

# TOCfE and Dyslexia

**TOCfE Virtual Conference  
October 18, 2012**

**Saginaw Valley State University**

**Presenter: Petra Pouw-Legêne  
The Netherlands**

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**Dear audience, WELCOME**

**Given the volume of registered participants,  
I will not be able to answer questions  
during this upcoming 50 minute presentation.**

**However, your questions are very welcome.  
If you send them to me by e-mail,  
I will respond to them as soon as possible.**

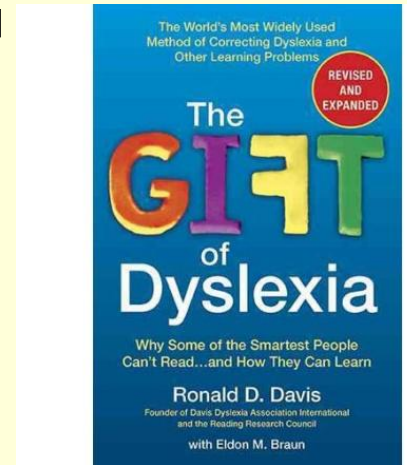
**Thank you!  
Petra Pouw-Legêne**

**[pouw.legene@planet.nl](mailto:pouw.legene@planet.nl)**



Since 1996 I am helping students with dyslexia program developed by Ronald D. Davis, author of the book: **The Gift of Dyslexia**

Besides, since 2000 I teach and use the tools of TOCforEducation, also during programs for dyslexia



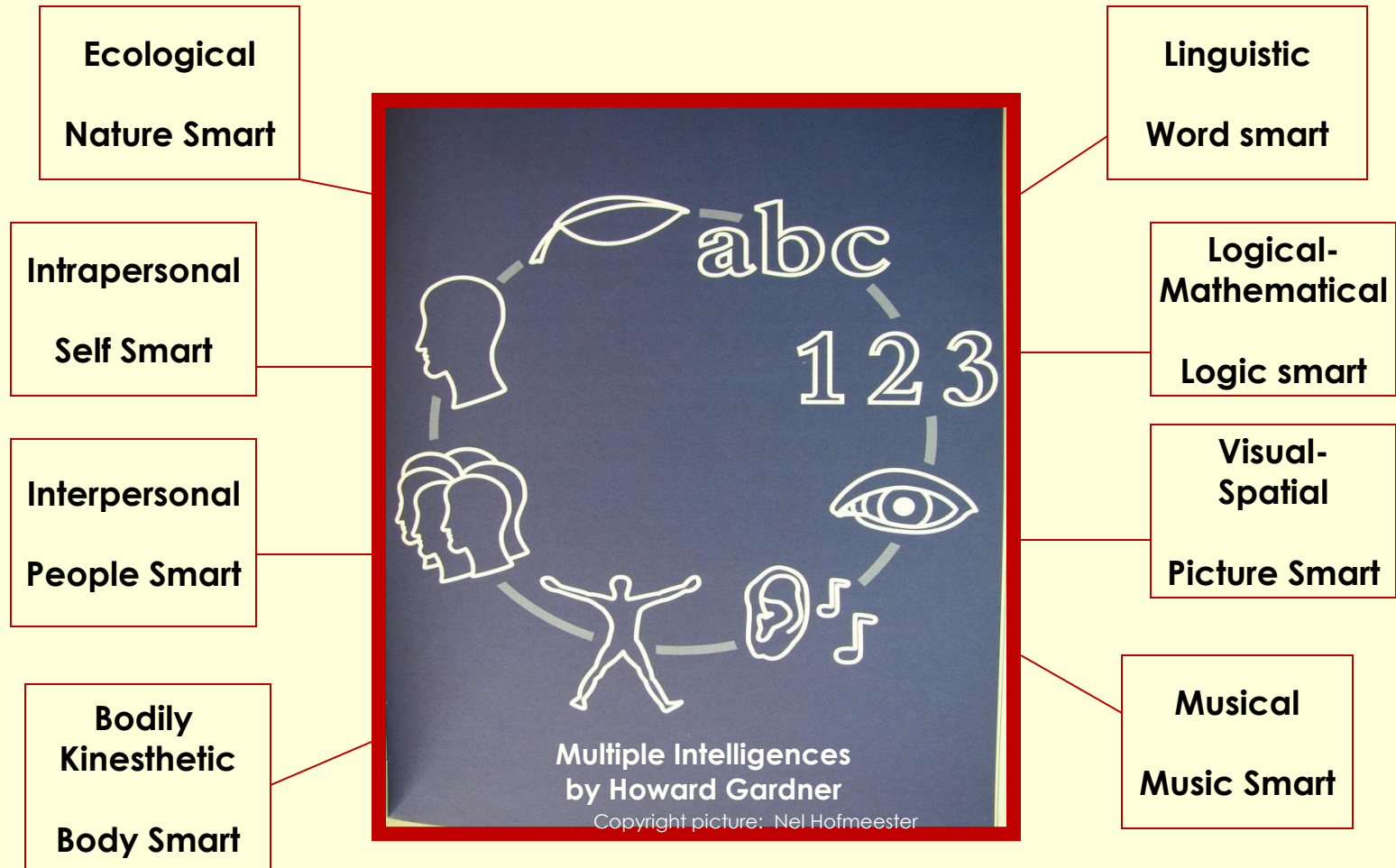
[www.dyslexia.com](http://www.dyslexia.com)

### **3 examples of application of TOC:**

- 1. During an individual counseling**
- 2. Setting up an organisation**
- 3. Questioning Early Reading Program**

**Part 1**  
**TOC in individual counseling**  
**with students with dyslexia**

# Assumption # 1: There are many different Learning Styles...

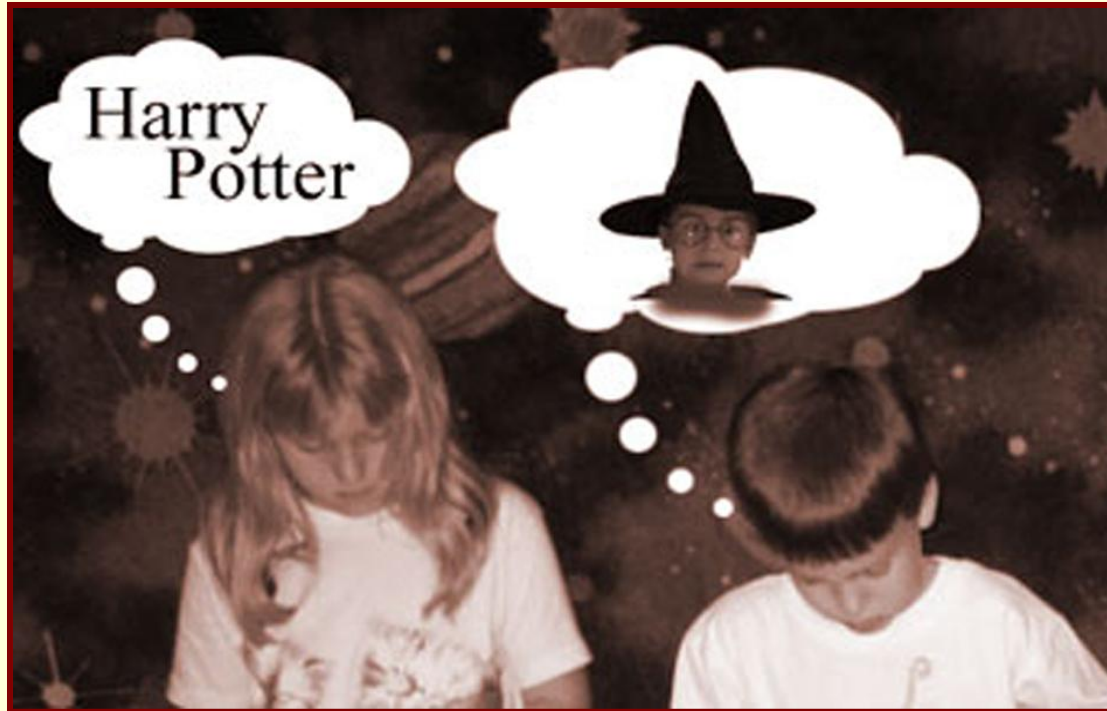


# ... but there are on only two Thinking Styles

verbal



non-verbal

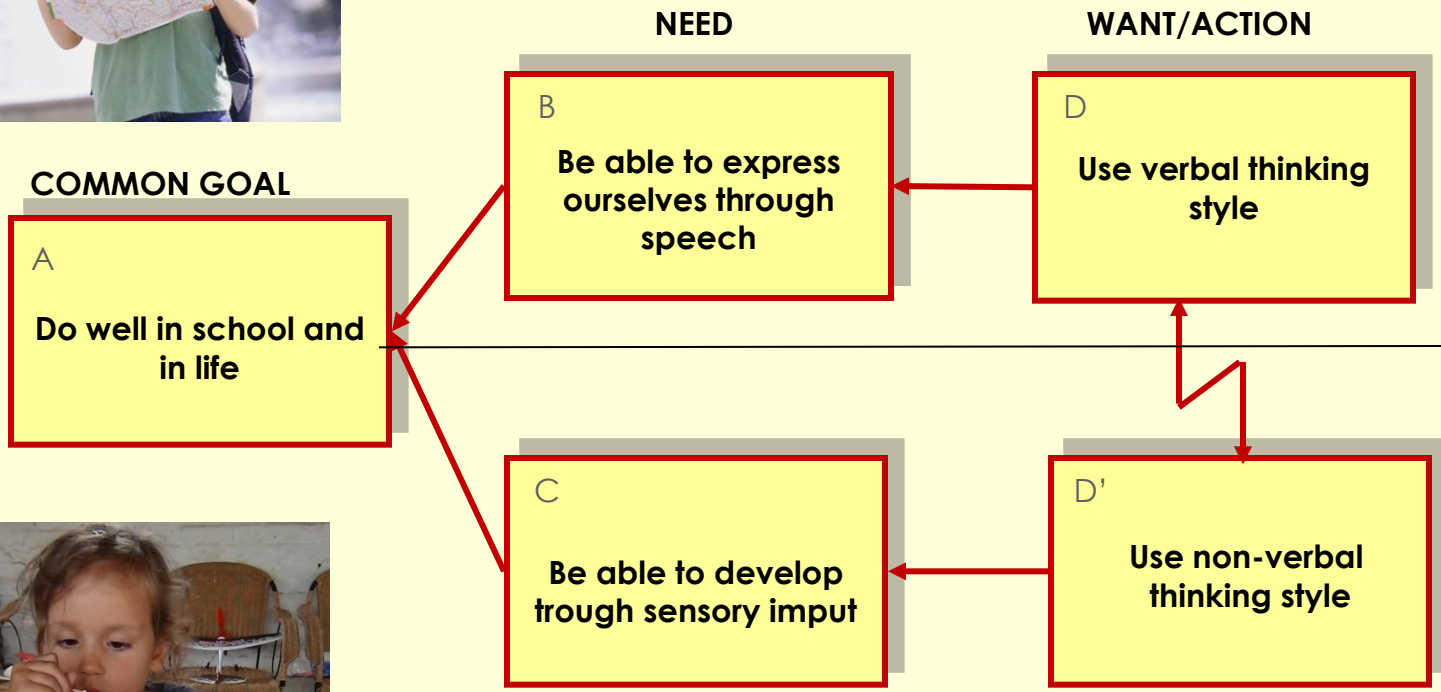


Many people have a preference for one of them  $\Rightarrow$  a conflict?

# (Evaporating) cloud



Aspects of verbal thinking:  
 Words are a lot slower than images, 5 words per second  
 sense of sequence, words follow one after the other  
 Sense of time  
 Answer comes through reasoning (inner speech)  
 Reading and writing come easy  
 School uses mostly verbal thinking



Aspects of non-verbal thinking  
 Thoughts are mental images experienced through all senses  
 Speed of mental images is 24-32 impressions per second  
 Intuitive, three dimensional, associative, holistic  
 Solutions often found subconsciously  
 School uses this style mostly for creative activities



## Assumption # 2

In the first years of a child's life the learning process is mostly non-verbal

- through play, trial and error,
- via all senses,
- by learning to recognise objects,



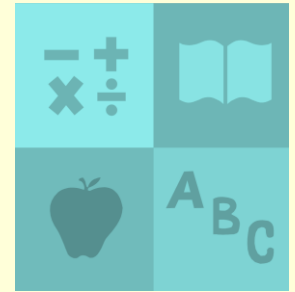
- mental pictures develop,
- easy and natural process.





**two dimensional pictures on paper**

**the young child can easily identify them...**



And then... the child goes to school

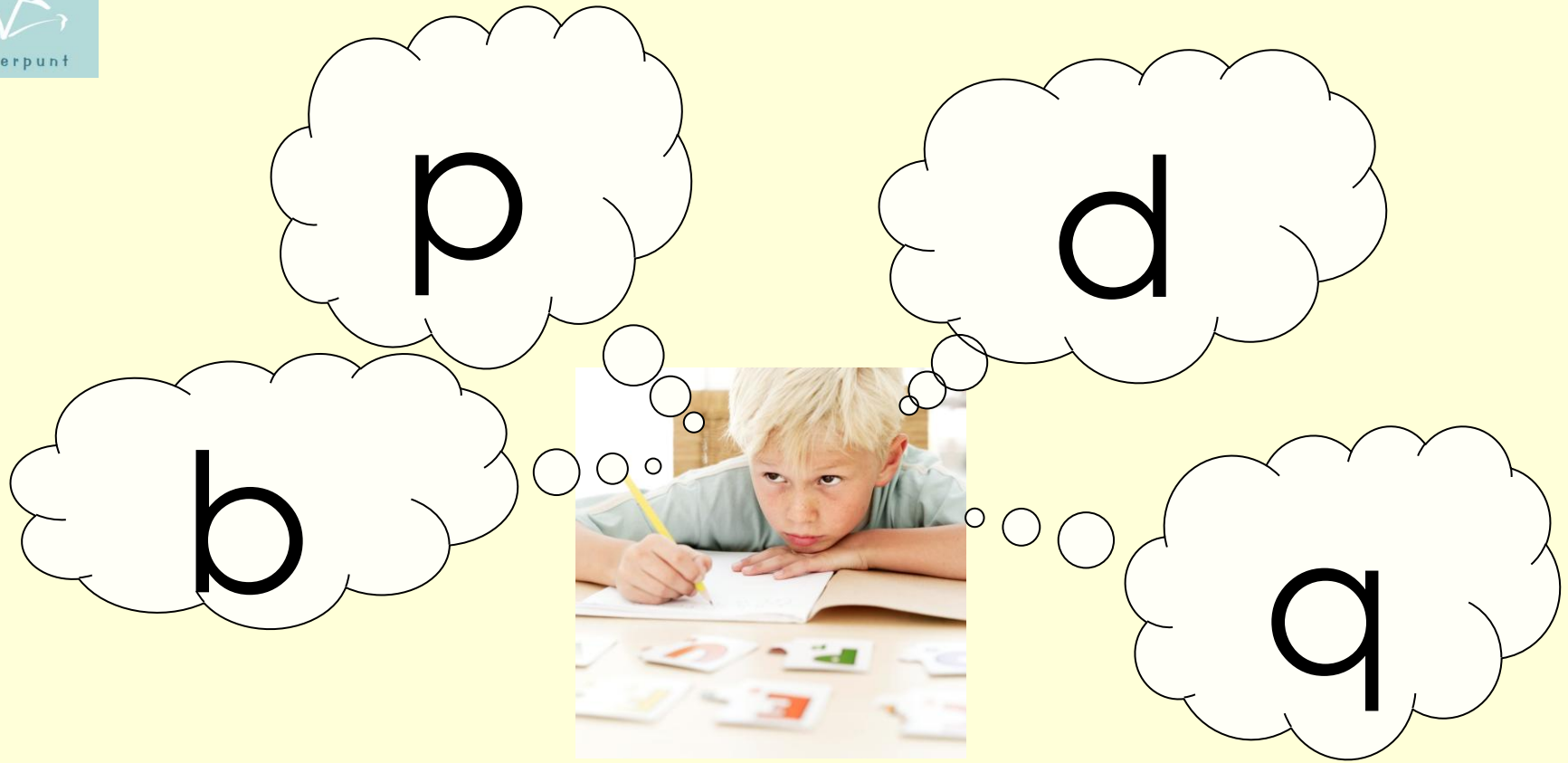
For many in first grade it is no problem

But for some,  
getting confronted with



**Symbols**

it means **confusion**



## **Confusion !:**

**the non-verbal thinking style of easily recognising  
the object does no longer work!**

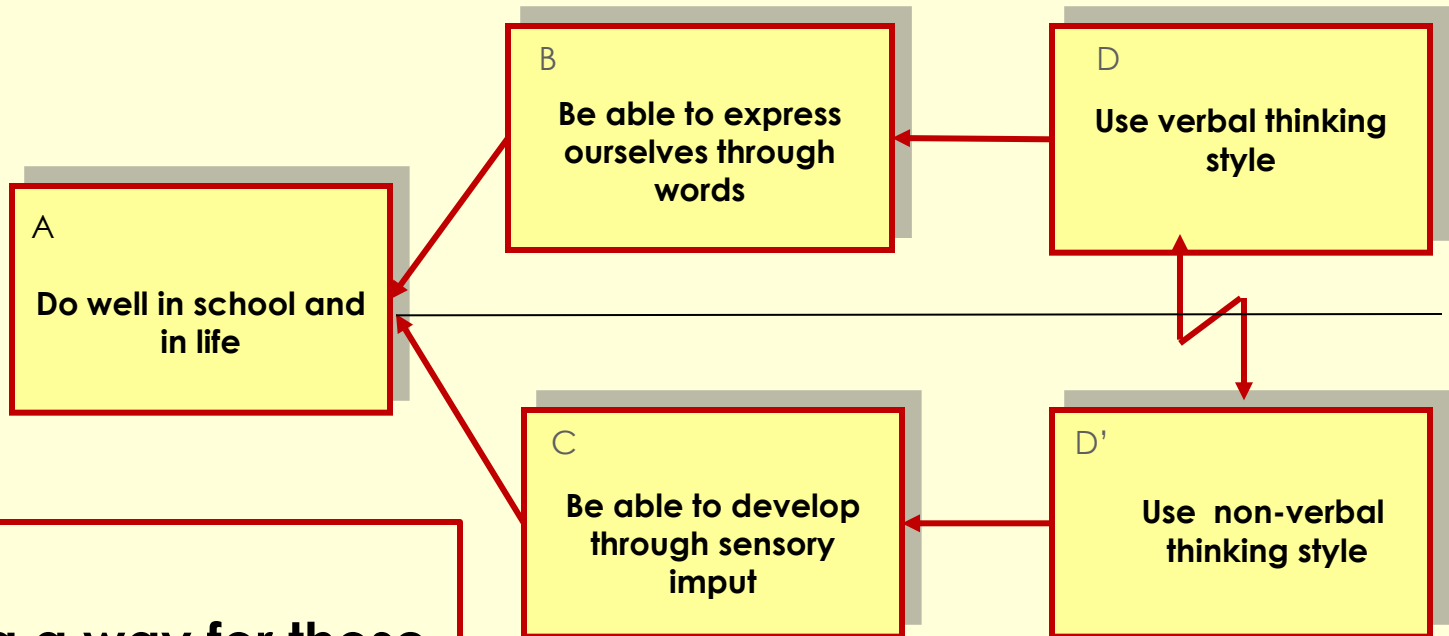
### **Assumption # 3:**

**During their entire life people with dyslexia keep a preference for the non-verbal thinking style**

### **Assumption # 4:**

**School uses mostly verbal thinking to teach**

## How can we accommodate and support students who prefer the non-verbal thinking style?



**By creating a way for those students to use their strong side (C) to develop the other side (B).**

# HOW?

**1. Stop confusion and stress  
(f.e. Davis: orientation  
counseling® and focusing  
strategies)**

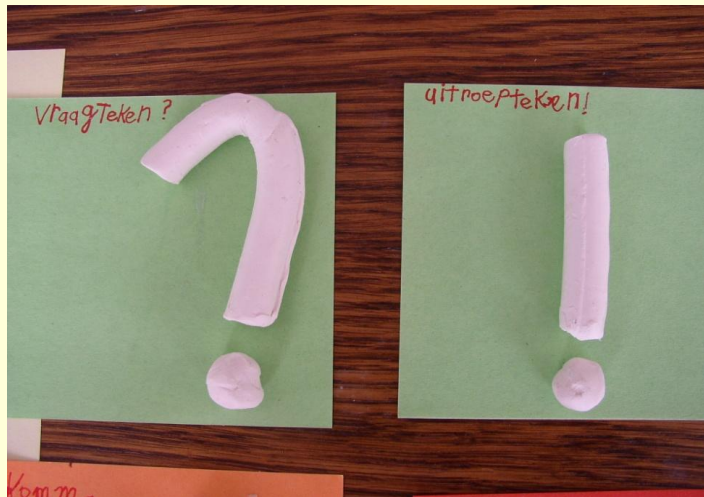
**2. Make all symbols three  
dimensionally, hands on**

**Create own images.**

**The easiest material: clay**



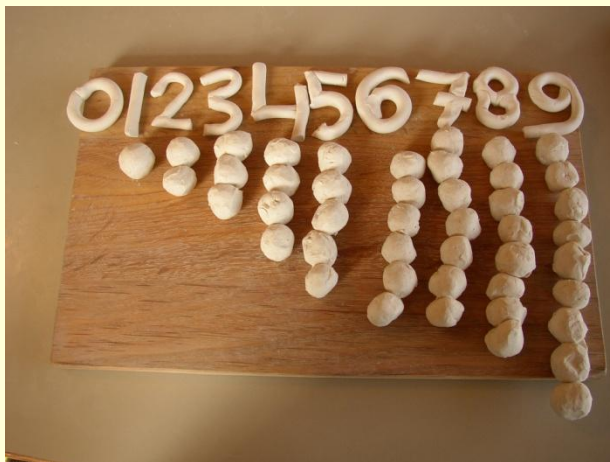
# Not only of letters but all the other symbols on a page



**Punctuation marks**



**basic words:**  
abstract sight words with no  
immediate mental picture



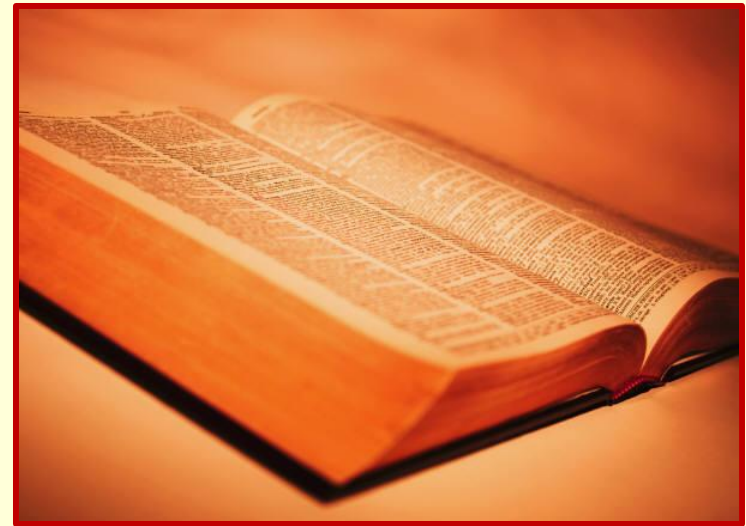
**numbers**

**and....**



# the definition of abstract concepts f.e.:

- ❖ **Change**
- ❖ **Consequence**
- ❖ **Cause and Effect**
- ❖ **Before and After**



**Find the definitions in the dictionary**

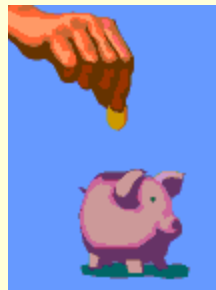
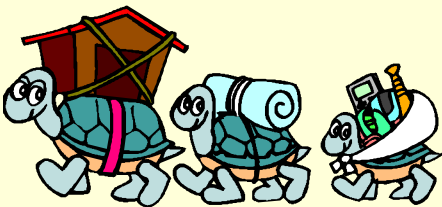
**(see examples on the next slides)**

## Examples made by students during a counseling:

The first question one asks a person in TOC is:

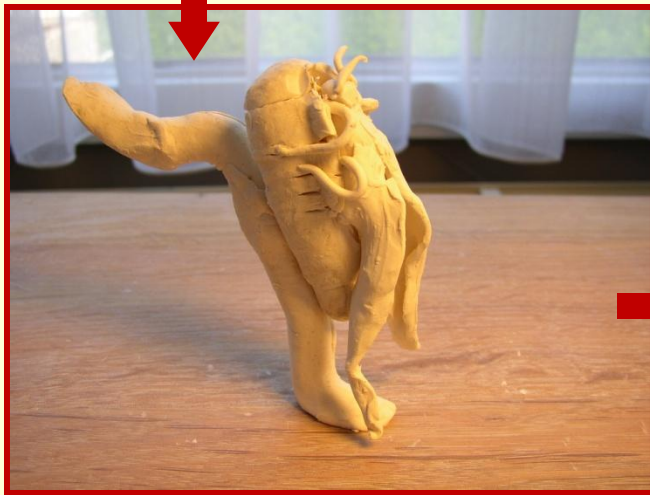
- ‘What do you want to change?’

- confusion
- no immediate mental picture

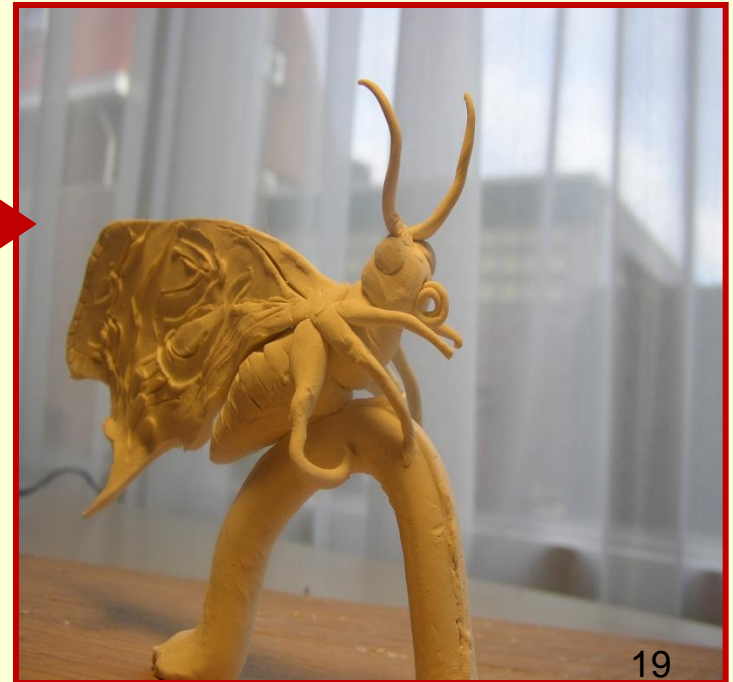




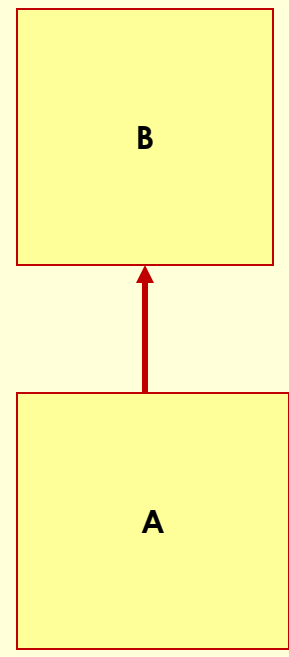
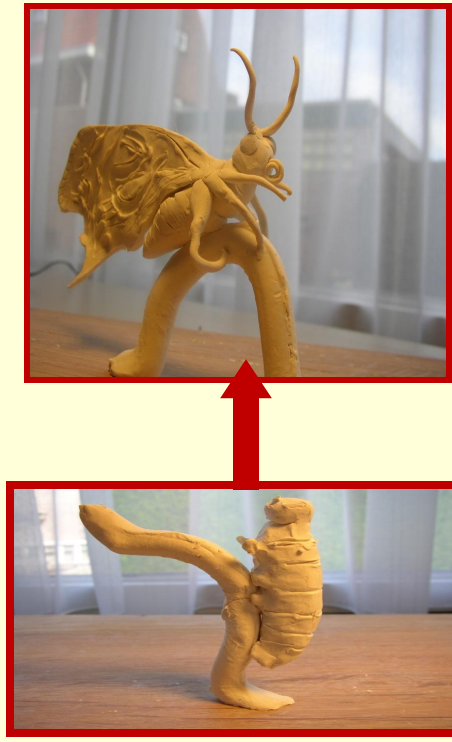
To stop confusion  
the student needs  
to create his own image  
of the  
definition of change



Webster Dictionary definition of  
'change': something (A) becoming  
something different (B)



Definition of 'change' made by Koen, 17 years.



TOC diagram:  
'the logic branch'

**something (A) becoming something different (B)**

**As soon as the student has created and mastered his own definition of 'change' he can then put it in a TOC diagram**

## Example 2: the concept of 'consequence'

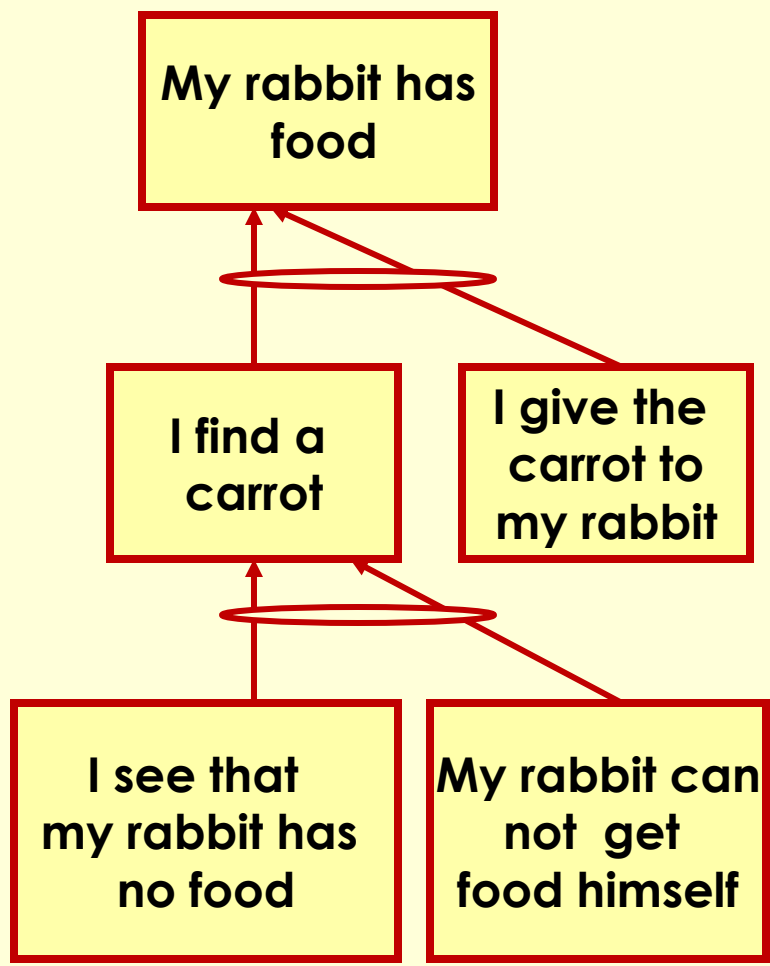
**The result or outcome  
(in this case of something I do,  
so we need a 'self' first)**



# the definition of 'consequence'



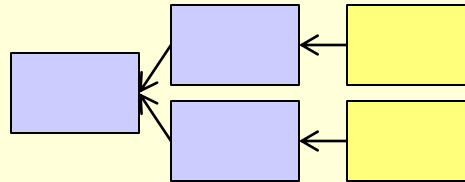
Definition of consequence made by Inge, 16 years



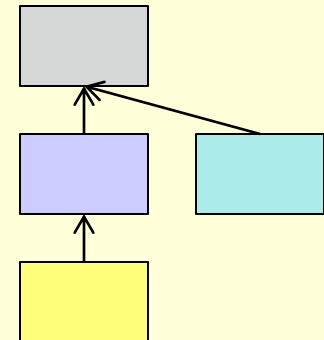
Logic branch

## Examples of one student: Tom, of

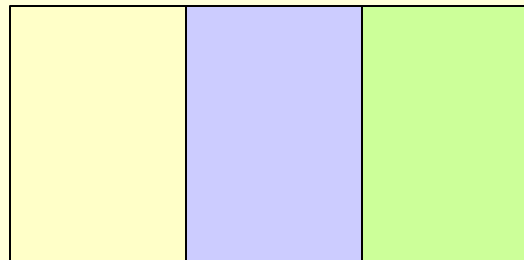
1. Evaporating cloud



2. Logic branch



3. Ambitious Target



# 1. Example of a TOC (evaporating) cloud



**A**  
Be happy with the clay model I make

**B**  
Make a concept of the definition

**D**  
Create a simple model

**C**  
Make something that satisfies my artistic taste

**D'**  
Create a perfect, detailed model

**Possible solutions:**

- I think the concept through before I start and I know what I want to make
- I put more attention on the result than on the process when making definitions.
- I can satisfy my artistic needs when I make my beautiful designs on guitars

**ASSUMPTIONS**

*It is not worth to spend so much time on the subject, I already understand the concept  
Sometimes my design is not what I had in mind, so I give up*

**ASSUMPTIONS**

*I have only a vague idea how to make the model  
This is how I am used to work, it is a pattern  
I start and then the image develops under my hands and I can't stop any more.*





## 2. Example of TOC (Negative) branch

I don't master the  
alfabet of the  
upper case letters

I get all mixed up  
in my head

I cannot visualise  
anything anymore,  
my mind goes blanc

I confuse the  
two letter types

I see lower case  
letters where they  
are not supposed to be

I work on mastering the  
upper case letters

I am used to lower  
case letters.

### Cutting the branch

*I need to practise a lot more  
with the upper case letters ...*

*Oh...it is actually only a  
difference in form:*

*lower case versus upper case...*

*So... I only need to find a  
balance between two forms...*

*Mmm...Actually, I need to find a  
balance in a lot more  
things I do!*

### 3. Example of an Ambitious Target:

**'We are super experts in sound mixing'**

#### Obstacles

5. People don't know us

4. We don't know how often we can practise as a group

3. We don't know if we are allowed to use the studio in our school

2. We do not know if we are allowed to use the school fire wire interface

1. Our teacher does not know that we are serious about starting our own music business

#### Intermediate Objectives

5. We make ourselves known

4. We know our schedule to practise as a group

3. We are allowed to use the studio in school

2. School allows us to use the fire wire interface and other tools

1. We convince our teacher that we are serious about starting our own music business

#### Actions

5. We build up enough confidence to invite our class mates and teachers  
We make flyers

4. We make a weekly schedule and present that to the school

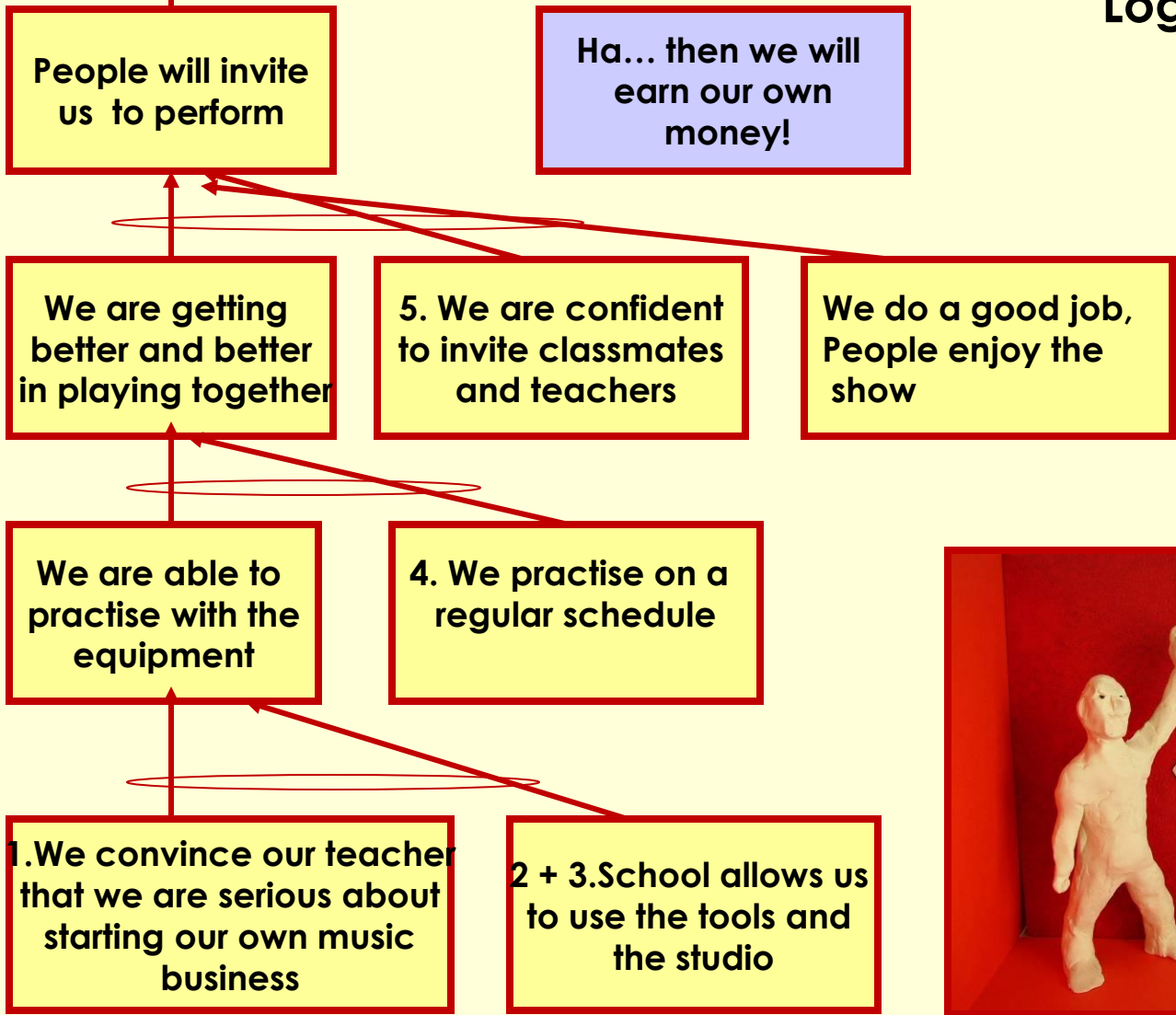
3. We convince the school that we mean serious business

2. We make up a list of reasons why school can trust us with the tools

1. We make an appointment with the teacher and tell him about our plans

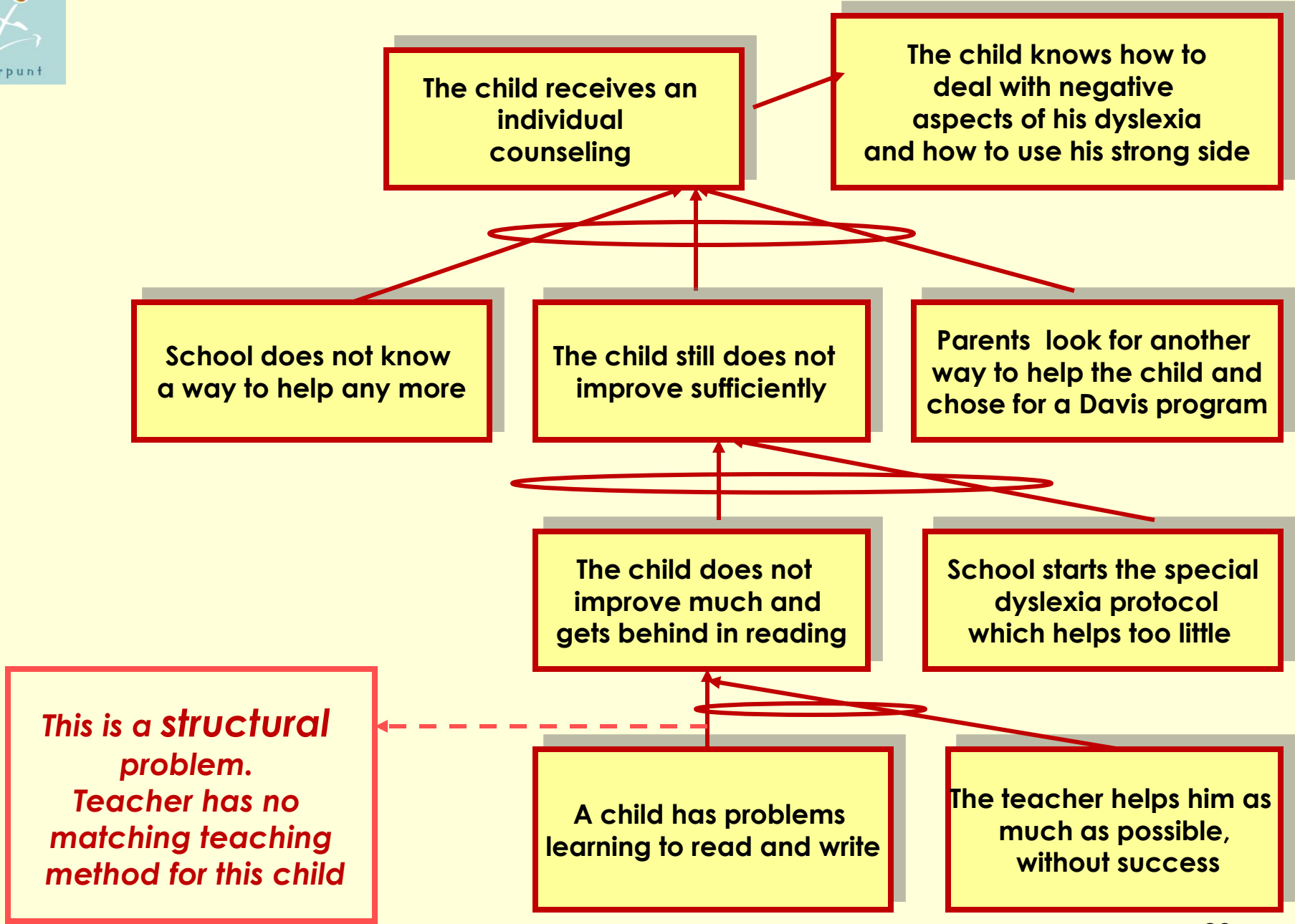
# Ambitious Target: **We are super experts in sound mixing**

Logic branch



## **Part 2**

# **Applying TOC to set up an organisation**



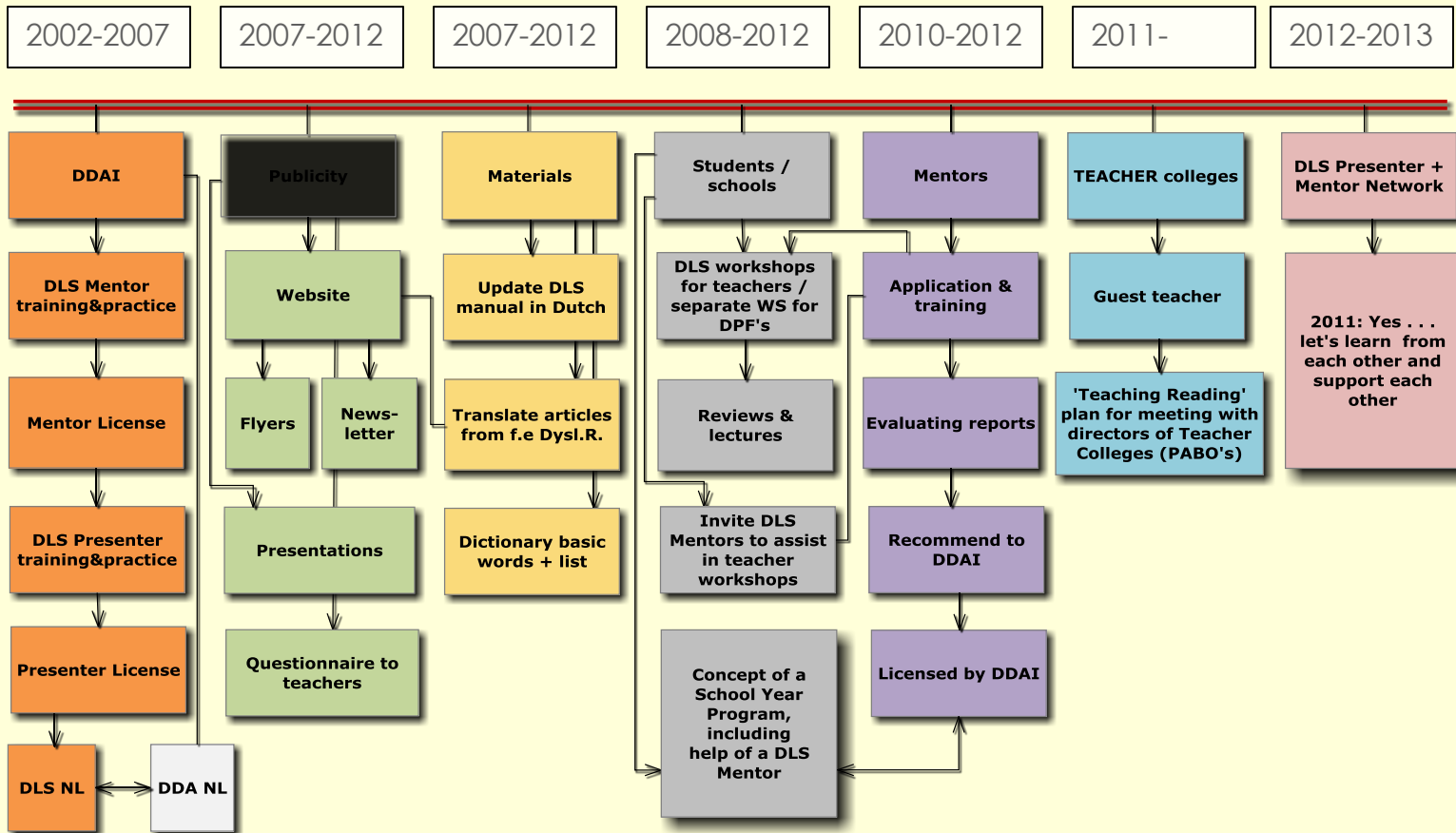
## ***My idea of a possible solution: the Ambitious Target (2002):***

***I want to be able to teach  
teachers in the lower grades  
of primary schools to use the  
same strategies  
(as used in the counselings)  
for the benefit of all children  
and to prevent dyslexic  
(and other)  
learning problems***



# Ambitious target:

## All Dutch primary schools use DLS® to teach children to read



**New AT's**  
→



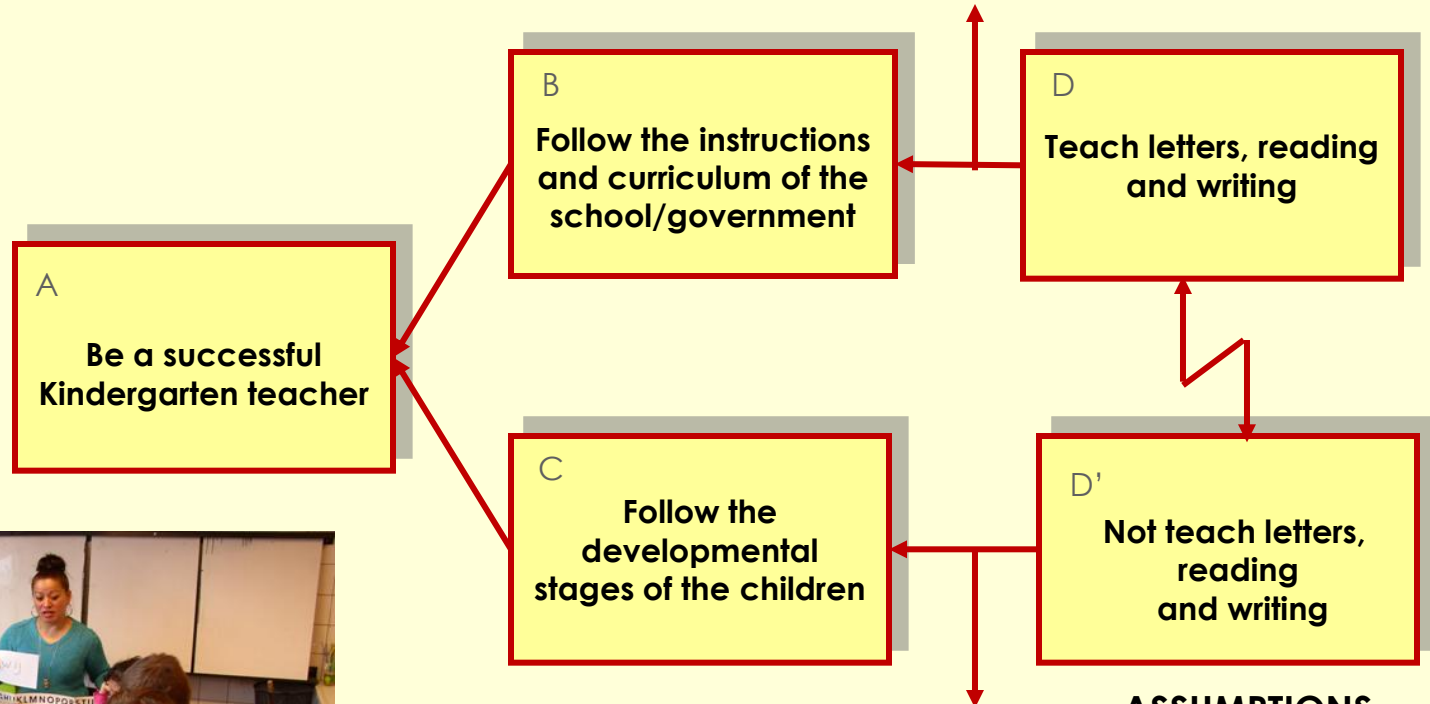
**Part 3**  
**Questioning some of the**  
**assumptions mentioned in**  
**part 1**



# This looks like a conflict

## ASSUMPTIONS

- | We have no choice, the system demands it
- | Children do like to work with letters and words
- | Parents often want school to teach letters and words
- | According to our Governemnt the Kindergarten child does not exist, it is considered to be a young school child
- | The earlier we start with letters and words, the better



## ASSUMPTIONS

- | The Kindergarten child is not a young school child.
- | The child needs to be able to develop in his own speed
- | Teachers should not offer words and letters when a child is not ready
- | There are many other ways to develop language skills
- | The child needs to be able to discover letters and words himself. Then teacher can support that.

The child receives an individual Davis counseling

The child knows how to deal with negative aspects of his dyslexia

School does not know a way to help any more

The child still does not improve sufficiently

Parents look for another way to help the child and chose for a Davis program

*This is a structural problem. Teacher has no matching teaching method for this child*

The child does not improve much

School starts a special dyslexia protocol which helps too little

*Is this perhaps a functional problem?*

A child has problems learning to read and write

The teacher helps him as much as possible, without success

?

According to the PhD research of the Dutch scientist and child developmental psychologist Dr. Ewald Vervaeet.

**For a young child not being able to learn to read and write is most of the time a FUNCTIONAL problem**

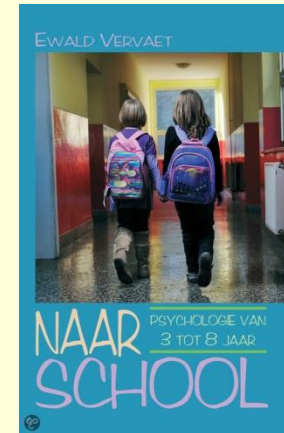
**BECAUSE:**

**Children develop psychologically in stages**

**Stages always appear in the same order**

**Examples:**

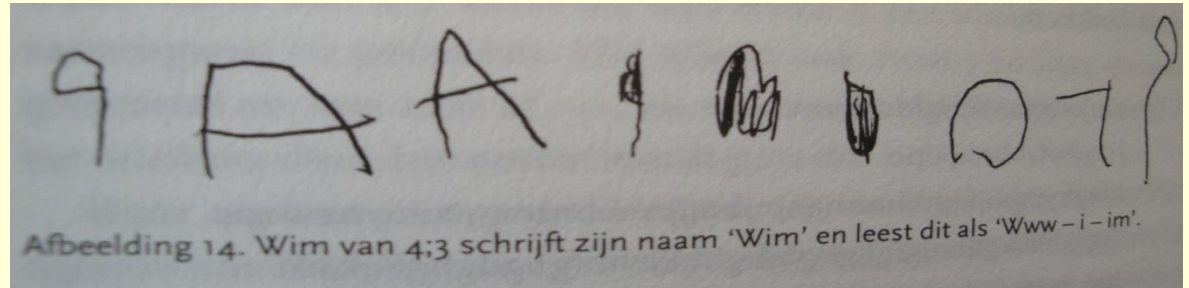
**By the time the child goes to school (in the Netherlands at the age of 4) ...**



*Ewald Vervaeet:  
'Naar school'*

...the child will usually be in stage 12 (between 3;9 til 4;6)

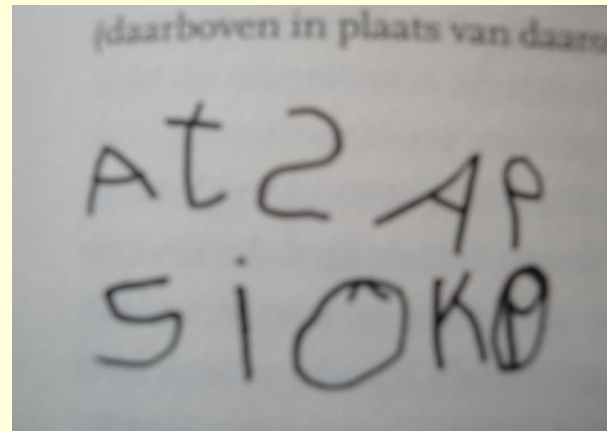
The child's writing may look like this:



Kindergarten 2, most children will reach stage 13  
(between 4;6 and 6;6)

Child may write like this

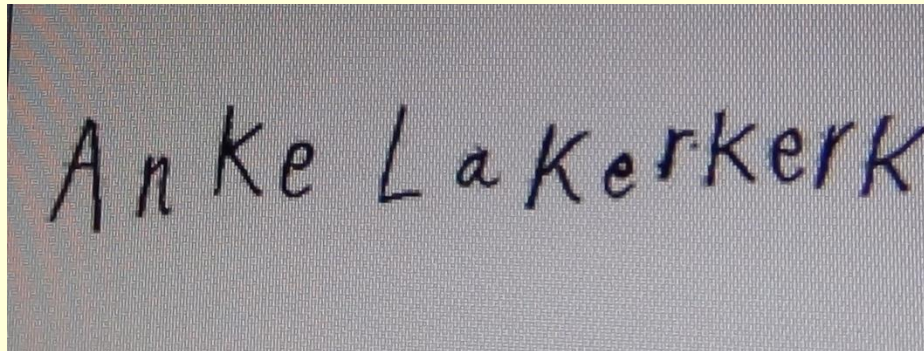
- left and right are equal
- no clear sense of a zone
- mirroring of letters

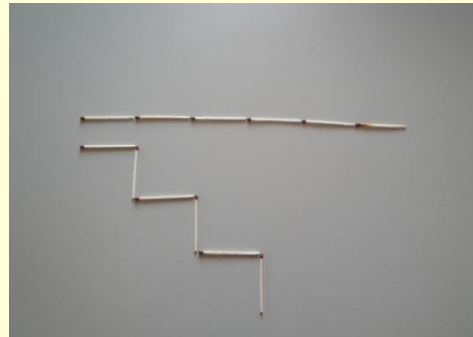
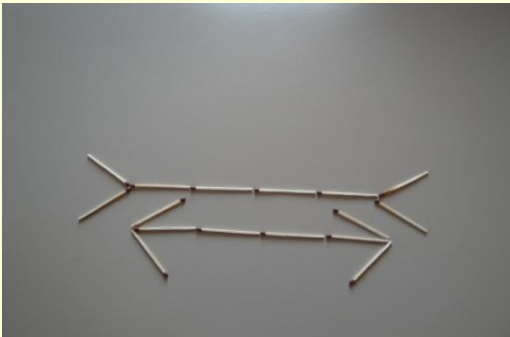


From: Ewald Vervae: 'Naar school'

## Stage 14: Conventional writing:

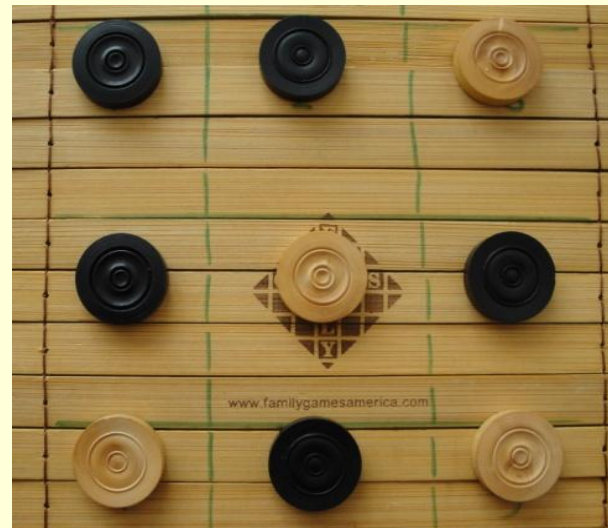
child reproduces conventional letter symbols  
without mirroring, and going from left to right,  
Between age 6;6- 8;6



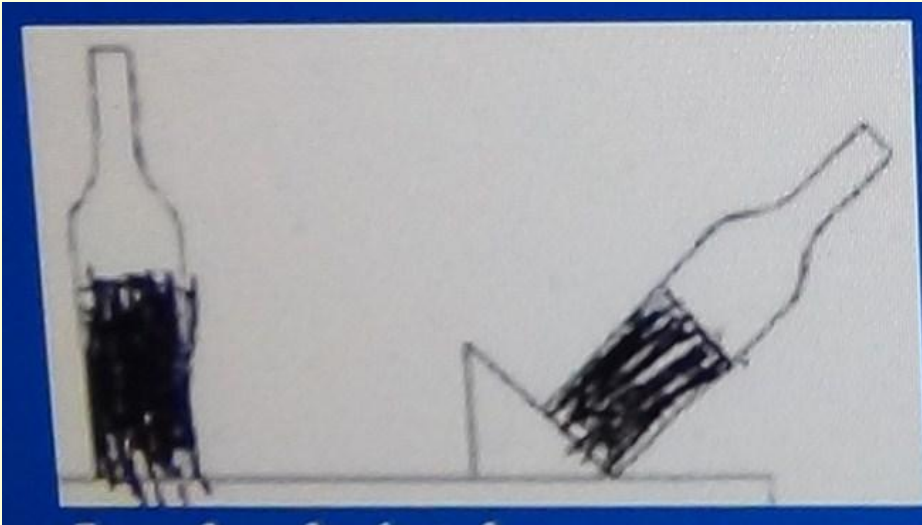


**Other examples: Children give different answers in**

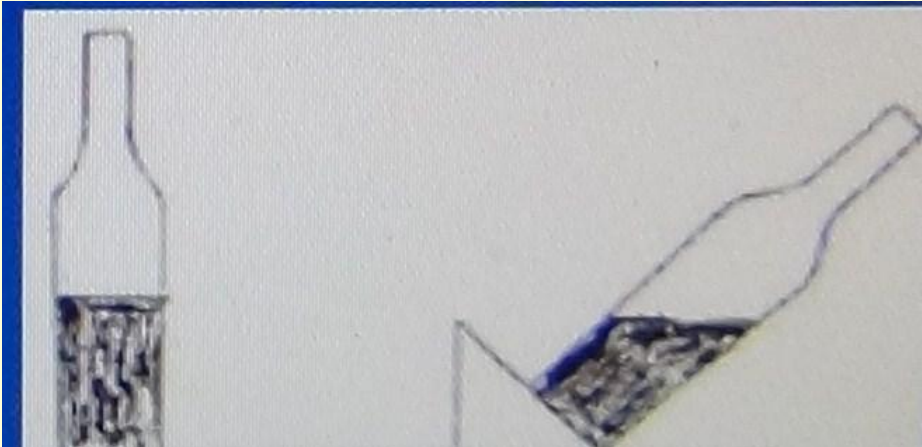
**Stage 13: (4;6-6;6) and/or Stage 14: (6;6-8;6)**



# Yet another example: The bottle test

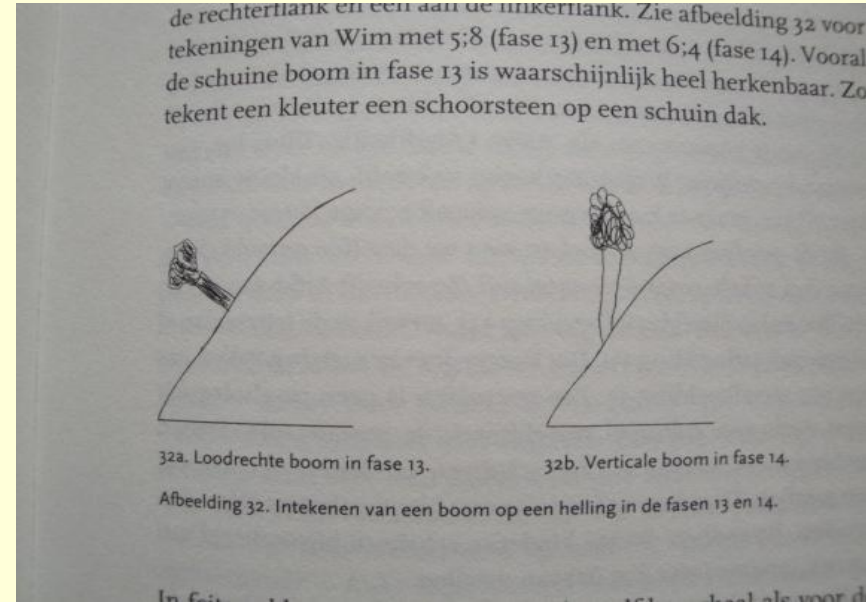


Stage 13



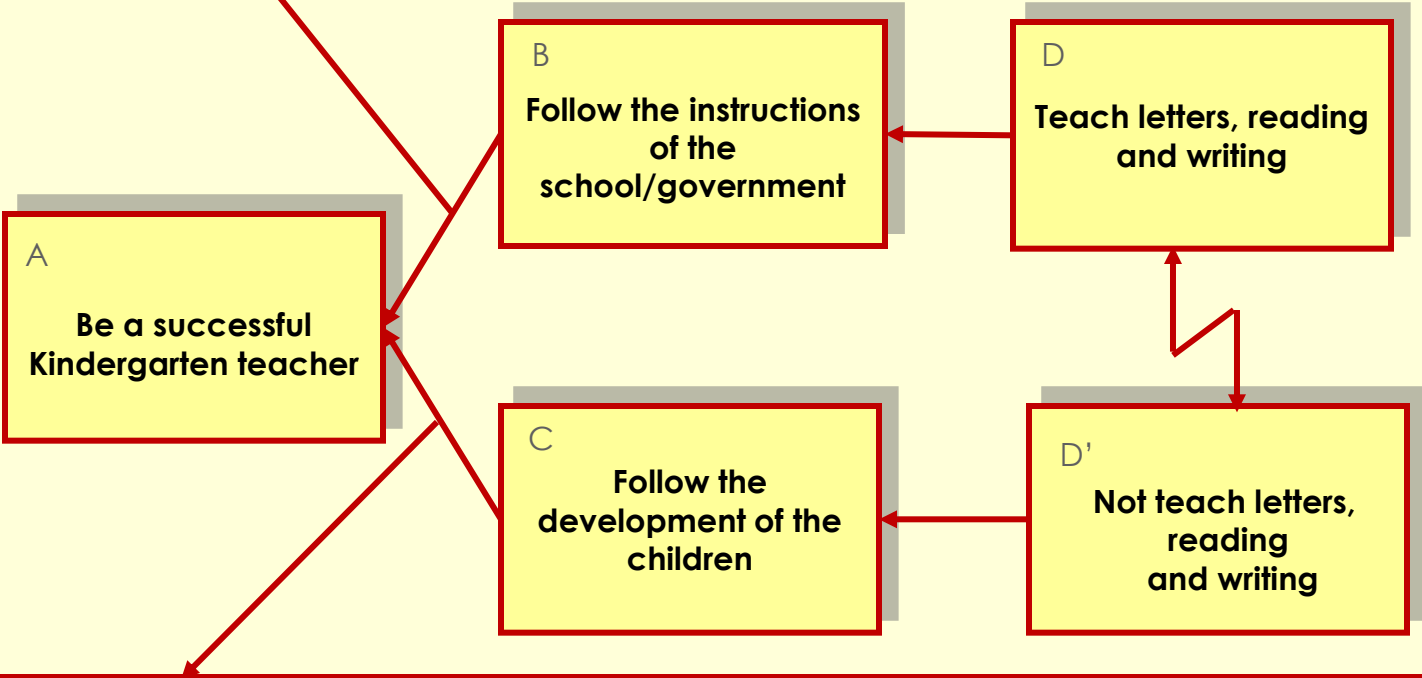
Stage 14

From: Ewald Vervaeet: 'Naar school'



# Possible solution

We first assess if a child has reached the necessary psychological stage to learn reading and writing before teaching letters and words.



Children who are not yet in stage 14 can be offered many other language skills: rhymes, songs, stories, cutting out different forms and shapes, or making them in clay and....TOCfE!!!



## Example of a writing and reading assessment of Rob (age 5;9)

Rob's teacher asks him to write his name and 'papa' and 'mama.'

He does that.

Teacher asks if he knows another name?

Yes, – 'bas' (brother).

The teacher makes with his letters a new word to assess if he is able to read a new combination of letters:



S A P



Rob reads: 'S, a, p. Papa. Is that "papa"?'

**Rob's teacher writes another word:**

177 0 5

**Rob reads: 'M, o, s. Sam? Bas?'**  
**(Sam is Robs other brother)**

**Rob recognises his letters,**

**But it is clear that he is not ready to read:**

**He is not able to connect the letters to a new word.**

**Even though he did write 'papa' and 'bas' himself in the writing test!**

# **CONCLUSION:**

## **New assumption:**

**Any attempt to teach a child to read  
or write in earlier stages  
of his psychological development  
than stage 14  
(mostly between ages 6;6 -8;6)**

- will take a lot of time**
- may be confusing for the child**
- may be causing a learning problem**
  
- may take away the joy of self discovery**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

**If you have any questions  
please send an e-mail to:**

**[pouw.legene@planet.nl](mailto:pouw.legene@planet.nl)**