



## Winter/Hiver 2011 **REFLEXIONS**



# Idanb•taanb

Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick

Troubles d'apprentissage—association du Nouveau-Brunswick

**For 40 years we have been helping our community  
become more aware of learning disabilities  
by making visible changes for an invisible disability.**

**Depuis 40 ans nous œuvrons dans le but d'augmenter les  
connaissances des troubles d'apprentissage dans notre province  
enfin de rendre plus de visibilité à un trouble invisible.**



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*Daniel Radcliffe of Harry Potter fame recently revealed he has a learning disability. It affects his language and motor skills, resulting in poor handwriting and difficulty with such things as tying shoelaces.*

# **LDANB/ TAANB Executive 2010-2011**

President: Beth Keyes  
VP Funding: Mary Jones  
VP Programs: Rhonda Rubin  
VP Administration: Fabienne McKay  
Treasurer: Sylvianne Caron  
Secretary: Dawn Gallow

National Rep: Cindy Grant

## **Message from the President**

*This new year brings with it many new challenges, including contending with provincial budget cuts and working collaboratively to ensure that none of the vital early intervention and support programs for persons with Learning Disabilities fall prey to such cuts. In the midst of all this we are energized to continue with our mandate and to seek out new and creative programs and services, and the addition of a Program Director to our team will certainly assist us in this process!*

*Thank you for your continued interest and involvement in our association.*

*Beth Keyes*

## **Frontier College hosts LD Workshop**

A LD workshop was provided on November 23, 2010 by LDANB TAANB board members, Andrea Schneider, Dawn Gallow and Ann Wagner, to Frontier College volunteer tutors. Our LINKS tutor, Natasha Brewer, helped to describe some of her work with children at risk for learning disabilities.

The Frontier College tutors were offered basic background on what LDs are, different types of specific LDs, importance of identifying and accommodating individuals with LDs.

This introductory session was followed by the practical hands-on strategies led by Andrea, Dawn and Natasha. These interventions are used as part of the LDANB LINKS program. Ample time was given for the participants to practice these activities in pairs or small groups .

The workshop was open to other community members, being offered as a Community Connections initiative. The attendees were very appreciative of the session.



# You might want to know.....



We have a new member of the team! **Jenelle Sobey** joined us recently as Program Director on a part time basis.

Jenelle comes to us with energy, management skills as well as research and planning abilities.

Jenelle is looking forward to meeting members, parents as well as the professionals working in the field.

She is presently getting her feet wet by writing proposals as well as exploring what LDANB/ TAANB has been offering as programs. She is looking forward to having persons with learning disabilities and their families give input into program planning. Please do not hesitate to send her an email or give her a call. You can reach her at [ldanbprograms@nb.aibn.com](mailto:ldanbprograms@nb.aibn.com) or at 459-7852

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## Pour vous garder au courant

L'équipe de TAANB à un nouveau membre ! Jenelle Sobey c'est récemment joint à nous en tant que Directrice des programmes à temps partiel.

Jenelle est pleine d'énergie, a des compétences en gestion et des aptitudes en recherche et planification.

Ses premières tâches ont été de créer des demandes de dons et d'explorer les différents programmes que LDANB/TAANB offre. Elle a hâte de recevoir des commentaires des personnes ayant des troubles d'apprentissage et de leurs familles pour l'aider à la planification des programmes. N'hésitez pas à faire parvenir vos commentaires à Jenelle par téléphone au 459-7852 ou par courriel à [ldanbprograms@nb.aibn.com](mailto:ldanbprograms@nb.aibn.com)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **ATTENTION:**

June 27-29, 2011: Summer Institute 2011 - Workplace Literacy & Essential Skills: Embedding Practice, Preparing Providers, Montreal, QC For more information, [carolyn.barilko@centreforliteracy.qc.ca](mailto:carolyn.barilko@centreforliteracy.qc.ca).

Sept. 29 - Oct.1, 2011 : LDAC-ACTA National Conference: Charlottetown PEI . For further information, contact [ldapei@eastlink.ca](mailto:ldapei@eastlink.ca)

## A VENIR

29 septembre - 1e octobre  
2011 : Congrès national de LDAC  
- ACTA à Charlottetown IPÉ. Pour  
plus de renseignements, contacter  
contact [ldapei@eastlink.ca](mailto:ldapei@eastlink.ca)

# Neuroimaging Helps To Predict Which Dyslexics Will Learn To Read

Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine have used sophisticated brain imaging to predict with 90 percent accuracy which teenagers with dyslexia would improve their reading skills over time.

Their work, the first to identify specific brain mechanisms involved in a person's ability to overcome reading difficulties, could lead to new interventions to help dyslexics better learn to read.

"This gives us hope that we can identify which children might get better over time," said Fumiko Hoeft, MD, PhD, an imaging expert and instructor at Stanford's Center for Interdisciplinary Brain Sciences Research. "More study is needed before the technique is clinically useful, but this is a huge step forward."

Hoeft is first author of a paper, which was published online Dec. 20 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The senior author is John Gabrieli, PhD, a former Stanford professor now at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dyslexia, a brain-based learning disability that impairs a person's ability to read, affects 5 to 17 percent of U.S. children. Affected children's ability to improve their reading skills varies greatly, with about one-fifth able to benefit from interventions and develop adequate reading skills by adulthood. But up to this point, what happens in this brain to allow for this improvement remained unknown.

Past imaging studies have shown greater activation of specific brain regions in children and adults with dyslexia during reading-related tasks; one area in particular, the inferior frontal gyrus (which is part of the frontal lobe), is used more in dyslexics than in typical readers. As the researchers noted in their paper, some experts have hypothesized that greater involvement of this part of the brain during reading is related to long-term gains in reading for dyslexic children.

For this study, Hoeft and colleagues aimed to determine whether neuroimaging could predict reading improvement and how brain-based measures compared with conventional educational measures.

The researchers gathered 25 children with dyslexia and 20 children with typical reading skills - all around age 14 - and assessed their reading with standardized tests. They then used two types of imaging, functional magnetic resonance imaging and diffusion tensor imaging (a specialized form of MRI), as the children performed reading tasks. Two-and-a-half years later, they reassessed reading performance and asked which brain image or standardized reading measures

taken at baseline predicted how much the child's reading skills would improve over time.

What the researchers found was that no behavioral measure, including widely used standardized reading and language tests, reliably predicted reading gains. But children with dyslexia who at baseline showed greater activation in the right inferior frontal gyrus during a specific task and whose white matter connected to this right frontal region was better organized showed greater reading improvement over the next two-and-a-half years. The researchers also found that looking at patterns of activation across the whole brain allowed them to very accurately predict future reading gains in the children with dyslexia.

"The reason this is exciting is that until now, there have been no known measures that predicted who will learn to compensate," said Hoeft.

As the researchers noted in their paper, "fMRI is typically viewed as a research tool that has little practical implication for an individual with dyslexia." Yet these findings suggest that, after additional study, brain imaging could be used as a prognostic tool to predict reading improvement in dyslexic children.

The other exciting implication, Hoeft said, involves therapy. The research shows that gains in reading for dyslexic children involve different neural mechanisms and pathways than those for typically developing children. By understanding this, researchers could develop interventions that focus on the appropriate regions of the brain and that are, in turn, more effective at improving a child's reading skills.

Hoeft said this work might also encourage the use of imaging to enhance the understanding (and potentially the treatment) of other disorders. "In general terms, these findings suggest that brain imaging may play a valuable role in neuroprognosis, the use of brain measures to predict future reductions or exacerbations of symptoms in clinical disorders," she explained.

The authors noted several caveats with their findings. The children were followed for two-and-a-half years; longer-term outcomes are unknown. The study also involved children in their teens; more study is needed to determine whether brain-based measures can predict reading progress in younger children. Hoeft is now working on a study of pre-readers, being funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Source: Michelle Brandt, Stanford University Medical Center Dec. 2010

# PCSDP Report Card Release

On Dec 3, 2010 International Day of Disabled Persons, the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons presented its report card providing an update on the progress made to date on the province's Disability Action Plan Strategy, initially released in 2007. Premier Alward was present at the release. He also thanked the many volunteers and service providers who work at improving the lives of persons with disabilities in our province. He assured them that his government has the same commitment and is dedicated to promoting full participation in all aspects of society for New Brunswickers with disabilities.

Christyne Allain, executive director of the council, said the report card will ensure that departments are held publicly accountable. The report card detailed the government's response to a long list of recommendations and gave it six "A"s, 32 "B"s, 58 "C"s, 3 "D"s and 3 "F"s.

To access document,  
<http://www.gnb.ca/0048/PCSDP/PDF/Report3Eng.pdf>

Here are the rating of some recommendations which centre on issues affecting students with LD and their parents.

*#34. Regular reporting and accountability measures must be in place with students and parents so they can track the progress of individual educational plans and outcomes for students with disabilities.*

*- Department of Education*

Grade: C

*#38. The Department of Education must adopt a policy that when a student is suspected of having a serious learning disability, they must not have to wait more than three months to have a professional assessment arrangement which will include identifying the problem and offering a plan with options to accommodate the learning disability. The assessment report and program plan ideas will be copied immediately for the parent/guardian of the student and the lead classroom teacher involved with that student.*

*- Department of Education*

Grade: C -

*#42. The programs working to improve literacy levels in New Brunswick must develop a strategy to improve overall access and use of their services by persons with various types of disabilities.*

*- Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour - Department of Education*

Grade: C



From left: Christyne Allain, council executive director; Michelle Horncastle, PCSDP chair; and Premier David Alward.

## What we hear is.....



# Changes to SEP for Your Child

The following is a 2 page document sent by the Department of Education to English language School Districts to have forwarded to parents of children with SEPs. Variations of the document have gone out to families. We ask that you contact LDANB as to whether you have received it. We also welcome your comments.

## Accommodations and My Child's Special Education Plan

The Department of Education is in the process of adopting a philosophy of teaching known as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which is particularly effective at meeting the learning needs of the greatest number of students. The adoption of UDL means that some students who previously required a special education plan (SEP) to receive accommodations in the classroom, and may also have required special approval for accommodations during provincial assessments, will begin to receive accommodations without an SEP.

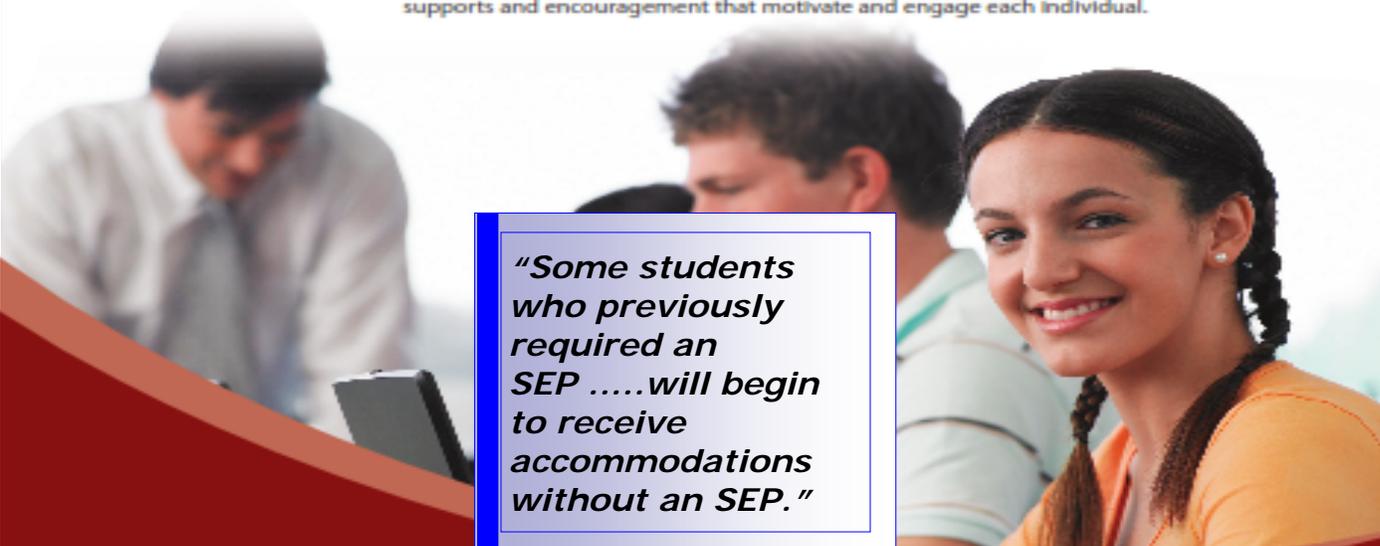
This document introduces UDL and explains why it eliminates the need for an SEP for certain students. You will also learn about changes that will be implemented during the 2010-11 school year relating to accommodations for instruction and assessment.

### Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based educational philosophy that provides a framework for designing curricula that enable all students to develop knowledge, skills and an enthusiasm for learning. The principles of UDL hold that the needs of the greatest number of students can be met by maximizing the usability of programs, services, practices and learning environments. Barriers to learning are reduced and supports are provided to ensure that students can participate in learning. You can learn more about UDL by visiting [www.CAST.org](http://www.CAST.org).

The key to UDL is for the teacher to provide options in these learning areas:

- The **what** of learning – The teacher uses various methods to present information so that all students can build knowledge.
- The **how** of learning – The teacher provides different activities and opportunities for each student to express his or her knowledge and to learn skills.
- The **why** of learning – The teacher builds enthusiasm for learning among all students by offering challenges, supports and encouragement that motivate and engage each individual.



*"Some students who previously required an SEP .....will begin to receive accommodations without an SEP."*

# Changes to SEP for Your Child (cont'd)

UDL enables teachers and students to use a range of strategies, technologies or adjustments at their own discretion to meet learning needs in the classroom and during assessment. Because they are available to all students if required, these are called **universal accommodations** and they don't require an SEP or prior approval for provincial assessments. A few examples of the many universal accommodations include sound-field systems, extra time, special seating and large print. When UDL and universal accommodations cannot meet a student's individual needs, an SEP will be required.

## ***Justifiable Accommodations and the SEP***

When UDL alone is insufficient to meet the individual needs of a student, an SEP is required, identifying justifiable accommodations that will meet the student's needs.

Justifiable accommodations are strategies, technologies or adjustments without which the student would be unable to access the curriculum. For example, a scribe who records a student's answers would be a justified accommodation if the child would not be able to succeed without the accommodation. The SEP documents justifiable accommodations and prior approval may be required to access them during provincial assessments.

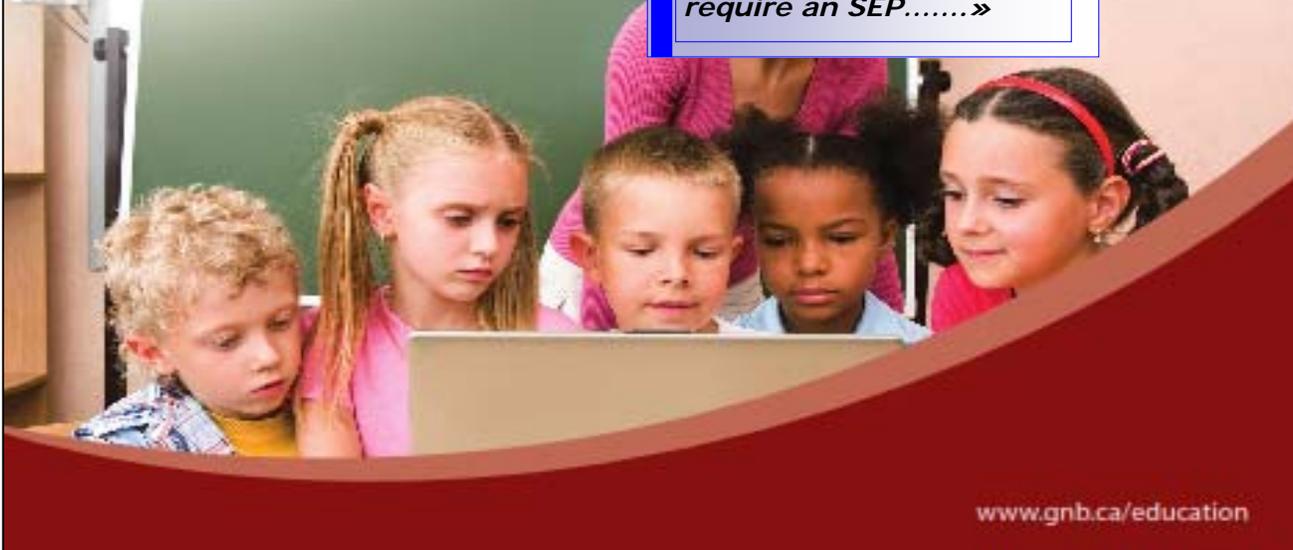
## ***Transitions During the 2010-2011 School Year***

The 2010-2011 school year will be a transition year for students who have an accommodated (only) SEP. Your child's teacher will meet with teachers and parents to determine whether your child's necessary accommodations are universal and no longer require an SEP, or justified and require documentation in an SEP.

By the end of this school year, accommodated (only) SEPs will contain only justified accommodations. The SEP will require the justified accommodations for all subjects and will ensure that the student has access to the needed accommodation for both informal and formal assessment, including provincial assessments.

For additional information, refer to the *Accommodations for Instruction & Assessment* document or speak with your school principal or the student services learning specialist at the district office.

***"Your child's teacher will determine whether your child's necessary accommodations are universal and no longer require an SEP.....»***



[www.gnb.ca/education](http://www.gnb.ca/education)

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est notre site

The right to learn,  
the power to  
achieve /

Le droit  
d'apprendre, le  
possibilité de  
réussir

## FEUILLET D'INFORMATION

### 2004 Le crédit d'impôt pour frais médicaux et les troubles d'apprentissage (ligne 330 du formulaire d'impôt sur le revenu)

Les personnes handicapées ont accès à de nombreux programmes et bénéfices très utiles dans le domaine des crédits d'impôt tels que le crédit d'impôt pour personnes handicapées, le crédit pour invalidité d'une personne de plus de 18 ans, le crédit pour des appareils ou de l'équipement, le crédit pour les personnes donnant des soins et la prestation pour enfants handicapés. Tous ces crédits devraient aussi intéresser les familles qui accueillent des personnes handicapées.

Ces dernières années, Troubles d'apprentissage – Association canadienne (TAAC) a reçu beaucoup de courrier et a tenu plusieurs réunions avec Finances Canada et l'Agence du revenu du Canada (ARC) pour faire en sorte que les personnes ayant des troubles d'apprentissage soient équitablement traitées sous le régime de la *Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu*. Étant donné que les lois sur l'impôt sont complexes et que de nombreux conseillers fiscaux ont souvent peu d'occasions de se servir de ces crédits fiscaux uniques, les familles encourent le risque de perdre des remboursements qui valent plusieurs milliers de dollars. Si votre enfant a d'autres handicaps physiques, mentaux ou émotionnels, vous pouvez aussi éventuellement être admissibles à d'autres bénéfices fiscaux.

Pour recevoir plus d'information sur un certain nombre de dépenses liées aux troubles d'apprentissage qui sont admissibles au titre du Crédit d'impôt pour frais médicaux (CIFM), contacter Troubles d'apprentissage – association du Nouveau-Brunswick.

*Adapté d'un document par Claudette Larocque, agente d'information, TAAC*

*Mise à jour par Eileen Reppenhagen, CGA, le 23 novembre 2004*

[www.taxdetective.ca](http://www.taxdetective.ca)

### Ce que l'on entend..

