DAVIS DYSLEXIA CORRECTION® PROGRAM – OUTCOMES

By Wayman E. (wes) Sole

The Davis Dyslexia Correction Program originated with research done by Ron Davis in 1980-1981 leading to the opening of his first center in California, in 1982. In 1995, the Davis Dyslexia Association International (DDAI) was established. By January 2000, the organization has grown to more than 175 Facilitators throughout the world. The Davis Dyslexia Correction Program is a three-part program beginning with an assessment and consultation to determine if the Davis Methods are suitable to help the potential student. Important factors for success with the Davis program are awareness of problems with learning, and motivation to solve them. The assessment and consultation will help determine if these factors are present. The second part of the Davis program is an intensive Five-Day program conducted one-on-one with the student and Licensed Facilitator. The program is tailored, where possible, to the specific needs of the student. Major areas addressed during this week are Davis Orientation Counseling®, Davis Symbol Mastery®, and Steps to Easier Reading. Also included in the program is support training for the person who will be continuing to help the student at home. The third part of the Davis program is an at-home segment where the student continues the work begun during the program-week. A kit of resource materials is also provided to support the at-home program.

More information about The Davis Dyslexia Correction Program can be found in the book, The Gift of Dyslexia, by Ronald D. Davis; and, the Davis Dyslexia Association International web site at: http://www.dyslexia.com

If you are like most people I've talked to, you wonder if the Davis Dyslexia Correction Program will help your child. I, along with other facilitators, have many success stories, some more amazing than others. But what can you reasonably expect for your child? Each individual that comes to the program brings a unique self and both short and long-term changes can vary widely. For most, the initial changes will be immediately evident. However, some students may prefer to think about what they have learned and how they want to apply this new knowledge to their day-to-day activities. For these individuals little change may be evident during the program week, but will be noticeable over the following weeks and months.

One question often asked, particularly by teachers, is what outcomes can be expected when a child participates in the Davis Dyslexia Correction Program. During my training at DDAI, much discussion focused on how we could clearly illustrate changes in a child's reading and comprehension when he or she participates in the Davis Dyslexia Correction Program. A method of evaluating attendee progress was co-authored by Myrna Burkholder, and myself, under the patient and persistent guidance of Sharon Pfeiffer of DDAI.   The evaluation instrument used is a subset of the *Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory© - Third Edition*.

Although the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory contains an extensive battery of tests, only a subset of three tests is used: the San Diego Quick Assessment or Graded Word List, the Oral Reading and Comprehension Tests, and the Listening Comprehension Tests. Oral reading is when the child reads the passage out loud and then answers questions about the passage content. Listening is when the child listens to the facilitator read the passage then answers questions about the passage content. The three reading levels measured by these tests are: Independent

Reading Level, Instructional Reading Level, and Frustration Reading level. Only the Instructional Reading Level was used for this presentation because it is the level most closely related to schoolwork. The Instructional Reading Level is the level at which a child, when working with new material, should be able to accurately decode at least ninety-five percent of the words and should comprehend at least sixty percent of the content. The grade levels Pre-Primary through Grade nine are provided within the Ekwall/Shanker tests.

The data were gathered in two steps, from a sample of twenty-one clients, at Dyslexia Help for Children and Adults in London, Ontario, during the years 1999-2000. The first set of data was collected prior to the commencement of the program, usually during client assessment and consultation. The second set of data was collected on the fifth day of the program. The data are sorted by age within gender. On the graphs, the dark markers represent the grade level at the beginning of the program and the bars, either up or down, represent the changes that were measured. Where no change was indicated, there is no associated change bar. When a grade level nine is indicated, the actual performance often exceeded the ninth grade; however, the ninth grade is the highest-grade level provided by the Ekwall/Shanker material.

Results Overview

Most children fully embrace the Davis Methods as they are taught during the program. However a few children may take several weeks or months before fully embracing them. In these cases the individuals may need to develop a comfort level with the Davis Methods within themselves before showing visible or measurable changes.

The following chart summarizes the results from twenty-one students participating in this study. Each individual participated in two sets of three tests from the Ekwall/Shanker battery of tests. The first set was administered during assessment and the second set was administered on day five of the Five-Day intensive program. The Ekwall/Shanker tests that were used are: the Graded Word List, the Oral Reading Test, and the Listening Test. The Grade Level results for each of the Test Segments were divided into three categories, Drop In Grade Level, No Change In Grade Level, and Increased One Or More Grade Levels. The Count of the individuals included in each category and the Percent Of Total are shown in the following table.

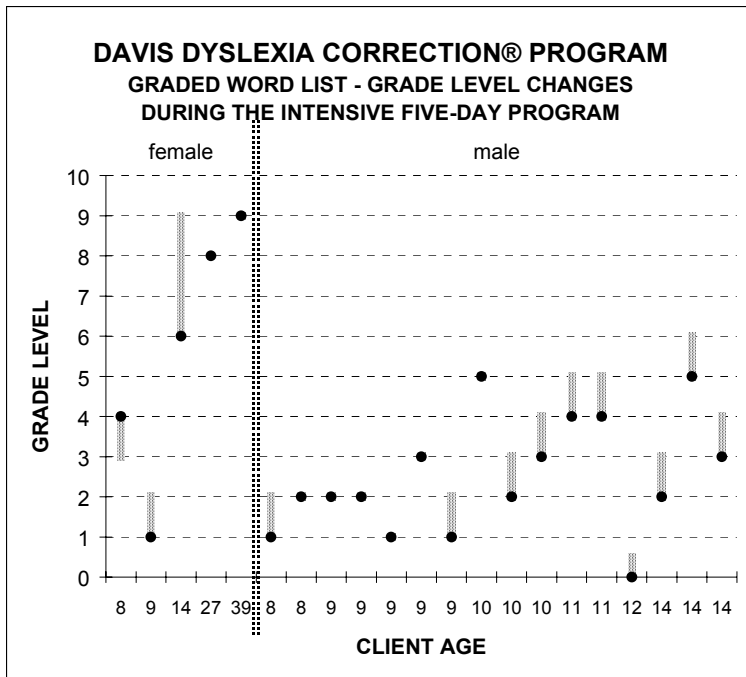| NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS AND PERCENT OF SAMPLE BY CATEGORY						
	CATEGORIES					
Test Segment	Drop In Grade Level		No Change In Grade Level		Increased One Or More Grade Levels	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Graded Word List	1	5	8	38	12	57
Oral Reading	1	5	5	24	15	71
Listening	4	19	7	33	10	48

Results Details

The numerical data gathered during this study are summarized in the Detail Data Table. The Pre-Pgm – data were collected during assessment and the Post-Pgm – data were collected on Day-Five of the intensive Five-Day program. The Pre-Pgm Marker is used to mark the initial test results on the graphs in the Graded Word List, Oral Comprehension, and Listening Comprehension, details that follow.

DETAIL DATA TABLE									
		Graded Word List			Oral Comprehension			Listening Comprehension		
Gender	Age	Grade Level		Pre-Pgm Marker	Grade Level		Pre-Pgm Marker	Grade Level		Pre-Pgm Marker
		Pre-Pgm	Post-Pgm		Pre-Pgm	Post-Pgm		Pre-Pgm	Post-Pgm	
F	8	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	7	4
F	9	1	2	1	3	3	3	4	7	4
F	14	6	9	6	6	8	6	8	9	8
F	27	8	8	8	3	6	3	5	9	5
F	39	9	9	9	7	8	7	7	9	7
M	8	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
M	8	2	2	2	4	5	4	9	7	9
M	9	2	2	2	3	4	3	7	6	7
M	9	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	8	6
M	9	1	1	1	1	2	1	7	6	7
M	9	3	3	3	6	7	6	8	9	8
M	9	1	2	1	2	2	2	4	4	4
M	10	5	5	5	5	8	5	7	7	7
M	10	2	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
M	10	3	4	3	5	8	5	8	7	8
M	11	4	5	4	4	7	4	5	7	5
M	11	4	5	4	7	6	7	7	9	7
M	12	0	0.5	0	2	2	2	4	4	4
M	14	2	3	2	4	7	4	9	9	9
M	14	5	6	5	6	8	6	9	9	9
M	14	3	4	3	5	6	5	4	5	4

Graded Word List

The Graded Word List, a quick test of a child's sight vocabulary consists of a series of ten words at each grade level from pre-primary through grade-level nine. The same Graded Word List is used for both the pre and post-program testing. The Graded Word List is used to quickly establish the child's sight vocabulary level. Although the Davis Dyslexia Correction Program does not specifically include the introduction of new vocabulary during the one-week program, the Steps to Easier Reading, used during the program, does help build sight vocabulary.

DAVIS DYSLEXIA CORRECTION® PROGRAM
GRADED WORD LIST - GRADE LEVEL CHANGES
DURING THE INTENSIVE FIVE-DAY PROGRAM

female   male

GRADE LEVEL vs CLIENT AGE

CLIENT AGE: 8 9 14 27 39 | 8 8 9 9 9 9 10 10 10 11 11 12 14 14 14

Data Interpretation

Individuals with significant perceptual difficulties can experience multiple grade level changes in the Graded Word List. The three-year grade level shift shown for the 14-year-old girl is an example of a change that can happen when significant perceptual difficulties are corrected during the Orientation phase of the one-week program.
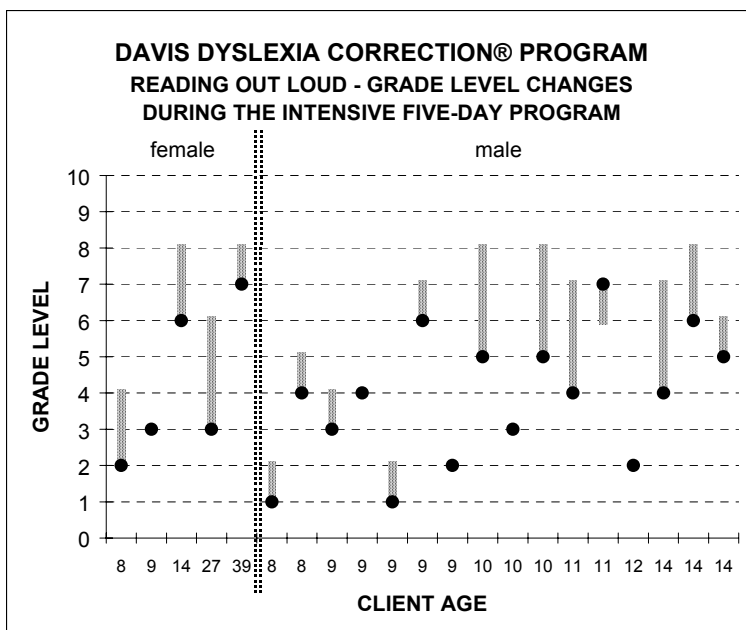
In some instances, no change in grade level was observed between the pre and post-program testing.

It is unusual to find a grade level drop in the Graded Word List test, as this test is a measure of the child's sight vocabulary. The observed change may be attributable to the child's fatigue at the end of the program.

It is very unusual to find a large change in Sight Vocabulary during the one-week program.

Oral Reading Assessment (vocabulary and comprehension)

The Oral Reading Assessment tests the child's sight vocabulary and reading comprehension. Vocabulary errors are tracked as the student reads the passage and a series of questions relating to passage content is asked following the reading. Different passages are used for the pre and post-program testing.

DAVIS DYSLEXIA CORRECTION® PROGRAM
READING OUT LOUD - GRADE LEVEL CHANGES
DURING THE INTENSIVE FIVE-DAY PROGRAM

female   male

GRADE LEVEL vs CLIENT AGE

CLIENT AGE: 8 9 14 27 39 | 8 8 9 9 9 9 10 10 10 11 11 12 14 14 14

Data Interpretation

Improvements in Oral Reading can vary. The two and three year grade-level improvements are remarkable and indicate that these individuals had significant perceptual difficulties that were corrected during the Orientation phase of the program.

For some children the ending Oral Reading Assessment may indicate no change at all. Sight vocabulary, story content, fatigue, etc. may be contributing factors.

When the Oral Reading grade level drops this is usually indicative of a lack of interest in the story content or confusion involving some concept or word contained in the story. In most cases when no change or a drop in the Oral Reading grade level is found it was in conflict with expectations as demonstrated by the child's progress during the week.

Some children exhibit a high level of comprehension even though they struggle with the vocabulary in the reading passage. This is particularly evident in the pre-program assessment. For other children sight-vocabulary is the limiting factor.

Occasionally there will be a child whose connection to expressive language is tenuous. Reading for these children is very difficult and progress usually takes much longer than the one-week program.

Listening Assessment (comprehension)

The Listening Assessment, tests the child's listening vocabulary and comprehension. A series of questions relating to passage content is asked following the reading. Different passages are used for the pre and post-program testing.

DAVIS DYSLEXIA CORRECTION® PROGRAM
LISTENING - GRADE LEVEL CHANGES
DURING THE INTENSIVE FIVE-DAY PROGRAM
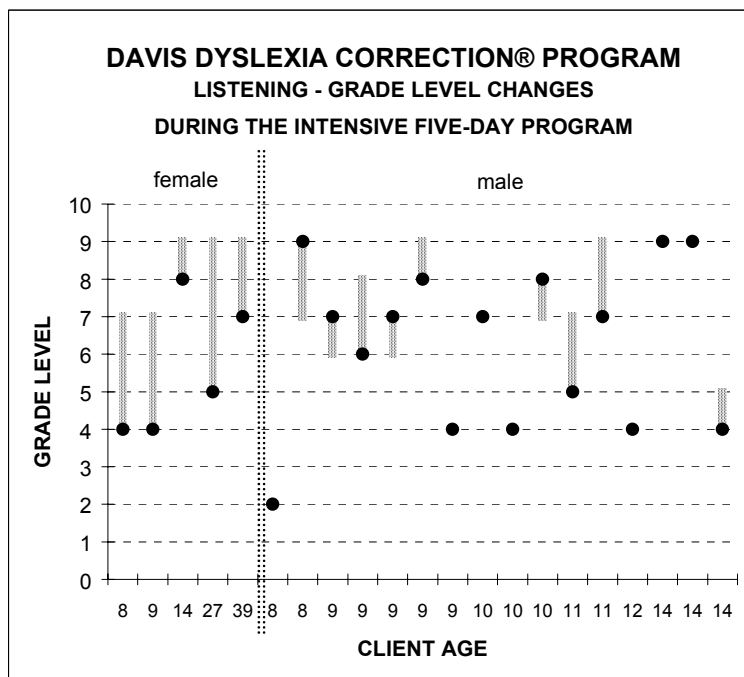
Data Interpretation

During the program, improvements in Listening Grade Level can vary. The two, three and four year grade-level improvements are remarkable and indicate that these individuals had significant perceptual difficulties that were corrected during the Orientation phase of the one-week program.

For some children general vocabulary is a limiting factor. When this is the case, there may be little or no change from the pre-program to post-program assessment.

A Listening Assessment can drop if the individual is tired, not interested in the story, or if some concept or word early in the story has caused confusion resulting in a portion of the story being missed.

Some children do not always get proper rest during the program week. Being away from home and familiar surroundings can have a profound effect on some individuals. When this happens, it has been observed that their ending assessment is at a lower level than expected, based on their progress during the week.

It has also been observed that by the end of the week some children are anxious to be on their way home.

The At-Home Program

Two important things happen during the At-Home segment of the program. First, all the tools introduced during the one-on-one sessions are practiced so they easily become a part of the student's day-to-day life. Second, the student completes Symbol Mastery of the Trigger Words.

Trigger words are the common connector words (if, and, the, but, where, etc.) present in all reading material. There are 217 common trigger words. Because these words do not naturally have mental images associated with them, they are a source of confusion that in turn triggers disorientation in the dyslexic individual. The Symbol Mastery process enables the student to stop the confusion by developing a picture for the trigger word along with a clear understanding of the meaning of that word.

The Symbol Mastery process can also be used to develop an in-depth understanding of other words and concepts.

About the author

Wayman E. (wes) Sole, has been a licensed Davis Dyslexia Correction Facilitator, since January 24, 1998, and is located in London, Ontario, Canada, Tel: (519) 472-1255 (evenings)
Web site: www.dyslexiahelp.com, e-mail: wes@dyslexiahelp.com