JUNE 2021 ISSUE 66

Dyslexic Advantage NEWSLETTER

DYSLEXIC INGENUITY AWARDS 2021



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW with STEVEN ERICKSON LEGO MASTER SEASON 2!

- BOOK GIVEAWAY: **EXPLORING SCIENCE WITH DYSLEXIC CHILDREN & TEENS**
- LEGO BOOK GIVEAWAY
- INTERVIEW TECH EXEC JOHN EDGAR RECORDING DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE & OCEAN EXPLORER BOB BALLARD
- DYSLEXIA NEWS

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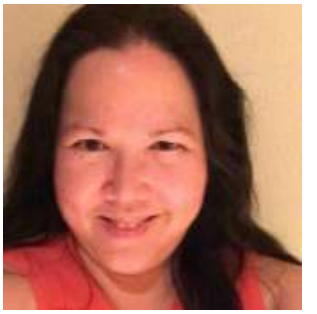
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Fernette Eide MD, Editor

This issue is a celebration of dyslexia and STEM / STEAM talents and professions. Besides the amazing winners of our Dyslexic Advantage Ingenuity Awards, we have an interview with Tech Executive John Edgar, Lego Master Steven Erickson, and Master Science teacher Dr. Diana Hudson. Although there may be many dyslexic students with extraordinary strengths in science technology, or engineering, they may be overlooked for STEM programs because early education tends to emphasize weak areas (like keeping handwritten notes in a science notebook). If you have a student who seems to have interests in science or technology, read all the articles and listen to the interviews. Your students may only see a full blossoming of their abilities in field experiences as well as in their college years and behind.

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The app may be used to identify and qualify for services such as Benetech.

Editor's Note: to make our publications easier to read, we will avoid use of italics and certain types of fonts.

Thank you volunteers Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Dayna Russell Freudenthal, and Michelle Wiliams for their astute critique and proofing. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for beautiful design and layout.

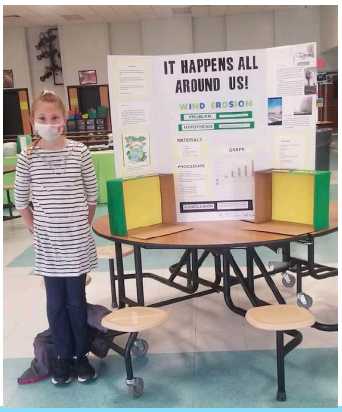
Newsletters can be read online **HERE**. This issue will be available on the Joomag site for 3 months and can also be downloaded as a pdf file.

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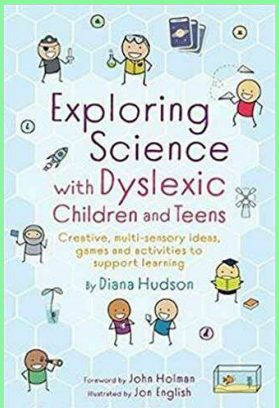
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Congratulations to all the remarkable Ingenuity Award winners!

Although it's been an unprecedented time of upheaval, these students showed remarkable fortitude and ingenuity in their work and we are thrilled to be able to honor them with our 2021 Ingenuity Awards!

Bravo to Ameen and his Helping Finger Prosthetic, Aiden and his Phone Box, Emma and Jaden for their Sister Stitch Studio, and Julianna for her Wind Erosion project. Awesome!



AMEEN



11 Years Old
5th Grade

VIRGINIA
Lab School of Washington

HELPING FINGER PROSTHETIC

My grandma lost her middle finger from diabetes. The problem I solved was to build my grandma an affordable 3D printed prosthetic finger that would help her write, and grip objects better. Prosthetics are very expensive, and a single finger prosthetic can cost thousands of dollars verses one made on a 3D printer.

The middle finger is a support finger, and missing a middle digit caused her to have a weaker grip, which made writing, or picking up drinks or a cell phone harder. I wanted her 3D printed prosthetic finger to make her feel like she had her hand back. I used a digital caliper to measure her exact measurements so it would be comfortable to wear.

I wanted the material to be sustainable and earth friendly so I choose PLA filament, which is 100% biodegradable and made from cornstarch and soybeans. I added a silicone finger tip to prevent slipping when she held any object, and I chose a cool hot pink color that matched her personality. Building this prosthetic finger for my grandma was such a rewarding experience. To see her write me a note wearing her prosthetic to thank me makes me want to continue to build on this finger and make it better, and stronger, and help others who can't afford a prosthetic.

Materials used: 3D printer, PLA filament, Silicone finger tip, elastic string, fishing line, Thingiverse software, Tinkercad software, Ultimaker Cura software, small sanding files, and a Digital Calliper.

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Ameen's efforts to develop a functional and low cost finger for his grandmother.

My grandma lost her middle finger from diabetes. I promised her in the hospital I would make her a prosthetic one day, but I didn't know where to start. I started googling prosthetics, but all the information became overwhelming. My mom found a prosthetic arm kit called Odyssey Teams Build-a-Hand to help me learn about prosthetics. I started with one kit, and eventually made 14 prosthetic arms for people in need of a prosthetic arm in other countries. Building these arms made me feel good about helping others, but I still wanted to build my grandmother her prosthetic finger as I had promised her.

I started to look at prosthetic fingers on an open source website called Thingiverse. I downloaded many finger prosthetic files, but all of them had issues, which was very frustrating. This took a lot of time printing out all of the pieces for each finger, and assembling them only for them to not work properly.

I emailed a company called NP Devices, which makes 3D printed finger prosthetics. I learned a lot from the lead engineer who helped me with my frustrations of failed prototypes, and gave me a lot of ideas and websites to look at to help with my design. I learned that my grandma lost her Middle Phalanx finger right at the PIP joint. This new terminology helped me search better results exactly to the finger she lost, and the prosthetic style she need.

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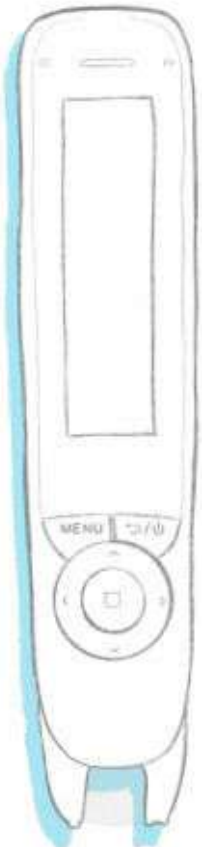
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Mississippi, Jefferson County School District, Director of Special Services / 504 Coordinator



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I found a file on Thingiverse that was a perfect fit for my grandmother. I used Tinkercad software to open the file, and make changes that would better fit my grandma's finger. I even designed 3D printed rods I didn't have, and used them to hold the finger in place along with elastic string and fishing line.

Once the finger was assembled I brought it to her, and she wrote me her first note with her new prosthetic. Prosthetics are very expensive, and 3D printed prosthetics makes it affordable so that anyone can have one.

The one advice I would give to young creators is to never give up on your idea. From the day I made my grandma the promise to actually building her prosthetic finger took 2 years. Building those Helping Hand prosthetic kits in those 2 years helped me build my confidence to build her a 3D printed prosthetic.





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PRESENTERS:



Elizabeth Begley



Brian Patterson



Kristen Koeller

Date: May 4, 2021 Time: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM | Time Zone: Eastern Time

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AIDEN

13 Years Old
7th Grade

CALIFORNIA
Terra Marin School
Teacher: Mike Burkett



THE PHONE BOX: SAVING THE LIVES OF TEEN DRIVERS

Recently, while doing a persuasive essay for my English class about the legal driving age and why state governments should change the law from age-based to maturity based; I found out that dialing a phone number while driving increases a teen's risk of crashing by six times, and texting while driving increases the risk by 23 times. To lower these crash rates and keep teens safe, I created The Phone Box. The Phone Box is a locked container in the car that contains the car's fob. To eject the fob out of The Phone Box and start the car, a teen must insert their cell phone into The Phone Box (see below for detailed description). The teen only gets the phone back when the car is stopped, turned off, and the fob is returned to The Phone Box, which would eject the phone.

I designed the box so that it could fit into any type of car (aftermarket) and fit any type of fob. It would be better, however, if The Phone Box was incorporated into the build of the car. As you'll see in my video, I came up with three different

But after I created the prototype, I realized that one particular design —the push/lock mechanism — worked the best and I used that to create the build.

My next step is to register a patent for my design and create a trademark application for the name of my invention and logo design.

The Phone Box is a cool looking container secured in your car. In order to turn the car on, a teen driver would need to insert their mobile phone into the Phone Box in order to eject the car's fob to start the car. The teen driver can still access voice activation for map directions, calling home, or calling 911. The teen cannot pick up the phone while driving because it's in the locked case. The only way to get the phone back is to stop the car, put the fob into The Phone Box which will then eject the phone. Once the fob is in the Phone Box, the car will not start. A teen must insert their phone to eject the fob.

I would advise any young creator to find a mentor as I did. In my case, my science teacher helped me with this big project. Or you can work with a friend or parent. The biggest thing, though, is to dream big. If you have an idea just know you can make it real as long as you have a glue gun and duct tape! So, as I always say . . .Get Out There! Be Curious! And Make Something! I'm always making something --and you can check it out on IG @AidenMakerTV. I post my larger projects to YouTube as well.

I'd like to thank my science teacher who was my mentor for this project. Mike Burkett, The Terra Marin School. We met every week over the course of a few months to go over every part of this project: from my failed ideas to my final idea to how to structure and present my project. I'd also like to mention my friend Michael D. who listened to my idea and helped me to think things out.





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National Center for Learning Disabilities, the International Dyslexia Association have evaluated the Sonday System(r) and deemed that the program contained the required elements for teaching reading identified by the Nation Reading Panel.

EMMA and JADEN

10 and 11 Years Old
4th and 5th Grade

COLORADO
Park Hill Elementary
Teacher: Mrs. G



SISTER STITCH STUDIO CREATION

Creating a child run business in the midst of Covid and virtual learning.

This has been an amazing project for two dyslexic sisters to work on together, raise over $750, learn wonderful gifts about working together as business partners, and resulted in a suitcase packed with dozens of scarves set for a children's orphanage.

Despite being dyslexic, Emma is an avid reader and has dreamed of putting a mini library on our property. Upon the onset of Covid and virtual learning, she had some time to bring this dream intro reality. Her sister, Jaden, also dyslexic, has been her business partner. The two of them have learned a tremendous amount. Here is an excerpt written to our neighbors, to elicit their support in this entrepreneurial project:

Hi! I am Emma. I love knitting. I made a scarf for one of our neighbors to thank her for letting me help her play with her dogs new puppies and she told me I should sell them. I decided it was a great idea so I started knitting lots of scarves. Another hobby I love is to read. At the time I was reading these really good books. I decided I would get them on an audiobook app so I can listen to them while I knit. I made scarves for mom, so she can give them to friends for the holidays. So my mom told

me I should decide what I wanted do with the money I earned. I thought of all sorts of ideas but I kept coming to the idea that I loved books and I wanted to do something that involved reading. I have so many books and I've read so many of them but I can't get rid of them. So I decided I really wanted a mini library so I looked into them and realized I need to earn some money. I'm hoping that you all may like to buy some holiday present scarfs for your friends and family. I thought you would also like to know: Every six scarves I sell I will donate one to a children's orphanage. Thank you all for your support, Emma.

ADVICE: Dream big! Don't let the way we learn differently stop us. We can do it!

Our nanny, who is an artist and also dyslexic, helped us put together our business name: Sister Stitch Studio, our business card design, and our Etsy account.

My grandmother was our consultant; my neighbor inspired me to start selling scarves; my other neighbors inspired me by giving them something to thank them for when they help me find my missing turtle; and my mom was our financial investor who gave us start up funds.

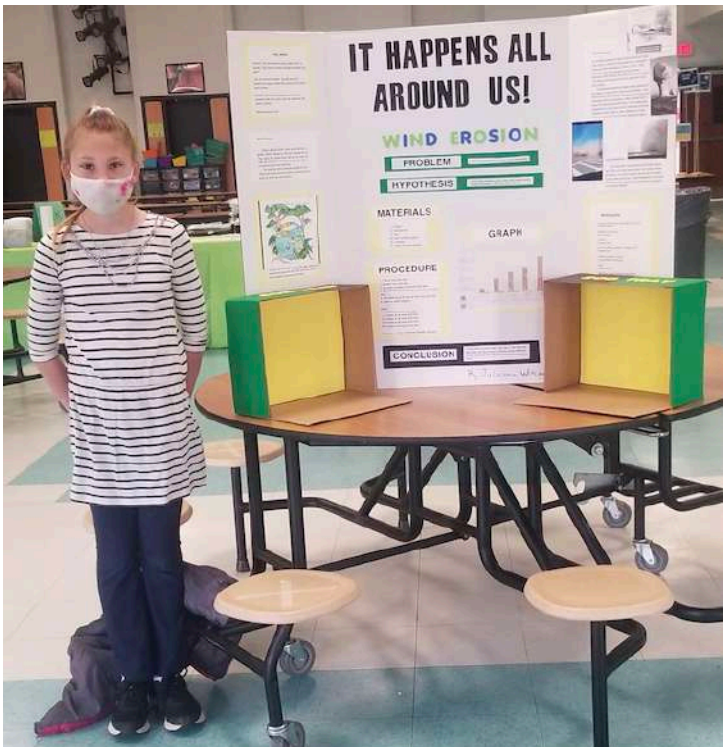


Emma created handpainted gift tags made out of recycled cardboard and handmade wraps for the scarves, made out of yarn.

JULIANNA

10 Years Old
5th Grade

NEW YORK
Park Hill Elementary
Teachers: Mrs. Clarke & Mrs. Sgori



IT HAPPEN S ALL AROUND US - WIND EROSION

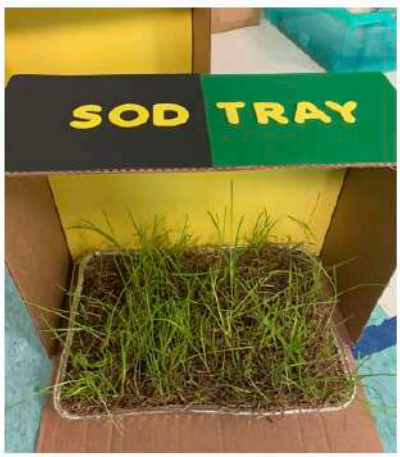
I live on the North Fork of Long Island, New York. There are many farms in this area. The farmers grow potatoes, different vegetables, herbs, flowers and grapes in the many wineries. One day when the wind was very strong, I saw a large dust cloud form and blow across the field. This sparked my interest!

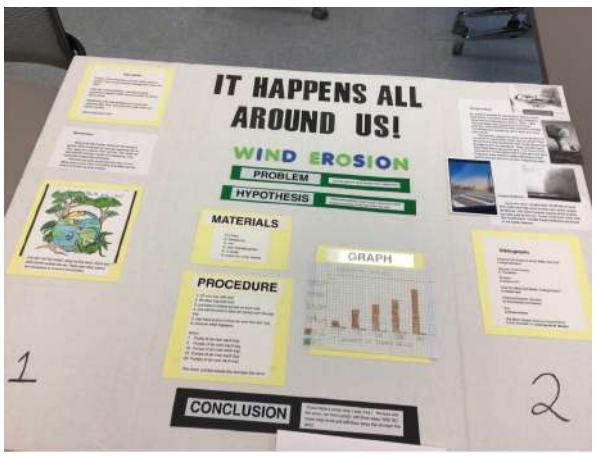
What was this cloud? and Why did it form? What can happen to the water and the ground with such a large cloud? Using this as my idea I entered into a deep dive of Erosion...

Using the information I found on the internet, I invited a school Science Fair Project. To simulate the wind I used a Balloon Pump, for the farming fields that was not planted with cover crop I used a tray of sand on dirty which I got from the field
next to my house. For a crop that was covered with cover crop (I used sod). Using the pumps I could show my classmates and the school judges how important cover crop is. Using the pump I blew air over both trays. The more pumps the more wind... Classmates and judges were amazing at how the dirty blows around. The wind thru the sod, did not have has much damage.









This was a simulation of the dust cloud I saw over the fields that had not been planted. I also researched the "Great Dust Bowl" that formed over a large part of the United States in the 1930's. At that time the farmers did not know that removing the sod before planting their crops would cause such a problem. The Government had to step in and help the farmers and establish guidelines for planting. Even the President spoke of the important of Cover Crop and Wind Erosion to farm land, he is hoping to be able to get financial aid to farmers so they can stop the erosion and "dust bowls".

Having a learning disability and being Dyslexic I have learned that anything extra I want to do I have to LOVE it. I'm now reading about the Grand Canyon and hope to visit it since that was form from Erosion.

I worked on my project with my grandma.

TECH EXECUTIVE JOHN EDGAR



As Chief Technology Evangelist and VP of Strategy at Digital Ocean, John Edgar helped group the company from #1000 to #2 cloud provider in the world (second only to Amazon). How did he do it and how can we understand how he arrived at the top of his profession in technology after leaving high school feeling as if he could never get accepted for as a computer science major?

Look at John's references on LinkedIn today and you'll see some impressive recommendations from tech industry leaders. For example:

"In the year that John and I worked together at DigitalOcean, he transformed from growing the tech evangelism team from nascent to one of the company's most critical and lucrative marketing channels, to a self driven one man fixer who successfully identified critical weaknesses in departments from hiring through operations, people, and compliance, and successfully filled those holes with the best people from all over the world, and processes he found in other companies."

"John Edgar is probably one of the single smartest humans I've ever met. I knew within minutes of talking to him that I would join DigitalOcean because he knew exactly what they needed to do to succeed. If I had to place a bet on a big thinker to take over the world I'd put all my chips on John."

Wow! Pretty impressive. John now recognizes that he has severe dyslexia and dyscalculia, but neither of these challenges were formally recognized in school. As a result, like many others in this community, his formal education up through high school was undistinguished. Outside of school, though he had found working with computers pretty easy and had already set up several websites for others when he was in high school and living on a rural farm in Scotland.



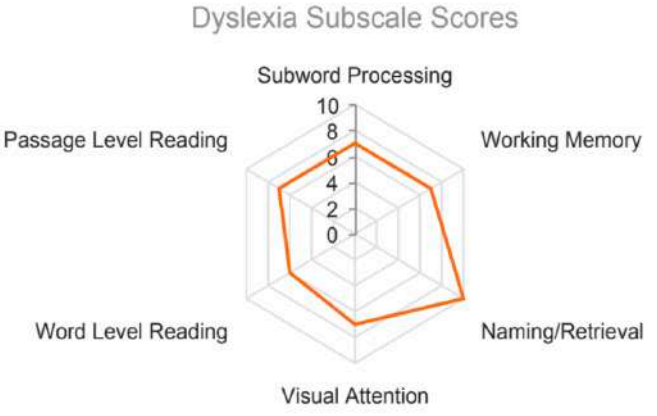
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- **A score of 5 is average on each subscale.**
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Your Dyslexia Subscale Scores Are:

Sub Word Processing:	7
Working Memory:	7
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Visual Attention:	7
Word Level Reading:	6
Passage Level Reading:	7



The radar graph of your scores provides a quick overview of your Dyslexia Subscale Scores. The further a particular score is from the center of the graph, the greater the likelihood it represents a dyslexia-associated processing trait.

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John's career prospects looked grim in the early period out of high school, but a call from his guidance counselor (after he had graduated) put him on an entirely different track. She told him that she heard about a new program opening at a nearby vocational college. It was called "Creative Digital Imaging" and it seemed like a good fit for his interests. To top it all off, too, she offered to help put together an application for him.

The program indeed seemed to be a great fit for John and he started a film company before he had graduated. Instead of becoming an apprentice at an established company, John thought that with the skills he learned in this new program, it would be an ideal time to launch a company of his own. His little company did well and even won a few Emmy's. He ended up leaving a few years later at the age of 23 when he and his co-founders (a husband and wife couple) decided they wanted to take the company in a different direction.

While in New York and exploring his options, John spoke to founders of an innovative cloud hosting company. The company hadn't yet gotten funding, but he was intrigued with the idea of joining them. By this time, John was thinking about working more in a business role that was artistic; he also realized that he didn't have suffiicent software development experience to make him ideally suited for a role he wanted, so he decided to go back to Toronto, take a job "for next-to-nothing" in order to gain experience, with a plan of returning to New York and looking up the company when he was ready.

John took a job in software and product development at MyPlanet.com. That company was rapidly scaling up (50-100 people) and soon he found himself as product manager of a project with a large enterprise client...a great experience! About a year later, when it became possible to return to New York again, he was told he could take a job that had a title of Chief Technology Evangelist if the could be in New York in just 4 weeks. In the next 5 years, John would help Digital Domain to grow from being #1000 in cloud computer to #2 in the world.

There's a lot more to learn from John about his journey toward growing Digital Ocean. Since leaving that company, he co-founded Stae, a company that "makes managing city data simple", and now operates a consultancy, advising companies like Netlify and Codesphere. My full interview with John will be posted with our Premium podcasts.

STEVEN ERICKSON LEGO MASTER SEASON TWO!



Congratulations to Steven Erickson and his brother Mark who won a coveted spot on the second season of Lego Masters to compete for $100,000.

Steven and his brother Mark have long been known to the LEGO community. You can find Steven **HERE**.

I have to say I especially enjoyed seeing the variety of Steven's trees and the storytelling that goes on in his projects like in the forest below.

For the challenge, Steven and his brother have 8 to 12 hours and an enormous brick pit to create scenes based on a challenge.



Steven told me that he and Mark were first approached for season 1 of Lego Masters, but he was just 3 weeks out of school and had accepted a job as a welder, so the timing wasn't right.



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Steven told me that he's currently been working for a welding company that builds big refrigerators - like those for industrial buildings. Steven enjoys it because it's almost all hands-on work and very little paperwork. Besides stick welding and using plasma torches, he operates cranes and drives forklifts.

Steven: "I've learned a ton...I work with some great people and learned a lot about myself working there."

Fernette: "Is there a lot of problem solving associated with welding?"

Steven: "Absolutely...You have to compensate for a lot of variance because a lot of the parts that you bring in are outsourced so they're not always the right length or the right size. Sometimes the table is off level or something like that...there's a lot of other things like that. So there is a lot of problem solving...Some of the stuff we have to do is using plasma torches which can burn at 3000 degrees. Wow, nice. Right through many inches of steel. So it's pretty impressive."

Check out Steven's Flickr pages for more LEGO creations **HERE**.





In terms of Steven's dyslexia story, his mother trained as a teacher, so she was prepared to teacher her kids when their family made the decision to home school.

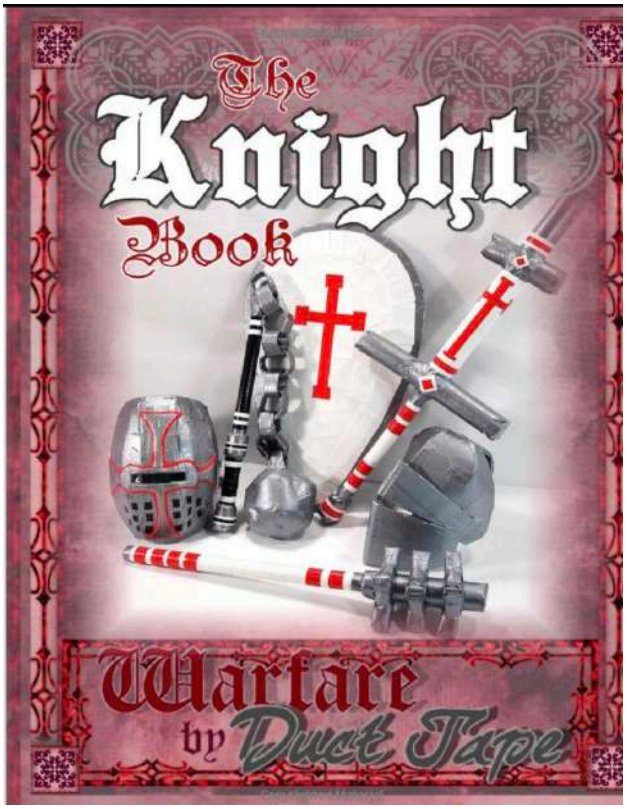
Steven: "I noticed something funny, you know, like something a little different. Compared to my friends, I was making a lot more stuff. I was doing a lot more stuff and I could learn quickly...like I learned to swim and ride bikes really quickly. I could also learn quickly, but other things were incredibly slow. Reading and spelling were the hardest by far, as well as math too. Math was a little easier, but some parts of math were a struggle...

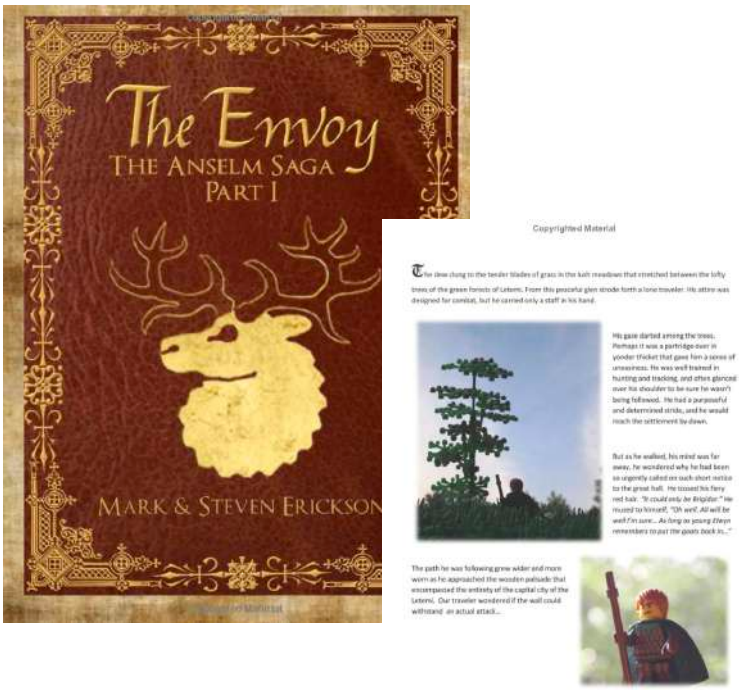
My sister (5 years old) was way ahead of the game reading. She's sort of the opposite of me. My brother was way ahead too, but he was also older (2 years)... When I got to his age, I was still struggling and I was still behind. So I noticed something was definitely up. It was my friends, too. They could all spell words. They were all learning words and I just wasn't. It wasn't my mom. I knew that because my siblings were doing fine. So I'm like, OK, something's up here, but on the flip side, I can make stuff. I made toy weapons, shields, and stuff and I made costumes to go with the shields. I had a Viking setup."

Actually, Steven has published several books available on Amazon that shows kids how to make costumes and toy weapons out of duct tape. It's part of his Warfare By Duct Tape series.

** In fact, if you or someone you know is talented with LEGOs, duct tape, or another building toy, we'll be giving away one of Steven's books. Submit a photo of your project **HERE** through our Artshare form. We'll also share it in an upcoming issue of this newsletter and you might also win one of his books!

Here are a few examples from Steven's books. Clicking on the book cover will take you to the book for sale on Amazon. The Knight book shows how to make weapons with duct tape, while Anselm is a saga with lego illustrations. Congratulations Steven for all your accomplishments including making it to LEGO Masters!

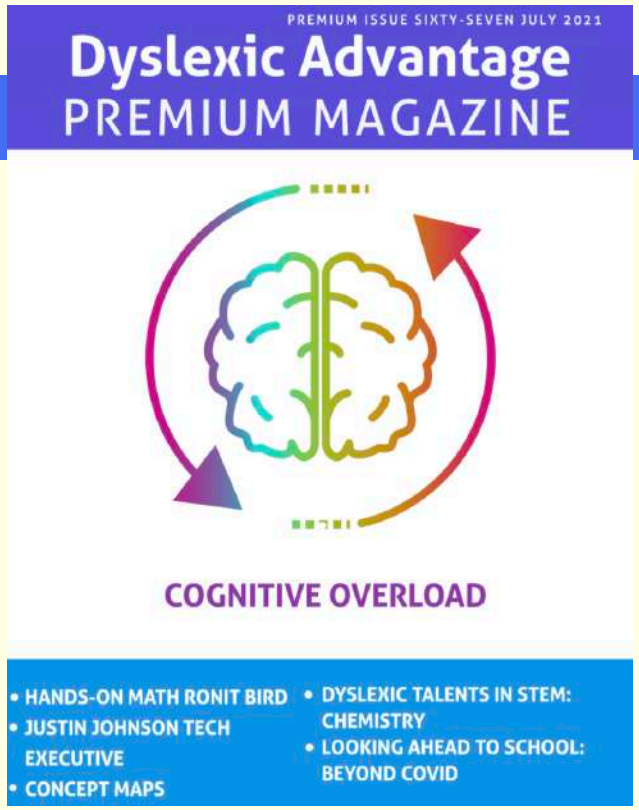




Steven's books on making medieval costumes and weapons with duct tape and his book **The Envoy** that includes his LEGO illustrations.



PREMIUM
RECENT ISSUE



- UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE OVERLOAD
- HANDS-ON MATH
- JUSTIN JOHNSON STARTUP to TECH EXEC
- CONCEPT MAPS
- DYSLEXIC TALENTS IN STEM
- LOOKING AHEAD TO SCHOOL BEYOND COVID

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EXPLORING SCIENCE WITH DYSLEXIC CHILDREN & TEENS



"The book begins by describing the strengths and weaknesses of creative thinkers who have dyslexia. It outlines the reasons that they may struggle in science and gives examples of specific areas of the school science curriculum that are often very challenging for them...It is, however, possible for them to learn and excel in science if a more creative and multi-sensory approach is taken..." - Dr. Diana Hudson

Dr. Hudson has a wonderful new book called:

Exploring Science with Dyslexic Children and Teens: Creative multi-sensory ideas, games, and activities to support learning.

The book has many examples of teach science through multisensory and interactive activities so that the principles are easy to grasp and remember for all students, but especially dyslexic students who may struggle with dry rote repetition approaches.

Thanks to Diana and her publisher, Jessica Kingsley, we have two books to give away.

The book is geared toward upper elementary and middle students, but clearly can be applied to older students as well. A book like this is so important because many dyslexic students have strengths and interests that suit them well in science, but if they are taught and assessed in ways that recognize ways that they prefer to learn, they may mistakenly believe they are "not good at science", when actually they are.

Diana has an added advantage as a teacher of dyslexic students (and teacher of teachers who teach dyslexic students!) because she is dyslexic herself.

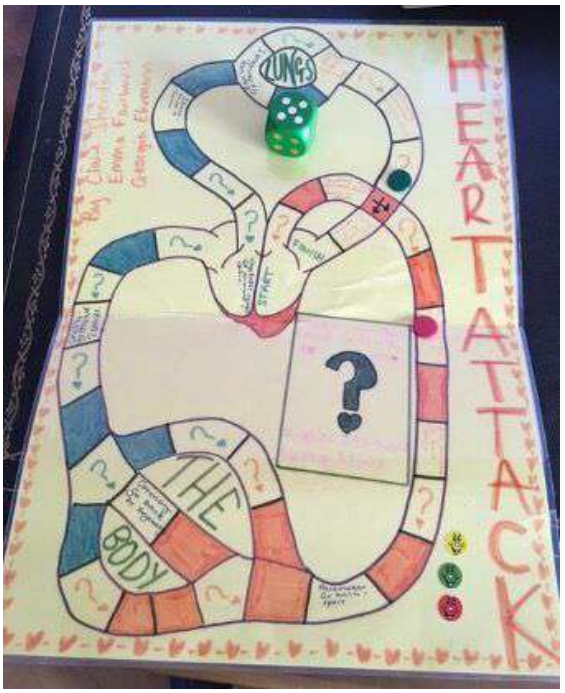
The chapters in this book are: Why Kids and Teens with Dyslexia and Other Learning Differences May Struggle with Science, Look and See, Hear and Say, Touch, Make, and Do, Playing Cards and Board Games, Action Games and Activities, Act and Mime, Dance, Tips and Tricks for Learning, and Creative Scientists.

The are also appendices at the end that include Useful Websites as well as Templates.

TEACHING

Diana's students learn by doing, making models of the heart and circulation or the stages of meiosis (opposite page). By doing, experiencing, and applying information, not only is the information easier to remember, but it also makes the subject come alive.

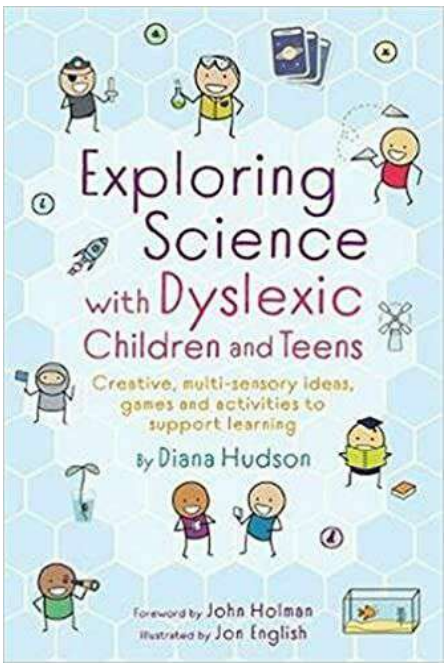


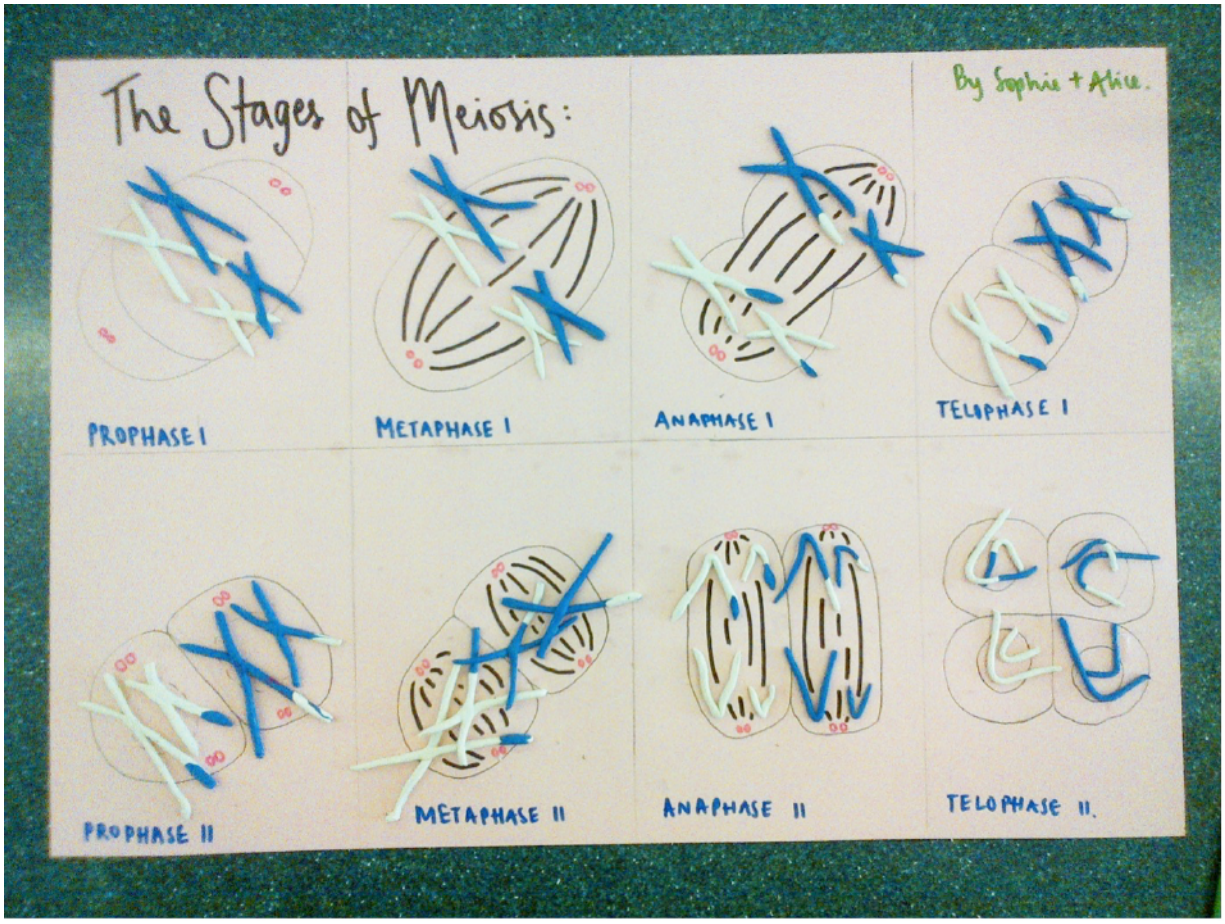


Listen to my interview with Diana on the opposite page.

We had a little trouble with connection so my camera was turned off, but fortunately Diana came through fine.

I found it interesting that when Diana was in secondary school, her parents were still getting bad advice not to allow her to enter University. She did well and then finished PhD, and now is a teacher with over 30 years of experience, teaching K-12, students in Biology, medical students, trainee nurses, and adults in access courses. In the midst of the pandemic, Diana still has been teaching and giving workshops through Zoom. To get in touch with her, contact her through **Diana's Linked In page**.







My chat with Diana about her new book, her dyslexia story, and how she came to be a master teacher in science.



To see how Diana engages her students, it's easy to imagine that her scientific promise and creativity would be easy to spot when she was a child (at right, Diana in her Brownie uniform), but her childhood looked very different from her life today.

When she was young, she recalled playing with her brothers a lot and taking ballet. Although she would eventually get a PhD in Zoology, she couldn't be around animals very much because she was asthmatic. Because schools really weren't identifying dyslexia at that point, she was considered "slow."

Her father was a surgeon and her mother was a nurse, so her parents had high expectations, but they also understood her and supported her. As she progressed in education, she recalled the following:

"I was in the less bright classes and not expected to go to university at all. In fact, my parents talked to the headmistress who said that I shouldn't be thinkinng of university. But my parents said, 'Could she just try?" So I scraped into university and went to Durham in a lovely city with a big cathedral...I enjoyed it and I did OK... I did Anthropology, Zoology, and Botany, and I enjoyed those."

Diana told me that she didn't find her courses easy and she also wasn't terribly confident. Diana again, "I misread question and go off the point and did all those typical dyslexic things.." but she thought she might enjoy research and pursued research as an undergraduate. Fortunately, she had a supportive supervisor and she chose to do her PhD with him. As a graduate student, Diana found she enjoyed science even more because "I was in charge of my learning. I could explore and I could do experiments, and I was fairly tenacious when things didn't go right..." Although she experienced some setbacks and failures, she also credits those experiences with making her a resilient and methodical researcher.

Flash forward to today and Diana has been a science teacher and teacher of other teachers, as well as authors of now two books! Check out her **Exploring Science with Dyslexic Children and Teens.** Her first book is **Specific Learning Disabilities: What Teachers Need to Know.**



Legendary Ocean Explorer Bob Ballard Dyslexic Advantage Webinar with the Eides Youtube Video



3 Things You Shouldn't Say to Dyslexic Students (from a Dyslexic Teacher)

TES.com



US Schools Resume Testing - Many Opting Out

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Texas Parents Take Dyslexia Concerns to State Capitol

Katy Magazine



OpEd: California Must Fix Its School Inequality Problem. Early Screening for Dyslexia is a Start

LA Times



Leigh Perkins Who Built Orvis Dies at 93 Washington Post (subscription)

Older article about Perkins, Orvis, and his Dyslexia at WSJ HERE.



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"Don't listen to anyone who tells you what you can or cannot do... there is no dyslexia ceiling.."

- MIT Professor of Chemistry and Biology Dr Cathy Drennan