexpected;
- be aware that both behaviour problems and shyness may be outcomes of listening problems;
- foster a classroom environment where no child is seen as a failure;
- keep in contact with parents about what children say at home about their school experiences - a ‘communication book’ where parents tell teachers about things that happen at home can help;
- conduct a classroom ‘listening audit’ to identify times and places where communication is at risk - you can contact me for more information on how to do this.

Teaching in ways that support the preferred learning styles of children helps not only their school performance but also the way they feel about themselves and others. They fall less and they feel better about themselves and their whole school experience. They also end up feeling less frustrated and happier, which is good for their family life. There is online training available for parents and teachers of children with listening difficulties at www.eartroubles.com.

Damien Howard
email: damien@eartroubles.com

Damien is a psychologist and educator interested in the social outcomes of auditory processing problems. For more information visit www.eartroubles.com
The bird’s nest and the squirrel

By Laura Janvrin ©

A week ago, a guy from one of my classes asked if he could make a copy of my notes. I ended up scanning him the notes and e-mailing them to him. They weren’t actually my notes. I have a note-taker in my classes; they were her notes. Anyway, he thought they were awesome. I didn’t say anything about them being a note-taker’s because I thought the story would begin and end there.

It didn’t.

Tonight I got an e-mail from another student in class. He said he was told that I took awesome notes, and since he missed class this last Tuesday, he was wondering if, after class tomorrow, he could make a photocopy of Tuesday’s notes.

This guy that e-mailed me requesting the notes knows that I write in a notebook during class. This is purely for concentration purpose on my part. The notes I use later are from the note-taker, and they are merely a copy of her notes. There’s no way to get around that. I have a bit of a trouble lying, especially when word is getting around that I’m a good note-taker, and I know that I am not. I would be taking credit for another’s work.

I e-mailed the guy back. I told him that they weren’t my notes. They were from a note-taker because I have a learning disability.

At that moment, I felt...disabled. I know that people have it worse, and I shouldn’t feel bad for what I have, but that didn’t stop the way I was feeling. The guy e-mailed me back; he was nice about it, but I still felt the way I felt.

Then I remembered; I live in their world. They don’t live in my world. I live in their world and have to adjust accordingly. I am not disabled, just different. As much as it is a curse, it is a blessing.

I lived in a different world for a year. I am American, with American ways, American values, an American outlook, and an American way of life. For one year, I lived in England. My whole world changed with that one year. Coming back to an American way of life hasn’t been an easy transition even though this is the world that I know and love. But even the transition has not hurt what I’ve come back with from England. England jerked me out of my comfortable frame of mind and forced me to look at things - things I once thought I knew - in a completely different light. It was like before I ever went to England, I could glance at a tree and see its beauty. Then when I came back from England, I glance at a tree, and it’s more beautiful because I don’t just see a tree, but I see a bird’s nest and a squirrel inside it. It wasn’t England itself that allowed me to see that beauty. It was the mere fact that England was not something I was use to.

England wasn’t all beauty. There were times I missed home terribly and though I hate to admit it, I even missed my American way of life. But England gave me a gift - an ability to move outside a comfortable way to think. It forced me to look at everything differently. It was and still is beautiful.

The APD - it’s always been there though - but it allows me to see the bird’s nest and the squirrel in the tree - the bird’s nest and the squirrel in the tree - the bird’s nest and the squirrel that many others tend to miss.”

“The APD - it’s always been there though - but it allows me to see the bird’s nest and the squirrel in the tree - the bird’s nest and the squirrel that many others tend to miss.”

As much as I get angry at them, I have to pity them. The world they see may be emptier and emptier. Fortunately, there are “normal” people out there that can see the bird’s nest and squirrel. We appreciate those and love them.

But when what comes to something as simple as admitting “I have what you would call a learning disability” to someone who doesn’t see the nest and the squirrel or not, we fear them. They hurt us. They make life hell. But we can remember that we live outside a box that they don’t know how to leave. We can remember that we aren’t the only ones. And, fortunately, that box is becoming emptier and emptier.

Issues have more than one side. Even the quietest, most seemingly-inconsequential people can look at an issue that’s plagued the greatest minds in the world and history and solve it with one sentence - if you would but listen. Everyone has something going on in their heads, and unless you yourself have struggled with communicated your own thoughts with the world, you cannot easily appreciate the ability to communicate - from the simplest sentence to the most complex idea. But you know the very importance of allowing it to happen if you struggle with it yourself. Even if the communication amounts to nothing, it meant everything to the one who cannot normally communicate in a world that lives by a set of laws they cannot easily conform to.

When you are forced to think about it in a different way - i.e. when you are forced to communicate in an auditory world, when you struggle processing that very language - you are forced to take your own world and adjust it to the moment. Not only that, but on a flip of a coin.

That’s when you step outside of your world, your busy world, to stop and enjoy the bird’s nest and the squirrel.

Fortunately, there are “normal” people out there that can see the bird’s nest and squirrel. We appreciate those and love them.

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The APD - it’s always been there though - but it allows me to see the bird’s nest and the squirrel in the tree - the bird’s nest and the squirrel that many others tend to miss.”
Books recommended by APDUK members

These books can be ordered via the APDUK book page at no extra cost to you, but it will help our funds as we receive a small commission from Amazon.
http://www.books.apduk.org/

Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Integration Issues
Temple Grandin (Foreword), Lindsey Biel, Nancy Peske
For more information, see www.sensorysmarts.com
PRODUCT DETAILS:
• Paperback 416 pages
• Publisher: Penguin Books
• ISBN: 014303488X

Mind at a Time: How Every Child Can Succeed
Mel Levine M.D.
PRODUCT DETAILS:
• Paperback 352 pages
• Publisher: Simon & Schuster Inc
• ISBN: 0743202236
Synopsis
A professor of paediatrics reveals the many modes of learning and arms parents and teachers with the knowledge they need to help children prosper in a school environment.

The Explosive Child
Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.
PRODUCT DETAILS:
• Paperback 288 pages
• Publisher: HarperCollins
• ISBN: 0060931027
Synopsis
Offers techniques for helping chronically inflexible children, shows how brain-based deficits contribute to these problems, suggests ways to calm things down.

Surviving the Special Educational Needs System: How to be a Velvet Bulldozer
by Sandy Row
An inspirational true account by Sandy Row, relating her experiences as a mother with four adopted children, who turned out to be on the Autistic Spectrum, with a mixture of other psychological problems, Asperger Syndrome, Semantic Pragmatic Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Attachment Disorder!
“I am hoping that it will be a signpost for other parents - and I know there are many out there - who are still struggling with the system.”
Sandy Row
PRODUCT DETAILS:
• Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
email: sandrow@onetel.com
www.special-educational-needs.co.uk
Editor: The book retails at £12.95 but Sandy would be happy to offer APDUK members a £1 discount if they order through her website. Thank you Sandy.

I would like to highly recommend the set of six books by Jan Poustie called “The Identification Solutions For Specific Learning Difficulties Library”.
For more details see her website www.janpoustie.co.uk

Identification Solution for Specific Learning Difficulties Library (Key Solutions S.)
Jan Poustie
No photo available
PRODUCT DETAILS:
• Paperback 300 pages
• Publisher: Next Generation
• ISBN: 1901544141

Surprising the special educational needs system
Sandy Row

Log onto www.books.apduk.org for more books on APD issues and related invisible disabilities
I t's funny how everyone - OK, maybe not everyone, but a majority of people, anyway - seems to think that the telephone is such a wonderfully efficient means of communication. I suppose if you have normal auditory processing, that may very well be the case; but for those of us with auditory processing disorder, communicating by telephone is often an exercise in futility.

Now, granted, anyone with APD can vouch that face-to-face conversation is often difficult enough, what with the ephemeral nature of spoken language, the fast pace at which many people speak, and all those little social cues that are thrown into the mix as well. But over the phone, you have not only those issues to deal with, but also a whole category of problems unique to the technology at hand. On the telephone, there's no visual feedback whatsoever; in face-to-face hand. On the telephone, there's no visual problems unique to the technology at

It also doesn't help that, when I get particularly frustrated (as a phone call is bound to make me feel!) I often begin to stammer and have difficulty getting sentences to travel from my brain to my mouth without their becoming garbled in transit. Thus, my phone conversations are punctuated not only with frequent repetitions of "Could you say that again?" and various synonymous phrases, but also with frequent "umm's and "uhh's as I try to form a coherent statement without stumbling.

Now, perhaps I wouldn't be so upset, if the telephone weren't so widely used, not just in personal life but in the business world as well. Far too frequently, I've stumbled across organizations that offer no reliable means of contact other than a phone number. Some companies claim to have an e-mail address, but never respond to anything sent there, for one reason or another. Others don't even make pretensions of having an e-mail address, and simply urge people to call them instead. The alternatives offered for hard-of-hearing customers do work, but can be rather clumsy; some companies do offer a direct line for the text phones used by the deaf, but in most cases, one must go through an operator who relays your typed text to the call recipient and then transcribes his or her responses—not the most elegant solution, by any means, and with certain privacy issues at stake to boot.

I wish more people and organizations were willing to take the risk, to open themselves up to other means of communication. Speaking and listening are so overrated!

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Quotations from people who learn differently and have achieved so much...

**Roald Dahl** (writer) – (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory)  
"We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams."

**Albert Einstein** (mathematician)  
"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labour in freedom."

**Lynda La Plante** (writer)  
"I didn’t really feel at home with the written word until somebody gave me a typewriter."

**Richard Branson** (millionaire entrepreneur)  
"At the age of eight I still couldn’t read... doing poor classwork or confusing the date of the Battle of Hastings."

**Michael Faraday** (scientist/engineer)  
"The five essential entrepreneurial skills for success are concentration, discrimination, organization, innovation and communication."

**Thomas Edison** (scientist/inventor)  
"Teachers say I’m addled... my father thought I was stupid, and I almost decided I must be a dunce... If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves."

**Walt Disney** (creator)  
"When you’re curious, you find lots of interesting things to do. And one thing it takes to accomplish something is courage."

**Stephen Spielberg** (director)  
"I dream for a living."

**Winston Churchill** (politician/Prime Minister)  
"My education was interrupted only by my schooling. I was, on the whole, considerably discouraged by my school days. It was not pleasant to feel oneself so completely outclassed and left behind at the beginning of the race."

**Tom Cruise** (actor)  
"I had to train myself to focus my attention. I became very visual and learned how to create mental images in order to comprehend what I read."

**Leonardo da Vinci** (artist, sculptor, inventor)  
"I should prefer a good scientist without literary abilities than a literate one without scientific skills."

**Orlando Bloom** – (actor)  
"I’m dyslexic so school was always a bit tricky. But I got all my exams and degrees - I just had to work harder. Dyslexia is not due to lack of intelligence, it’s a lack of access. It’s like, if you’re dyslexic, you have all the information you need, but find it harder to process."

**Robbie Williams** (singer/songwriter)  
“Live the dream! ”

These people have proved that by ingenuity, determination and coping strategies you can make the most of what you are born with, your gifts, your dreams and your spirit.
I lived with Central Auditory Processing Disorder (now called Auditory Processing Disorder) my entire life. However, I was not diagnosed with the “silent disability” until I was twelve years old. I had successfully hidden it from the world up until that point. In hindsight, there were tons of indicators, but not one symptom quite distinct enough to scream “APD”. I was a reading dyslexic with Sensory Integration issues. My hyper acute hearing and noise sensitivities were accredited to SI. It all started to unravel when I was around eleven and a half. I went through a battery of tests and it was determined that I did indeed have APD; severely so. It was estimated that I have a 98% hearing loss in a noisy classroom.

Being a teen with Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) has its share of ups and downs. As if being a teenager wasn’t hard enough. Between boys (or girls), dances, classes, homework, friends, and sports- APD adds another dimension onto the awkward stages of teenage adolescence. From the cafeteria to the movie theater, dances to the classroom, teens with APD are constantly faced with challenges minute by minute. The most obvious trouble-location is the classroom; rustling papers, scraping chairs, the fluorescent lights buzzing incessantly. And it certainly doesn’t help when the teacher simply responds with, “Well, just tell me what you missed.” When you didn’t even hear it to know what it was in the first place.

The fortunate aspect of classroom accommodations is that nearly all accommodations benefit all students. The unfortunate part is that these types of accommodations, such as written assignment logs, syllabi, checklists and notes on any aural information, are incredibly time consuming for the teacher- or so I’m told- and therefore only happen on a hit and miss basis. A dream come true would be for each classroom to be outfitted with Surround Sound.

Cacophony
The cafeteria. Ah yes. The cafeteria. Like the mall, gym, and dances, the cafeteria serves as a mash pit for APD sufferers. A cacophony of brash sounds, trying to carry on a conversation is all but impossible. Often times my friends will tell me to “stop yelling” when I can barely hear what I’m saying. Walking with friends at the mall and trying to talk amidst crowds and background noise is incredibly frustrating both for myself and whoever I’m walking with. The conversation is peppered with “What?” and “Huh?” until we finally either drop the conversation or walk outside. Dances are just as bad, if not worse, due to the overwhelming throb of the bass. I’ll never hear those sweet nothing’s in my ear- at least, not under those circumstances. The worst part is that you can never trust what you hear- or think you hear. One example of this is music; when I listen to the radio or just to a CD, half the time I mis-hear the lyrics and don’t end up finding out about the mishap until I look up the lyrics in text!

Compensating
Being born with APD, you don’t know that there is anything wrong until someone tells you about it. You hear the way you’ve always heard, except now, you have a reason for the “what’s”, “huh’s” and misunderstandings. There are upsides, however, to this disability. I am one of 2% of the population to have perfect pitch, and I have strong musical/mathematical abilities. My audiologist said that I’d be the perfect candidate for learning Mandarin Chinese because of the tonalities needed. The brain is an amazing thing and is quite capable of compensating. Life, of course, will certainly be easier when I’m released from formal education.

Kelsey Ganes is fourteen years old and attends high school in the U.S.A. She plays guitar, violin and piano and sings for a crowd on a regular basis. Her passions are drawing & painting and textile arts.
Diversity and disaffection – celebrating children who learn differently

by Alyson Mountjoy, © Executive Vice Chair APDUK

Who are these children that learn differently? The simple answer is ALL children. It is a grave misconception that all children learn in the same way. Why then does our education system see to it that they are all taught in the same way and wonder why some fail to understand, to learn, to achieve and then put the blame on them for not doing so? The answer is simple; it is easier, cheaper and less time consuming to focus on the teaching of a system that is stacked against the vulnerable to the comments they receive, often with no recourse. They often feel excluded and incompetent in everyday school activities. Self-respect can be easily destroyed by a thoughtless comment from a frustrated teacher, comments that linger and shape a child’s perception of themselves as worthless. Humiliation, sarcasm and so-called humour are often employed in the name of discipline. Conversely a word of praise can have the opposite effect and a good teacher is remembered for life.

APD is a relatively new term in the UK and teachers need to understand how this affects children in their care, both educationally and socially. Children with APD are not lazy or deliberately slow; they just need that elusive extra time. APD can be socially isolating and they are vulnerable to bullying, an increasing presence in ALL schools, no matter how much you are told otherwise, and the damage from which can last a lifetime. Children have a right to be protected, to feel safe, at school as much as anywhere else, especially children with processing difficulties who are easy targets.

As adults we all struggle with something and we are all good at something, no matter how small or insignificant that may seem to others. Yet ALL children are expected to be good at all subjects. They are not perfect learning machines and they are not somehow less, somehow faulty for that. They all have strengths and the sheer diversity and potential in every child should be encouraged, not stifled.

"Children with APD need more visual and hands-on presentation and reinforcement than the auditory based teaching that our present system favours."

instead of the learning. But can we really afford to let this continue? The current UK education system fails to allow for originality, individualism, enthusiasm and stifles children, preventing them from ever experiencing the sheer joy of learning. Everything is rushed, no time to revisit topics and make sure children really understand. There is often not even enough time to cover the whole cumbersome curriculum. Children with APD need extra time to process what they are learning in order to fully understand it. Our system leaves no time for that.

Rules dictate that children must speak only when they are allowed. A child with APD is often unable to wait because they will forget what they wanted to say, so too if they are interrupted mid-sentence. A child may be silenced and deemed disruptive if they have too many questions. This is normal for a gifted child or a child who does not understand, but many children are referred for investigations of ADHD and misdiagnosed, even medicated over such misinterpretation. Children must put their hand up to speak in many schools, but those with APD may easily forget this rule in trying to hold on to that vital answer. If sent out, children miss part of a lesson in which they may already be behind the others. They may well be expected to catch up by missing their break and lunchtimes, free time that children with APD so badly need to relax their already overstretched and exhausted brains.

Our children are told what to learn and how to learn it, so they forfeit interests which are seldom included until they get to the stage where they are failing, and original ways are then sought in which to teach them. How much better to ensure that they did not fail in the first place, with all the stress, anxiety and lost self-esteem that entails. Children with APD need more visual and hands-on presentation and reinforcement than the auditory based teaching that our present system favours. ALL children deserve innovative and interesting instruction but children with APD must have it if they are to survive the school system. They need child-based education that focuses on the ways in which they naturally learn, that inspires and promotes learning, not spoon-fed verbally presented facts which they must regurgitate parrot fashion in order to taste success. Good teaching is too often lost in the daily race against time. As teachers seek to do more with less, some children lose out more than others and the child with APD loses more than most.

In choosing GCSE subjects, choices are limited to what falls in certain boxes on a piece of paper. If their preferences or strengths do not lie in accordance with these criteria, they must abandon their preferred subjects in favour of those in which they might be less competent, but which fit in with the teaching curriculum. We then wonder why these children lose any enthusiasm they might have had. They fail to achieve their potential and are blamed for it; victims of a system that is stacked against them.

Our children aim to please and are vulnerable to the comments they receive, often with no recourse. They often feel excluded and incompetent in everyday school activities. Self-respect can be easily destroyed by a thoughtless comment from a frustrated teacher, comments that linger and shape a child’s perception of themselves as worthless. Humiliation, sarcasm and so-called humour are often employed in the name of discipline. Conversely a word of praise can have the opposite effect and a good teacher is remembered for life.


diversity and potential in every child should be encouraged, not stifled.

"As adults we all struggle with something and we are all good at something, no matter how small or insignificant that may seem to others."

When employers consider a group of applications from equally qualified school leavers, they choose one over another by their originality, ingenuity, skills and aptitude to the position for which they are applying, by their unique gifts. Why then are schools sending children out unprepared into the real world by not nurturing these talents? With the right support the child with APD can learn to adapt, to use their strengths to help them cope in a world they cannot fully understand. All children deserve this chance and what hope will a child with APD have when...
those without APD are also denied these coping strategies?

Most children will tell you they do not like school. They are fed up with being treated like military recruits, who go in one end young, full of life and eager to learn and the majority of whom come out the other end disenchanted, disaffected, de-personalised, battle-weary and relieved that it’s all over. Is this really education? I have heard from teachers who are just as appalled at this system as the children they teach and feel they are nothing more than “glorified childminders”. Why then do they not speak out? I have been told it is because they fear for their jobs. But the children ultimately pay a worse price, their right to a decent education.

Our schools need the tools to do the job properly, the money and the time to effectively teach our children as they were made to learn, as individuals, with gifts and strengths, enthusiasm, originality and a sense of self-worth. Then more teachers might stay in teaching and enjoy it, instead of leaving in droves. More children might enjoy learning if it is made accessible and applicable to them all. Many deemed unable to learn because they do not learn in the way that teachers are made to teach, will finally have a chance and not be put in a daily position of failure. Children are ALL unique and ALL deserve the same chance to succeed. They ALL have very special educational needs that are not being met. The greatest disability they face is being sold short.

For more information on APD including help for parents and schools, see http://www.lacewingmultimedia.com/apd.htm
The new APD Cymru / Wales website has been put together and should be available as soon as the APDUK website is moved to a new web hosting service. It will include information on APD, APDUK membership and support and links relating to SEN provision in Wales. Please email olanys@aol.com with any links you would like to add.

Bydd wefan newydd APD Cymru / Wales ar gael pan fydd wefan APDUK wedi'i sefydlu mewn lleoliad newydd. Cynhwysir gwybodaeth ar APD, aelodaeth APDUK, cymorth a chysylltiadau sy’n berthnasol i anghennion addysgol arbenning yng Nghymru. Os oes unrhyw gysylltiad gennych i’w cynnwys, anfonwch at olanys@aol.com, os gwelwch yn dda.

APDUK will continue to promote awareness of APD in Wales, in order to ensure that everyone with APD gets the necessary support. Consequently, we have approached the Welsh Assembly Government to help us and have a strong ally in Peter Black AM, Chair of the of the Assembly Education Committee, which has just completed the first stage of a review into SEN. Any success we have in Wales will have a knock-on effect and implications for the whole of the UK. News of progress will be posted in future editions.

Bydd APDUK un dal i gyhoeddi arwybod am APD yng Nghymru er mwyn sicrhau bod pawb sy gydag APD yn cael cymorth anghenrheidiol. Felly gofynnyd Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru am gymorth, ac mae Peter Black AM, Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Addysg Cynulliad sy wedi gorffen archwiliad Anghennion Addysgol Arbennig, yn gynrychiolwr mawr. Bydd unrhyw welliant yng Nghymru yn cael effaith ar Brydain i gyd. Cyhoeddir newyddion mewn cyhoeddadau dyfodol.

You can help us by joining APDUK. See www.apduk.org membership page or use the form on the last page of the newsletter.

Gellwch chi helpu, gan ymuno ag APDUK. Gweler tudalen aelodaeth www.apduk.org neu ddefnyddiwlch y ffurflen ymuno ar y tudalen olaf.

Thank you very much;
Dioch yn fawr iawn
Amy
olanys@aol.com
Alyson Mountjoy,
Executive Vice Chair of APDUK / Is-Gadeirydd APDUK
Dyslexia Friendly LEAs, working with Careers Wales, Job awareness with employers, County Councils, campaigning for what it is like to have this condition. Through raising difference. More and more organisations are becoming APD Cymru, BDA Cymru and APD Cymru are making a working relationships with key organisations in Wales like Ministry for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson AM, in a statement declaring her support in a collaborative way with APD Cymru. Together we aim to ensure that, through collaboration and constructive partnerships, the needs of people with a range of learning differences are met.

The BDA now has a presence in Wales. In September 2004, it was delighted to launch BDA Cymru in the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff. This event was well attended by Assembly Members, some of whom were moved to speak during the event declaring themselves as having dyslexia and spoke in strong support of BDA Cymru. Representatives from across the public and voluntary sectors in Wales were also there to offer their support as well as members of the Dyslexia Associations in Wales. Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson expressed her support in a statement.

“I am certain that the only way we will achieve our ultimate goal is to work in partnership with organisations like BDA Cymru.” said Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson AM, in a statement declaring her support for the official launch of BDA Cymru.

A key objective for BDA Cymru has been to build links with other organizations in Wales who work for and on behalf of people with learning differences. Understanding the reasons for and causes of conditions like dyslexic, dyspraxia, ADHD and others is a fundamental aspect of our work. It is therefore a pleasure to be working collaboratively with APD Cymru.

BDA Cymru, based in Rhayader, Powys has an ambition to create a dyslexia friendly society in Wales. It has three main campaigns:

- Dyslexia Friendly Education
- Working with Young people with dyslexia in the Criminal Justice System
- Dyslexia Wise Employers Initiative

Through these campaign areas, I hope that BDA Cymru and APD Cymru can work together in identifying the excellent dyslexia-wise practice that already exists in Wales and build on that good practice and promote it Wales-wide. Having pockets of good practice is not good enough: every individual with dyslexia deserves to be heard and have their needs met.

By working in partnership with key organizations in Wales, BDA Cymru and APD Cymru are steering, shaping and influencing the Welsh dyslexia agenda and achieving the vision of an inclusive friendly society in Wales.

A key message from BDA Cymru is to be positive about dyslexia. This message is equally relevant to those who have dyslexia as well as those who don’t. It is true that having dyslexia can be very debilitating and frustrating for some. We at BDA Cymru recognise that and are working hard to ensure that the needs of these people are met. By developing robust working relationships with key organisations in Wales like APD Cymru, BDA Cymru and APD Cymru are making a difference. More and more organisations are becoming aware of dyslexia and have a much better understanding of what it is like to have this condition. Through raising awareness with employers, County Councils, campaigning for Dyslexia Friendly LEAs, working with Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus teams, and many more organisations and agencies, more and more people are getting the message.

An example of how the two organisations are working together is Project Llwyddiant. A £2 million project funded from the European Social Fund this project will enhance the educational experience of two thousand 13 – 19 year old young people in Wales who have specific learning difficulties. It is a very exciting initiative and one which sees BDA Cymru benefiting from strong alliances with organisations such as APD Cymru. Together we aim to ensure that, through collaboration and constructive partnerships, the needs of people with a range of learning differences are met.

As the message spreads across Wales, people are taking the opportunity to come forward. Take Emma McMurchie for example. Emma is a young woman from Sketty who was diagnosed with dyslexia during her time at Primary school. Although Emma had to deal with many difficult and frustrating experiences, she always remained positive about having dyslexia. She has had a successful educational career, overcome many barriers and is now applying to do a degree in Psychology. Her advice to other young people with dyslexia is to “acknowledge your dyslexia and celebrate it!” Great advice Emma!

Emma is by no means the only example of an individual who has come to terms with her dyslexia and has not let it stop her from reaching her goals. Two men with dyslexia from North Wales are also celebrating after signing publishing contracts for a first book which has drawn the attention of a TV company. These are great success stories and the individuals involved to be commended.

But of course, we recognise that not all people with dyslexia may wish to “shout it out from the roof tops”. We are here for those people too, those who are as equally committed to the cause but adopt a more ‘low key’ approach. BDA Cymru works with these people too offering advice on how to support themselves or individuals around them who have dyslexia and putting like-minded people in touch with one another. In this area BDA Cymru rely on the support of a dynamic and forward thinking local dyslexia association which is affiliated to the BDA. The West Wales Dyslexia Association, based in the Swansea area with satellite groups in Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, and whose Helpline service has supported many people over the years is always keen to hear from individuals who want to know more, or have something to say.

So, things are beginning to happen. APD Cymru and BDA Cymru have formed a strong strategic alliance. Recognising that there is strength in depth, both organisations see the value in working together and combining our individual strengths.

Encouraged, motivated, want to know more, want to contribute, want to join a local dyslexia association or start a new one? Contact us and help make Wales become an inclusive society.

Together we can make a difference.

Jennifer Owen Adams
National Officer Wales: BDA Cymru
Tel: 01597 810831
Email: jowenadams@btconnect.com
APDUK | Membership Application Form
Auditory Processing Disorder in the United Kingdom

I AM/WE ARE APPLYING FOR (please tick)

- Individual Membership £5.00
- Family Membership £7.50
- Concessionary Membership £2.00
- Professional Membership £10.00

Name .................................................................
Address ......................................................................
........................................................................................
........................................................................................
Postcode ...........................................................................
Tel. No ...........................................................................
Email ..............................................................................

Please tick your preferred options regarding how we can contact you.

- Post
- E-mail
- Telephone

I am interested in APD for one or more of the following reasons (Please tick the relevant box(es) which apply to you)

- I think I may have APD
- A young member(s) of my family may have APD
- An adult member(s) of my family may have APD
- I have a professional interest regarding APD
- I am interested in issues relating to APD and the Education System
- I am interested in issues relating to APD and Employment
- I am interested in Support for Families coping with APD

Please tick the nature of your interest

- Audiologist
- Paediatrician
- Educational Psychologist
- Special Educational Needs
- Other
- Speech & Language
- SENCo
- Parent Partnership
- Occupational Therapist

Please send the completed form together with a cheque made payable to APDUK to:
Mr. Mark Mitchell,
Membership Secretary APDUK
c/o Dacorum CVS, 48, High Street,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3AF

All APDUK members are automatically registered for our private chatrooms as part of their membership. We hold several chats a month, the details are listed below. They are held here.

http://client.sigmachat.com/sc.pl?id=46104

For those who are not members and who wish to participate in our international and adults with APD chats, please contact me olanys@aol.com as you will have to be registered in advance. Transcripts of the chats are only available to those who participate.

CHAT DIARY:

First Saturday of the month - APDUK International Chat.
Open to everyone with an interest in APD. (International chatroom)

Third Saturday if the month - APDUK Adults with APD chat
For those interested in the issues surrounding adults with APD. (Old_APD chatroom)

Last Sunday of the month - APDUK Members Chat
For paid members of the UK voluntary organisation APDUK. (APDUK_members chatroom)

APDUK Committee meetings are held as and when necessary. Although generally for committee only, we often hold open meetings for all paid members who wish to contribute ideas and help, and who are always welcome to join the committee. (APDUK_Exec chatroom)
You are all welcome to join us.

Aly(olanys@aol.com) Executive Vice Chair APDUK: http://www.apduk.org