Evaluation Report – Preston Dyslexia Centre

The Dyslexia Centre was set up to provide literacy support sessions to people with dyslexic difficulties. The support sessions typically take place for 1 hour per week using the specialist Indirect Dyslexia Learning software and was undertaken with children from local schools along with adults from the local areas.

This evaluation describes how the Dyslexia Centre has addressed the needs of those children and adults who suffer from dyslexia related symptoms.

What difference has the Centre made? Has it achieved its outcomes?

Outcomes achieved:

- Provided a lifeline for people struggling with the devastating effects of dyslexia
- Provided effective support for people with dyslexic difficulties where no other effective alternative exists or is accessible
- Raised awareness of dyslexia and how to support it effectively
- Established a unique provision of effective dyslexia support in the region, recognised by the local community and within schools
- Brought together local dyslexia/community support groups to offer a valuable service for those whose lives are being blighted through having dyslexia
- Provided life changing opportunities to over 200 children/adults in the local area
- Enabled adults and children from local communities to improve their:
  - Reading
  - Spelling
  - Self-confidence
  - Self-esteem
  - Employment opportunities
  - Engagement in leisure activities
  - Achievement in school
  - Engagement in school activities
  - Life chances and life experience

Evidence of outcomes achieved

Beneficiaries provided feedback that they had noticed improvements in their self confidence and self-esteem. Overwhelmingly, beneficiaries described experiencing improvements in employment opportunities, engagement in leisure activities, achievement in school reports, and engagement in school activities.

Records of 220 beneficiaries that have accessed the centre have been used for statistical purposes. Rates of progress in literacy skills have been defined by reading and spelling ages denoted for the period before they commenced using the IDL programme at the centre and for their actual time spent on the programme. The
rates of progress made were then compared to allow for judgement on the actual effectiveness of the IDL programme.

The results were analysed to demonstrate that:

- There was a significant increase in reading/spelling age
- That IDL does improve the rate of learning over that expected of traditional methods
- Rate of progress can be related to age

Information was taken from our central database which included:

- Name, address, DOB, sex, assessment date, reading/spelling age at initial assessment, reading/spelling age determined from progress reviews undertaken at 40 weeks:

**Analysis**

**Total Numbers on programme:** Male – 167 – Female - 53

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers on programme</th>
<th>Age 8-10</th>
<th>Age 11-13</th>
<th>Age 14- 17</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No on programme 2009</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No on programme 2010</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No on programme 2011</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What were the outcomes?**

Reading and Spelling improvements were significant and are shown below in improvements by months/age and year. Of the 220 children and adults who were evaluated, the average rate of improvement was 13 months in reading and 19 months in spelling over a 40 week period.

This is significantly faster than improvements using non-specialist teaching methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 After 40 weeks on programme</th>
<th>Age 8-10</th>
<th>Age 11-13</th>
<th>Age 14-17</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Average Increase Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in spelling</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Conclusions

- The IDL programme provides consistent, excellent results across all age groups in raising reading and spelling levels.
- Results are not affected by any changes made to support staff. This is due to the resilience of IDL, as a complete multi-sensory programme.
- 88% of the people attending were children/young people; 12% were adults.
- 24% of the people attending were female; 76% were male.
- Rates of progress made were greater in the 11-13 and adult age brackets.

### Why is there a need for IDL support in the community?

Our work within the communities has proved to us that there is a real need for support and has identified the following:

- Lack of individual/personal funds to support dyslexia learning is a barrier to entry.
- Limited/no access to effective specialist support.
- Adults forced to live with very low literacy levels and all the accompanying stress and disadvantage that goes with it.
- Adults underachieving in employment.
- Life chances are limited for people with dyslexic difficulties.
- Citizens contributions to their local communities are limited by poor literacy levels causing lack of engagement.
- Strong demand for dyslexia support from the region.

Proving IDL support in a community will:

- Contribute to promoting and celebrating excellence in local education authorities.
- Help towards local authority achievements in promoting active citizens and communities and narrowing the gap.
- Contribute to the children and young people’s plan including, importantly, the high proportion of looked after children who have SEN.
- Help those from low socio economic backgrounds.
- Deal with marginalised sections of the community.
- Address the knowledge gap in the community
- Give involvement and participation to the local community who are socially disengaged
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Contribute to local, regional and national plans, strategies and initiatives

Our work with local charities, voluntary and wider community organisations and with schools has identified that:

- There are insufficient resources to support dyslexia
- There are limited referral points for those who have dyslexia
- There is a lack of specialist staff to support this type of learning
- There is a need to establish a self-supporting community based dyslexia networks
- There is insufficient, ineffective support for children with dyslexia in local schools
- Children are struggling, under stress and underachieving
- There is a lack of funding with budget constraints
- There is insufficient specialist knowledge or training opportunities within regions
- This programme will help achieve regional targets for addressing special educational needs and will help support inclusion

What has worked well?

- Excellent results for those on the programme proves that the programme works effectively
- Quality of support
- Knowledge and empathy of staff

Excellent feedback from students and parents regarding:

- Friendliness and approachability of staff
- Ease of programme in use
- Enjoyment of programme by students
- Effectiveness in raising confidence
- Effectiveness in raising reading and spelling levels
- Word of mouth recommendations by students to other potential students
- The ability to bring people with the same issues and concerns together
- Accessing the views of the beneficiaries in the local community
- Bringing together dyslexia support services
- Engaging local unemployment support organisations
- Engaging key support workers from local authorities
- Integrating dyslexia support into an educational setting

What hasn’t worked well?

- Loss of students due to cost barrier – e.g. with redundancies etc in the recession
- Assessed people with dyslexia unable to afford essential support costs
Organisations interested in buying the programme to deliver support but unable to, due to cost barrier
Centre not easily accessible to those from further away
Diagnostic testing – long winded and expensive

What were the lessons learnt?

- Cost is a barrier to many children and adults being able to access the programme
- The problems in accessing dyslexia support are widespread across all age groups in these communities
- Widespread recognition amongst community establishments that support for dyslexia is very hard to find
- Most existing provision for literacy support is ineffective for dyslexia
- Impact of dyslexia is profound: affecting much more than literacy needs
Performance of IDL in Educational settings August 2011 - August 2012

288 beneficiaries registered on IDL across 40 schools and 4 venues within the Fylde and Central Lancashire regions:

Results show:

- 226 beneficiaries have stated that they have reduced stress as a result of using IDL which represents a 79% success rate
- 209 beneficiaries have stated that they have increased their self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of being on IDL which represents a 73% success rate
- 223 beneficiaries have improved their reading which represents a 78% success rate
- 246 beneficiaries have improved their spelling which represents an 85% success rate

The average increase in reading and spelling from beneficiaries within schools was 11 months in both areas.

The average increase in reading and spelling within other community establishments was 9 months in reading and 8 months in spelling. Although this did not match the school achievement levels it was still encouraging and considered a life changing progress.

At the onset of the programme each beneficiary was required to complete a questionnaire which evaluates their current stress, self-confidence and self-esteem levels. These levels are noted on a 5 point scale so that we are able to monitor the impact of the programme by reviewing what they are saying when they have completed the programme.

The teaching staff provided information on individual performance at the end of the beneficiary learning experience.

Some children achieved higher than predicted rises in reading/spelling which has been measured through the returned trackers, with dates/measured via re-assessment.

Two Venues expressed interest in going on to support parents with IDL, where they had found it to be successful with younger people.

Local Special Education representatives from Lancashire and Blackpool Boroughs have expressed interest in using the program widely across services, not only for youth support and the unemployed, but also for travelling communities, looked-after children and young offenders.
The average rise in reading and spelling levels for the majority of individuals was above expectation. For the individual beneficiaries, these rises are significant and represent a leap in progress which they have not been able to achieve previously.

Rises in confidence and happiness, as a result of using a programme that finally worked for them, have been widely reported. In addition to the positive written feedback, we have received much praise from parents and children at the Dyslexia Centre.

Parents and young people reported that they felt so much more confident in life in general, as well as in their reading and spelling. In many cases, this was described as being life-changing and having made a huge difference to their outlook on life.

The increase in confidence was visible to us at the Centre: children were noticeably more outgoing and engaged with their school lives after the project. They even held themselves more confidently, made better eye contact, and interacted more confidently with peers and adults.

Parents and children reported that they had received much improved school reports and increased scores in school tests as a result of being on the IDL programme.

Though adults were in the minority, they reported feeling much more confident about reading in their leisure and working environments. One older adult was then able to set up his own website after the year of support: at the start of the year he was lacking IT skills.

These improvements in quality of life, as well as to literacy, confirm our expectations and prove that the programme is a highly valuable intervention.

**Performance of IDL in Educational settings August 2012 - August 2013**

The Lifting Barriers project has continued to make good progress during the second year of The Big Lottery funding.

There have been 425 additional beneficiaries registered on the project in Year 2.

There were 33 new venues selected for delivery of the IDL programme in Year 2 of the project, in addition to the continuing delivery at the CES Wellfield dyslexia centre in Leyland.

In Year 2, 75 community based advisors attended training on how to recognise and support beneficiaries who have dyslexia.

In Year 2, 294 beneficiaries stated that they have reduced stress as a result of being on the project which represents a 69% success rate.
In Year 2, 314 beneficiaries stated that they have increased self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of being on the project which represents a 74% success rate.

In Year 2, 400 beneficiaries demonstrated improvements in their reading which represents a 94% success rate.

In Year 2, 391 beneficiaries demonstrated improvements in their spelling which represents a 92% success rate.

In Year 2, the average beneficiary reading age increase was 10 months and the average beneficiary spelling age increase was 9 months.

The average increases in reading and spelling ages for adults completing the IDL programme at other community establishments was 8 months for reading and 10 months for spelling.

**Feedback**

A community advisor noted, 'Using the the IDL programme has been a very positive experience for the children, they enjoy working on the computer and it provides a fun way of working that is so much more varied and interesting than the more traditional methods……the children do not feel that they are working on their reading and spelling'.

Another community advisor noted, 'Due to the impact the programme has had on pupils and the positive results they have made, we will be running the IDL sessions for both KS3 and 4 pupils during this academic year'.

All advisors who took part in Year 1 and 2 of the Lifting Barriers project will now be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and support future children and adults with dyslexia.

A community advisor noted, 'I have enjoyed focusing on children with dyslexic traits and understanding the need for learning in a repetitive, multi-sensory manner..'

At the end of 2 years of Big Lottery funding, the beneficiaries who have accessed the IDL programme, will now have a better understanding of what it means to have dyslexia and will have learned essential coping strategies (such as using coloured paper and filters).

A beneficiary noted after the programme, 'The only time I avoid reading is if it's out loud to others, but I feel more confident when I have my light blue over sheet'.

Following feedback, CES Solutions have now developed a 'cloud based' version of IDL and we now have over 3000 students using IDL across 350 schools.

Sustainability will best be achieved by a dyslexia product that is demonstrated to work effectively and change the lives of sufferers. This is summarised by one community advisor at a school venue, 'Yes, we plan to continue using the IDL programme. It has raised reading and spelling levels and children who have used
the programme have gained confidence in their own ability. It offers a fun and motivating method and encourages independent learning.'