

# communiqué

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

## ***“The Executive Functions Issue”***

## **New Reading Software**

### **Re-Organizing ADHD Brain Wave Activity**



**... and we have very  
pretty lampshades too!**

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THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

## **CONTENTS**

### DEPARTMENTS

- 3 Editor's Notebook:** Executive Suite
- 4 LDAO and LD News:** Dr. Kenny rocks the house at Learning and Leadership Breakfast • The Ins and Outs of the Web-Based Teaching Tool • Introducing The Vox Factum Tutor
- 7 Public Policy Round Up:** Updates on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service • Safe Schools Legislation • The Law Commission of Ontario Disability Project and more
- 8 Elsewhere:** Bits and pieces of LD news from around the globe
- 9 The ADHD Files:** *Bob Gottfried* on how reorganizing brain wave activity can improve attention deficits
- 10 Shelf Life and Hot Web**

### FEATURES

- 12 Executive Functions**  
Wildly misunderstood, oversimplified and under-discussed, we decided to tackle a complex subject and break it down, item by item for you. From Activation to Emotion to Action, it's all here waiting for you!

### THE BACK PAGES

- 22 Thanks to Donors and Sponsors:** Sending gratitude to the folks who help keep us going.
- 24 LDA Chapter News and Views:** It's true! Vintages and Wine is back in York Region
- 26 In Person:** *Dean Goldstone* is much more than just a pretty lampshade

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# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

## *Executive Suite*

By Carter Hammett



Carter Hammett, Editor

I've got a friend who I love to borrow quotes from. Like a handful of people I know, she speaks and thinks in great sound bites and I try to steal from her as often as possible.

One of the statements she frequently repeats, is "saying focus to a person with ADHD is like saying, 'oh, just cheer up' to a person with depression.

In recent years it's become somewhat trendy to talk about "Executive Functions." For those of you out of the loop, Executive Functions (EF) are, in short, the logic and problem solving centres of the brain.

In reality, they are more like a complex neurological ecosystem, one part relating to, and affecting another. Although they are often discussed in the context of ADHD, more and more health care professionals are beginning to take note of Executive Functions as a focus for treatment and further exploration of trouble causing behaviours in both children and adults.

Looking at the breakdowns can be confusing, and when you start getting into specifics, downright overwhelming. Among the most commonly-affected areas, time management, stress management, emotional management, priority setting, organizing, multitasking, personal censorship, working memory and just plain getting started are often cited.

You can see how these items would have a huge impact on the job. Especially since many of the affected areas are deemed essential working skills.

It seems only fair then that we decided to bring you an issue with a theme dedicated to this concern. Although there are many

models for ADHD, I relate to Dr. Thomas Brown's the best in terms of editorial content and so our features this issue are structured around each of the six areas he has identified.

These are: **Activation**, which is discussed at length by professional ADD coach **Tina Bauer** of Toronto, who sheds light on this function, which often surfaces as a last-minute emergency, despite the fact we had months to accomplish it (like meeting deadlines for this magazine, for example). Focus is the ability to shift and sustain attention to tasks, both inner and outer. Oakville's **Lisa Booth** introduces you the ups and downs of this next vital stage. In Brown's model, **Effort** has to do with regulating alertness, sustaining effort and processing speed. Ottawa's **Rick Antosik** gives us an example of effort with an article on time management that may be relevant to many readers. Meanwhile, Toronto's **Ken Seaton** offers five steps to avoid having meltdowns at work. This is because Brown identifies **Emotion**, and its regulations as being a big part of EF. Working memory is also frequently cited as the bane of all existence and few people know this better than psychologist **Bob Gottfried**. Lastly, but not least, when all is working well, and even when it isn't, **action** has a lot to do with what one puts out in the world. Artist Roselyn Chues of London is profiled in our last component.

If you haven't heard about Executive Functions by now, you and your clients will have a pretty good idea of what they are when finished this issue. Hope you enjoy it!

Carter Hammett, Editor



## CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE

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## LDAO AND LD NEWS

# Message from the Executive Director and Chair

Adults with learning disabilities (LDs) confront a compound set of challenges especially if they have managed somehow to get through high school without being properly assessed and supported. They are likely to carry with them the scars of never having quite fit in and of having suffered a succession of disappointing grades and failed attempts at projects, summer jobs and even relationships. All these “failures” can make the transition from home and school to independence and employment like trying to walk up a wall. Where would you start, and why would you want to?

The proposed standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) are certainly a step toward creating better, more accessible workplaces but standards are not enough. Standards do not erase stigmas and they do not negate the unwarranted shame that is often associated with “disability”. How does someone with a learning disability disclose to a prospective employer without jeopardizing his or her potential employment? How does an employer create an environment that is open and welcoming to employees who are “different” while at the same time meeting their corporate needs for productivity and a healthy “bottom line”?

Certainly understanding is key. The articles in this issue of Communiqué provide some critical information and dispel some

of the myths surrounding learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD. They also provide some examples of how some individuals have succeeded in spite of their learning differences or perhaps because of the creative ways they have learned to use their learning differences to their advantage.

There are examples of successful, high achieving adults with learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD in every employment sector – in industry, sports, the arts, business, science etc. – throughout history. Einstein, Beethoven, Winston Churchill, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Richard Branson, Henry Winkler, Bruce Jenner to name only a few. Unfortunately, they were/are thought of as “exceptional” rather than as the norm.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario including the twenty chapters throughout the province, is making a commitment to help make a success of the proposed (AODA) standards and the hiring and employment implications for individuals with LDs and ADHD. To do so we will work not only with individuals with LDs but also with the corporate community to make “exceptional” the new norm.

**Maggie Wygant, Executive Director**

**Vin Greco, Chair**



Maggie Wygant

## LDAO Learning and Leadership 3rd Annual Corporate Breakfast

More than \$85,000 was raised at the LDAO 3rd Annual Learning and Leadership Corporate Breakfast hosted at the Royal York Hotel on February 24, 2010. Guest speaker Dr. Kenny Handelman donated his time to speak to an audience of educators, parents, corporations and community organizations about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and unwrapping the gifts that individuals with this exceptionality can bring to the work environment.

Kenny Handelman, affectionately known as “Dr. Kenny”, is a psychiatrist who works with child, adolescent, and adult clients and is an expert in ADHD. In his talk, Dr. Handelman spoke about how common ADHD is and the reasons it is often not diagnosed. Dr. Handelman highlighted the impact of Adult ADHD in the workplace and in society, as well as strategies for identification and treatment. Dr. Handelman spoke about the gifts of ADHD.

Adults with ADHD often face the same issues in the workplace that they experienced in school: difficulty concentrating for long periods of time, planning and written reports, and trouble juggling multiple deadlines and transitions. But research shows that individuals whose hyperactivity, distractibility, and daydreaming

were considered a challenge in the classroom will frequently become energetic, observant, and highly creative employees. Companies that recognize the benefits of these dynamic traits understand where they are best applied. Whether in sales, marketing, teaching, communications, politics, or business – exploration, risk-taking, enthusiasm, entrepreneurship, ingenuity, and charisma all have an important place in the workplace and in our culture.

Dr. Handelman spoke about why it is so important for Canadian employers to embrace and utilize the productive talents of adult workers with ADHD. By providing these exceptional employees with the tools and support they need to thrive and succeed, we leverage their strengths, build our business, and enhance our communities.

A special thanks goes out to presenting sponsors Corus Entertainment and Scotiabank, as well as event Co-Chairs Robert Richards and Jay Mandarino (and their committee of volunteers).

For more information on next year’s Learning and Leadership Corporate Breakfast please contact Denise Harding, Fund Development Consultant, at 416-929-4311 ext. 40.



# AN EARLY SCREENING AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM: The Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT)

The Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) is an online program, based on the Dynamic Screening and Intervention Model, which primary teachers (JK – Grade 2) use for early screening and intervention. The WBTT program helps teachers determine:

1. Which of their students are struggling
2. What areas they are struggling with
3. How these areas of need can be addressed in the classroom.

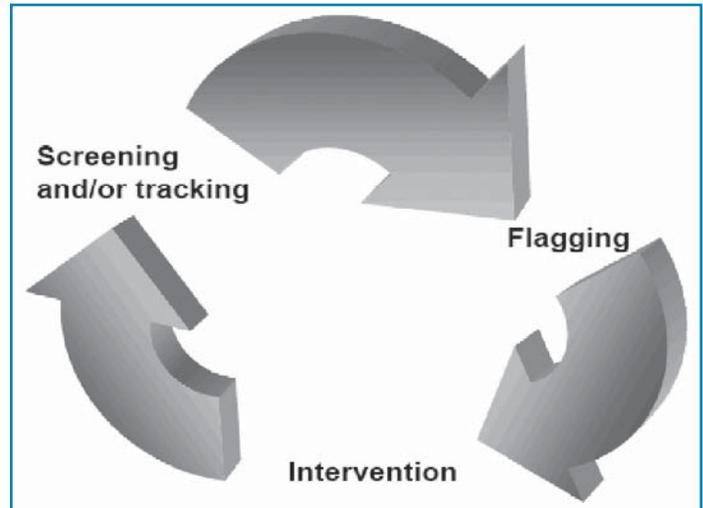
Generously funded by the Ministry of Education, this online tool consists of several quick, predictive screening measures in the areas of school readiness, early literacy development (phonological awareness) and math. The WBTT program automatically flags students whose scores fall below the benchmark and are therefore considered at-risk for future school difficulties, and also recommends interventions and 'next steps' for flagged students. This ensures that teachers have the tools they need to help struggling students early on in their school careers. The WBTT program also includes Observation Checklists for further determining flagged students' areas of need, and for tracking their progress throughout the year. The WBTT's searchable database of classroom-based interventions and teaching strategies helps teachers find ideas for supporting students, right in their classrooms.

## History:

In 1999 the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) began the Promoting Early Intervention (PEI) Initiative in response to the McCain-Mustard Early Years Report. This landmark report emphasized the importance of the early years



The WBTT program is used to screens students in the following areas:  
• School Readiness • Early Literacy • Mathematics



*The Dynamic Screening and Intervention Model*

and recommended that we pay closer attention to students during these years. The PEI Initiative conducted a series of fourteen focus groups with School Boards across Ontario to examine the screening models Boards were using. It was determined that there was:

1. a wide range of practices in Boards regarding screening
2. no standardized approach to screening young students, and
3. no guarantee that screening led to intervention with flagged, or at-risk, students.

The PEI working groups determined that educators needed an organized system to help teachers differentiate between those students who require extra support in order to catch up to their peers and those who will have long-term learning difficulties. After several years of piloting the PEI program, the LDAO, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Education, developed the Web Based Teaching Tool program.

## Current Research in Education regarding Early Screening Practices

Current research shows that early screening in literacy and math can detect students who are at-risk for future school difficulties. Current research also shows the following:

- When these at-risk students are provided with interventions by their classroom teachers, they often catch-up to their peers and no longer struggle in school
- The earlier an at-risk student is supported, the less likely they are to struggle in the future
- Students who are not supported continue to struggle. If students are not detected as struggling until the later elementary years, they are often achieving much below their potential and peers and may be inaccurately diagnosed with a learning disability.

## Goals of the WBTT Program

The WBTT program was developed to assist teachers in detecting students who could be at-risk for future school difficulties. It provides teachers with quick predictive screening tools and a wide variety of interventions to enhance their teaching practice and benefit their students. The goals of the WBTT program are to;

1. increase student achievement
2. close the early achievement gap
3. support the classroom-based model, where screenings, interventions and progress monitoring take place by the classroom teacher
4. provide additional support to students who need it as early as possible
5. activate a chain of support when it is determined that a student needs extra help.

## Why Use the WBTT Program?

### The WBTT program seeks to ensure that:

- There is a standardized approach to screening students
- Screening leads to intervention with flagged students
- Educators have a system to differentiate between those students who require extra support in order to catch up to their peers and those with long-term learning difficulties

- All of the screens used by the WBTT program are research-based, valid and reliable. They can successfully predict when a student is at-risk for future school difficulties
- The WBTT program encourages discussions between teachers and parents
- The WBTT program helps teachers achieve data-driven instruction
- Research shows that the correct use of the WBTT program can increase student achievement rates
- The WBTT process aligns with the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, which has also been shown to increase student achievement and reduce achievement gaps.

Currently the Web Based Teaching Tool program is being used across the province of Ontario to screen and support over 23,000 students in public elementary schools. Our vision for this program is that it will be used across the country and globe to support teachers in their classroom practices, and help struggling students get the supports they need and deserve, as soon as possible.

### Want more information about WBTT?

If you would like more information about the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) Program please contact Cynthia Grundmann, the Program Manager, at 416-929-4311 Ext. 44 or [cynthiag@LDAO.ca](mailto:cynthiag@LDAO.ca)

### The School Principal's WBTT Site

The WBTT School Administrator Site (SAS) for principals was built to help principals support their teachers in implementing the screening and intervention process and to enable them to gather and analyze screening and intervention data for their students and school. The SAS provides principals with the following:

- The ability to track student achievement in their school

- Student screening and intervention data, aggregate school data and information about how each cohort of students is progressing each year
- Access to the data export feature, which exports each school's WBTT data to the board's Student Management System (SMS)
- The opportunity to help principals support their teachers in implementing the screening and intervention process.

# Introducing the Vox Factum Tutor

By Lawrence Feld

About 12 years ago, Lawrence Feld developed a strategy based on the best practices in the field that students could use to simplify their note taking experience, and improve their reading and listening comprehension performance. It proved to be very effective, but it was difficult to reach out to all the kids that he wanted to make it available to in the classroom or at home.

Therefore, a few years ago, Feld teamed up with an innovative engineer and educator,



Paul Gent, and together they formed a design team to create a software program that was based on this strategy and incorporated the best of both technology and teacher resource. It is called Vox Factum Tutor, and it offers students interactive learning experiences on the computer framed by the monitoring of certified teachers.

It can be viewed on line at [www.voxfactum.com](http://www.voxfactum.com).



# PUBLIC POLICY ROUNDUP

## SPRING 2010

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The requirements of the **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**, under the AODA, came into effect for public sector organizations on January 1, 2010. This means that all public sector organizations (including postsecondary institutions, municipalities and school boards) must develop and document policies on how they will provide accessible customer service, and must train staff on how to serve people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2012 the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will apply to Ontario businesses and nonprofits that have one or more employees. To help organizations understand how customer service applies to people with LDs, LDAO has created a document on [Customer Service for Persons with Learning Disabilities](#), which can be found on the home page of the LDAO website [http://www.ldao.ca/aboutLDs/news\\_full.php?id=173](http://www.ldao.ca/aboutLDs/news_full.php?id=173)

The proposed standards on **Accessible Information & Communication** and on **Employment Accessibility**, developed by standards development committees, are currently before the Minister of Community and Social Services for consideration.

### Safe Schools Legislation Updated

On February 1, 2010 changes to Safe Schools provisions in the Education Act came into effect, requiring: all school staff to report serious student incidents to the principal; principals to contact the parents of victims who have been harmed as a result of serious student incidents; and staff to respond to incidents that have a negative impact on the school climate, including incidents of sexual and gender-based bullying or homophobia.

These changes are in addition to previous Safe Schools legislation and regulations that require school boards to: develop and implement policies on progressive discipline; treat bullying as an infraction for which suspension must be considered; consider mitigating and other factors before students are suspended or expelled; and provide programs to students who have been expelled or are on a long-term suspension to allow them to continue their education and access services such as anger management or career counselling.

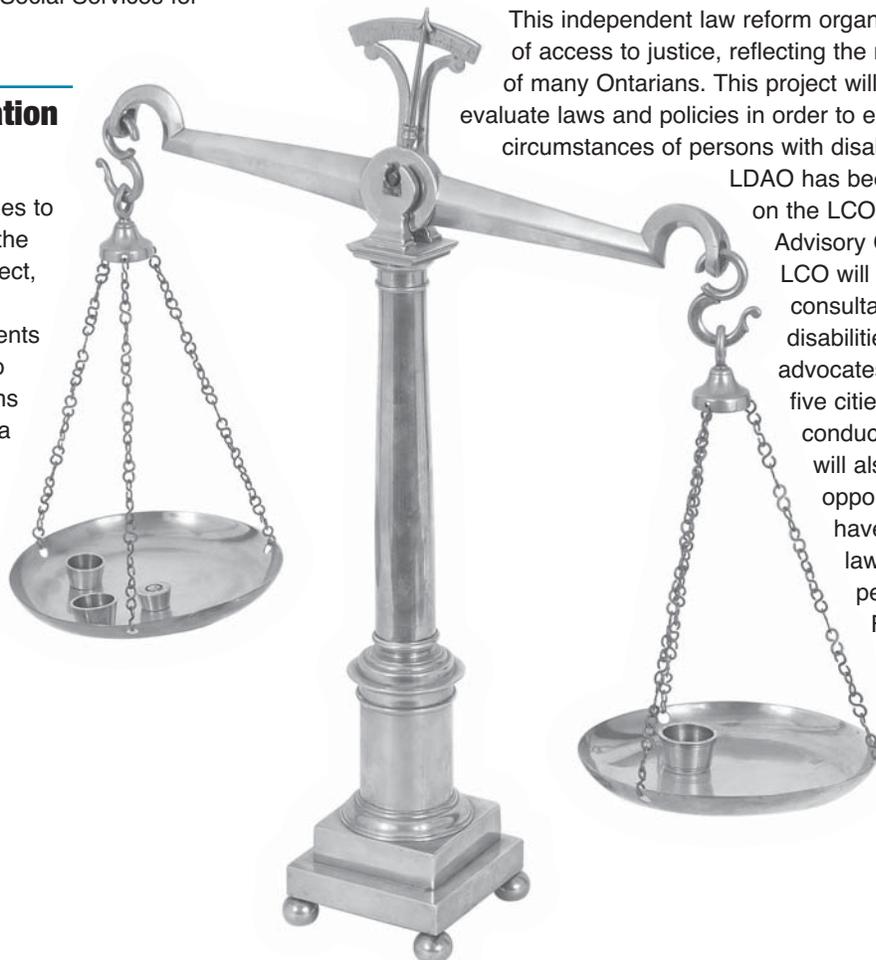
Students with learning disabilities and with co-existing disorders will be significantly affected by how all these changes are implemented. They could be helpful if progressive discipline is interpreted in a positive sense of anticipating triggers, with careful consideration of how the effects of the disability has influenced behaviour, and the planning of a series of steps to manage behaviours.

### Law Commission of Ontario Disability Project

The Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) has launched an exciting and ambitious initiative on the law and persons with disabilities.

This independent law reform organization works on issues of access to justice, reflecting the needs and experiences of many Ontarians. This project will develop guidelines to evaluate laws and policies in order to ensure that the rights and circumstances of persons with disabilities are respected.

LDAO has been asked to participate on the LCO Disabilities Project Advisory Group. This spring, the LCO will conduct community consultations with persons with disabilities, service providers and advocates. The LCO will travel to five cities across the province to conduct focus groups. There will also be on-line opportunities for people to have their say on how the law has affected them as persons with disabilities. For more information go to [www.lco-cdo.org](http://www.lco-cdo.org).



# ELSEWHERE



## Bits & Pieces of LD News Collected from Around the World

### **FINLAND – Mixed-handed children more likely to have mental health, language and scholastic problems**

Children who are mixed-handed, or ambidextrous, are more likely to have mental health, language and scholastic problems in childhood than right- or left-handed children, according to a new study published in the journal *Paediatrics*.

The researchers behind the study, from Imperial College London and other European institutions, suggest that their findings may help teachers and health professionals to identify children who are particularly at risk of developing certain problems.

Around one in every 100 people is mixed-handed. The study looked at nearly 8,000 children, 87 of whom were mixed-handed, and found that mixed-handed 7 and 8-year old children were twice as likely as their right-handed peers to have difficulties with language and to perform poorly in school.

- When they reached 15 or 16, mixed-handed adolescents were also at twice the risk of having symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They were also likely to have more symptoms of ADHD than their right-handed counterparts. It is estimated that ADHD affects between 3 to 9 percent of school-aged children and young people.

The adolescents also reported having greater difficulties with language than those who were left- or right-handed. This is in line with earlier studies that have linked mixed-handedness with dyslexia.

Little is known about what makes people mixed-handed but it is known that handedness is linked to the hemispheres in the brain. Previous research has shown that where a person's natural preference is for using their right hand, the left hemisphere of their brain is more dominant.

Some researchers have suggested that mixed-handedness indicates that the pattern of dominance is not that which is typically seen in most people, i.e. it is less clear that one hemisphere is dominant over the other. One study has suggested that ADHD is linked to having a weaker function in the right hemisphere of the brain, which could help explain why some of the mixed-handed students in today's study had symptoms of ADHD.

### **UNITED KINGDOM – All prisoners to be tested for ADHD**

Police, courts and prisons will test all adult offenders for attention deficit disorders in a bid to reduce reoffending rates and cut aggressive behaviour in prisons.

The scheme is being set up by the Department of Health after research revealed a disproportionately high number of undiagnosed and untreated sufferers in the criminal justice system.

“We know that conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can contribute to people turning to crime,” said health minister Phil Hope. “We are concerned that ADHD is not understood well enough in the criminal justice system so cases go unnoticed. In addition, when prisoners are released, they might be helped to find housing and employment but, if a health issue is not recognised, it can leave that person vulnerable to falling back into crime.”

Research by the UK Adult ADHD Network revealed that almost 20% prisoners probably suffer from undiagnosed ADHD. Those with the disorder were at least one third more likely to reoffend than non-sufferers. A second research paper produced at the meeting revealed that 10% of drug and alcohol addicts have ADHD. Both figures are much higher than the estimated prevalence of ADHD in the adult population of 2.5%.

Professor Philip Asherson, chair of the UK Adult ADHD Network, welcomed the initiative: “ADHD should be considered as a mental disorder that may impair criminal responsibility. They are vulnerable at every stage in their interface with the criminal justice system.”

-UK Guardian, December 27, 2009

### **UNITED STATES – Amazon's Kindle to add features for vision-impaired**

Amazon.com's Kindle e-book reader is getting two new features to make it more accessible to blind and vision-impaired users.

The announcement came a month after UW-Madison and Syracuse University said they wouldn't consider making the device available on campus until Amazon made it easier for vision-impaired students to use.

The Kindle will have a read-aloud feature that could be advantageous to blind students and those with other disabilities including dyslexia, but getting to that point is a problem. To turn the Kindle on, users have to navigate through screens of text menus.

Amazon says it's now working on audible menus, which would let the Kindle speak menu options out loud. It's also working on an extra-large font for people with impaired vision. The additions should reach the Kindle next summer.

Online reporting by Chris Wilson December 7 2009, <http://www.wkowitz.com/Global/story.asp?S=11637477>

# THE ADHD FILES

## How Reorganizing Brain Wave Activity Can Improve Attention Deficits Associated with ADD, ADHD and LD *By Bob Gottfried*

*It is estimated that over five percent of all children in North America are experiencing at least one form of learning disability. ADD/ADHD is characterized by one or more of the following: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Learning disabilities are characterized by one or more difficulties associated with attention, reading, writing, oral language, reasoning, memorizing, and problem solving. Further difficulties may include compromised organizational skills and social interaction.*

### Brain Wave Activity and Attentional Shifting

The brain produces different frequencies for different levels of attention. They include the following:

**Delta** – sleep state

**Theta** – between sleep and awake, also a meditative state

**Alpha** – relaxed state

**Beta1** – focused concentration

**Beta2** – alert state

**Beta3** – very alert, vigilant

**Beta4** – Hyper vigilant

The ability to produce the right states, especially those associated with focus and attention, is paramount to be able to perform a variety of cognitive tasks. In addition, the ability to shift from one state to another when required, offers tremendous mental flexibility, which results in enhanced performance in every area of life.

### The Use of Neurofeedback in Treating Attentional Difficulties:

Neurofeedback, which is a form of biofeedback, has been used for over 20 years to treat concentration-related difficulties associated with ADD/ADHD and LD. In general, Neuro-feedback is a modality which uses an EEG recording system along with training software to enhance brain wave activity that is instrumental for improving concentration.

The premise behind Neurofeedback is related to earlier findings that established that individuals with poor concentration lack sufficient levels of Beta1 (this band is also commonly termed SMR – short for sensory motor rhythms) brain waves to sustain attention. The findings also showed that individuals with attentional deficits exhibit excessive amounts of slow brain wave activity, especially Theta waves. Joel Lubar, a pioneer in this field, demonstrated that treatment modalities focusing on enhancing the Beta1/Theta ratio, have been very effective in treating children with attention deficits and learning disabilities, which usually resulted in improved school performance and better behaviour control. During Neurofeedback sessions, the person wishing to enhance concentration uses feedback coming through an EEG machine to enhance Beta1 and decrease Theta. After a certain amount of training, typically between 40 and 60 sessions, the individual is able to produce more Beta1 at

will. Lubar also proved that all children experiencing any form of learning disabilities demonstrated low amounts of Beta1 waves and that many of the symptoms diminished after a process of brain wave training. Neurofeedback treatment can also result in significant improvement of intellectual functioning, as measured by increases in IQ scores (Linden, Habib & Radojevic, 1996). Such improvement is most likely the result of the treatment's positive impact on the person's ability to concentrate.

More recently, Monastra (2002) found that Neurofeedback has proven to be successful in long term improvement of ADD/ADHD symptoms. In this study, 100 children, aged six to 19 years, diagnosed with ADD/ADHD were monitored for one year. All children received parental counselling, academic support, and Ritalin. Half of the children also received Neurofeedback training. After 12 months, all children showed improvement in their attention. However, children who stopped taking Ritalin and did not train with Neurofeedback, lost the gains they had achieved, whereas those who also received brain wave training, kept their gains even after they stopped using Ritalin.

The major limitations of Neurofeedback consist of the cost of treatment (typically, \$3000 and up) and the fact that the treatment can only be administered in a clinic by a qualified practitioner. Furthermore, Neurofeedback focuses mainly on reinforcing sustained attention. Different cognitive skills, such as divided attention, visual-auditory processing, multitasking and speed of processing are not part of traditional Neurofeedback protocols. They are, however, incorporated in a new generation of cognitive related software.

### New Generation Software

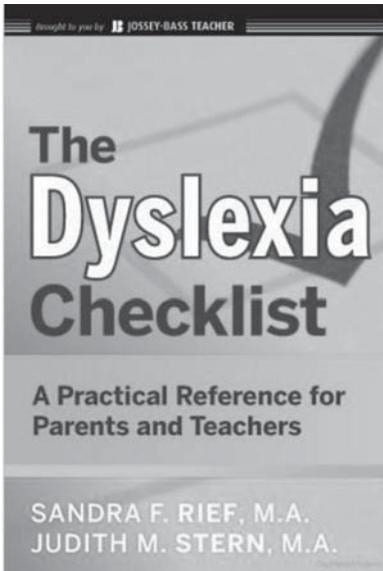
Lately a new generation of programs have been released to the market. The most notable innovation related to these programs is the fact that they are content free. What this means is that the program does not offer any stimulating activities to achieve the desired results. Instead, it offers a series of cognitive tasks that directly work on improving different types of attention.

Research indicates that the ability to produce, at will, specific aspects of attention will result in improvement in a variety of cognitive abilities such as divided attention, multitasking, speed of processing, working memory, visual – auditory processing and coordination as well as higher executive skills such as decision making, organizing and prioritizing. For more information, visit: [www.sharperprograms.com](http://www.sharperprograms.com)



## SHELF LIFE

# *The Dyslexia Checklist:* A Practical Reference for Parents and Teachers



Sandra F. Rief, M.A.,  
Judith Stern

ISBN: 978-0-470-42981-5

Paperback; 336 pages;  
January 2010; US \$15.95;

Available as E-Book

**T**he Dyslexia Checklist is a valuable guide for parents and teachers that can help them better understand children and teenagers with dyslexia and other reading- and language-based disabilities. The book relays the most current research available and is filled with practical strategies, supports, and interventions. Using these tools teachers and parents can accommodate the needs and strengthen the skills of students with reading and writing disabilities across all age levels. The book is presented in a simple, concise, easy-to-read checklist format and is filled with useful advice and information on a wide range of topics.

- Explains what we now know about dyslexia from decades of research
- Contains games to strengthen a child's literacy and language skills
- Provides important information for hooking in reluctant and struggling readers
- Offers suggestions for enhancing skills in vocabulary, comprehension, composition and written expression, spelling, math, and more

The book also provides information on the educational rights of students with dyslexia.



**HOTWEB:**

**About.com**

## Learning Disabilities

About.com is an online neighbourhood of hundreds of helpful experts, eager to share their wealth of knowledge with visitors.

Every month, over 60 million people visit the site for help with everything from health care and parenting issues to advice on travel, cooking, technology, hobbies and more. And they offer solutions in the form of over two million hand-crafted, original articles, recipes, product reviews, videos, tutorials and more.

All created by a network of expert 'Guides' – real people who, like all good neighbours, help others so that everyone's life gets just a little better.

Founded in 1996, About.com was acquired in March 2005 by **The New York Times Company** (NYSE: NYT). Today, About.com is recognized as a **top 15 content site** and one of the largest producers of original content on the Web.

The sections on both learning disabilities and ADHD are in a word, excellent. They are also vital and use common language to get complex points across. They are short enough to read and user friendly with broad appeal. The guides who host the site are also accessible and quick to respond to questions.

<http://learningdisabilities.about.com/od/learningdisabilitybasics/p/>

# Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

in partnership with

The Community Health Systems Resource Group at The Hospital for Sick Children  
presents...

## LDAO 2010 Workshop Series: Practical Applications of Current Research for Parents and Professionals

**\$75.00 plus HST (lunch provided)**

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### **ADHD and School Performance: Practical Interventions and Best Strategies for Success**

**October 1, 2010**

**Presented by: Chris Dendy, M.S.** Chris is an author, former educator, school psychologist and children's mental health professional with more than 40 years experience. She is also the mother of three grown children who have ADHD. Her highly acclaimed books include: *Teenagers with ADD and ADHD*, *Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD*, and "A Birds-Eye" *View of Life with ADD and ADHD*, a teen survival guide she coauthored with her son Alex.

This workshop will highlight the key issues related to ADHD and school success. Chris Dendy will provide a basic understanding of ADHD, current research on the brain, the role of neurotransmitters, and an update on medication. The workshop will demonstrate effective and practical intervention techniques for improving school performance, outline the reasons for school failure, and identify how parents and teachers can support students with ADHD and help them succeed in school.

### **Learning Disabilities, ADHD and Working Memory November 26, 2010**

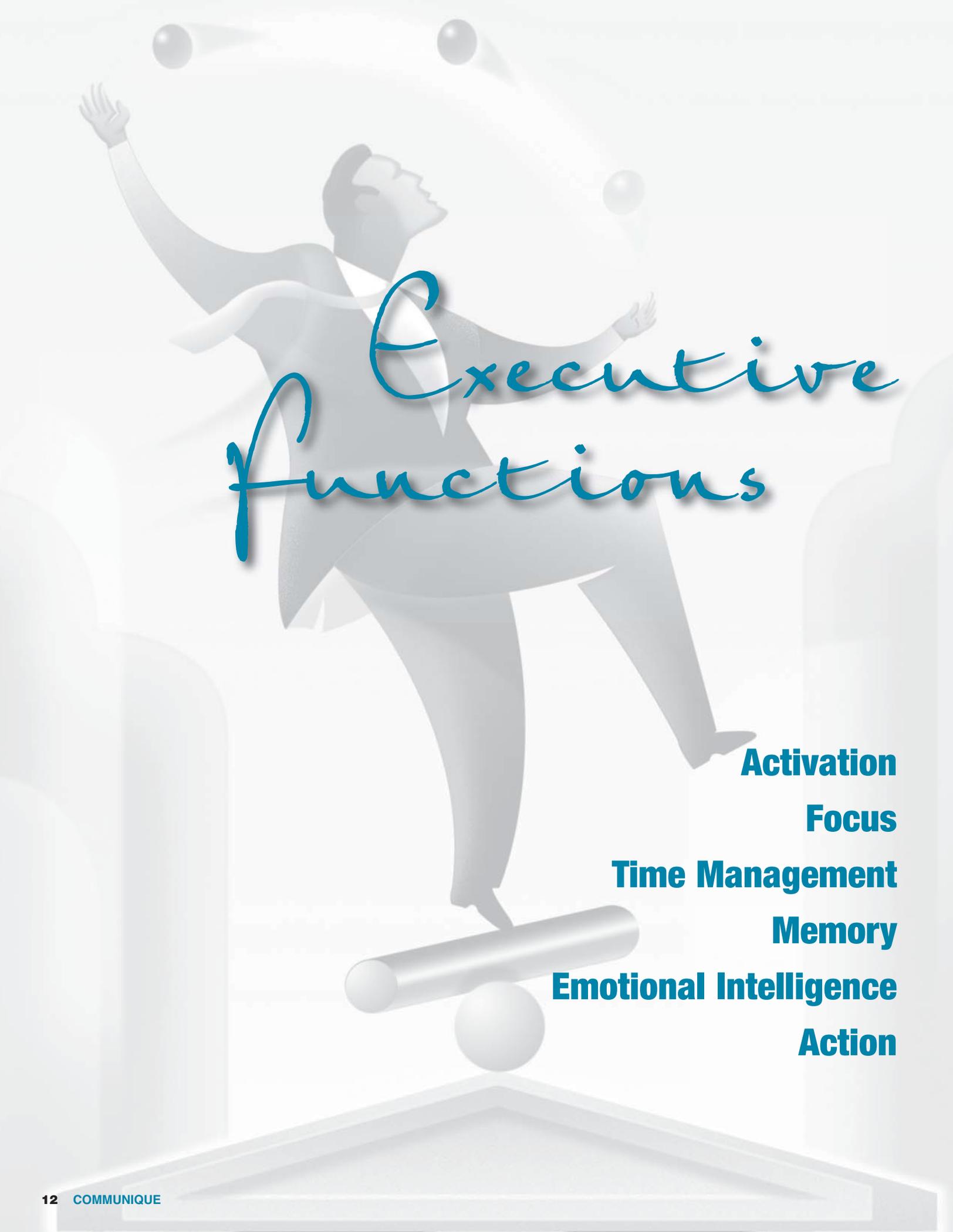
**Presented by: Dr. Rhonda Martinussen.** Dr. Rhonda Martinussen is currently an Assistant Professor of Special Education and Adaptive Instruction at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on the relations among working memory, inattention, and academic achievement in children and youth. She is currently conducting a study examining how to enhance listening and reading comprehension in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). She is also studying note-taking and written expression skills in youth with and without ADHD.

What is working memory? How do we measure it? What is the relationship between working memory and academic achievement? Is working memory related to attentional control? These are all questions that Dr. Martinussen will address in her talk. She will also discuss various factors to consider when instructing students who exhibit working memory weaknesses.

All workshops are hosted at:

**The Hospital for Sick Children**  
Main Auditorium  
555 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
**10:00am – 2:30pm**

Speakers/workshops  
subject to change



# Executive functions

**Activation**

**Focus**

**Time Management**

**Memory**

**Emotional Intelligence**

**Action**

# *The Focus Factor in ADHD*

By Lisa Booth – Educator and Group Facilitator for ADDRESSING ADULT ADD

## Does this sound like you, or someone you know?

**Y**ou've been assigned a plum project at work and the deadline for the client presentation is two days away. You only have to add a couple more crucial pieces from the boss to complete the pitch. With all good intentions of accomplishing this, you start your work day.

While your computer boots up you wander off to the office watering hole. You dutifully smile at each and every photo of a colleague's new grandbaby. You trade a few funny stories with the group and help a frustrated co-worker get her computer to work properly.

Cold coffee in hand, you return to get started. You recall how fired up you were about this project when you got the assignment. It really let you tap into your creative muse. Your client has been thrilled with your progress to date, so much so they have referred you new business already.

Initial talks with this new client have stirred those creative juices up and you can hardly wait to get working on their project. You zap off a quick email to find out from the client a bit more about their needs, before your mind shifts back to the report at hand.

You try reading over the draft, but the chit chat going on in the office around you is driving you nuts. The fishy odour of someone's tuna sandwich wafts by your nose. You take another stab at reading the report, knowing it has to be done at all costs today. Even with three passes at reading it, all you can think about is satisfying your now growling stomach. Probably should do something about lunch.

Your email pops up with a reply from your new client. Reading it, ten ideas spring to mind and you know you better jot them down before you forget them. As you stuff them in a new folder, your boss buzzes you to find out why you haven't appeared at his office. You ditch the file and hustling down the hall.

While handing you the additional information you need for your report, your boss gives you a rundown on the details of the

presentation, where the meeting is, what's needed, blah, blah, blah...Six new ideas pop into your head for that new project and you struggle to keep them top of mind until you can add them to the list you've already started. Suddenly, you realize your boss is staring at you, expecting some kind of response. You have no idea what he's been talking about.

Pulling your mind back into the present you head back to your desk fully intending to edit the presentation. You suddenly remember that you want to add those new ideas to your new client's file, and you spend the next hour tracking down where you put the folder. Finally finding it, you happily spend the next six hours totally captivated, adding ideas and detail as you flesh out the exciting new project.

At the end of the day your boss swings by on his way out to see how the finishing touches are going for the big presentation. Both of you are dismayed that it isn't ready. How did you manage to get off the rails so badly?

This scenario can easily happen in the work life of someone with ADHD. Clearly, there can be some major consequences to the behaviour. Regardless of intentions, it illustrates the effect of a compromised executive function that contributes to difficulties screening out the distractions happening around them. They react to any and all interruptions particularly if what they are working on is difficult or mundane. Often there is a heightened sensitivity to sounds, smells, and other environmental annoyances that they also cannot filter out and so takes up their immediate attention.

There is a flip side to this inability to regulate focus amongst interruptions. Ironically it is an uncanny ability to hyper-focus. When someone with ADHD is fully engaged in something that really interests them, they can stick with it for extraordinary periods of time, regardless of what is going on around them. Once there is a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors that affect focus, strategies can be put in place in the workplace that will serve those with ADHD well.

# When the Rubber Meets

By Tina Bauer

In order to get something done, you need a purpose, energy, and choices. The paradox is, we are always “doing something” whether it’s running, sleeping, thinking, eating, or writing — and we can do many different things at the same time. Consider what you are (presumably) doing right now. At a minimum, you are breathing, sitting, holding a magazine or looking at a computer, reading, and considering what you are reading. You may also be waiting for dinner or deciding who else needs to read this article. All of these “activities” hold part of your attention.

To activate is defined as “to make active; cause to function or act”. This implies a beginning. And for the activity to which you are about to switch your energy, it is a beginning, but for you as a person it is a change from one activity to another. We are faced with so many possibilities, we have to make a choice about which one needs our commitment right now.

When you have ADD, making that choice can be difficult. Perhaps you know you “should do” something, perhaps you want to do it, or you feel you need to get down to business and “just do it”. But when ADD is in the equation, “just do it” doesn’t get it done! “Just do it” is ubiquitous in our culture. It sounds so simple. It seems to say “don’t even think about it and it’s easy.” But hearing, saying or thinking about the words is, paradoxically, a thinking activity. If you are doing something, you are doing it, not thinking about doing it. Substituting doing something for thinking about it short-circuits the executive functions and never lets them engage.

But you can’t live without thinking, you say! It is true that you can’t, but you also can’t live without making decisions. We make choices all the time. Some are made with very little information, some with too much, and everything in between. Decision-making is a very complex phenomenon (witness whole MBA courses on the subject) but we make decisions every minute of every day, whether by commission or omission. Refusing to decide is also a decision.

What is involved in making choices about what to do, or not to do?

You need information on what is possible, what outcomes might be predicted.

Take laundry.

- ❖ **Should you do it now, or later?**
- ❖ **If later, when?**
- ❖ **If you do it now, what will you have to put off?**
- ❖ **If you don’t do it all, what are the consequences?**
- ❖ **Could you/Should you get someone else to do it?**
- ❖ **If so, who do you choose?**
- ❖ **Will they do it right or ruin your best shirt?**
- ❖ **Should you do the shirt and have them do the rest?**
- ❖ **Do you have the right detergent on hand?**
- ❖ **Do you have a full load?**
- ❖ **Does someone else need you to do something more pressing?**
- ❖ **Should you answer the phone?**
- ❖ **If yes, will you remember that you were thinking about doing laundry?**

***Which questions above do I need to answer in order to get clean clothes?***

I often liken ADDers having to prioritize incoming tasks and responsibilities to people with no depth perception having to navigate a new room. Is that chair the first thing I am going to run into, or should I worry about the shelf beside it? Binocular vision provides clues about which furniture is closer, and thus what order they need to be navigated around. For ADDers, new information gets jumbled into one “inbox”, since the executive function that puts one thing behind another is not working. It takes effort to order the tasks into a logical sequence. This is before one even deals with a new thought. It is so much easier to “decide” not to think at all! So what looks like procrastination or “laziness” can be a reasonable response to being overwhelmed with choices, information or responsibilities.

# *the Road*



And what to do about equally important tasks on the horizon? Should I go get groceries or do the laundry? Maybe I should get one load ready, go for groceries, switch loads over, then put away the groceries, then fold laundry? Should I load one, ask someone to do the switching while I'm away, have them put away the groceries while I fold laundry? There might be some efficiency if the timing works, but for non-ADDers (except those odd SUPER-organized people), it would be assumed that you should do one and then the other, and the major criteria for which to do first is when the store closes or whether you need groceries for lunch (i.e. before clean clothes). Again, the ADDer is spoiled for choice. The ability to take in and parse a wide range of information – invaluable when brainstorming with the boss – has overwhelmed their daily decision-making, and neither the laundry nor the groceries get done.

I call the skill needed here “compartmentalizing”. When two simultaneous projects need doing, decide which one will be dealt with and when to switch. So decide to do groceries, do only that, knowing that there will be time to deal with laundry afterward--assuming you don't get sidetracked during the grocery period. Use the “I still need to do laundry” as impetus to finish groceries, not as a cue to think about laundry. This is about deciding before-hand when you will allow yourself to think about something.

There are historical factors that cause ADDers to learn certain rules of thumb for what is more important. Take putting gas in your car. If your parents always mentioned when the gas gauge reached the “1/4 full” mark and started looking for the next gas station, you may find yourself doing the same thing. It means you will never run out of gas, but if you have to detour to get the gas, will you be late for work for the 3rd time this week? What about filling the tank the night before, on the way home? Or letting it wait until after work, though it will be closer to empty? What is more important in this instance?

So decision-making in daily life is a challenge for ADDers. What is to be done? Should you decide to become the best decision-maker ever and make sure that each decision is the

correct one and made at the right time? Is the solution to abdicate responsibility, refuse to make decisions and then deal with the consequences, and so live in a purely reactive mode? Those are the two extremes. All or nothing-another ADD favourite. Let's have a closer look at them. The first requires intense energy and concentration at each decision point. This person will spend so much energy on the decisions that there will be no energy left for the actions of life. On the other hand, the latter person will have no control of the trajectory of their life. They'll end up spending their energy in places they never intended or wanted to be.

What is the alternative? How about putting the energy in before the fateful moment? The key is setting oneself up beforehand, so that at the moment of decision, making the “best” choice is the simplest process it possibly can be. Set up your decisions in advance so the “correct” ones are easy, obvious, or engaging. This also includes knowing how to ask for help! Note that this is where effective coaching can help: in setting you up for real success, helping you figure out priorities and strategies that work, keeping your thought processes positive and keeping negativity and self-sabotage at bay.

Since it is a disorder of the executive functions, the most difficult effects or symptoms of ADD occur “as the rubber meets the road”. Planning to make the right decision is not enough, because that good intention gets overwhelmed by all the other factors occurring at the moment of decision. Plans to go for a walk after dinner get derailed by guilt about leaving the dirty dishes, or finding your shoes, or dealing with the phone call that interrupted your dinner. Instead of just thinking “I will go for a walk after dinner”, how about changing your shoes before dinner, having a note pad beside the phone so you won't forget to return the call, and asking your fellow diners to hold you accountable about that walk. Now, you are encouraged to leave, properly shod, phone call not forgotten.

# Mastering the Art of Time

By Rick Antosik

## “Got a Minute”?

They’re probably the three most dreaded words in the Canadian workplace. And yet most of us, in the name of team co-operation, and office harmony, however reluctantly, usually say, “sure...how can I help?” while the constant chorus of telephones, faxes, emails, Blackberries and text messages continue to chime ever louder in our general direction. These days, it seems “instant messaging” simply isn’t fast enough.

Sound familiar? And yet despite clear indicators of an ever-increasing “time famine”, Canadians continue juggling competing priorities during a work-week that only seems to get longer.

And it has. Despite the importance of “work-life balance” trumpeted by agencies like Ottawa’s Vanier Institute, a 2005 Statistics Canada report found that on average Canadians spent 45 minutes more away from their families on work days in 2005 than two decades prior. Families’ loss is workplace’s gain with the biggest chunk of time away from partner and kids—39 per cent in all—spent on the job. Western Canada, struggling to keep up with a booming economy, was, not surprisingly, hit the hardest. Calgary especially, suffered from the time squash with

**Effort:** Many people with learning disabilities and ADHD report that regulating alertness, sustaining effort, and processing speed are difficult for them. Many with ADHD report they can perform short-term projects well, but have much more difficulty with sustained effort over longer periods of time. They also find it difficult to complete tasks on time, especially when required to do expository writing. Since this is a common issue to many, even without ADHD/LD, we thought it might be a good idea to offer one aspect of this EF component for your consideration.

increasing minutes spent commuting to and from work alone. On average, 45 daily minutes tallies up to 195 fewer hours spent with family, based on a 260-day work year. It goes without saying that in addition to social structures snatching away precious hours, people with learning disabilities, are apt to work far more hours than the norm, just to catch up to their able-bodied counterparts.

Paige Turner, seems to exemplify this. The harried, 42-year-old who lives with what she describes as a “mild” non-verbal learning disability, struggles to keep up with the demands of a bustling, small Toronto non-profit agency, where she works as a volunteer coordinator. But wait, that’s not all! She’s also the mother of a rambunctious three-year old, adopted just two years from his native India, a recent cancer survivor. Indeed, she received her diagnosis a mere four months after the arrival of her son. A relaxing year of bliss spent bonding with her child suddenly became an endless cycle of doctors’ appointments, radiation treatments, daycare visits and therapy sessions. One-and-a-half years later, she’s recently returned to work and faces the challenge of integrating a full-time job into her child care and health regimen. All this while managing a marriage to a busy teacher. Oh! And she has dyslexia too.

How does she do it?

“I complain a lot!” she laughs. “Honestly, I don’t know. I sleep on the same schedule as my son...I’m still trying to figure it out,” she says with a slightly world-weary sigh in her soft-spoken voice. “It helps to be organized and plan ahead, but everything’s on a second’s notice. You could be walking out the door only to realize you have to change a diaper again. You always have to keep adapting.”

Small wonder then that the little “time wasters” such as chatting with co-workers, which once seemed enjoyable at work, now seem intrusions to her. “It irritates me now when people gossip

# Management



or make personal phone calls and you can hear them. Our office is small and the phone rings off the hook. You're multitasking during the call but what are you accomplishing?" she asks.

It's a question many of us are asking, says productivity expert and author Mark Ellwood, president of Pace Productivity, a company that's conducted time studies in 31 countries. "Work is a social place and people need to interact," he says. "Time becomes wasted when chatting is excessive."

There is also the myth that busyness equals productivity. "Our research indicates that people want more sanity and less communication. However, we've internalized the need to be 'in touch' lest we miss out on something important. Genuine human interaction is not text messaging. It's a false paradigm that I must be busy or popular," he says. "My clients state their workplace clients demand availability but by not saying 'I'll get back to you today,' instead of right now, You can't get faster than 'instant' and that sets you up for failure right away."

Part of this pressure is because the concept of work is so intertwined with our self concept and identity. "There's a kind of show-off-ness about it. People recognize this in each other and think, 'you're with me.'" But his research indicates that people are feeling overwhelmed, saturated by multiple demands on their time.

Among the biggest office time wasters are meetings and emails, says Elwood. "If you're part of a culture where meetings don't start on time, everyone is responsible for advancing the meeting. Someone can't take the lead and say, let's start right away instead of waiting for everyone to show up." As for email, Elwood says it's something we're all guilty of. He states that it's not only how many emails you send out in a day, but the number that are cc'd to others. "Email is a great tool for transactions but lousy for communication.

Everyone can learn to write better, but it's more about using the wrong medium for communication. If you're upset with someone, you should be speaking to the person not emailing them. Emails can also be delegated to an assistant for screening, but this can be a crude way to get to know what's going on."

Elwood says that many people feel hampered by a lack of choices to make positive and more productive use of their time. "I get calls from customers complaining they have no ability to choose and my response is, yes you do, so let's make some choices, the ones that work for you," he says. "Research shows that we spend 25 per cent of our time on administrative tasks. That's a huge amount. Bring back secretaries and get that administration piece own to five-or-ten per cent. Most rely on technology, but that's not the best use of a manager's time."

He praises the rise of virtual assistants, noting it's wise to spend some money to save time.

For those wondering where their precious hours are gobbled up most, Elwood's website, [getmoredone.com](http://getmoredone.com), features a tabulator, a handy self assessment tool that allows users to plug in how much time they spend in a week on meaningful activities spread across categories that include employment, family and commuting time. You might be surprised where the time goes and how easy it is to redesignate priorities.

It's a tool that Paige Turner might benefit from. These days she's attempting to schedule both individual and relationship time by utilizing a support system to assist with child rearing and health care. She has joined a babysitting network to share childcare with others. She's aiming to go out once a week by herself and once a month with her partner. "There's so many things you have to be responsible for, and some things just need to take a back seat," she says. "It's stressful, but I'm learning."

# Working Memory

By Bob Gottfried

I divide memory into three parts – short-term, long-term and working memory. Other existing memory models consider short-term and working memory to be the same mechanism. I make a distinction between the two. Working memory, as the name implies, is the information we work with directly while performing various cognitive tasks. The information is taken from both short-term and long-term memory to be able to process information, store it and make it available for future use.

Short-term memory, on the other hand, contains mainly new data which we take in through our senses. Another term for this type of memory is “sensory memory.” Normally, we only keep data in our working memory for a short while from a few seconds up to a minute. Afterwards, the information is stored in long-term memory. The process of storing and retrieving information from working memory to long term memory can repeat itself many times while doing more complicated cognitive processes.

When we learn how to operate new machines, new software programs, or any new information for that matter, we use our working memory function in order to understand what principles and procedures the particular tasks involve. The learning process is based on our previous abilities, which we retrieve from the long-term memory, and from information that we collect through our short-term memory. This information is processed in our working memory, which acts as the working board where we combine previous data with new information based on direct input from the senses. With repetition and practice (when skills are involved), all this information is solidly stored in our long-term memory banks for future reference and retrieval: either for repeat usage or for the purpose of using it to help in learning similar or even more complicated material.

Working memory interacts not only with sensory memory and long term memory, but also with parts of the brain related to attention, learning and executive functions such as decision making and prioritizing (located at the pre-frontal lobes).

For those who have a basic understanding of computers, the following may serve to better understand how working memory works.

Say you want to key in certain data, notes perhaps, into a computer file. The keyboard acts as the sensory input, equivalent to our short term memory, transferring all the raw information to what is called RAM memory. RAM acts in the same way as our working memory, in the sense that it holds the information we are working with. It also temporarily holds the different programs we are using. It is displayed on the screen to shows us the programs currently in use as well as the data we have keyed in (equivalent to sensory or short-term memory), and it enables us to perform different functions in real time. Once we store the information on the hard drive, which in this example

represents long-term memory, the information can then be later retrieved for further use.

## Working Memory Capacity

Our working memory is limited to a few distinct information units. Titled “digit span,” it reflects how many digits, or chunks of data, we can contain at one time. This capacity is typically between 5 and 9 units, with an average of 7. The term: “the magical number seven, plus minus two” was coined in 1956 by psychologist George Miller, who studied memory extensively. This number, also represents the amount of what I call “channels of attention,” which refers to the amount of tasks we can do consciously – or which we can focus on at any given moment. This is the reason, by the way, why our telephone numbers consist of seven digits. Seven is the optimal number of digits which our working memory can process. When working memory is bombarded with too much information, it goes into overload mode and fails to transfer important data to long-term memory, and as a result some of the information may get lost.

Aging, stress, disease or injuries tend to narrow the channels of attention, so that instead of working with seven channels, only five, four, sometimes even less remain available. This diminished capacity would also explain why we cannot concentrate well when we are tired, in pain, or preoccupied with worry and stress; these conditions simply occupy some of the channels, leaving between one and three available channels with which the mind has to process information.

The availability of fewer “channels” may be enough for a very simple task, such as turning on the TV, yet be insufficient to perform a more complex task for instance, following an educational program on TV, or reading an article in a magazine. In addition to an inability to concentrate normally, the ability to retain information decreases dramatically as well. Have you ever tried to read at the same time as someone was talking to you? You can probably do a little of both, but you would not perform either role as well as if you were to give your full attention to only one task. People who are able to do this well are those who have eight or nine channels available to them. How we allocate the various channels thus determines what we pay attention to, as well as how attentive and focused we are.

Individuals suffering from ADHD or LD (learning disabilities) suffer among other things from impaired working memory, which is one of the reasons why they have problems processing information properly. It also explains why they have problems understanding concepts or why it many times, takes them longer to understand complicated concept – math for example. Their working memory is not big enough to see the picture in its entirety.

# Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

By Kenneth E. Seaton

**Y**our desk is more than cluttered; your in box has reached skyscraper height and the lights on your phone lines are blinking in some sort of bizarre code! Arriving late for work the last two days has put you way behind in your work. Your boss just came over and dropped a pile of documents on top of the mess and growled “Have this done by three!” Your mind goes blank and you feel yourself spinning out of control, you have an overwhelming urge to say something, do something, anything! What happens next is as predictable as it is preventable.

Your meltdown is of biblical proportions and as security escorts you out the door you think to yourself, “Not again!” Yes again. How many times has this happened to you? How many times have you been let go from a job due to inappropriate behaviour? How many jobs have you quit because you just couldn’t hack it? Have you been unemployed or underemployed for long periods of time? What is going on and why is it happening to you? Do any of the following traits sound familiar to you?

You are busy doing one thing, get interrupted and completely forget what you were doing? Have difficulty in prioritizing and scheduling your tasks. Always arriving late or even forgetting to go somewhere? You find yourself losing track of conversations or interrupting the conversations of those around you. And not being able to stop talking when it is obvious (to others), that you have said something inappropriate. Can’t find something that you were working on because it was lost in your work space chaos? You are quick to anger and socially inactive with your co-workers? These are all characteristics of Emotional Intelligence.

What is Emotional Intelligence (EI) and how does it affect persons with ADHD/LD? In 1990 John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, two leading researchers, defined the phrase – emotional intelligence – as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.”

Essentially, EI provides us with the ability to not only identify our emotions but to think constructively about, evaluate and then deal with those emotions. EI also furnishes us with the capacity to regulate how, we not only respond to emotions, but how we can utilize emotions to stimulate our intellectual growth. By employing emotional intelligence we can use it to assist us in carrying out problem solving and also how we interact with others.

Executive functioning skills are impacted by emotional intelligence. EI can influence the effectiveness of your responses



or behaviour as you perceive and react to positive or negative emotions. Many important functioning skills such as task and time management, how you get along with others, even how you think and talk to yourself are also affected.

So what do you do? Do you just keep on keeping on or do you work at finding a solution to your woes? Seeking professional counselling and treatment is a great first step (two informative websites are: <http://www.ldao.ca/>, <http://www.adhd.ca/>). Many adults who participated in counselling and treatment sessions as children tend to stop receiving support as they grow older. Additionally, a large number of disruptive employees have never been diagnosed with a learning disability or disorder. ADHD/LD can be treated and many of its symptoms, if not alleviated, can often be diminished to a more manageable level.

For persons with ADHD/LD emotional intelligence has a major impact on how they live their lives. In many instances people with ADHD/LD report strained relationships with family, friends, employers and co-workers. As human beings we are often judged solely on how we interact with others; any small variance of the norm, can greatly influence how others respond to us.

By taking positive and constructive steps to identify your strengths and address your challenges you will achieve more stability in your work environment. Managing your workplace will also help you gain more control of your life.



# More Than Meets the Eye

By Carter Hammett

**A** giant woman floats upside down over a busy urban scene. Below her, a man is lying on a workout bench lifting weights. Elsewhere, another woman, this one thin, determined, marches straight towards the viewer. She is bookended by what look like boxer dogs, one of which seems to gradually disappear off the canvas.

Both these paintings are part of the inspiring work of London artist Roselyne Chues. The paintings described above, part of the recent "Supers" series, were designed to be inclusive of all of society's individuals.

"I thought I'd take my friends and do the opposite of exclude, and include them," says Chues, 40, who has been part of the bustling London arts scene for years now, and whose work is beginning to gain popularity.

Inclusion is a big concern of at least some of her work. This is because as an artist living with both dyslexia and ADHD, she knows what it's like to be on the outside of things.

"I'm not normal; a bit of an outcast," she says matter-of-factly.

"My disability took me out of society. My art came from this place," she says. "If people could just see into me differently, they'd see someone who uses paints like other people use words. It's like the way people read or write is the way I paint.

“My dyslexia gives me a ten-second delay and I can get away with this for a while. Sometimes people talk and I lip read. They think I’m a freak for it and either exclude me blatantly or in subtle ways.”

Those words are common to many with invisible disabilities. She’s worked hard at reprogramming herself to fit in with social expectations and behaviours.

“I’ve had to consciously learn how to greet people when I first talk to them, gesture and bring them into my space, smile and then smile again.”

But this has been inconsistent and another tool she’s learned to cope through mimicry and this in turn has informed her art.

“I’ve turned the negative into a positive. My paintings are dedicated into moving into a positive place for the audience to experience a different view of the world.”

And that’s certainly reflected in her work. It was perhaps the “Pure Joy” series of paintings that first got people noticing her work. Working from the plethora perspective, she brought vivid imagery to life through a jungle of color and the tapestry that evolves when the artist puts brush to canvas. The work challenges the viewer to experience a deeper connection to the painting, telling their own story through the interpretation of the art.

“The combination of colors pushes the viewer’s eye and inner instincts of symbolisms that we have been exposed too but the assembly of personal symbolisms creating one’s own conversations. Objects (Flowers, horses), as the subject matter are chosen for their neutrality, while creating a loaded personal reaction,” states her web site, and she achieves beautiful results.

It’s not uncommon for both people with dyslexia and ADHD to have auditory processing problems. They will often compensate visually, and Chues is well aware of her strengths. But it was only after visiting LDAO and watching a video that hit close to home, she realized she might have the disability. All her life, she had managed to cope untraditionally, but successfully with her challenges.

“In high school I had two great friends and we would discuss homework on the bus. I made it through high school with 78%. When I went to OCA, I asked if I could do things in a video format. So, I always got the concept, but couldn’t do it through reading or writing. I’m at a grade 6 level there.”

Despite this, she was one the youngest of 16 entries to be accepted into Toronto’s Ontario College of Art, where she graduated with top honours. Her studies have also taken her to England, Sweden and Italy. She’s also the recipient of a Canada Art Council grant for the Visual Arts for a multi-media exhibition called Paradox/Pair O Docs/Pear o Docs, which was presented at A Space in Toronto. After returning to school at the University of Western Ontario, she became involved in several film

projects, including a 30-second commercial entitled Being an Example for Diversity.

These days her work is explored in oil, bronze, steel and glass. She also teaches private classes. Chues is driven to capture the essence of her subject matter. She brings her subject to life with hidden meanings.

“I feel that if we’re all a little more visible to people without LD, we can share the gifts we’re born with. I was born with painting and I think we should be celebrating those gifts. If we did people would accept us more.”

For more information about the artist and her work visit: [www.roselynechues.com](http://www.roselynechues.com)



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# News Around The Province

## LDA KINGSTON OFFERS TWO NEW PROGRAMS

### New Kids on the Block Program Tackles LD

**L**earning Disabilities Association Kingston (LDAK) will be delivering educational puppet performances to elementary schools for students in **Grades 3-5**. The puppeteers are teacher candidates who are presenting this program for their alternative practicum. The performers have been trained in LD issues and also received puppet training from a professional puppeteer.

LDAK has purchased puppets from “Kids on the Block, Inc.” The purpose of Kids on the Block is to provide educational puppet programs, which enlighten children about disability awareness, medical/educational differences and social concerns. Our puppets deal exclusively with **Learning Disabilities** issues and how they impact on the lives of students. Our aim is to educate elementary students about learning disabilities, as well as to reinforce the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, by providing venues which assist in breaking attitudinal barriers that exist within the area of LD.

The performances are approximately 45 minutes in length, including question and answers. KOB is a powerful tool in helping break down inhibitions, enabling children to be candid with their questions and concerns.

### The Friendship Club – An After-School Social Skills Program

**T**he Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston (LDAK) will be running an after-school social skills pilot program for students in Grades 4-5 who have been diagnosed with or have suspected learning disabilities or AD/HD. Often, students with learning disabilities struggle with making and keeping friends, and sometimes, their social awkwardness can make them a target for bullying – particularly during recess and other unstructured times during the school day. Our program will teach students games they can play during indoor and outdoor recess, so they know **what** to do during those unstructured times, and we'll target specific skills, such as inviting others to play, taking turns, dealing with losing, and so forth, so they'll know **how** to get along with others. Our hope is that if students are given strategies for navigating recess culture, their success will spill over into the classroom and the learning challenges they face there.

Using a unique approach that recognizes that students with LDs learn differently, each session will address one particular skill, and the students will role play that skill and see how they can

apply the skill to play at recess. In order for the support to continue outside the program, the students will take a copy of each week's social skill story home so that the family can reinforce the positive behaviour.

The program will be offered once a week, for 1.5 hours per session for 6 weeks. Students will be placed in groups of 4 and assigned a social skills coach, who is involved in the Behaviour and Child & Youth program and/or Education Faculty at Queens University. For the first pilot session, the program will accept 12 children. The program will be monitored for student progress, and coaches will evaluate its success through observation and feedback provided by parents, teachers and most importantly, the students themselves.

For more information on both programs you can contact us at the numbers or emails below.

Tel: 613-545-0373 Monday – Friday 10a.m-4.30

jbarling@ldakingston.com or ldak@ldakingston.com (Lana Greenwood)

## NORTH PEEL/MISSISSAUGA

### New Mentoring Program Fosters Support for Youth

**M**entorship & Learning: Youth Serving Youth  
This is a group initiative project where we pair an older youth with a younger youth to support each other on social skills, career choices, and academics. The mentor will be a knowledgeable, positive role model, and have common interests. Meetings will be one on one and once a month on a Saturday. Youth will also participate in various recreational activities such as bowling, laser tag, go-kart racing, and much more! Sessions start in April 2010 in both Mississauga and Brampton locations. Please visit our website or call 905-791-4100 or 905-272-4100 for more information on either being a mentor or participant. This project has been funded by a Youth in Action Grant through the Region of Peel and United Way of Peel Region.

## YORK REGION

### Vintages and Jazz Back for Another Year

**I**t's that time of year again! Spring is around the corner and so is our major fundraising event, Vintages & Jazz, which will be held Sunday, May 2nd, from 2-5pm on our beautiful landmark, the Loyal True Blue and Orange Home, 11181 Yonge St. Richmond

Hill. This will be our 11th Vintages & Jazz and our Honorary Chair will be Charles Beer, Accessibility Director, Community and Social Services! We are actively pursuing sponsorships and donations and look forward to another successful event. For information please contact (905) 88479 33 x 23 or info@ldayr.org.

Our last 2 picnics were such a hit that we are planning to hold another picnic this summer. It will be held June 28th.

LDAYR has entered into several partners within our community. LDAYR is pleased to announce a partnership with the York Region District School Board. We will be approaching a number of elementary public schools to offer the LDAYR SOAR program to students in their schools. Through this partnership, LDAYR will provide direct training to the SERTS so that they can successfully run the SOAR program at their schools. The program is designed to assist students in grades 6 to 8, identified with a learning disability, in understanding their disability, how to advocate for themselves and how to make good academic choices when the move on to High School.

Our other partnership is with the Regional Municipality of York, who has provided LDAYR a grant to offer a new program, SOAR Transitions, which is designed for students aged 16 to 20 years, identified with a learning disability and/or with ADHD. The objective of this new program is to assist students with their transition from High School to post secondary institutions or to the workforce. This program will be offered on a one to one basis by our Resource Facilitator.

LDAYR continues to provide a variety of services to meet the LD needs identified in our communities that reflect the diverse nature of the residents of York Region. We continue to add to our translated information packages – thanks to a recent grant from the Parents Reaching Out project, we have translated our information into an additional two languages – Korean and Urdu (information is also available in Chinese, Farsi, Tamil, Punjabi and Russian). Our adult services – Job Fit, Adult Support groups and one-on-one resourcing continue to attract LD adults. In the past year we have seen an 50% increase in services in this area.

As a result of additional funding received from Trillium, we are now able to provide free tutoring via our ABCs 123s volunteer tutoring program to children up to and including grade 8 who are at risk. This is a major accomplishment that will no doubt provide substantial assistance not only to these children but also to their parents.

LDAYR has another reason to celebrate this year. Our Executive Director, Lynn Ziraldo has reached the milestone of 25 years as



Lynn Ziraldo

the ED! And her involvement started long before 1985. Lynn started out in 1979 (31 years ago) as a volunteer board member for LDAYR, reaching the role of President in 1981 and continued in that role until taking the ED reigns in 1985. Her work encompasses volunteering at the local, provincial and national levels. She has represented learning disabilities and ADHD on numerous committees/task forces and education, health, social and legal issues throughout York Region, Ontario, Canada and the United States. Lynn's work has also been acknowledged with several awards.

**“Walking together, succeeding together” Lynn Ziraldo**

## LDA WELLINGTON COUNTY

LDA Wellington County continues to offer its workshop series on topics related to LDs, the most recent being a presentation of some of the emerging research on learning disabilities in both educational and social contexts. On April 27, 2010 Christina DeRoche, M.A., B.Ed., OCT PhD student, McMaster University, outlines these issues in the context of major trends in therapies, teaching strategies and the like. All workshops are aimed at teachers and parents. If you would like further information about this or any other LDAWC workshops, please contact the chapter at 519-837-2050 or by email at info@ldawc.ca



# IN PERSON: DEAN GOLDSTONE

## “Belle Époque”

By Carter Hammett

**R**emember reading comic books as a kid and seeing a light bulb suddenly appear over a character’s head whenever a great idea struck him?

Well, what if someone took that bulb and covered it with a decorative self-designed lamp shade that was beaded, lace trimmed, hand painted, silk pleated and embellished with bows, ribbons, tassels and hand-dyed fringe?

Dean Goldstone for one, would probably applaud.

Indeed, the Toronto-based Goldstone’s entire world is all about lampshades. But not just any lamp shades. No, it’s all about historically-accurate, hand-crafted couture. And Goldstone, 41, has been doing it for as long as he can remember.

“I first noticed antiques by the time I was five,” he says of his Surrey, BC-based childhood. “I was a very annoying kid. My father called me an idiot savant, but by eight I was hanging around people doing lamps,” he laughs, noting how he never quite fit in anywhere as a kid.

The lampshades he either painstakingly recreates or designs on his own are a lost art form. He can honestly lay claim to being virtually alone in the field of historically-correct art of lampshade fabrication and the reconstruction of their wire forms.

Lampshades have been around since there were light fixtures. Whether a



Dean Goldstone

flame, or a light bulb, all lighting forms have generally always had some kind of covering to either diffuse or accent its brightness. Despite the rise and fall of various artistic movements, the Victorian, Edwardian, Regency, Art Nouveau or Art Deco periods all incorporated highly detailed and decorative elements into their lamps.

“I was always more interested in doing things. I didn’t like playing with toys I was more interested in building things with my hands and working with art supplies,” he says.

Small wonder then, that he was always drawn to the highly visual and kinaesthetic elements of his colour and detail-oriented craft. The auditory elements of his dyslexia and ADHD, while a problem, never held him back from accomplishing his goals.

“I can read but not retain,” he says. “The written word doesn’t stick in my memory. Visually, my memory is strong and my conceptual and abstract thinking is excellent,” he states with pride, noting, how he also learned how to play the piano at a very young age.

As for ADHD, Goldstone notes he “always has 10 things on the go at a time” and that projects don’t get finished in a linear fashion. Deadlines have also been a small issue, but “my clients definitely know there’s no such thing as deadlines much of the time,” he cracks.

Today, Goldstone’s projects include introducing a line of his own designs that are currently being mass produced in China and shipped around in Canada. He retains a storefront—reportedly, the oldest in Toronto—near St. Lawrence Market that’s opened by appointment and continues to produce custom orders from his 1500 square foot studio loft, a former shoe factory in a century-old building. The studio is a gorgeous thing to see at night; a three-dimensional advertisement that glows luminous on low voltage lighting.

His messaging for others with similar disabilities is plain: “You can do anything else better than anyone else. The ADHD is awesome because it works on multiple planes, and dyslexia helps you build things visually and conceptually before you even start.

“Dyslexics need to be patient with people who don’t have learning disabilities, because we think in multiple layers at the same time. We have a lot of embedded skills but you have to just figure out where yours is pointing.”

For more information on Goldstone’s work, visit: [www.goldstonestudios.ca/](http://www.goldstonestudios.ca/)



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# The Web Based Teaching Tool

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