

Voice recognition software aids dyslectic teacher

Australian teacher, Matt Buttsworth, who is handicapped with dyslexia and dysgraphia has found Nuance's Dragon NaturallySpeaking 12 a life liberating solution to his impediments.

According to the Australian Dyslexia Association, dyslexia is a reading impediment that hampers one's ability to spell, decode and read written language. It affects about 10 per cent of the Australian population.

Dysgraphia is an impairment in which a person has difficulty with the ability to write. Although not as widespread as dyslexia, dysgraphia still affects thousands of people in Australia.

Diagnosed with both handicaps at a young age, Buttsworth learned to live with both impairments as best he could. He struggled through school and was bright enough to enter university and gain a doctorate in history before deciding to pursue a teaching career.

He says: "All through university I would have to pay typists to type up my essays and assignments. Then I would have to check that the typist's deciphering of my written script was accurate."

"When I decided I wanted to be a history teacher I knew I had to find something to help me write clearly and read effectively. It's very embarrassing when your students cannot read all that you have written and when you know that the information will contain numerous spelling mistakes."

In 1994, while living and working in Switzerland, Buttsworth first heard that voice



dictation software had been developed.

"I remember buying every voice dictation program and using them to see how they could help. It was at this time that I first heard of Dragon NaturallySpeaking. After testing everything else, Dragon was the only one that could help me. It wasn't perfect but it was useable and I stuck with it."

Nuance released Version 9 during 2007–08 while he was teaching at an international school in Norway. He says: "Dragon 9 was far superior

when compared to the earlier program. The accuracy in terms of converting my speech to text and the spelling were much better so I could create lecture notes to help me teach in class and make detailed study booklets that I could email my students."

In 2012 Nuance released Dragon 12 and with this version Buttsworth says "everything changed. All of a sudden I no longer felt inhibited and it was a liberating feeling."

He found that in addition to using the software while teaching, he could use it to type letters and correspondence, send emails and surf the Internet. In class, Dragon became a powerful teachers' aid. He could hookup his Dragon enabled computer to a projector screen to help him dictate text for the students without the need to write.

"My students no longer had to put up with my writing, which starts off OK but ends up with numerous spelling mistakes and as an illegible scrawl."

He has since used Dragon Professional to write his book *How to Beat Dyslexia and Dysgraphia – My Story*.

"With Dragon, having dyslexia and dysgraphia is no longer a disadvantage. The software is easy to use and like everything, the more you use it the better you get at it. Ideally, it would be wonderful to see the use of such a tool implemented as a nation-wide education policy to allow students with these handicaps to perform to their full potential." **ET**

Knowing the Bard is good for students



In 2012, Bell Shakespeare commissioned Educational Transformations to evaluate three of its key learning programs; Actors At Work, in-school Residencies and the Regional Teacher Scholarship, with the aim of identifying and quantifying their value and what direction they should play in the future of the Company.

Teachers reported increased confidence in their ability to teach drama and Shakespeare's texts and increased knowledge, ideas and skills

to teach Shakespeare through their involvement.

Teachers that had participated in the Regional Teacher Scholarship reported significantly increased use of drama and Shakespeare's texts in their classroom after their participation in the program.

Got a minute?

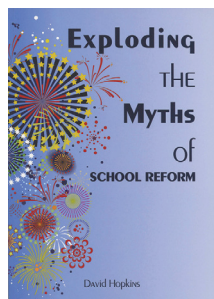
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ET Books



Exploding the Myths of School Reform

David Hopkins

ACER Press

ISBN 9781742860985

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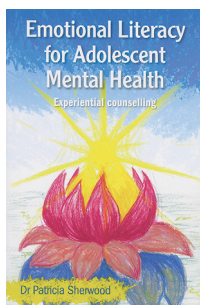
David Hopkins is Emeritus Professor at the Institute of Education, University of London and Director of Education for the Bright Tribe Trust.

In this, his latest book, established and emerging ideas about effective school and system improvement are scrutinised.

He confronts real-world challenges and perspectives from research, policy and practice, and draws on international benchmarking studies to support its objectives and claims.

Each of the 10 chapters addresses a perceptible fallacy – such as the myth that poverty determines performance – and sets out ways that school boards, principals and teaching staff can implement change.

299 pages plus a comprehensive Bibliography and Index make this a valuable work to have on hand and refer to.



Emotional Literacy for Adolescent Mental Health *Experiential counselling*

Patricia Sherwood

ACER Press

ISBN 9781742861036

RR \$39.95 at the ACER online shop

Prof Sherwood recognises that traditional talk therapy may not always be the best approach when the adolescent's need for personal privacy is important and verbal communication is often confined to peers in whom young people feel they can trust.

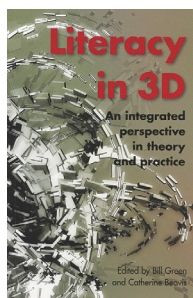
In this book, she describes a diversity of non-verbal experiential exercises, skills and interventions for working with adolescents.

The activities are drawn from the artistic therapies, including drama and movement, clay therapy and sand play as well as meditation and nature-based and animal-assisted therapies.

Nine of the 10 chapters describe an individual adolescent's situation and discusses how one or other non-verbal techniques was used to tease out the root cause of the problem.

The 'set the scene' pages are followed by detailed descriptions of a series of exercises designed to help the patient.

This is an interesting book and worth reading, however this reviewer's conclusion was that helping adolescents with serious issues requires special skills – 'do-it-yourself' psychology is not a good idea.



Literacy in 3D

An integrated perspective in theory and practice

Editors Bill Green and

Catherine Beavis

ACER Press

ISBN 9781742860381

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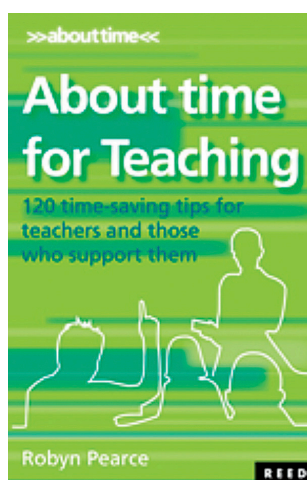
Literacy in 3D brings together an authoritative collection of essays by academics, policy makers and educators from across Australia.

Each draws on Bill Green's influential '3D' model of the cultural, critical and operational dimensions involved in literacy, pedagogy and practice.

The essays are the work of 10 well-recognised authors and there is an interesting foreword by Prof Claire Wyatt-Smith Dean (Academic): Arts, Education and Law Griffith University.

ET

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