



MARIE-FRANCE COALLIER THE GAZETTE

Renée Figlarz, herself dyslexic and the first certified licensed Davis Dyslexia Correction facilitator in Quebec, teaches people at her Westmount office.

A medication-free program is helping people overcome learning disability

# Getting to the root of dyslexia

MIKE KING  
THE GAZETTE

Clinton Pazdzierski used to have terrible handwriting and tended to consult his colleagues a little too often about documents when he was a personal finance officer.

"I knew I had difficulties with work, and it was becoming an issue," Pazdzierski, 33, recalled yesterday. "I had a lot of issues with handwriting and comprehension of documents."

It was something he had struggled with since he was a child and had developed ways to cope.

"I remember going to a learning assistance centre and the teachers telling my parents that even though I was very poor at certain things, I was better (than fellow students) at other things."

But with his job on the line as an adult – "It was at the point where they were ready to

fire me if I didn't change or do something" – Pazdzierski had himself professionally assessed and discovered he had dyslexia, a learning difficulty similar to Attention Deficit Disorder.

He searched the Internet and learned about **Dyslexiability Inc.** It offers the Davis Dyslexia Correction program, a medication-free approach that deals with the root of the problem rather than just the symptoms and views dyslexia as a gift because most people with it are highly creative and intelligent.

"I took the one-week course and saw changes instantly," Pazdzierski said. "My handwriting changed so much in four days that people thought I took a handwriting course, and my comprehension in reading increased."

He realized the poor penmanship had been a way to disguise spelling mistakes and his inability to properly form

letters.

Most professionals and tradespeople are hesitant to openly discuss such learning difficulties for fear of losing their jobs or opportunities for advancement, says Renée Figlarz, herself dyslexic and the first certified licensed Davis Dyslexia Correction facilitator in Quebec. She was also the first to bring the French program to North America, using Dyslexiability material from France.

"We still have a long way to go to change the stigma of dyslexia into positive dyslexiabilities," Figlarz said at the Dyslexiability office she opened in Westmount two years ago.

"So many people coming here want that promotion and do what they can to move forward," the former marketer said. "This program is a jumpstart to give clients the tools to reach their goals."

According to Statistics Cana-

da, one in 10 people have a learning difficulty, 22 per cent have low literary skills and 24 per cent have only basic reading, writing and math skills.

Figlarz was asked whether former Montreal Canadiens head coach Jaques Demers publicly revealing last fall that he is illiterate encouraged others with learning disabilities to seek assistance. She responded: "People haven't mentioned him, but I hope he has influenced people."

Today is ABC Canada Family Literacy Day.

**For more information,** call (514) 815-7827 or visit [www.dyslexiability.com](http://www.dyslexiability.com)

mking@  
[thegazette.canwest.com](mailto:mking@thegazette.canwest.com)

**Online Extra:** Most U.S. college students lack literacy skills, a study shows. Read more at our website: [www.montrealgazette.com](http://www.montrealgazette.com)