

BORN TO BE A CREATIVE GENIUS

Perceived as problems for long, children with dyslexia are visual thinkers waiting for the right kind of schooling

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Perhaps my early problems with dyslexia made me more intuitive. When someone reads 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 *Leading My Vision: How I've Succeeded, 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 reading, writing or spelling. These kids are not lazy or dumb but are intuitive thinkers, who have the makings of a genius, if given the right support at right age. These children have specific learning needs and a neurological condition termed as dyslexia. Dyslexia is a term used to refer to people who experience difficulties with reading, spelling or writing.

Dyslexia is estimated to occur in 15

per cent of all school-going children worldwide. An estimated 30 million children are known to be dyslexic in India. It is more prevalent among boys than girls, and the ratio is roughly 4:1.

Just because one part of their brain is underactive does not mean that dyslexics are unintelligent. Far from it, they can be considered gifted. A dyslexic needs to be taught at the manner whereby these his individual strengths and talents are nurtured. They are typically highly creative, intuitive, and



One such example of a dyslexic genius who used to study at the DPS Patna, and is on his way to becoming a millionaire is that of Brahmajet Singh (17). Brahmajet 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 appreciated it and mentioned that they too were working on it. The embassy of Spain asked him to develop the module for commercial production. Calorex Foundation has negotiated the finances/ patent rights for 10 years for him. Today Brahmajet is in Spain looking forward to a successful life ahead.

Manjula Powja Shroff, added, "We at DPS Patna identify the kids who need help and try to provide them with an environment where they can give shape to the innovative thoughts and ideas along with classroom education. Our aim is give kids with dyslexia a chance to realise their immense potential and work towards actualising it."

As we proceed, however, we should expect the pace and direction to be set by strong visual thinkers and creative dyslexics who will often ignore conventional verbal descriptions, putting themselves into their own mental models instead, talking with their hands. It is time to take a long, hard look at visual thinkers and creative dyslexics and begin to see how these individuals and our larger culture can benefit from a new understanding about what we used to see mainly as a problem.

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.

Manjula Powja Shroff, chairperson of Calorex Foundation, a trust that runs DPS Patna, a school that provides education that will help the students to overcome their learning difficulties and develop into well-balanced personalities, says, "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 academically, 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.

They take active part in discussions. They are socially and behaviourally pleasant and active.

They have good verbal skills.

They are good at handling mechanical gadgets. They have exceptional talents in other areas.

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

The reason behind this finding is that dyslexics who struggle with textbook studies make up for it by being more creative, and looking at the bigger picture. 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 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, they require maximum support from the school and parents to bring out the full potential. Schools for dyslexic kids should aim to achieve the following:

- To make 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 making, problem solving and critical thinking)