

December 2010

Czech Republic: Kateřina Nevřalová

Prague workshop for the Czech Dyslexia Association

Parents and teachers in the Czech Republic have few online resources to use to support the dyslexic individual. Therefore, when Prof Ian Smythe was invited by the Czech Dyslexia Association to give a talk about technology based support and solutions, people travelled up to 300km to hear him, despite the cold winds and driving snow.



parents and teachers to convince others. This was followed by the section about assistive technology with an overview of what can be done, with recommendations of software can be downloaded free, including from other EU funded projects, as well as discussions of commercial options.

The third part was carried out jointly with Katerina , to provide an overview of the Dys2 project, starting with an overview of the cognitive relationships between the Dys2 games and their potential

The day long workshop was dedicated to the use of technology, broken into three parts. The first part was a presentation on what is dyslexia, designed not only to provide background information, but also empower

impact on reading and writing. This was linked to the background discussions in the first part. There was much interest in the work, and more than ten people followed up the talk signing up to try the activities and promising



to enrol those they are working with. There were mostly the special trainers and psychologists working with the young dyslectic adults and teenagers and they highly appreciated the targeting of the games on this target group. They were surprised with the amount and professionalism of the games and their free availability. They were interested in using the additional options like scoring and uploading the sets of pictures and auditory files. These functions make the games very flexible and allow to modify them according to the problems of the users. The new contacts are important for piloting and the sustainability of the project in the Czech Republic as well.



Cyprus: Klitos Symeonides

Preparation for the Pilotings in progress

In all Partners Countries there are last preparation for Pilotings.

Games are ready to be tested by new users in new countries.

There will be involved at least 20 dyslexic young students per country and 5 specialized trainers.

Some partners will carry out Piloting in an online mode (in Lithuania, Austria, and Cyprus); others decided to provide offline/ blended mode: Germany, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and UK. In Czech Republic there were first meetings with dyslexic adults in universities. Katerina, EF said: "The first responds are almost

positive. Especially the teachers are very happy to get this free tool which is very dyslectic friendly and allows to provide spontaneous training". The Pilotings are to be provided by the end of February by all Partners and at the end of March will be provided summary of those activity.

The results of Partnership's Pilotings will be known at the beginning of the April 2011.

UK: Dr. Ian Smythe

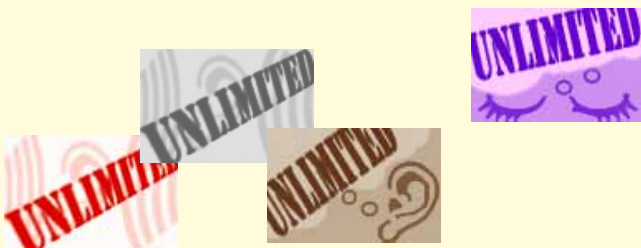
Translating – the next step

When it comes to learning languages, the dyslexic individual has a lot of difficulties. There are many ways that technology can help. But it is one of the latest iPhone App that seems to offer the most useful support. Image holding your mobile phone up to a sign in a different language in the camera mode, and seeing not the sign, but a translation of the sign!! This may sound futuristic, but the English-Spanish version was launched on 16 December 2010. Just check out their video at www.questvisual.com. And the price? Less than €5! There are sure to be many who will even consider buying an iPhone just for this App. And let's not even start to think about all that money



that goes into EU projects that could be saved.
(© Ian Smythe 2010)

All configurators and new standard games are online



In our November newsletter we reported about the configurators Unlimited Same Picture and Unlimited Same Word-Picture. Today we can announce that all configurators are online. Partners uploaded resources to their national versions, so you will learn easily how the games work.

Following configurators are available: in the area Auditive Discrimination:

Unlimited Intonation
Unlimited Wordline Rhymes
Unlimited Wordline Same Initial Sound

in the area Auditive Memory:

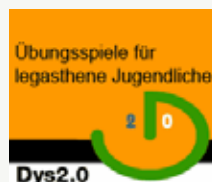
Unlimited Same Sound
Unlimited Same Word
Unlimited Rhyme Pairs
Unlimited Same Initial Sound

and in the area Visual Memory:

Unlimited Same Picture
Unlimited Same Word-Picture

Ad Banner

Do you want to integrate a link from your website directly to the DYS 2.0 online learning games? Contact the DYS 2.0 partner in your country and you will receive an animated ad banner. Look here at some of the existing versions:



Lithuania: Julita Pigulevičienė

Dissemination of DYS 2.0 project in Prague and Vilnius

Dys 2.0 project was disseminated in the contact seminar “Developing competences for professionals in VET” in Prague, 17th-20th of November, 2010 and in international conference “E-Education: science, study and business”, which took place in Vilnius on 24th-25th of November, 2010.



17th-20th of November, 2010 Julita Pigulevičienė participated in the contact seminar “Developing competences for professionals in VET” in Prague, where DYS 2.0 project was presented to the participants of the seminar. The feedback of the project was very positive and huge interest of games was noticed.



The DYS 2.0 project was also disseminated in the international conference “E-Education: science, study and business”, which took place in Vilnius, where the project and its website www.dys2.org was presented. The participant of the conference showed a great interest to the learning games, which are already translated into Lithuanian language.

Germany: LiNK MV, Editha Tegler, pro-kompetenz, Dr. Gerd Zimmer

Piloting workshops to present DYS 2.0 game based training have started in Rostock, Germany

In the German Federal State of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania neither pro-kompetenz nor LiNK MV were involved in Dyslexia networks so far.

For dissemination and valorisation of the project and its results, as well as for preparing successful piloting, we decided to build up contacts in two directions: to parents support groups and to dyslexia organisations/training centres.

From our perspective it has been a good strategy to start this way dissemination locally, with direct contacts, and to enlarge, step by step, information and cooperation channels. From our perspective, this approach can reach a wide and sustainable transfer of information to potential users.

Who if not parents are the most motivated persons willing to take up initiatives which can support their children? In support groups, information will be transferred from mouth to mouth and this will be the case also after project's lifetime. Teachers working with dyslexic can be another crucial source for a long term use of results – provided that they are good enough and convincing.

A first prove for this would be the piloting workshops. Would we be able to attract teachers and parents?

We addressed our contact persons two times by e-mail and invited to workshops by phone. Together with the e-mail we provided again information about the project progress made so far and results which are available yet.

Two workshops took place on November 22nd and 25th 2010 – and almost all invited persons came – from “Sprachheilpädagogisches Förderzentrum Rostock” (Centre for professional pedagogical promotion for children with speech and language disturbances) and from adult education centre, interested parents organised in the dyslexic organisation. Not a large number of persons – just seven, but highly interested to get to know more about the project and its results.

For workshop introduction, we used slides explaining the approach of the game based training. Our UK project partner, Dr. Ian Smythe, expert in the field of Dyslexia, provided us this valuable support material which we translated into German. Marek Suchowski from LiNK MV who develops the game configurators explained the platform and options for using and personalizing the games. In the discussion participants reported about their background related to the dyslexic issue and their expectations.

After two workshops we can say that the feedback regarding to the project topic and the games was very positive. This feedback confirmed that there exist a demand for services like this especially for young persons and young adult because there is a lack of suitable instruments for working with dyslexic people of that age.

A third preparatory workshop has already been scheduled for January 24th 2011.

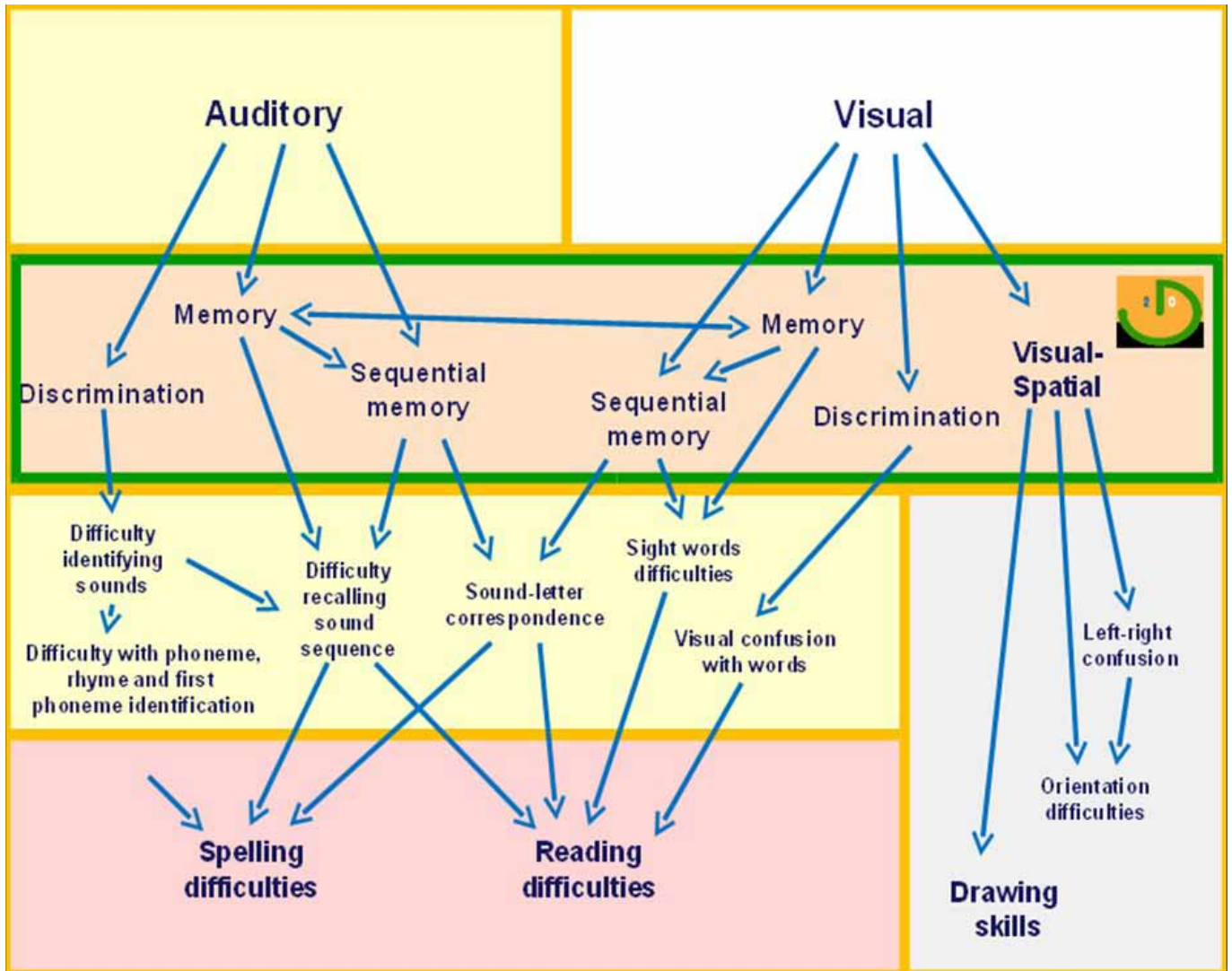
All participants were encouraged to sign in as tutors and test the games and use game configurators in order to create their own application according to the needs of their students. After a certain period of self-testing we will get together again in the second half of January 2011. Then the second phase of the piloting starts where young dyslexic will be involved. The trainers and experts who participated in the introductory workshops will work together with their students and test the games.

A closing workshop is planned mid February 2011 (before the beginning of the school vacations).

At the moment we favour a face-to face workshop again in order to get as much detailed feedback as possible. But it is also an option to hold a workshop in one of the participants' institution together with the students.

We plan also to have a valorisation workshop with German participants and the project partners during the transnational meeting on 8th April 2011.

For us, this piloting strategy seems to be an ideal possibility to establish good and lasting contacts with persons who are willing to use the project results in future.



UK: Dr. Ian Smythe

Phonology needs a new way of thinking

According to research reported in the Dyslexia journal in November 2010, the idea of phonological awareness being the core difficulty of the dyslexic individual is highly questionable. What they claim is “In summary, the results of this study with familial risk children did not support the phonological (awareness) deficit theory of dyslexia; more precisely, the results render this theory unlikely.” (See Reference below.)

To an outsider, this makes perfect sense, since, as the article says, if not every dyslexic individual has this difficulty, how can you claim that a given cognitive difficulty is core? For many years Professor Ian Smythe has been highlighting the need to analyse in research as well as evaluate in practice all possible causes of reading difficulties in the dyslexic individual and not just the phonological skills promoted by a small group of researchers

who analyses are based on misguided correlation statistics that may have significance in a group context, but do not tell you the problems of any given individual.

However, the problem then arises that if phonological awareness is not the problem, what is? The answer is simple - researchers should stop looking for a single core difficulty using correlation statistics, and accept



that every individual is different. Even simple regression analysis will demonstrate the multi-variant nature of any individual. It is true that phonological awareness may be most likely causes of a problem, but it is better to consider all possibilities.

So why is this relevant to Dys2? Because in Dys2 there is no assumption of where the difficulties lie. Dys2 activities allow the teacher/tutor to work with students to identify areas that may require skill and strategy

development across a diversity of cognitive domains, rather than fixated on those related to “phonological awareness.”

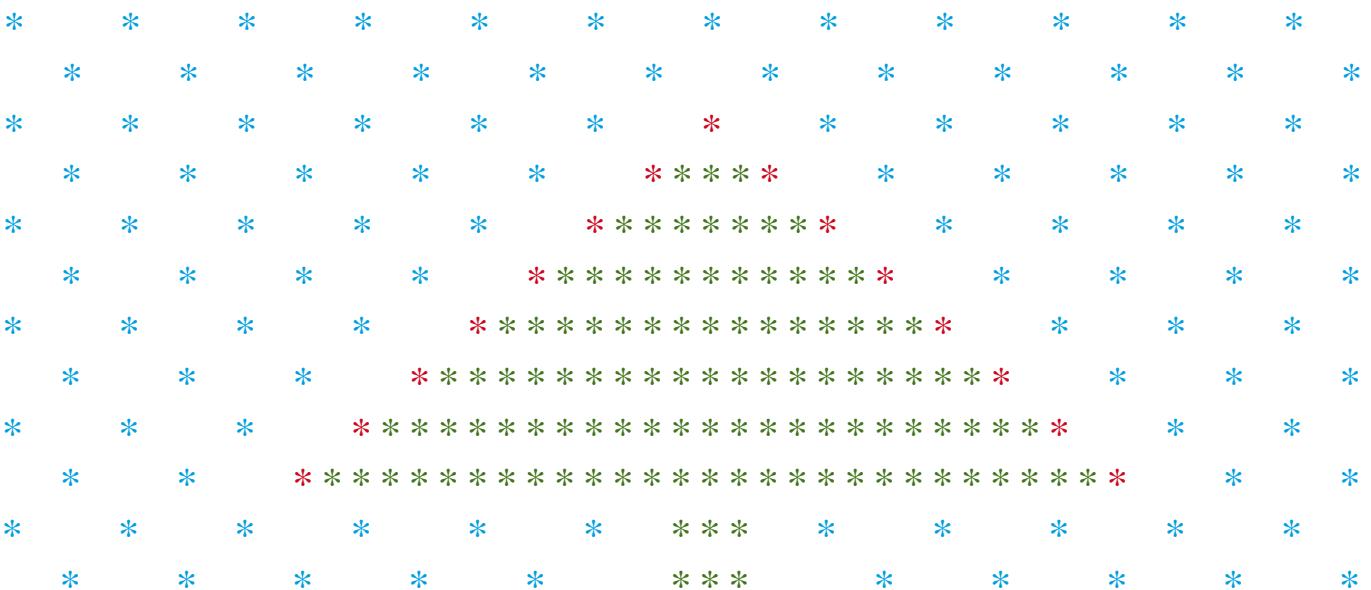
However, remember that there are many reasons why an activity may be regarded as fun. It is not just the challenge, the technical skill and motivating content, but also the underlying cognitive abilities required. Put another way, if an individual says they don’t like a task, maybe it is not about motivation or challenging nature of the game, but an indicator of an

underlying cognitive processing problem of the individual.

Page up is a diagram that maps some of the relationships between the same areas, the games, and their potential impact upon literacy related areas. (© Ian Smythe, 2010)

Reference

Blomert, L. and Willems, G. (2010) Is there a causal link from a phonological awareness deficit to reading failure in children at familial risk of dyslexia? Dyslexia 16(4):300-317



Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year :-)

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