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J Learn Disabil 1997 30: 99

DOI: 10.1177/002221949703000109

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The Legacy of Jan Kappers

Dirk J. Bakker

Dr. E. Jan Kappers, author of the article "Outpatient Treatment of Dyslexia Through Stimulation of the Cerebral Hemispheres," in this issue of the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, died October 23, 1995, at the age of 49. A few weeks earlier he had submitted the manuscript to JLD. The comments, in general, were positive, but revision of some parts was requested. Revision was provided by Drs. Victor van Daal and this author, colleagues of Dr. Kappers.

Being trained in special education and educational psychology, Dr. Kappers taught in the Teachers College of Alkmaar for 16 years. In 1986 he graduated from the State University of Utrecht. In preparing his dissertation, he once came to Amsterdam to interview me on the concept of hemisphere specialization and learning to read. His interest in this subject is clearly reflected in the title of his dissertation (translated from the Dutch): "Cognitive Strategies, Hemisphere Specialization and Learning to Read" (Kappers, 1986).

That same year, 1986, Dr. Kappers was appointed chief clinician and clinical researcher in the Paedological Institute, Outpatient Clinic for Dyslexia (at Duivendrecht/Amsterdam). In that position he contributed substantially to the recognition of, and subsequently the financial support by, the National Health Insurance. As indicated in his article, the children with dyslexia accepted for treatment usually were severely disturbed and apparently insensitive to the remediation they had received before enrollment in the program at Kappers's clinic.

Dr. Kappers never renounced his original interest in special education, but he was open-minded enough to adopt new insights from other science

domains. Before he joined the Paedological Institute he already demonstrated great interest in neuropsychological contributions to the assessment and treatment of dyslexia, notably in those obtained in the context of the balance model of learning to read (Bakker, 1979, 1990, 1993; Bakker, Licht, & Kappers, 1995). That interest was exciting in that Dr. Kappers was at the point of starting the first large-scale clinical evaluation of findings obtained in the laboratory.

Dr. Kappers analyzed some 80 cases of dyslexia before his illness precluded further research. Most of what he found through analysis and reanalysis can be read in his current article. Part of his research was published elsewhere (Kappers, 1990, 1994; Kappers & Dekker, 1995; Kappers & Hamburger, 1994); some other products of his scientific efforts await processing by his colleagues.

Dr. Jan Kappers was inventive in solving problems; he was systematic and accurate in his research, eager to give full account of the procedures he used. All this does not make his papers easy reading, but a little tenacity will turn out to be rewarding for the reader.

It will be clear that we lost a qualified and promising colleague, and a pleasant companion as well. It gives some comfort that the product of his major endeavor is being published in this issue of JLD.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dirk J. Bakker, PhD, is professor of child neuropsychology at the Free University of Amsterdam; head of the department of child neuropsychological research at the Paedological Institute, Amsterdam/Duivendrecht; and director of the European Graduate School of Child Neuropsychology, Amsterdam/Duivendrecht.

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