

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDUCATIONAL KINESIOLOGY

I am writing as a member of the B.E.D.P. and as Guidance Coordinator of the Christian Community High School.

I am very keen to obtain further information on and a balanced assessment of Educational Kinesiology, which is being used by one of the staff members at our school.

The technique is claimed to help children with learning difficulties, and to help adults to achieve their full potential. It involves the integration of left-brain/right-brain procedures through the use of simple exercises and other procedures.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone with information on the technique.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Fyson
Christian Community High School
59/61, Regent Street,
Regents Park
NSW 2143

Editor's Note: I hope that readers can assist Stephen with his request. Any information could be sent to the Editor for distribution and/or publication as appropriate.

CANADIAN EXCHANGE

I am a psychologist with the Toronto Board of Education and am interested in organising an exchange with an Australian colleague. As you know, for an exchange to be effected, each person must be able to fulfil the job requirements of the other. In my case, the visiting psychologist would be required to complete psychoeducational assessments for children from grade one through secondary school, provide consultation to school staffs, offer shortterm counselling to students and parents, and participate on departmental committees. Facility in French would be an asset but is not required.

If you could suggest agencies or individuals I might contact to pursue this matter, I would be most appreciative. A copy of my curriculum vitae is enclosed.

Thanking you for your attention to this matter, I remain

Sincerely,
Janice Gouse-Sheese, Ph.D.(C.Psych.)
129 Durie Street,
Toronto, Ontario
M6S 3E7

Editor's Note: A copy of Janice Gouse-Sheese's curriculum vitae is available for persons interested in an exchange. Please contact the Editor.

OMITTED REFERENCES

It has recently been brought to my attention that only half of the relevant references which I submitted actually accompanied the paper "Behaviour analysis and social skills training: Some points to consider", which appeared in Vol. 3, No. 2 of the AEDP in November. I enclose the pages which contain those references which were omitted and would be grateful if they could be included in the next issue with some appropriate comment.

Thankyou in anticipation of your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Ralph
Psychology, Murdoch University
March 9, 1987.

Editor's Note: Apologies for this omission to Alan and all our readers. The remainder of the references is included in this edition.

COLOURED LENSES — YES or NO?

Coloured lenses for the remediation of learning difficulties based on the "Irlen Institute for Perceptual and Learning Disabilities" also known as: "Dyslexia Diagnostic and Scotopic Sensitivity Learning Centre", have been the subject of much discussion lately.

Last year the writer was unable to obtain (computer search of the literature) scientific evidence in support of this method.

In addition "Insight" which seems to run or co-ordinate a course in Australia for individuals to become "franchised Irlen lens licensees" (\$5000 per annum) failed to reply to a letter requesting supporting information about the method.

It was therefore surprising to read in an article by Don Zimmerman, Acting District Guidance Officer, Kalgoorlie, (W.A. Education News August 1986) that "The only thing that seems to be universally agreed among all researchers is that the lenses do benefit to some degree. None has stated that they do not work" Zimmerman mentions also that lenses are sent to the Irlen Institute in the U.S. where they are tinted, which seems to imply that the "treatment" is used there.

Consequently the following individuals or institutions were contacted:

The Director of the State Education Department,
Los Angeles, California
(Helen Irlen was at Long Beach State University in California before coming to Australia).

The California State Library.

Professor R. Calfee,
Education Department,
Stanford University, California.

Ms. M. Henry, Vice-president, Orton Dyslexia Society,
Stanford University, California

The International Centre for the Disabled in New York
(does research in dyslexia).

The California State Librarian replied that: data based searches produced "no specific information on coloured lenses or the Irlen Institute"

The International Centre for the Disabled in New York and the Director of the State Education Department Los Angeles, California, were unable to provide any information.

Professor Calfee from Stanford University also answered by saying: "I know of no evidence to support this programme. To the contrary the research literature suggests that dyslexia is more likely to result from difficulties in the phonological and general language systems . . . the cure for the problem appears to be effective teaching of decoding and formal language skills"

Ms. M. Henry of the Orton Dyslexia Society was more familiar with the Irlen Institute since she had recently prepared a paper on "fraud and dyslexia" at Stanford University. She states: "I have seen no research to support Mrs. Irlen's claims. She has left her position at California's Long Beach State University and seems to offer her seminars primarily in Australia"

The American Association of Ophthalmology (1) along with the American Academy of Paediatrics and the American Academy of Ophthalmology have issued a joint statement noting "there is no peripheral eye defect which produces dyslexia and associated learning disabilities" and that "Eye defects do not cause reversals of letters, words and numbers". In addition, they find no scientific evidence to support the claims for "improving the academic abilities of dyslexic children with treatment based solely on visual training (i.e. muscle exercises, ocular pursuit, glasses)"

In fact, the joint statement notes that such training often results in "unwarranted expense and has delayed proper instruction for the child". They also warn that unless the child has correctable ocular defects "glasses have no value in the specific treatment of dyslexia or learning problems"

The above is in agreement with a statement last year by the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists (2) . . . "The parents of learning disabled children are particularly vulnerable to promises of help for their

children and the College is concerned that these parents should exercise caution in buying these tests and tinted glasses when there is no proof of their usefulness”.

In spite of the foregoing, some individuals seem to report improvement after using coloured lenses.

The answer may be that some forms of dyslexia are susceptible to psychosomatic cure. This already has been established with warts. That is, a strong mental conviction in an individual that a wart is about to disappear, or that it needs to disappear, will make it vanish.

That is, we may not need coloured lenses to cure dyslexia. Almost any “charm” may do so long as the dyslexia sufferer believes in it.

Tom Vandamme
District Guidance Officer — Pilbara
(Registered Psychologist)

- (1) American Academy of Ophthalmology (1984) Learning disability, dyslexia and vision (policy statement), San Francisco cited in, M.K. Henry (1984) Curing Dyslexia (unpublished paper) California: Stanford University, School of Education.
- (2) Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists (1986) Press release: Coloured lenses for learning disability University of New South Wales cited in E. Tuettemann (1986) The use of tinted lenses in the treatment of reading disabilities: a background paper (unpublished paper) Education Department of Western Australia.

Editor’s Note: I would be pleased to hear from any readers who have experience with the Coloured Lenses and/or know of relevant research evidence.