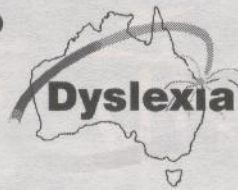


WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Brenda Baird, Davis Facilitator in Brisbane, Australia



The current trend is to label symptoms of dyslexia. One of the labels is *Slow Processor*. But a more accurate label would be **Detailed Processor**. Let me explain.

Let's imagine that a *detailed processor* is presented with a pen. A non-dyslexic will look at the pen and identify it as a pen and go no further. A *detailed processor* will look at the pen and mentally investigate its mechanics. This may appear to be slow processing compared to a person who only identifies the object as a pen, however, the dyslexic identifies key parts inside the pen and establishes how the pen works.

Both of my children are *detailed processors*. My youngest son is always taking things apart - shampoo bottles, toys, motors. At one point I reached my frustration threshold when I stepped on a toy that my son had disassembled. With clenched teeth I said, "Why do you always take things apart and leave them on the floor?" My beautiful son looked at me and said, "Mum, that is my gift."

Knowing he was a *detailed processor* I immediately sensed this was a pivotal moment and after a few deep breaths replied, "You're absolutely right! In the future can you make sure you clean up the mess?" Who am I to curtail the way my child learns? I can tell you, if something needs fixing I will always ask one of my *detailed processors* to do it.

Isn't this how Leonardo Da Vinci thought? Imagine Leo looking up in the sky and observing a bird. A "normal processor" would just notice and recognize the bird. Leo, using his detailed processing, would figure out how that bird flew. Hence, his drawing of a helicopter 400 years before aviation was invented.

Let me tell you about Dylan, another *detailed processor*. I was explaining to his mum about the thinking process of a dyslexic. Suddenly a light bulb went on in her head and she said, "That explains it!" Apparently when Dylan was younger he took apart the treadmill his sisters used to keep their Barbie dolls'

figures perfect. Dylan perfectly reassembled the treadmill but added a little more power. Imagine how angry his sisters were when the now turbo-powered treadmill caused poor Barbie to lose her legs! And, as you might guess, these days Dylan builds computers from scratch.

Now let's consider the **Diversified Processor**, a person with ADD or ADHD. A *diversified processor* would look at the pen, instantly understand its mechanics, and visually process the unlimited uses of that instrument. I would put Richard Branson and Ted Turner into the category of *Diversified Processors*.

On a recent camping trip I noticed a camp kitchen I quite liked. I turned to my husband and started to say, "Do you see that..." but was cut off mid sentence. My husband, a *diversified processor*, said, "Yes, and I have redesigned it!"

Now, before I understood diversified processing, I would have responded angrily saying, "Why don't you ever let me finish a sentence? You never listen to me!" But in my new state of enlightenment I laughed and replied, "I should have known you could design something better!" Those words had barely left my mouth before he had a pen and paper in hand to draw his new camp kitchen.

I hope we can embrace these new terms and more positive ways of understanding people.



Lloyd (third from left), a Davis Program graduate in Australia, watches with friends the successful flight of a model airplane he designed.

Parent Responses to Ms. Baird's Article

From Dylan's mom

I read your article and so did Dylan. He was "tickled pink." He is tinkering with car engines at the moment trying to work out how he can supercharge his grandfather's utility vehicle!

From Sally's mom

I must say I have to agree with you. Long before we realised that Sally had dyslexia, I knew that she didn't look at the world in the same way! I remember once I sent her to clean up the bathroom. After about 20 minutes I went in to check on her. The place was a shambles, even worse than when I sent her in! She was sitting on the floor, scribbling on pieces of paper. I asked her (calmly) what she was doing. She said she was writing down how many we had of each item in the cupboard: toothpaste, soap, washers etc., all lined up with the count on paper! She was taking inventory! I think she was 7 at the time...

From Lloyd's mom

Lloyd has been continuing persistently in his passion for building aeroplanes. He downloads plans off the internet, draws up his designs, prints them out, and gets to it. After many, many, many models of different shapes, sizes and building materials, this one FLEW YESTERDAY!

This article was first published as a download from Dyslexia Australia, the website of Brenda Baird, and is reprinted here with her permission. Brenda has been a Davis Facilitator since 2002 and is the owner of Dyslexia Australia. You can visit her website at: <http://www.dyslexia-australia.com.au>.