

15. *Minimus* and Dyslexia

In recent years dyslexia has been recognised as a different learning style, less efficient for processing symbols and language, involving difficulty in certain areas of ordering and recalling written material.

Latin is truly a structured language with a heavy memory load. The ability range of dyslexic people ranges from low to high average as in the general population, and each person has individual areas of strength and weakness in processing language.

Yet many dyslexic students succeed in gaining First Class degrees and aspire to Doctorates, even in English. Motivation and confidence building are vital.

The accepted and most effective remedial teaching method was researched and initiated in the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, Texas, and refined by perceptive teachers, psychologists, paediatricians and occupational therapists world-wide. The method involves a highly structured, cumulative, phonic, multi-sensory programme.

This is also the thinking in the *Minimus* teaching materials, capturing the imagination visually, building up from the beginning, using structured stories, games and songs, tapes for auditory help with phonic representation of words, and rhymes to encourage enjoyment of the tasks in an appropriate way.

The characters are real friends, and the animals, *Minimus* and *Vibrissa*, are appealing. They can add a three-dimensional hand-skills challenge to the child who loves modelling in clay, Play Do or bread dough.

The dyslexic child can take a leading part in a playlet, or by becoming the class photographer in an outing to one of the beautifully presented Roman sites at Bath, or Vindolanda for example. The keen cook can recreate a Roman meal for the class. Every child loves to make a Latin birthday card for parents and friends.

The discovery that Latin words really do help with unknown words in potentially puzzling reading Comprehension has led Tom, a 12 year old bright dyslexic boy, to beg for a ten minute *Minimus* 'session' at the end of his remedial lesson. His spelling may be a little awry, but his love of words and their Latin roots have enriched his language skills to the extent that he has come top equal in English this term.

Yes! *Minimus* is for the dyslexic child.

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