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***Re-engaging the SEN Child into Learning through Social Networking
A Case Study***

Although technology has provided many advantages to the special needs child through individualised e-learning and assistive technology, the more recent Web 2 activities have implicitly excluded these individuals due to a lack of insight of the needs of this special group. Problems include difficulty with written responses (for dyslexics) particularly when carried out in real time, problems of social skills (for those on the Autistic Spectrum), and the brief attention span of those with ADHD. However, through careful development of a specific system, it is possible not only to compensate these disadvantaging features but also to use social networking as part of a learning strategy, and re-engage those who would otherwise be marginalised in the new web environment.

By building a special community for dyslexic learners, Calldysc (an EU funded project) provides evidence that a shared environment can be made to overcome the basic fears and negative first experiences of this group who normally have difficulties in learning a new language. The Web2 principles, including social networking, shared environments, personal blogs, and collaborative learning, even across national boundaries, were adapted to the needs of this group by user prompts, short text, high levels of interaction and other techniques to promote re-engagement into a field many SEN children leave at an early stage.

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