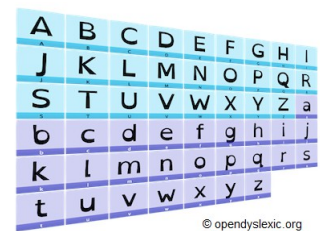# Dyslexia and your computer – using MyStudyBar

1. What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly affects the way you read and spell words. This may show in difficulty processing and

© kidshealth.org

remembering information you see and hear. This can affect learning.

However computers can be helpful. For instance, if you are dyslexic, this document is written in a font (OpenDyslexic) which you may find is easier to read.
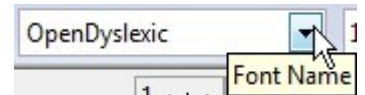
© opendyslexic.org

2. How computers can help those with Dyslexia

Everybody's different so you will have to choose what's good for you. Try them out from the suggestions made here.
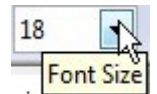
PTO

3. **Choose a font** that works for you. If it is not on your computer you will have to download it first. If OpenDyslexic is not available try e.g. Arial or Comic Sans.
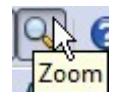
You can make a comparison of some of these on the British Dyslexia Association website at
http://bdatech.org/what-technology/typefaces-for-dyslexia/#arial

Or it may only be a question of adjusting the font size in a document.

Or adjusting the image size to view it by means of the zoom facility.

And on browser screens press Ctrl and + or - to increase or decrease font size on the screen.

4. **Set the screen background colour** to make the text easier to read.

The use of the program **MyStudyBar** allows you to do this and many other options. Download it from www.eduapps.org by left-clicking on Download.

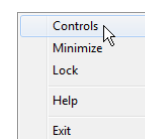Then left-click on **MyStudyBar** and then on the appropriate link for your computer.

Double-click on the folder to unzip it, double-click on MyStudyBar.exe to install it. Right-click on the **MyStudyBar** program and left-click on Pin to Task Bar which shows the icon. Left-click on this to open it to give you the various options available and the bar looks like this. Left-click on each of the options shown to make a further selection. For our purpose   of setting background colour left-click on **Reading**, then in the **Menu** which appears, on **T-Bar – screen masking.**

A transparent coloured rectangle appears over the screen. This can be adjusted for colour and size by right-clicking on it which brings up a menu. Select Controls which allows you to select Colour Options and shades within these, Line Options and Bar Options from Menus. Bar Options allows you to make the rectangle wide enough to cover the
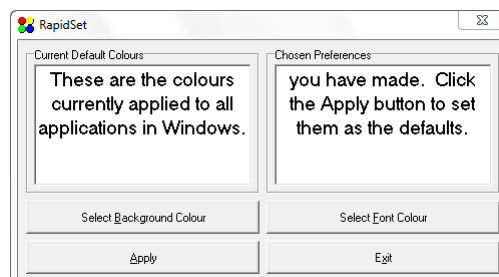
PTO

text you are reading.

Again you will need to experiment with colours and shades to find what best suits you.

Line Options can set the number of lines between 0 and 2 within this, with height and position options for each line and also colour. Experiment with these to get your best settings.
You can set the total Background colour and Font colour quickly by left-clicking on the **Reading Menu** and then on **Rapidset – change colours** RapidSet - change colours.

When you have finished your selection left-click on Apply and then if you are happy with it, on Exit.

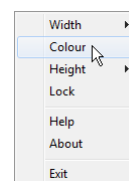## 5. Another facility which may help with reading is to

Vu-Bar 4.5

use the Vu-Bar option.

ALT+F11 to Minimise, ALT+F12 to Restore

Left-click on the **Reading Menu** and then on **Vu-Bar – screen reader** .

This puts a rectangle of colour round a line of text.

Again you can set this up by right-clicking on it and choosing from the menu the selections of Width, Colour and Height that you want.

Width
Colour
Height
Lock

Help
About

Exit

PTO

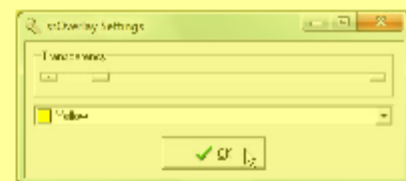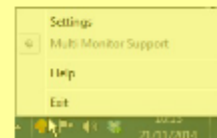# 6. Tint the Screen with **Reading Menu** option ssOverlay – screen tint

You can tint the whole screen, which you may find better, with the option ssOverlay – screen tint.

This allows you to edit or click on things under the colour which is not the case with T-bar. When you click on this it puts an arrow in the Task Bar. Right-clicking on this brings up a menu. Left-clicking on Settings allows you to set Transparency and Colour.
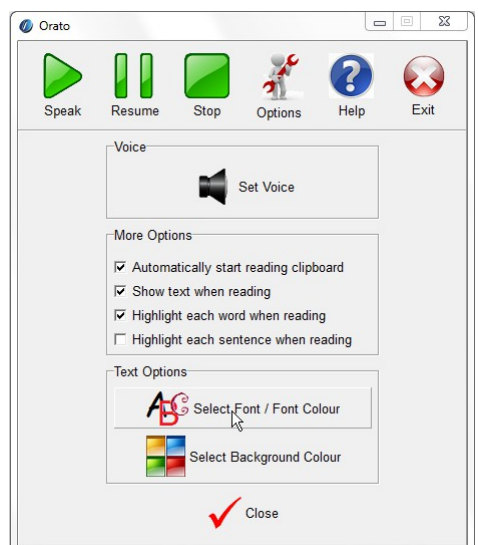
This page shows the text how it would look although the whole page and screen are actually affected. Note that if you set ssOverlay – screen tint twice the transparency gets less because it is running twice and you will have to exit it twice. Again experiment with colours and transparency to find what best suits you.

7. **Orato – text reader** is the final option under the **Reading Menu** . This allows you to select some text and **Orato** will read out loud what you put in the Clipboard when you copy the text. Left-click on **Orato – text reader** . Obviously, you need to have your speakers on or headphones plugged in!

When you select **Orato** it puts an icon in the Task Bar which allows you to open it as required.

Orato puts up another Menu Bar to control it.

Left click on Options first so that you can set the screen how you want it, especially by choosing Select Font/Font Colour and Select Background Colour where you can make settings as you would for using the computer generally similar to some of those described above. When you have done these left -click on Close.

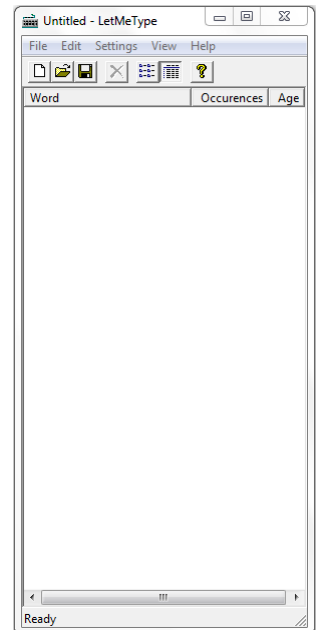Then select the text you wish to have read out and press Ctrl C. This puts it into the Clipboard

PTO

and it is then read out automatically.

You can repeat it and control it by left-clicking on Speak ![Speak], Pause ![Pause], Resume ![Resume] and Stop ![Stop] as required.

A wee donation would be very welcome from anyone richer!   **Version 01 – 31/10/14**

8. The **Writing Menu** has various options which will help you to predict text, check meanings and spelling and improve your typing.

LetMeType – word prediction helps you to speed up the process if you have difficulty spelling or typing. Left-click on **Writing** and then on **LetMeType – word prediction**
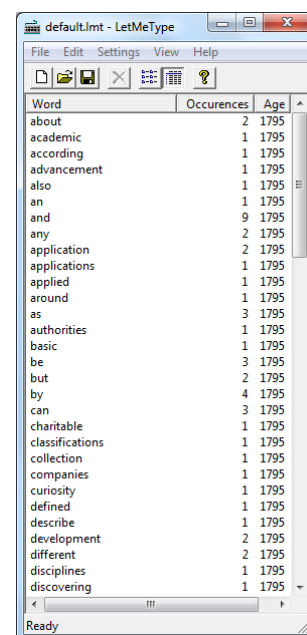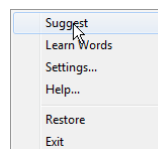

First of all you get a window which is blank and also an icon in the Task Bar. You then have to load in the dictionary. To do this left-click on Open and then on the path Local Disk/Program Files/MyStudyBar_Win7/fscommand/LetMeType/default.lmt. This loads the dictionary. Right-click on the icon at the bottom right of the Task Bar which shows **LetMeType** deactivated. Left-click on Suggest to activate it to put a tick in front of it. The icon will change .
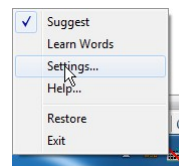

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This indicates that **LetMeType** is not learning words which is better if you have difficulty in spelling.

Note that the downloaded default dictionary is extremely limited so is not a real help until it starts learning words.
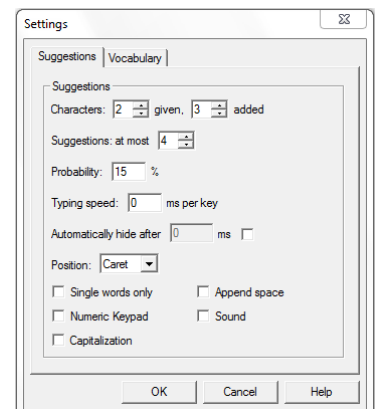
When you start typing a new word a suggestion box appears after 2 or 3 letters if the dictionary contains the initial letters of the word, like this wor

9. There are various settings that can be chosen by right-clicking on the icon and left-clicking on Settings.
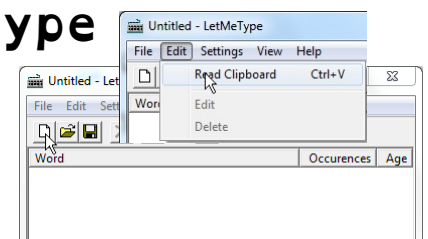
A Settings window appears.

Choose your preferred settings and left-click on OK. It's probably a good idea to left-click on the single words only box to start with.
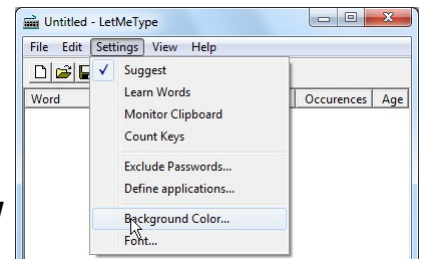

10. You can load word lists into **LetMeType** by copying them (i.e. into the Clipboard) and pasting into a New file

which is opened by left-clicking on the New icon. Then left-click on Edit and then on Read Clipboard when the new words will be entered. This file can then be saved by selecting File and and then Save As and choosing Save as type Vocabulary (*.lmt) file.

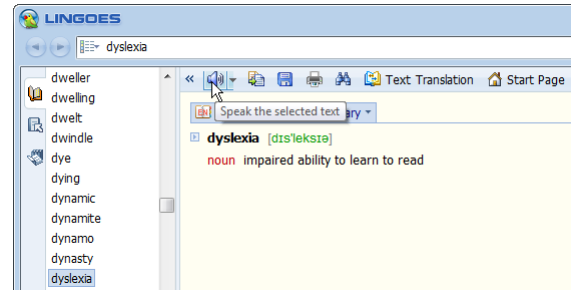11. You can also change settings of background colour to make the Suggestions box easier for you to read. Left-click on Settings in the Let Me Type Window and then on Background Colour and select the colour you require and left-click on OK. You may want to try out different colours to see what suits best.

12. The next option in the **Writing Menu** is **Lingoes talking dictionary**. This allows you to hear the pronunciation of words as a way of checking that you've chosen the right word. Left-click on **Lingoes talking dictionary** and an icon appears in the Task Bar.
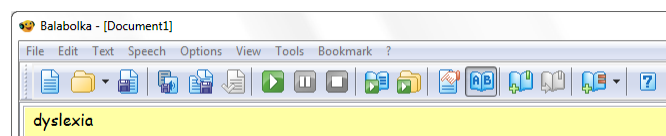
PTO

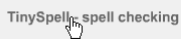Left-click on this and a window appears where you can type the word you wish to hear spoken and by left-clicking on the speaker icon 🔊 you will hear the pronunciation. There are lots of settings which can be tried out. See the **MyStudyBar** step-by-step guides.

13. The next option in the **Writing Menu** is **Balabolka – writing support/mp3** could be more useful for you in that it can pronounce a word after it has been typed. **Balabolka** can import a wide range of text-based files, read them aloud, highlight words as they are read, and convert text to speech, e.g. in MP3 form. Left-click on **Balabolka – writing support/mp3** and an icon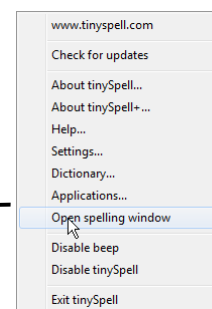 appears in the Task Bar. Left-click on this and a window appears where as you type the word you hear it pronounced. Again there are lots of settings which can be tried out to cover your needs. See the **MyStudyBar** step-by-step guides.

14. **Balabolka** has a spell checking facility, however there is included a standalone program option in the **Writing Menu** for this called **TinySpell – spell checking.**

Left-click on **TinySpell – spell checking** and an icon appears in the Task Bar. Right-click on this and then on Open spelling window and this appears just above the Task Bar. As you type, this window shows whether the word you typed has the correct spelling by displaying the word e.g. in black for OK and red for miss-spelt. If it shows in red then left-click on the ticck. You will notice that the word in the text is underlined in red as well and you'll hear a sound to indicate miss-spelling.

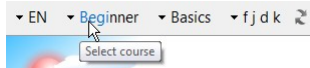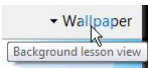There are also other options for setting up when you right-click on the icon .

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15. The last option in the **Writing Menu** is **Rapid Typing – touch type tutor** Rapid Typing, touch type tutor. This brings up a whole screen with a picture of a keyboard to indicate how to type.

Just follow the instructions on screen to learn to type. An icon appears in the Menu Bar which will bring it up or take it down as required by left-clicking on it.

You can choose level of difficulty by left-clicking on the Menu at the top left . There are also options for different Languages and different areas to practise.

There are options for changing the background in the Wallpaper menu at top right . Change this to suit you.

16. The next menu **Vision** has various options which will help you to interpret what's on screen. The first option is **Magnifier – screen magnifier.**

This puts a rectangular window on screen which can be moved around with the mouse to magnify the text under it. Left-click to remove it. An icon also appears in the Task Bar . Left-clicking opens it and right-clicking on it gives lots of setting options.

17. The second **Vision Menu** option is **Sonar – cursor ring** . Left-click on this and it puts a circle round the area of the mouse pointer around w magnify click to 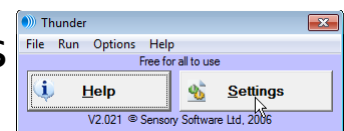although it does not magnify or alter it. An icon also appears in the Task Bar. Left-clicking opens it and right-clicking on it gives setting options and the means of showing and hiding it. Sometimes you may get an error message but just close this.

18. The third **Vision Menu** option is **Thunder – screen reader** which is a program to read out loud what you type or access on screen. Left-click on this and it puts an icon in the Task Bar and a window on-screen. Again you can choose how it is set up by left-clicking on Settings .
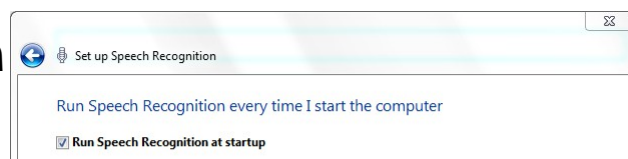
19. The next menu in **MyStudyBar** is **Voice** which is a speech recognition program to allow you to control your computer with speech. It uses the Windows speech recognition facility in your computer. You will need a microphone attached to your computer to proceed.

When you left-click on the **Voice Menu** you get a setup Wizard series of Windows to set this up for your voice and an icon appears in the Task Bar. Left-click on the options as appropriate. For one of these you have to speak a sentence on the screen so that the program recognises your voice.
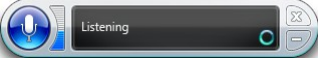
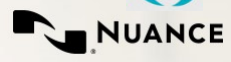You are also given the opportunity to print out the speech commands for reference which you will find useful (The Speech Reference Card). It finishes with a screen followed by the opportunity to take a Tutorial which is highly recommended.

When something like this appears it explains what's happening. (Once set-up this should appear, e.g. at the top of the screen, on switch-on). It will tell you if it has understood what you
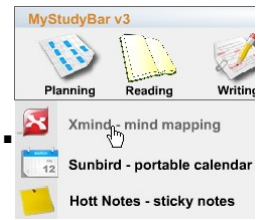
PTO

said.

20. If you find that **Voice** doesn't obey commands correctly or recognise what you say then you may have to invest in a specialised speech recognition progam such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking (Home Edition) by NUANCE which you could try for on ebay.
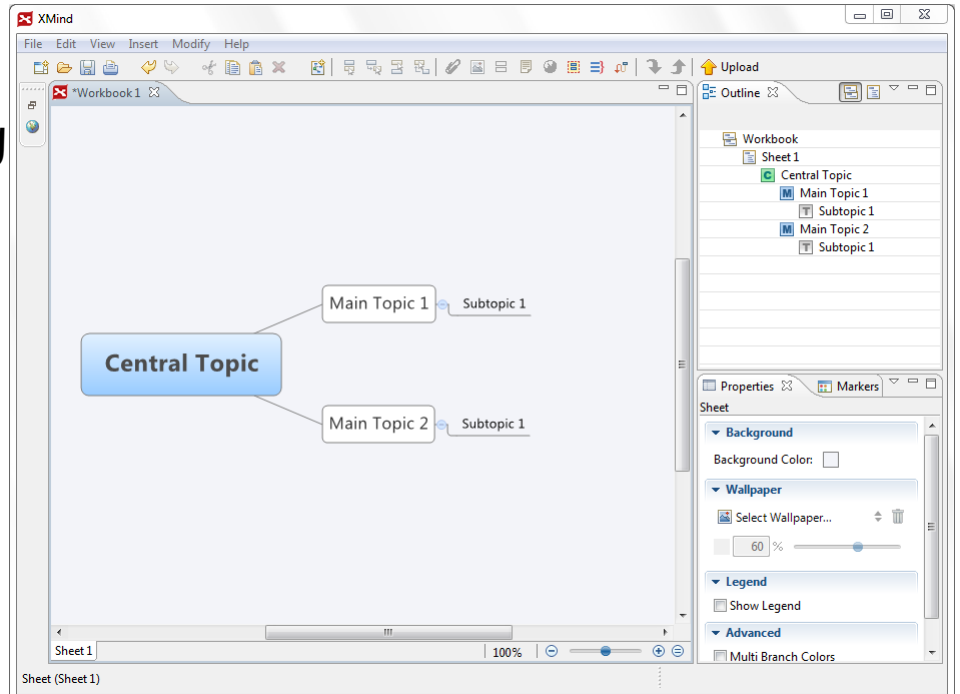
21. The final menu in **MyStudyBar** is **Planning**
which has 3 options.
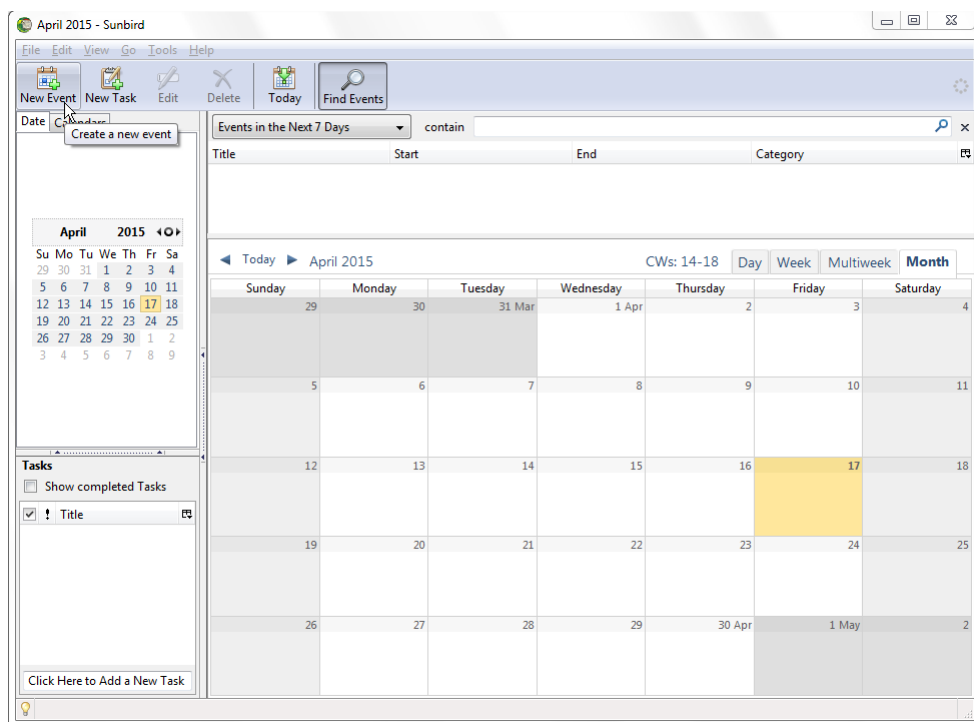
The first of these is **Xmind - mind mapping.**

This opens a window allowing you to plan in the form of a mind map and puts an icon in the Task Bar. Further details can be had on the eduapps webpage.

PTO

22. The second option under the **Planning Menu** is **Sunbird – portable calendar** 📅 Sunbird – portable calendar . This opens a calendar sheet and puts an icon 🌐 in the Task Bar. You can enter events in the calendar by clicking on the day and then on the New Event button.
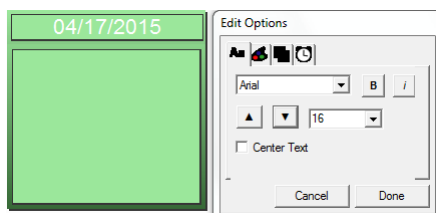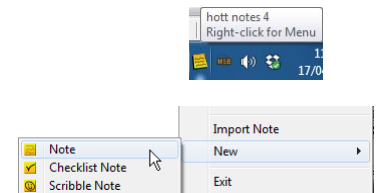

Again further details can be had on the eduapps webpage.

23. The third option under the **Planning Menu** is **Hott Notes – sticky notes** .

Its function is to act as a reminder in the form of a message or checklist or scribble and it puts a small icon in the right hand end of the Task Bar where you can right click for the Menu .

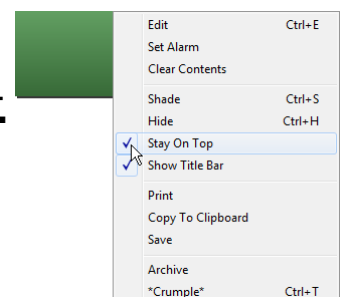Try left-clicking on New and then Note and a Note appears on screen along with Edit options. Alternatively just double-click on the Hott Notes icon .

Unfortunately you can't amend the date format permanently under Settings but you can edit it each time you open Hott Notes.

To add a note just type in the Sticky Note window. You can change the look using the Edit Options window.
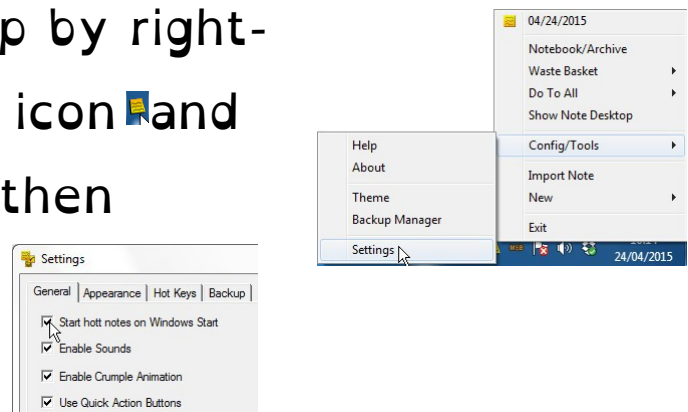
Note that the Sticky Note does not always show above other windows but by right-clicking on the note and then left-clicking on Stay On Top it can be kept at the front.

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Other options under New are Checklist (a list of items) and Scribble Note (writing with the mouse). To close Hott Notes left-click on the icon and then on Exit. If you open it again the previous Sticky Note will show.

If you want you can choose that Hott Notes always opens on Windows start up by right-clicking on the Hott Notes icon and then on Config/Tools and then Settings. Then make sure the Start box is ticked.

Again further details can be had on the eduapps webpage.

24. This has only been a brief introduction to some of the facilities available in **MyStudyBar** which will hopefully give you an idea as to what's available. Note that there are full tutorials for all these at http://eduapps.org/?page_id=7#MyStudyBar+step-by-step+guides