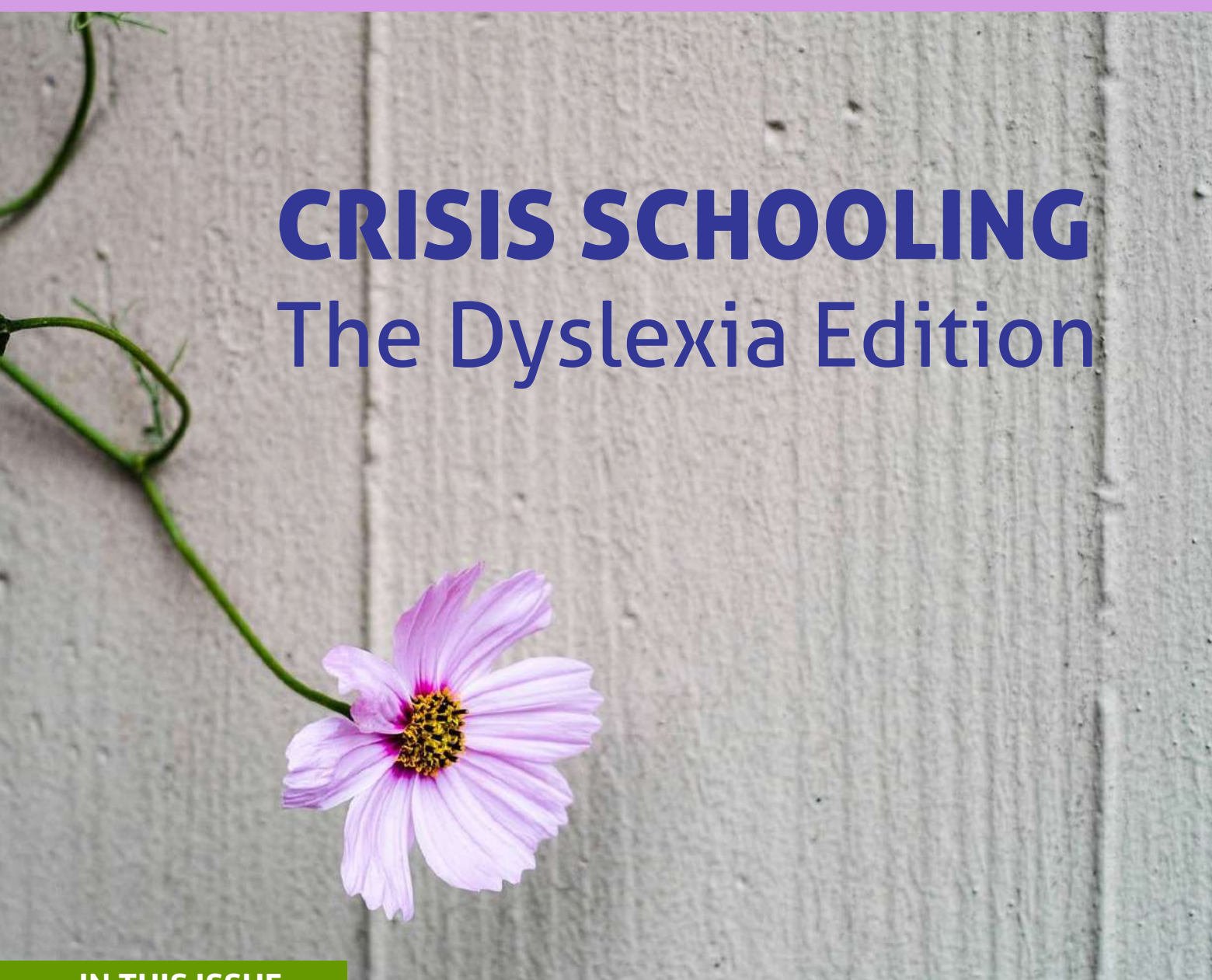


PREMIUM ISSUE FIFTY-SEVEN SEPTEMBER 2020

Dyslexic Advantage

PREMIUM MAGAZINE



CRISIS SCHOOLING

The Dyslexia Edition

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Dr Bob Ballard Legendary Ocean Explorer
- There's a Tutor for That!
- Temperament & Learning
- What About High School?
- Fractions and Word Problems
- Free Resource for Grammar
- If You Haven't Done This...



Dyslexic Advantage is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and one of the world's largest online communities for dyslexia.

Our mission is to transform the way dyslexic people are understood, educated, and employed by identifying and using strengths that are the core features of the Dyslexic Mind.

Dear Friends,

Here are the highlights of this issue:

- Crisis Schooling
- Ocean and Shipwreck Discoverer Bob Ballard (a proud dyslexic!)
- Temperament - More Important Than Most People Realize!
- Grammar, Fractions, High School, and What You Should Do...

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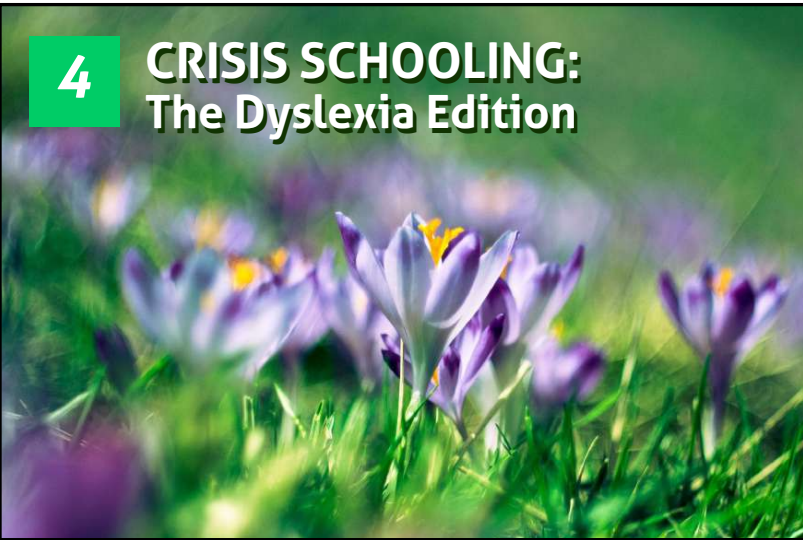


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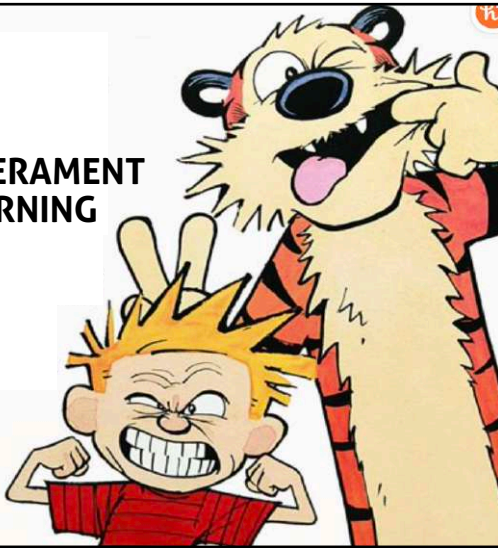
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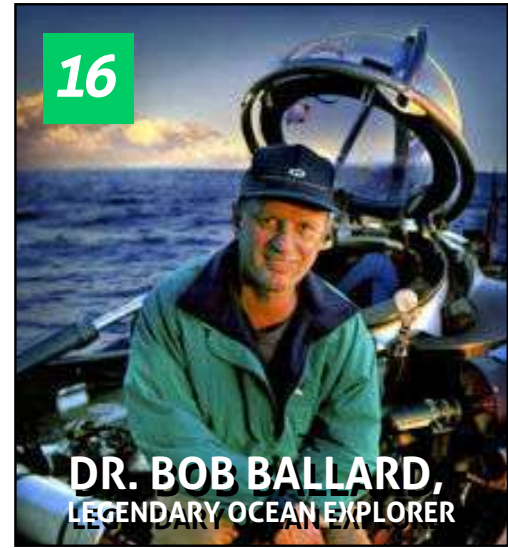
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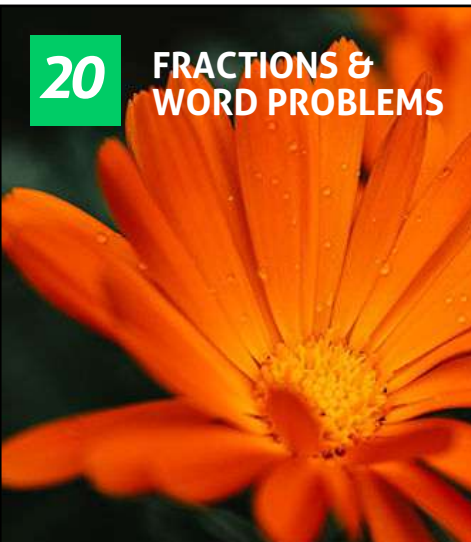
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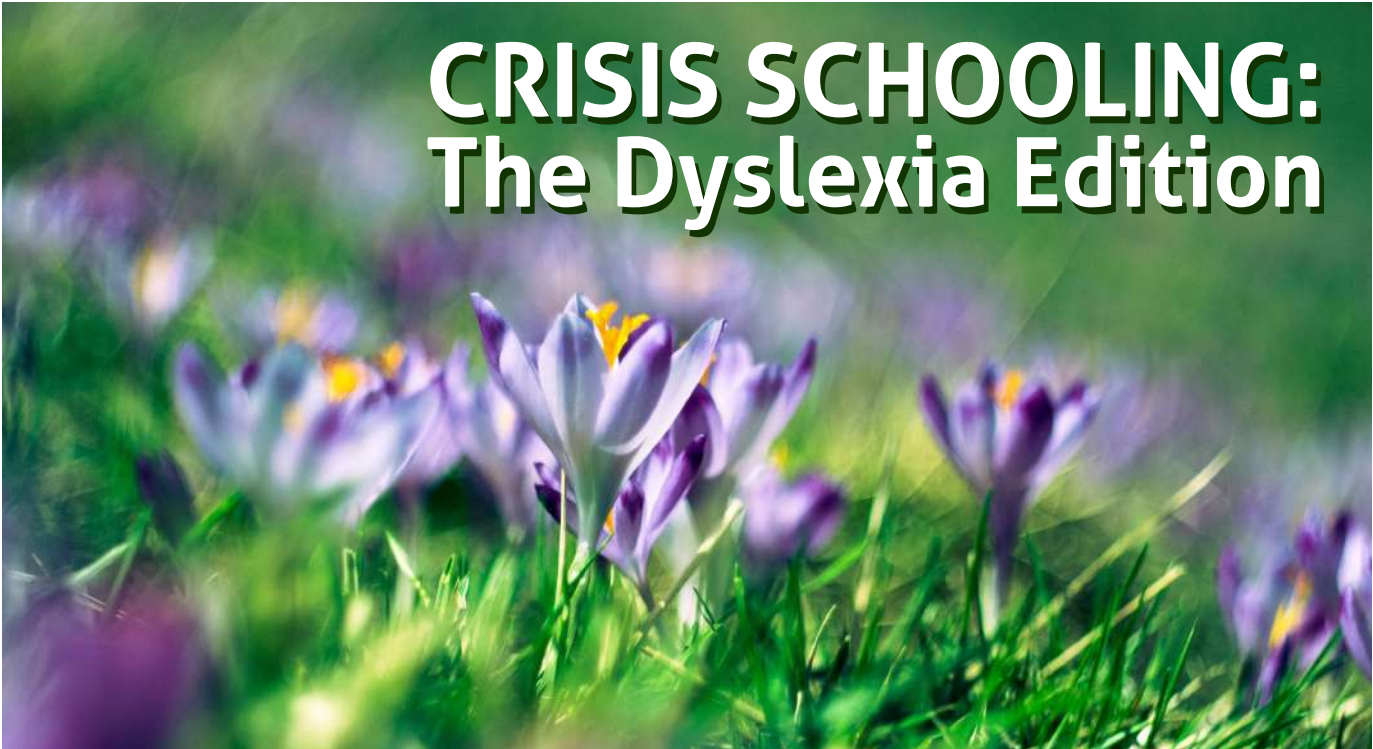
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PANDEMIC: WHAT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL?





CRISIS SCHOOLING: The Dyslexia Edition

Are you going to be homeschooling or perhaps willing to give traditional school a try under the new rules?

Teacher mom blogger Heather Ann said this:

"You are NOT homeschooling. You are CRISIS schooling. There is a huge difference. You may choose to homeschool after this, but this is not what homeschooling looks like, not even remotely."

I completely agree. If you are schooling, no matter what form, you are crisis schooling and not homeschooling or traditional schooling. Even with all of the protections in place, something is likely to go wrong, whether its activities that can't be done, or unexpected quarantines because of someone at school or a co-working getting sick.

And yet, with all the uncertainties on the horizon, it is possible for this year to have a lot of benefits over the conventional school year. For many students, the routine of full class days and homework is a grind for the body and soul. Shaking up the school year creates opportunities if parents are flexible and keep focus on the big picture.

Here are a few positives that are likely to be a reality for the coming school year:

- Lighter homework and assignment loads
- More access to technology for assignments and learning
- More time to decompress, pursue hobbies and interests
- More time to pursue dyslexia remediation or become proficient at using assistive technology

Let's face it, there's a lot about the standard school year that can work against dyslexic students. Students who are heavily scheduled in sports and extracurriculars may be staying up late at night to get all their work done. They won't have to this coming school year.

On the other side, all parents probably share the goals that their students don't fall behind and that progress made in reading, writing, and math, don't disappear.

IF YOU ARE HOMESCHOOLING

If you have already made the decision to homeschool, congratulations! The most difficult period of decision-making may be over.

We were in a different situation when we considered homeschooling, of course, but every situation is always a little bit different.

School for our son wasn't working despite numerous school meetings and well-meaning efforts by the school.

Both Brock and I were in full-time jobs that weren't that close to the school. We tried part-week in-class schooling (a situation considered by some schools), first Monday, Wednesday, Friday, then Monday through Wednesday when neither really worked. When we finally decided to homeschool, I think we all felt like failures. We had all failed to make things work and now we were homeschooling...not the best attitude to be starting, but there you are.

What I know now is that we were actually crisis schooling.

I had heard that it was a good idea to at least take one month to detoxify if students were leaving a stressful situation, so fortunately I did that.

Many of you might have done that over the summer; as long as you had some break and a fairly low stress summer break, you can plan to start when school normally would have begun.

WHEN YOU ARE HOMESCHOOLING YOU WILL HAVE MORE TIME THAN YOU REALIZE

If you are crisis homeschooling, there is no rush to start doing things all at once. If you have a student in elementary, schooling may take place in short blocks of time 20-30 minutes or longer if a student is watching a documentary or doing independent lessons.

Consider your student's natural rhythms. Many children are at their most alert and focused in the morning. Maria Montessori thought that children worked at their best in 3 hour chunks. Your kids may vary. If you are also working from home, plan for a routine where you can also have some relatively uninterrupted time.

A common schedule for structured literacy is 25-30 minutes for a lesson and practice, four times a week. Some parents may plan little blocks at a time, but as relaxed homeschoolers, we had a looping schedule whereby we'd try to get through different subjects each week.

Remember, your student is also getting much more individualized attention, so she or he may show more progress than the time it may take as a student in a large classroom. You will notice if your student doesn't understand, can stop and explain.

If your student has a "spiky profile" with high abilities and low, then allow them to follow their passions in areas of their strengths and be prepared to take as long as you need when you come to a problem area. Students who are still struggling with decoding and beginning a structured literacy program, may need to dictate their ideas to you...for a while! In the meantime, you can

Homeschooling for Dyslexia Online Course for Parents

24/7 Video Lessons +
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**Reading, Writing,
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allow them to begin using a keyboard, or even start a low pressure typing program.

Be content with your student knowing much more that she expresses in writing. The gap will narrow over time.

For students who are already writers, but struggle with sight word spelling, this is a great time to begin typing with a word prediction software like Co: Writer or WordQ. If these programs are too expensive, then consider adding the free Ginger Software to your browser or using the Smart Compose function for Google Docs (free).

Whether you are full-time homeschooling by choice or part-homeschooling because of the pandemic, setting aside regular time for your student to listen along with reading and learning to type with word prediction software can help make sure that your students have a positive learning year.

THERE'S A TUTOR FOR THAT!

When I first heard about homeschooling, I had this image of Abraham Lincoln learning how to read in a log cabin. Flash forward to the millennium, and some people still think it means teach at the kitchen table. It could look like that of course, but it can look nothing like that.

SPECIALIST TUTORS

Reading

For some, the most obvious choice for a tutor is something that you don't have specialist training in. That could mean reading remediation or math, if you can't find an alternative online class that seems to be a good fit. Also while some students work well with technology, others decidedly do not. Some kids especially need a human connection to be intrinsically motivated and some student-tutor relationships can be positive connections and sources of encouragement long after the formal sessions may have ended.

When a tutor already has various curricula, that also saves a homeschooling parent from having to learn everything and also buy all the materials.

Writing

Many parents choose to use an outside tutor for writing for a variety of reasons. For starters, an objective outsider will be assigning and grading work. It may avoid family tussles of assignments or due dates, and have a patient person working positively step-by-step until the final pieces of the work are perfected.

It's definitely helpful if homeschooling parents are in touch with their own strengths and weaknesses as well their children's. Some people may be well-suited to tutoring their students in writing, whereas others are happy to delegate the task.

Math

If I came across a math subject that I had a hard time explaining, I was fortunate that I could ask my husband to help with instructing. I learned a great deal of math by rote, therefore could come up short with explanations.



Some care needs to be taken with math tutors for dyslexic students. I've definitely heard from some parents who complained that the tutors may be good mathematicians themselves, but not know how to help the problems their students were having. Some of the reasons are the specific demands for multisensory learning or explanations of confusing language aspects of math. If a tutor can't communicate ideas in the ways your student needs to learn, then try again with someone else. It may be that a general dyslexia tutor who also tutors math may be a better match than a general math teacher found from a general tutoring service.

Tutors in Areas of Interest and Talent

Some specialist tutors allow students to try out potential career interests like an artist for art lessons or a computer-savvy tutor for help learning to program a first game. Because of the pandemic, many people are at home and might be looking for a little extra cash.

It's actually very easy to get native foreign language tutors through platforms like [italki](#). Tutors from another country also have an added benefit of learning more about that country as well as mastering a second language.

Don't feel as if you have to grade every educational or learning experience your student has. With everything shaken up, grades have never taken on so little significance. This may be a great year for rediscovering the joy of learning for learning's sake!

TEMPERAMENT & LEARNING

Temperament is a person's emotional disposition, style, and manner of responding behaviorally and emotionally to the world. Temperament is part of a person's personality, which also includes humor, intelligence, interests, and talents.

If you have heard of temperament, you've probably heard about Meyers-Briggs. For adults who want to take the formal test, it's \$49. There's a free kids personality check for kids ages 7-12 [HERE](#).

Temperament can really affect how you or other people respond to lock-down or change and it can also affect how things might go if you do something new with others, like, say begin to school remotely.

I love this meme about introverts and extroverts in quarantine:



Self-Awareness: MBTI

Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory (MBTI) / Keirsey Temperament Matrix

<i>Mentor</i> <u>INFJ</u> <u>Introverted iNtuition</u> "Computer" (IJ)	<i>Crusader</i> <u>INFP</u> <u>Introverted Feeling</u> "Wanderer" (IP)	<i>Dependable Producer</i> <u>ISTJ</u> <u>Introverted Sensing</u> "Computer" (IJ)	<i>Loyal Provider</i> <u>ISFJ</u> <u>Introverted Sensing</u> "Computer" (IJ)
Idealists (NF) (Relational)		Guardians (SJ) (Industrious)	
<i>Charismatic Leader</i> <u>ENFJ</u> <u>Extraverted Feeling</u> "Mountain Climber" (EJ)	<i>Playful</i> <u>ENFP</u> <u>Extraverted iNtuition</u> "Bungee Jumper" (EP)	<i>Maintain Order</i> <u>ESTJ</u> <u>Extraverted Thinking</u> "Mountain Climber" (EJ)	<i>Social Team</i> <u>ESFJ</u> <u>Extraverted Feeling</u> "Mountain Climber" (EJ)
<i>Mastermind</i> <u>INTJ</u> <u>Introverted iNtuition</u> "Computer" (IJ)	<i>Problem Solver</i> <u>INTP</u> <u>Introverted Thinking</u> "Wanderer" (IP)	<i>Troubleshooter</i> <u>ISTP</u> <u>Introverted Thinking</u> "Wanderer" (IP)	<i>Meticulous</i> <u>ISFP</u> <u>Introverted Feeling</u> "Wanderer" (IP)
Rationals (NT) (Intellectual)		Artisans (SP) (Skillful)	
<i>Visionary Leader</i> <u>ENTJ</u> <u>Extraverted Thinking</u> "Mountain Climber" (EJ)	<i>Debater</i> <u>ENTP</u> <u>Extraverted iNtuition</u> "Bungee Jumper" (EP)	<i>Crisis Manager</i> <u>ESTP</u> <u>Extraverted Sensing</u> "Bungee Jumper" (EP)	<i>Full of Life</i> <u>ESFP</u> <u>Extraverted Sensing</u> "Bungee Jumper" (EP)

Adapted from:

Myers, I.B., & Myers, P.B., (1995). *Gifts differing: Understanding personality type*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.Keirsey, D. & Bates, M., (1998). *Please understand me II*. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus NemesisDitiberio, J. K. & Hammer, A. L. (1993). *Introduction To Type In College*. Palo Alto, CA: CPP, Inc.

TEMPERAMENT

According to [Business Insider](#), 80% of Fortune 500 companies test their employees to get them into the good fit "roles" and working well within teams. Temperament has also been studied in the classroom and personality profiles of students and teachers can work well together or clash.

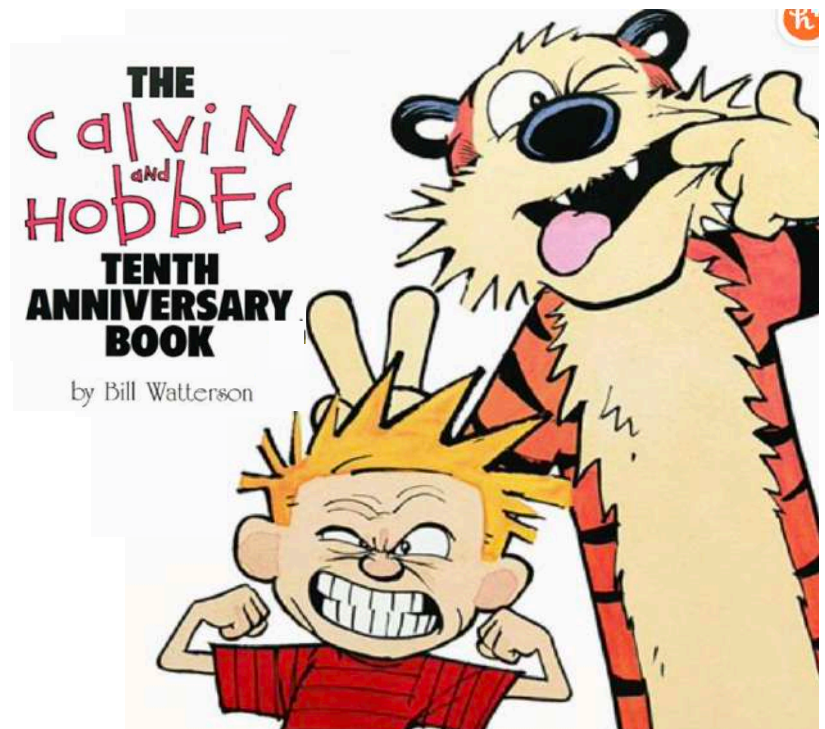
Difficult temperamental traits may include high intensity negative mood, extremes of high or low physical activity, negative responses to new situations or people, slow adaptability to change, sensory and emotional sensitivity, low task persistence, distractibility.

So many times in our clinic we would see students with similar performances on assessments, but almost complete opposite responses to challenges facing them, work assignments, and setbacks, depending on their temperament. Gifted and twice-exceptional children often have higher levels of intensity than non-gifted peers, leading to more significant responses.

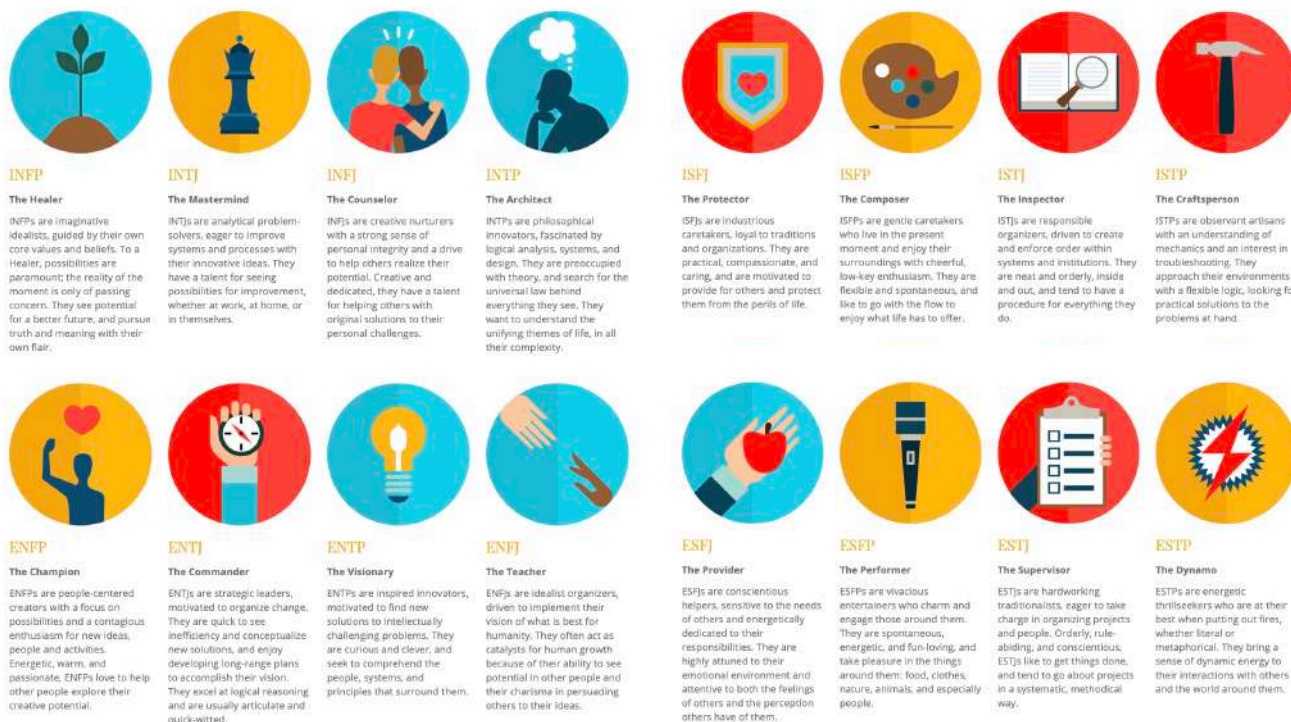
I wanted to share this because this pandemic really is shaking things up and whereas some people will take new challenges daily in stride, others may have much more difficulty. Close quarters, like families isolating, educating, and working from home, may also put very different temperaments in close contact, so new problems can arise.

There's lots of good reading about temperament. Some books we've liked included:

[David Keirse's Please Understand Me II](#)
[Barbara Probst's When the Labels Don't Fit](#)
[Raising Your Spirited Child](#)



An interesting site which explores interactions of different Myers Briggs types is [Truity](#). They also have a free personality / temperament test.



If you know your type, you may want to check out areas that describe strengths, good careers, and relationships.

If you're in a new job situation or newly schooling your kids at home, being aware of your own temperament as well as others' may help you understand why certain conflicts occur. If you're a sensitive, INFP (introverted, intuitive, feeler, perceiver), then an ESTJ (extroverted, sensor, thinker) could drive you nuts. But as the Truity site diplomatically suggests, sometimes opposites can help each other.

If you are planning to newly homeschool your student or students this fall, then you might want to check out some of the information on temperament. Anticipating students' tendencies and aversions can help guide choices about what you want them to do regarding activities, and also with who, what pace, and what sort of schedules you might pursue.

To read more about temperament and learning, visit [HERE](#).

QUILL: FREE RESOURCE FOR GRAMMAR

For some, grammar is one of those "if we ever have time" subjects or something that really has no pressing need, but for some it can be like a magical key that unlocks writing.

In our old clinic days, Brock and I would get boxes of "stuff" from students' school days. If parents never threw anything away, sometimes it told a sad tale of a student never given specific feedback on grammar. Instead, when we looked at a student's graded work through the years of middle and high school, we only saw middling or low grades, without guidance about what to do, or how to make writing better.

When scientists study artificial grammar learning in dyslexic and non-dyslexic subjects, the dyslexic students don't pick up grammar incidentally through reading - that's why it's good to teach grammar explicitly through examples.

It's also not true that grammar teaching needs to be arduous. Often if students "get" how grammar works, they just need a short period of teaching (weeks, not months), and that's it for teaching. Having a little cheat card for transitional words can be helpful when writing, but otherwise, that's it!

There are no pictures with Quill, but there are sections for assessment, sentence combination practice, and sentence writing activities that give students practice with activities like verb tenses. For teachers or tutors, there's a section where you can use their platform of interactive writing prompts and slides that advance for whole class or small group writing.

Because the exercises are browser based, students can use text-to-speech; the site does not have any integrated text-to-speech options. For students who are reading and writing independently, though, this site can be used for independent practice in grammar. Teachers, tutors, or homeschooling parents can assign specific activities.


We arrived school before the bell rang.

on in at to ← choose one

 Fill in the blank with one of the words.

Submit

A tree fell and blocked traffic.
It fell over the road.

 Revise your work. Put the *over the road* phrase right after the action word it's describing.

A tree fell and blocked traffic over the road.

Recheck Your Answer

A squid has eight arms.
It is similar to an octopus.

since ← joining word

 Good work! Here are the most popular strong answers:

1. **Since the** squid has eight arms, it is similar to an octopus.
2. **Since** a squid has eight arms, it is similar to an octopus.
3. **The** squid is similar to an octopus **since** it has eight arms.

DR. BOB BALLARD

LEGENDARY OCEAN EXPLORER

"I'm proudly dyslexic. In fact, I think that's why I'm so good at what I do..."

Dr. Robert Ballard

Scientists say that over 80% of our ocean is unmapped, unobserved, and unexplored. There are many mysteries that still exist in oceans - even though oceans cover over 70% of the earth.

For those who truly know the potential of dyslexic minds, the oceans are ideal places for dyslexic people to flourish, and there is perhaps no better example than pioneer Dr. Bob Ballard.

I recently had a chance to attend an online presentation by Bob as part of a Camp Explore program through the Westport Public Library. At the very end, I asked him a question about his dyslexia and he gave a wonderful reply. You can watch the entire presentation through crowdcast [HERE](#) (from July 22nd).

If you look at all the discoveries that Bob made over the past decades, the importance and breadth are truly breath-taking.

Some people may know Bob best from his discovery of the Titanic, but Bob also profoundly impacted the fields of geology, deep-sea archeology, exploratory ocean technology, and maritime history with his discovery of hydrothermal vents and the bizarre life forms surrounding them, discoveries of The Bismarck, PT 109, and ancient ships of the Mediterranean.

"Us dyslexics are extremely visual creatures, and we're really, really good underwater."

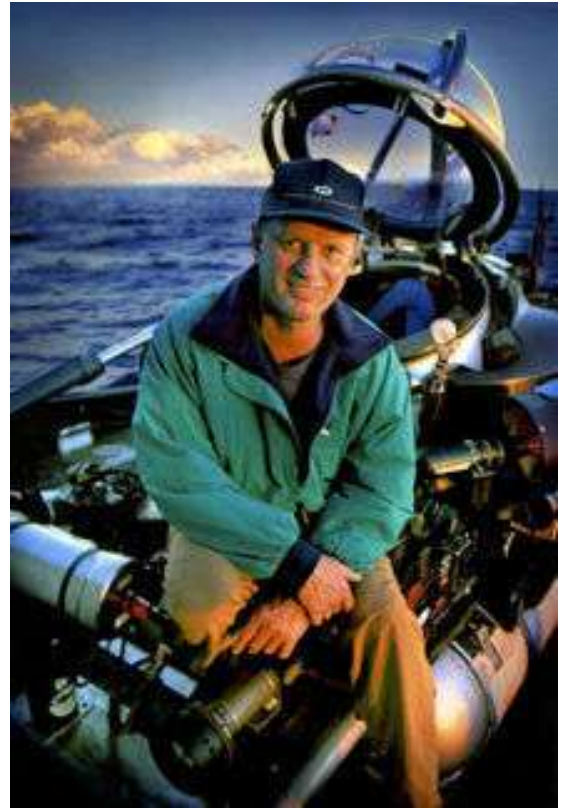


Photo reference [HERE](#).



Bob in a National Geographic program, Raise the Titanic

INSPIRATION



View of an "octopus garden" from Nautilus Live



Some video highlights from Nautilus Expedition

“Wait a minute. What is that...I think there’s shimmering water right over here to the left, coming out right off the top.”

It was in 1977 when Bob noticed a subtle shimmering quality in one of his deep sea dives and that led to his discovery of hydrothermal vents. He would draw close to one, insert a thermometer and then see that it melted. He also retreated in his vehicle as he realized his porthole was made of the same material!



Bizarre undersea creature found near a hydrothermal vent.

Bob's discovery would lead to so many other discoveries, like the explosion of life near hydrothermal vents, creatures that hitherto were not known to exist, chemosynthesis inside a clam which could explain how life could be sustained so far from the ocean's surface and sunlight. But all of Bob's life has been a life of discovery. When asked to create a blueprint for what the future should look like in the 1980's he invisioned submarine explorations as "tele-presence" so as not to waste hours each day in journey down and back from a deep sea site. Over the next decades, he supervised the design of robotic vehicles that could do just that and maximize exploration time at the bottom of the sea. Bob exemplifies all the MIND strengths - material and spatial reasoning, interconnected thinking, narrative reasoning, and dynamic reasoning.

There are many more stories to tell about Bob, but you'll have to watch some of his talks yourself - it includes how he was able to discover the Titanic in just 12 days although so many previous 60 day explorations had failed. Bob's work involves not only seeing what others do not see, but connecting dots, generating multiple scenarios (like finding the ruins of ancient ships by guessing that sailors would drink some of their cargo and dump the bottles overboard...leaving a debris trail), or choosing to start a search where you know something definitely isn't. His explorations and hunches remind me of Jack Horner. So, check out one of Bob's documentaries - they are like master classes in the Dyslexic Advantage!

FRACTIONS and WORD PROBLEMS

"Fractions, more than any other topic in fundamental mathematics, can strike fear into students and teachers alike. Complex and demanding, the topic involves a new notation and long list of rules, posing challenges that can frustrate and confuse students and leave teachers struggling to help. It is no coincidence that fractions are also the area in fundamental mathematics most plagued with obstacles in the language and symbolism."

- Concepcion Molina, The Problem with Math is English

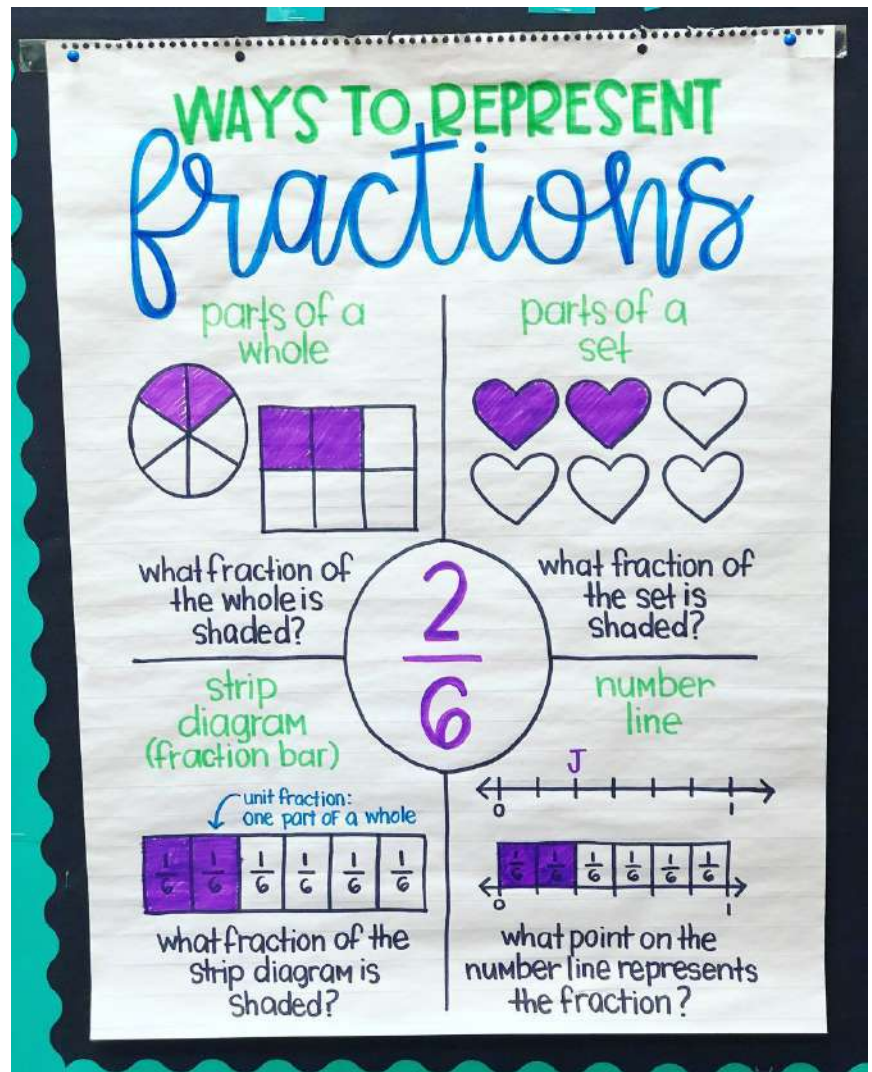
Especially when teaching dyslexic students, it is important that definitions and concepts are presented clearly and unambiguously... in other words, whenever possible, try not to teach something that a student will eventually have to unlearn. Teaching students that fractions are a piece of pie is one such common mistake. Students who learn that fractions are only parts of wholes will have a lot harder time learning fractions as relationships (like proportions, ratios, or slopes) than if a proper definition were given at the beginning .

It's kind of like how defining animals as "cats and dogs" can baffle students when you tell them that insects are also animals.

If we teach that the fraction $\frac{3}{5}$ represents a relationship between 3 and 5, then there will be no confusion if the student encounters 3 pieces out of 5 pieces of pie, the act of division (3 divided by 5), a ratio (3 boys to 5 girls), slope (a gain of 3 inches every 5 months) or probability of getting a red marble (3 out of 5 chances). Visual examples can support the various meanings of "fraction" at the beginning.

Visual of some representations of fractions. At least this supports the idea of relationships and not parts of a whole only.

Reference [HERE](#).



How would you write a word problem for the $\frac{4}{5} - \frac{1}{2}$ involving pizza?

Write a word problem for $\frac{5}{6} - \frac{1}{3}$ involving iced tea.

In a research study by Dixon et al. from the University of Central Florida, almost all pre-service teachers struggled with the problem. Even when confronted with their wrong answers, they had trouble identifying where they had gone wrong.

Look at examples of incorrectly written word problems on the next page.

Table 3: Sample of Incorrect Responses for fraction subtraction during interview

Expression	Word Problem
$4/5 - 1/2$	Sammie had $5/4$ of a pizza. She got really hungry and ate $1/2$ of that pizza. How much pizza was <i>left</i> ?
$5/6 - 1/3$	Amy loves iced tea and had $5/6$ of a gallon. She pored a large glass and ended up drinking $1/3$ of her iced tea. How much iced tea was <i>left</i> ?
$4/5 - 1/2$	Erick had $4/5$ of a pizza left, he then ate $1/2$ of the pizza. How much pizza does he have <i>left</i> ?
$5/6 - 1/3$	Erick was thirsty. He had $5/6$ gallons of iced tea in the refrigerator but Gary drank $1/3$. How much is there <i>left</i> for Erick to drink?
$4/5 - 1/2$	Mark had $4/5$ of a pizza and he gave $1/2$ of it to Karen. How much pizza does he have <i>left</i> ?
$5/6 - 1/3$	Candy had 3 gallons of iced tea. She drank some and now she has $5/6$ of the 3 gallons left. If she drinks $1/3$ more, how much will she have <i>left</i> ?
$4/5 - 1/2$	Sean had $4/5$ of a pizza leftover from yesterday. He a half of his left over for lunch today. How much pizza is <i>left</i> for the dog?
$5/6 - 1/3$	Sean has $5/6$ of a gallon of iced tea in the fridge. I drank a third of the tea. How many gallons of tea is <i>left</i> for Sean?

Here are examples of correct answers:

Table 2: Correct Responses for fraction subtraction during interview

Expression	Word Problem
$4/5 - 1/2$	Bob ate $4/5$ of a large pepperoni pizza. Billy ate $1/2$ of a large mushroom pizza. How much more pizza did Bob eat than Billy?
$5/6 - 1/3$	Reenee bought two gallons of flavored ice tea. One gallon was peach flavored. The second gallon was green tea flavored. Reenee drank $5/6$ of the gallon of peach flavored ice tea. Her husband Scott drank $1/3$ of the gallon of green tea flavored ice tea. How much more ice tea did Reenee drink than Scott?





The common problem that arose was that the unit wholes were ambiguous. In the pizza problem, the mathematical problem as written must indicate that $\frac{4}{5}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ were referring to the same whole...In the incorrect word problems, pre-service teachers tended to define $\frac{1}{2}$ relative to the leftover pizza or $\frac{4}{5}$.

In a study by [McAllister and Beaver](#), other tests of pre-service teachers showed some other common problems:

"One reason for the greater difficulty in writing story problems involving fractions less than one than for mixed numeral problems seems to be related to the setting in which a fraction less than one is used. For example, fractions less than one tend to be used in the context of a relative amount of a whole ($\frac{1}{2}$ of a cookie) whereas the mixed numerals are used more frequently in the context of a numerical amount of wholes ($4\frac{1}{2}$ cookies). The students were more likely to confuse the meaning or change the whole in the relative reference. Unit errors also occurred less frequently when students used units of measurement in their problem such as "cups" or "miles" instead of units composed of objects such as "pies" or "apples," which can be referred to either in a relative setting ($\frac{1}{2}$ of a pie) or an absolute setting (three pieces of pie)."

Also, errors in multiplication and division of fractions were attributed to an over-emphasis of the part:whole meaning of fractions and over-conceptualization of multiplication as repeated addition, with the neglect (or relative neglect) of examples showing other examples such as shrinking scaling, and enlarging.

Critique was heavy indeed! "Contextual analysis suggests that the students are aware of too few contexts in which to place these problems and do not have sufficient understanding of the contexts of which they are aware." Many dyslexic students are especially susceptible to ambiguities in math problems. Allowing students to see both correct and ambiguously worded problems can help them avoid similar mistakes in the future.

IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE THIS AT LEAST ONCE, DO IT...

IMMERSION READING

There are so many options for listening and reading with listening, these days, so that it's easy to not get around to what's supposed to be the creme-de-la-creme experience of immersive reading.

True immersive reading involves a professional reader for the audiobook part, and optimized electronic text which highlights each word as its read, or as scientist Matt Schneps, does, [read a little ahead](#) of the word being spoken.

I was reminded of this when Amanda Warren, a dyslexia mom, software developer, and recent dyslexia teacher diplomate [shared](#) her shock at her son suddenly wanting to share the latest book that he was reading:

"After some research, I discovered that this referred to a technique called immersion reading where the text in a Kindle eBook is highlighted as the professionally narrated companion Audiobook plays. Thinking I had nothing to lose, I downloaded the Kindle version of David Walliams' *Demon Dentist* along with the associated Audiobook to my iPad, gave my son some headphones and asked him to read a chapter as we drove down to the south coast to see family. Within a few minutes he started giggling... "Mum this book is hilarious!" What! Hang on! A positive comment from reading a book, this has never happened before! Ten minutes later, "Mum this dentist is so mean to the children, you'll never believe what she does." I was shocked, not only was he understanding what he was reading but he was enjoying it! For the next hour he continued to read, without any prompting, only pausing occasionally to tell us more amusing extracts.

Two weeks later, all 441 pages had been read. I asked my son why it was so much easier to read like this and he explained that with the sound added, he could imagine the characters and create pictures of the story, a skill that for him is missing when viewing text alone. The audio also removed the burden of constantly

performing the complex process of matching written characters to known words and from words to voice output, translations that for someone with very slow processing are extremely draining.

After witnessing this success, I considered what our next steps were. For a number of years, our local school has participated in the Accelerated Reader (AR) program, intended to motivate children to read and enabling teachers to identify children who may need literacy intervention. For some parents it can be an exciting opportunity to see their children become word “millionaires,” for others, like me, it highlights even more starkly how far behind your child is from his peers who are natural readers...every physical book seemed “effortful” for my son to read, and the more I pushed him to read, the more he rebelled. Now in Year 8 and sitting at the bottom of the class in terms of AR points, I could see his lack of reading was limiting his vocabulary and significantly affecting his ability to access many areas of the curriculum.

I decided it was time to download teenage level books and use immersion technology to get him reading again. We made a deal, if he read 300,000 words before his next birthday we would buy him a mobile phone. This gave him seven months and equated to about eight books of around 300 pages each. I then downloaded ‘The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’ (age range 14+) and we agreed on a schedule of twenty minutes reading per day. Each evening we’d talk about the chapter he had read and use Post-its to create a summary of the characters and the plot so far. Two weeks later the book was finished and he took the AR quiz. Passed! 46797 words read! But most importantly, he’d told me how much he was enjoying the book and some evenings had even asked to read for longer! One month later and he has read and quizzed on “The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe” and is half way through “The Boy at the Back of the Class.” Books he could never have read in solely written form. He has even pointed out discrepancies between the audio commentary and the eBook indicating he is scanning the text and not solely listening to the story.

Immersion reading requires both the audio and eBook to be purchased and downloaded to a suitable device. Not all titles support immersion reading, the easiest way to check this is to select the Kindle Edition and see whether an option to “Add Audible narration” appears as shown in the screenshot below...”

Whispersync and Immersion Reading is for physical Kindle devices or tablets or phones with the free Kindle App.

READING

For children who are still struggling with decoding, discovering Whispersync books can be liberating. Students who may struggle with sustained listening only or print reading only, may suddenly find it easy to do both at once. If their eyes are tired, they can listen; if their listening is tiring, then visual reading can take over.

Although electronic voices are getting better, none are perfect. Younger readers (and some adults) are more easily distracted by or derailed by awkward voice stresses or prosody.



We've known many students over the years who needed Whispersync books at first, then might have gravitated to ebook readers like **Voice Dream**.

The reason why it's a good idea to try it if you haven't is that it can be huge boost to a student (or adult for that matter) that reading is 'easy.' It rewards the progress they've made and also lets them have much more independence in their reading.

Also, as Amanda's son so beautifully articulated, it may free them up to visualize the characters and create pictures for the story - and truly fall in love with reading. Kudos to mom too for picking humorous books that kept the reader wanting to keep reading.

Now, the professional readers of audiobooks can vary a great deal, so let your student experiment with different professional readers, perhaps through the [Libby App](#) from the public library.

Audiobooks can be adjusted for speed and many dyslexics can get really good at speed listening. According to Audible, only 5% of listeners try increasing their speed - and many level out at about 1.25x. Interestingly, many dyslexic listeners we know can listen at 2-3x or higher speeds, much faster than non-dyslexic readers.

Read more about others' experiencing speeding up listening [HERE](#).



In the best of all possible worlds, the time of high school should be a time for finding interests, part-time work experiences, and preparation for higher education, if that's what the immediate future goals are.

Now things are tossed up into uncertainty, families, colleges, and businesses are under stress, and nothing is a sure thing. Nonetheless, there are some things that you can plan on, as long as you consider that 2020-2021 could have unexpected surprises of its own.

1. Do No Harm. Maintain reading and writing skills and try your best to find a low stress way to keep up in math.

2. Do Not Worry. Try your best not to worry. Everyone is in the same boat. Look at the upside of many tests and requirements being waived. Because of the normal timing of development for dyslexic people, any delay in entering college may be easier than starting immediately after high school

3. Optimize School for Your Student. If your student will be attending school, then request accommodations such as reduced quantity of homework if necessary. The pandemic has been causing a great deal of disruption and stress, and schools should be sensitive to such requests.

It is not an unreasonable idea to choose homeschooling for part or all of the upcoming school year. We've known many students who did this for a variety of reasons, and they were successful in their later college pursuits. Some students chose to homeschool a year or more in high school, because it gave them an opportunity to have more free time and pursue personal interests, as well as prepare for tests that could help them earn scholarships or admission to more select schools.



The most critical thing that dyslexic students do not have in school is time. If you are able to squeeze more time for your student in the 2020-2021 school year, it will likely be only positive.

A student who surprised us by choosing to take his senior year off, said he could study for AP exams or keep up with AP classes assigned work, but not both.

With some trepidation, his parents allowed him to make that choice; choosing to homeschool but also prep for AP exams meant he also had more free time for creative pursuits (like playing in a band). The net result was that he got accepted to his first choice college, scored some AP course credit after doing well on his exams, and also had time for his musical interests. He also ended up getting a near full-ride scholarship to his first choice college.

High school in particular is not well set up for dyslexic students. They are expected to have full course loads, prepare for college entrance exams, and still have a life that includes getting together with friends, working, and developing talents.

Fewer Classes, College Credit through Courses or Test-Taking

Depending on the student, taking fewer classes with more college credit can be a winning combination for dyslexic high school students, pandemic or not. Aside from science and math, there is little essential content in high school that is absolutely needed for college work...exceptions being in areas that a student particularly wants for a college concentration.

For instance, our young illustrator didn't absolutely have to have in-depth knowledge of European History or Government. We personally wanted him to know about the founding of America, the Civil War, World Wars, and history of totalitarians in the 20th century, but we didn't require him to test out or write all the papers about this that being enrolled full-time in a public or private high school may have required. There's a lot of time that can be spared students if the

focus is on learning for learning sake, and assignments are strategically reduced.

I think, more often than not, dyslexic students have higher than average conceptual ability, so it's not difficult to work at higher levels, if the written demands are not excessive. If a high school student tries something that they can't keep up with, they can drop the class and choose not to include that class on their homeschool transcript.

The benefits of working 'ahead' with college material are several-fold: confidence at recognizing their advanced thinking abilities, a strong high school transcript showing that they can succeed at college work, and credits that can allow them to place out of introductory college classes (these are often the hardest for dyslexic students to succeed in for a variety of reasons) when the time comes. Also, if you weren't aware, high school students who take college classes by convention have their letter grades lifted 1 level because the work is "advanced." That means on a transcript, a C in a college class as a high school student, gets added to a transcript as a B, and B in a class, gets added as an A, and so on. A scores become A+'s, accounting for why high school students can have GPAs higher than 4.0.

It may also be helpful to know that colleges won't necessarily accept a particular college credit...they will only do so if there is a similar for-credit course in their college or university. So Introductory Psychology is probably a safe bet, but some unusual or specific topic course, isn't. That mainly matters if you're looking for credits that will allow you to graduate sooner (and with less debt). By the time our son entered college, he had 1 year of credit. That allowed him to take fewer classes at one time and graduate at about the same time as student who went straight through.

Even if your student is a high school part-remote, part-in class student, most schools would allow students to take advanced classes. What many will discover is that these classes aren't above their conceptual level, and if they are careful about picking their classes, the work demands are also not higher than high school. College credit options include taking community or other college classes (in-person or remote), [AP tests](#), [CLEP tests](#), or [ACE credits](#). My students liked doing 1-2 college classes at a time, without the need to juggle many subjects at once!



Lost Liners with Robert Ballard - Titanic, Lusitania, Empress of Ireland

"Us dyslexics are extremely visual creatures, and we're really, really good underwater..."

- Dr. Bob Ballard

