

**Welcome to the Wonderful and  
Challenging World  
of**



**Tahlia Giovanni**

**Date of birth: 5 May 2004**

Here is a short summary of what we know about Tahlia, which we hope will save you time in getting to know her and in helping her thrive in your classroom.

**Tahlia is somewhat of an enigma.** We know the following (but there may be more still to learn):

- She has been diagnosed with **dyslexia**. From what we have learned so far, the problem has a **phonological basis**. She can read using the whole word (visual) method but struggles when sounding words out and will have difficulty reading new words.
- Her difficulties are **not related to lack of effort**. She works very hard to achieve as she does.
- IQ testing has found her intellectual potential to be within the **top 1% of the population**. She has an uneven profile, with exceptionally strong scores in Perceptual Reasoning/Visual Spatial Processing in particular and weakness in Auditory Processing.
- She has difficulty with tracking and adjusting her focus and currently wears glasses (graduated lenses) to help with this. She needs to wear her glasses for all close work (basically everything inside) at school.
- She is currently seeing an Occupational Therapist weekly focussing on planning issues and handwriting efficiency.

### Strengths

- Tahlia has a very strong **visual memory**. Using strategies that encourage her to engage her visualisation ability will help her learn efficiently.
- She has a dominant '**helpfulness gene**', making her a willing helper in the classroom, although sometimes she uses this as a way to avoid work which is difficult for her.
- She can **concentrate for long periods** of time when she is interested, but can be slow to get started if she doesn't understand the *purpose* of a task.
- **Maths**. Tahlia was working at the next grade level in maths last year and achieving highly.

### Weaknesses

- Her written output is often limited and is rarely a reflection of what she knows. Her strong visual spatial preference means getting ideas on paper in written form is difficult. (OT is currently focussing on this).
- The effort required to work in an auditory environment means she gets tired easily.
- Her handwriting can be difficult to read, especially when she is tired, even though she tries hard.
- She may not look at you when she is thinking. She is not being rude, she just needs to focus on the mental image of what you are saying in order to understand.

### Things that bring out the best in her in the classroom

- Understanding the purpose of a task
- Sitting where there are fewer visual distractions. Near the front works well.
- Mind mapping and visual planning, demonstrating her knowledge in a visual format, visual spelling
- Written instructions for tasks (even better if there are images as prompts).

### What we know that doesn't work

- Drawing attention to her weaknesses, especially criticism where others can hear. She will withdraw.
- Timed tasks, rote learning, dictation.
- Spelling which is phonics based. Phonics is not an effective method of learning for her as the sounds are meaningless.
- Asking her to read aloud in front of others, especially an unfamiliar passage. If she will be called on to read aloud, let her know and make sure she has read the passage ahead of time.

I hope that gives you a brief insight into our daughter. We would appreciate being able to meet with you again soon to discuss some of these issues in more detail. We are looking forward to working with you during the year so that the best outcomes are possible for everyone.

*Tom and Sarah Giovanni*