

Born to be creative

Albert Einstein, Louis Pasteur, Beethoven, Winston Churchill, Walt Disney, Thomas Edison ... all dyslexic. With the right kind of education at the right time a dyslexic child can grow up to be a genius.

Perhaps my early problems with dyslexia made me more intuitive: when someone sends me a written proposal, rather than dwelling on detailed facts and figures, I find that my imagination grasps and expands on what I read - Richard Branson, from *Losing My Virginity: How I've Survived, Had Fun, and Made a Fortune Doing Business My Way*

In every school we come across students who are highly talented and show keen aptitude for non-academic activities but seem to struggle when it comes to reading, writing or spelling. These kids are not lazy or dumb but are innovative thinkers, who have the makings of a genius, if given the right support at the right age. These children have specific learning needs and a neurological condition termed as dyslexia, which is used to refer to people, children and/or adults who experience difficulties with reading, spelling or writing.

Gifted children

Just because one part of their brain is underactive doesn't mean that dyslexics are unintelligent, far from it they can be considered gifted. A dyslexic needs to be taught in the manner whereby his individual strengths and talents are nurtured. They are typically highly creative, intuitive, and excellent hands-on learners and given the right opportunity they often end up enjoying successful careers where their skills are valued, such as in the fields of architecture and art.

Dyslexic children have average or above average intelligence and are not slow learners or mentally challenged. These children can be termed as trapped geniuses because though there are gaps in their ability and performance aca-

demically they have the ability to think laterally and innovatively.

A number of strengths can be seen in kids with learning difficulties, as they are able to think out of the box:

- Take active part in discussions
- Are socially and behaviourally pleasant and active
- Have good verbal skills
- Are good at handling mechanical gadgets
- Have exceptional talents in other areas.

A study in Britain found that self-made millionaires are more likely to be dyslexic. A significant majority of the 5,000 self-made millionaires in Britain reportedly struggled in school.

Need for support

People with dyslexia, are often very good lateral and strategic thinkers. Another reason individuals with dyslexia may do well is the fact that due to their academic struggles they often find themselves outside of the mainstream social groups in school. Feeling alone, they compensate by spending time exploring ideas, learning new strategies, and working to find a model of success. In these cases they require the maximum support from the school and parents. Like the education process at DPS Prerna, Ahmedabad tries to bring out the full potential of dyslexic kids and aims to achieve the following:

- To have students become confident, competent, self-directed learners.
- To facilitate students achieve cognitively and master the curriculum and guide them in the learning process.
- To help students acquire process skills (decision mak-



ing, problem solving and critical thinking).

- To encourage students to explore their potential and work hard in that field to bring their best.
- To inculcate in students values like kindness, caring, helping others, sharing, concern for others and admitting their mistakes.

Young genius

One such example of a dyslexic genius who used to study at the DPS Prerna, and is on his way to becoming a millionaire is that of Brahmjot Singh (17). Brahmjot had made a project on "alternative fuel" (based on hydrogen - which has zero level pollution). He shared his project at a science fair, where students of Banaras Hindu University also recognised and appreci-

ated it and mentioned that they too were working on it. The Spain embassy approached him and asked him to develop the module for commercial production. Calorex foundation negotiated the finances/ patent rights for 99 years for him. Today Brahmjot is in Spain looking forward to a successful life ahead.

Albert Einstein was a relatively dull child. Louis Pasteur was considered slow in school and Beethoven's teacher once called him hopeless as a composer. These famous people had some things in common with Sir Winston Churchill, Walt Disney and Thomas Edison, who were all geniuses - great men with great minds... And yet they were all dyslexics!