

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER

A photograph of two young girls sitting on stone steps in front of a large, dark stone wall. The girl on the left is wearing a white dress and the girl on the right is wearing a yellow dress. They are both looking towards the right. The wall is made of large, dark, irregular stones.

AMERICA'S STONE HENGE

Photo

HARVEY FITE'S OPUS 40

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Fernette Eide MD, Editor



Dear Friends,

Happy Thanksgiving to all! A shout of support to all of the amazing people who make up this community. Share an issue and support us by buying or gifting a Premium subscription. We need your help to spread the message and resources of Dyslexic Advantage to the world. Check if your company will match your donation! :)

Become a **Premium Subscriber** and discover the most comprehensive resource on dyslexia in the world. You can sign up for an individual subscription or gift a school with institutional subscription. Don't forget there is a **Homeschooler's** course for parents and for teachers, a clock hour course that provides professional development credits (**Dyslexia for Teachers**). For a 50% off coupon on a signed **Dyslexic Advantage Hardcover** from our store, use the coupon **BOOK50** before Dec 31st.

The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is \$39.99 and available for children and adults 7-70 years old. iPad, iPhone, Android, and Kindle Fire.



The app may be used to identify and qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books.

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 Williams 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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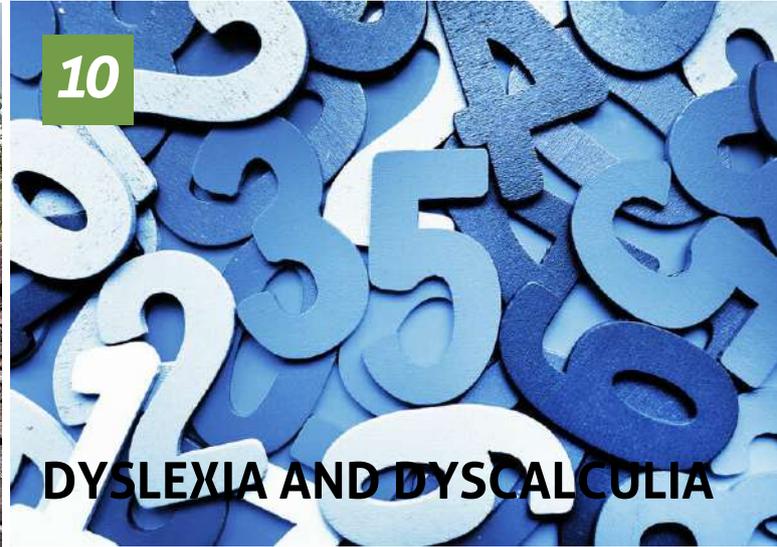
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NO SMALL PROJECT



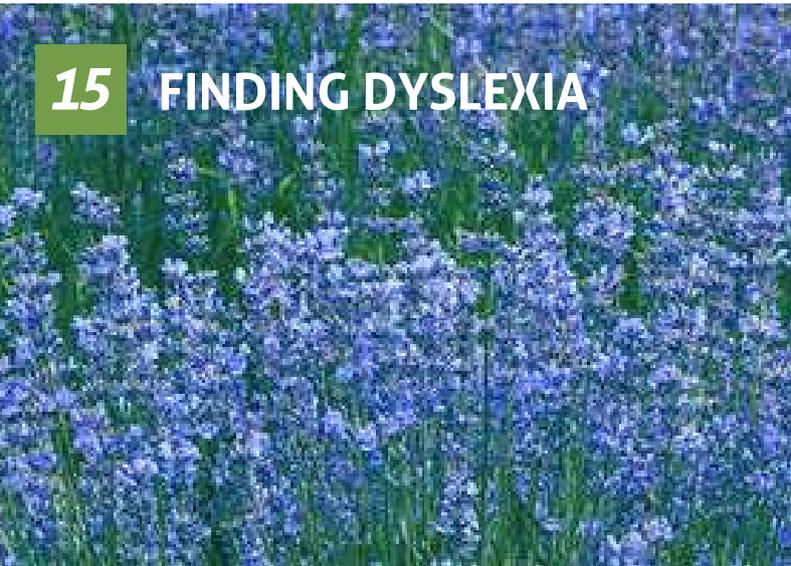
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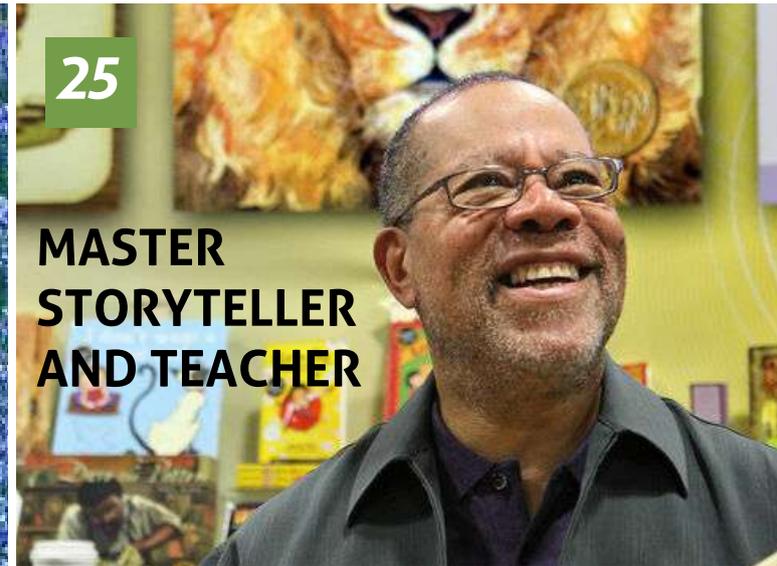
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NO SMALL PROJECT: HARVEY FITE'S OPUS 40

When I heard that what's been called America's Stonehenge, [Opus 40](#), was hand-built by a dyslexic artist, I wasn't really surprised. A lot of dyslexics are grand slam-type creators.

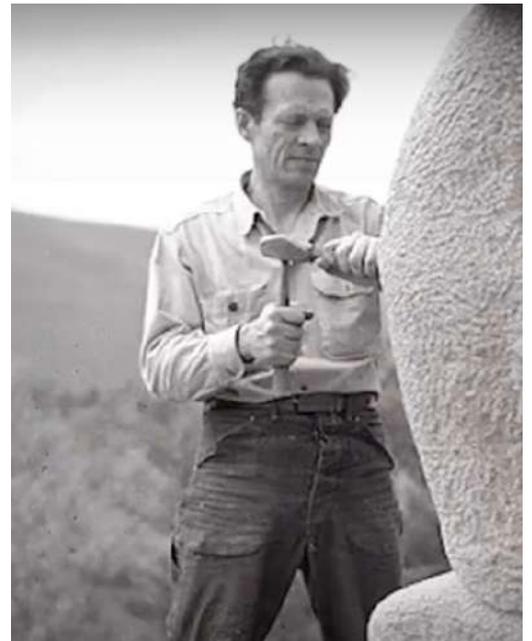
Harvey Fite spent half his life creating the Opus 40 Sculpture Park. He hand cut and place all the stones in his sculptural landscape. Architectural Digest called it one of "the most beguiling works of art on the entire continent, while The Art Newspaper called it "a testament to the wondrous and crazy things humans can create."

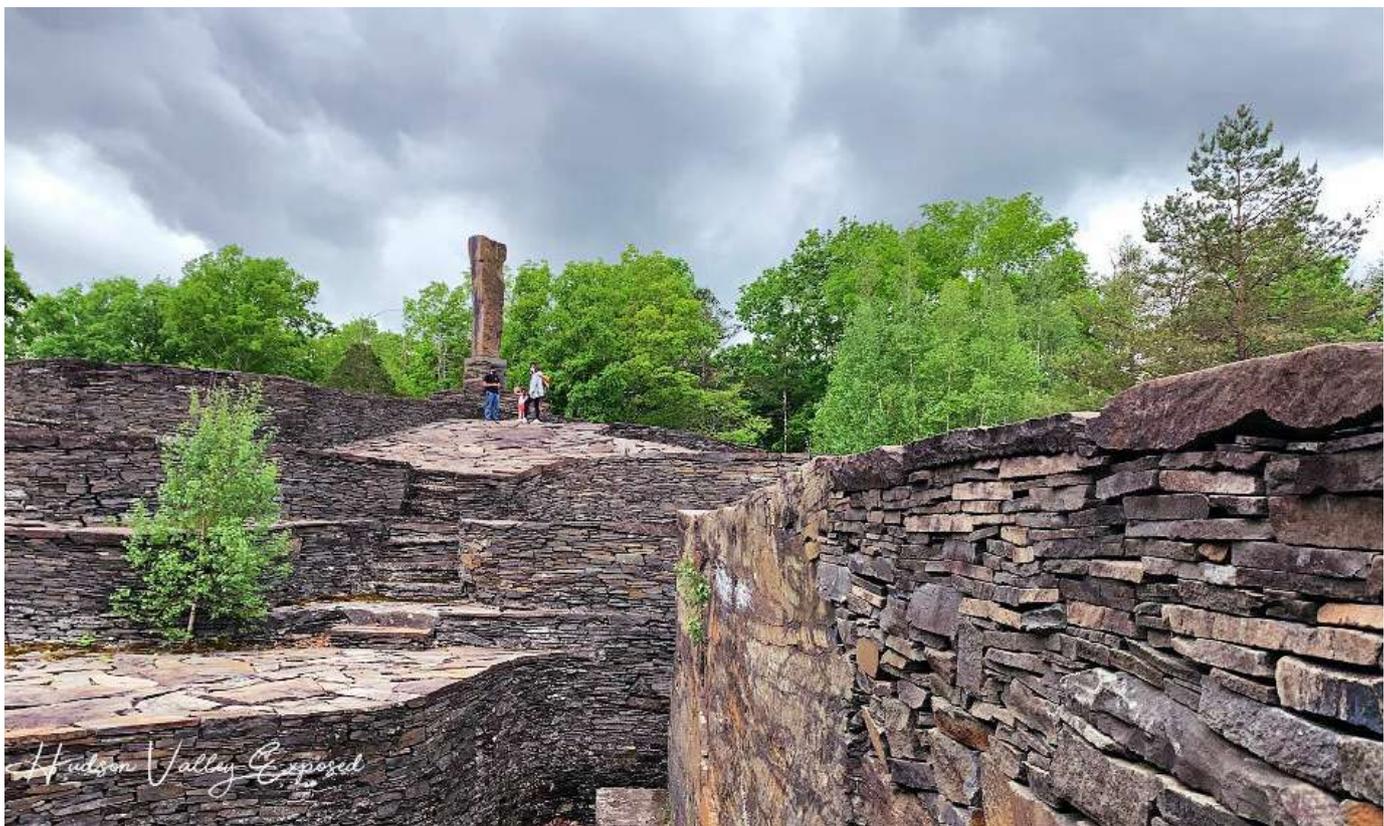
Harvey had a non-linear path to his goal.

His father was a carpenter and his family was frequently strained financially. He intended to become a lawyer, but dropped out, briefly tried divinity school, then found himself in the Woodstock area having joined a theater group. While waiting backstage, he picked up a wooden spool and began carving.

He became so interested in carving, he left theater and began living in the barn of one of his former professors at Bard College. He was ultimately asked to create a Fine Arts department at the college, then affiliated with Columbia University. He then traveled to Italy to study stone carving.

In 1938, in search of stone for his sculptures and a place to live, he bought twelve acres for \$376.25 and began shaping the land and the stones themselves.





See more beautiful pictures of Opus 40 [HERE](#) and [Hudson Valley Explored](#)





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MAKERS

In 1939, Harvey got invited to travel to Honduras to do restoration work on Mayan sculptures. He became fascinated by how the Mayans used stone masonry to develop structures with plazas, stairs, and terraces and how they worked with the natural topography of the landscape. The "dry key" approach used large key stones to draw smaller surrounding stones to them so that stable structures could be built without mortar or cement.

His experiences led Harvey to use similar principles in Opus 40. He also emulated the Mayan tradition of making structures fit around natural features rather than the other way around. As a result, his fitted bluestones curve around quarry springs, trees, and natural shapes.

The striking monolith ([cover](#)) that takes its place presented new challenges that Harvey had to solve...like figuring out how to position the 9 ton rock into place. Harvey ended up choosing an ancient Egyptian approach using wood blocks and a truck, winch, and wire to raise the stone into its final position.

Harvey's dyslexia story is being pieced together by his stepson Tad Richards who along with his wife Pat have been stewards of Opus 40 as well as putting together Harvey's memoirs. I had the chance to talk with Tad and he shared the following with me about Harvey's dyslexia...





"Harvey can't read, but he knows everything..."

- from Ralph Moseley, biographer of Harvey Fite,
based on interviews of Fite's friends.

Although Tad Richards grew up in Harvey's household as his stepson, he never knew about Harvey's dyslexia until he began reading his memoirs. He knew his mother read to his father aloud in the evenings, he "assumed that it was a loving companionable way to spend an evening (which indeed it was)," but he was to learn that reading difficulties dogged Harvey throughout his life: "Harvey could not learn to read. Letters on a page made no sense to him. He sometimes memorized an entire lesson, getting his mother or brother to read it to him, or poring over it for hours, absorbing one letter at a time, painstakingly turning them into words." As many in this community would be familiar with, Harvey was taken to a succession of eye doctors, had to listen to a series of inaccurate pronouncements ("it's an illusion"), and criticized for poor work because his dyslexia had never been formally identified. Harvey may not have had the educational successes he had if he hadn't been able to memorize as well as he could, get help from friends who helped summarize readings, or impress people on an individual basis with his knowledge and his ideas. In spite of it all, Harvey survived, thrived, and created his magnificent work of Opus 40.

Harvey might love to see what his hand-built monument has grown to today. In 1980, Richie Havens, a rock great known for his "Freedom" performance at Woodstock gave the first large public concert at Opus 40. Since that time, there have been many performances by legendary greats such as Sonny Rollins or Orleans. Jazz great Sonny Rollins said that Opus 40 embodies his Saxophone Colossus.

After Harvey and his wife passed, Tad Richards and his wife took over Opus 40's stewardship, forming a non-profit charity to support it and more recently having it recognized on the National Historic Register. The National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological treasures. Kudos to Harvey and his family for creating his meeting place for generations to come.

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DYSLEXIA AND DYSCALCULIA

How often do individuals with dyslexia also have dyscalculia, a specific disability in math? As many as **60% of of dyslexic students** may also be dyscalculic, but math difficulties are rarely tested for in schools, so specific needs for a particular student are rarely recognized or addressed.

It does not help that like dyslexia itself, dyscalculia can also present in different ways among dyslexic individuals.

DYSLEXICS USE DIFFERENT BRAIN AREAS WHILE PERFORMING MATH PROBLEMS

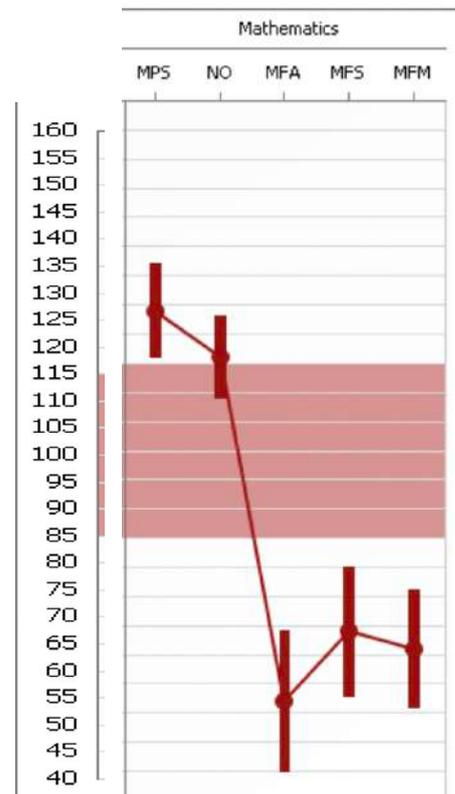
It was only in 2014 when **neuroscientists found** that dyslexic students doing simple math problems (addition and subtraction) use different brain areas to solve answers...in particular right parietal regions instead of left perisylvian areas which non-dyslexics use.

In our practice, when we performed comprehensive testing, we used The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test or WIAT to look at discrepancies that might exist between different abilities and achievements.

Although this high school student had a full scale IQ in the top 99th percentile, her basic math facts fluency (ability recall simple math facts - like $8 + 4$) was at the 1st percentile, although her math problem solving ability was at the 93rd percentile.

The subtest scores at right abbreviations:

MPS: Math Problem Solving, NO: Numerical Operations (untimed), MFA: Math Fluency Addition, MFS: Math Fluency Subtraction, MFM: Math Fluency Multiplication. The colored band refers to the "average" range.



Interestingly, Dr. Rachel Lambert of the University of California Santa Barbara has been researching differences in math among diverse individuals, including dyslexic mathematicians. What is so helpful about her approach is her interest in studying both strengths as well as challenges.

Strengths that dyslexic mathematicians noted related to visual thinking and a search for symmetries and mirror relationships, but for the focus of this article, another interesting aspect of her study, was how their career mathematicians had some difficulty with basic math facts fluency.

One mathematician said, "I couldn't memorize facts in math. So I paid attention in class, and I had good enough teachers that they derived everything..." That statement was interesting for me to hear, because we had heard it so often before. Another mathematician recalled that their mother taught the multiplications tables through a smaller set of memorized facts - specifically the squares, then extrapolating to build other math relationships through the distributive property of known facts. Several of the mathematicians also noted the difficulty of retrieving math facts when they were also under time pressure.

Rachel's conclusions:

"Offer opportunities for visual thinkers to learn new concepts through visual thinking. Not only provide multiple modalities for learning mathematics, but explicitly connect different kinds of representations. For example, one participant explained how their own mathematics teaching relies on visuals, but also with explicit connections to algebraic representations for those who preferred to think that way.

2. Remove the focus on memorization and procedural learning for students with dyslexia...

When mathematics focuses on speed and memorization "without structure," the potential of those with dyslexia will not be realized in our schools."

DYSLEXIA AND MATH

CALCULATOR ACCOMMODATIONS IN MATH

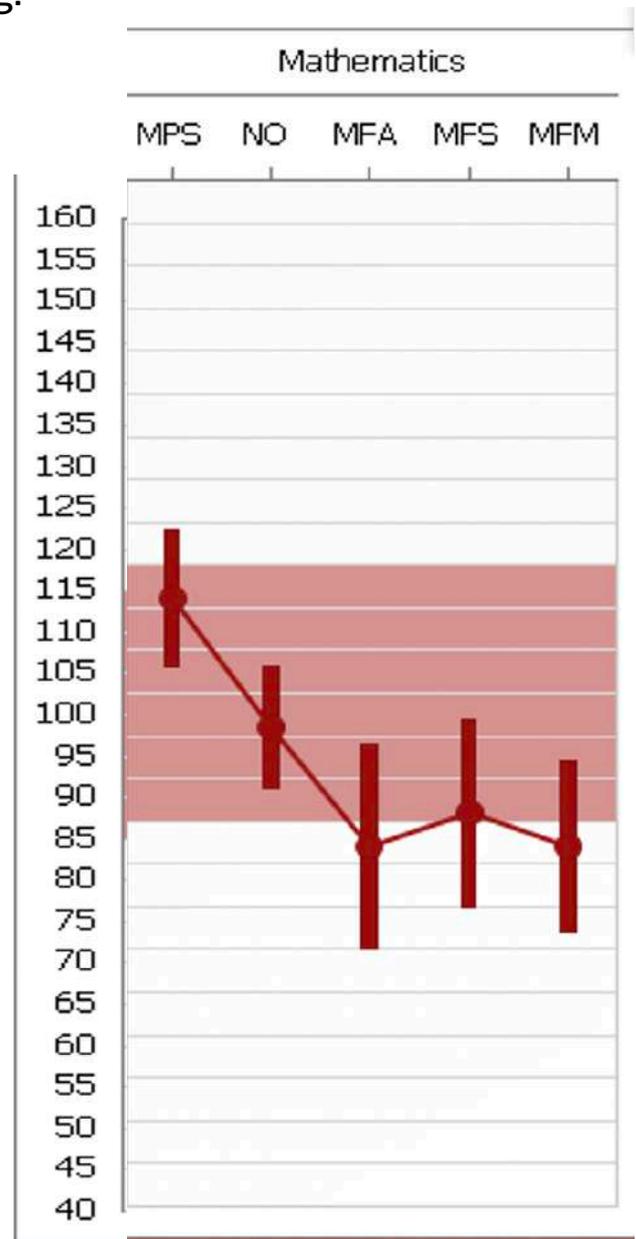
In the context of what is known about neurobiological differences in math facts retrieval for dyslexic vs. non-dyslexic individuals, calculator accommodations should be a standard practice when the speed of math facts retrieval interferes with math problem solving.

Sometimes the discrepancies between math problem solving and basic math facts fluency is not as large as shown in the preceding example, but the discrepancy nevertheless was significant on a practical level that as a 3rd grader, his teachers were in discussion with his parents that he should be held back. His parents were exasperated at the situation because they thought their son was actually "good in math."

With a nonverbal intelligence score at the 99th percentile and basic math facts fluency score at the 10th percentile, we successfully argued for calculator accommodations for this student and by the time this student was entering middle school, he had successfully skipped two grades in math with full calculator accommodations. Today he is graduating with a computer sciences degree and has won several engineering awards.

These cases are somewhat dramatic, but

other [research studies](#) support wider use of calculators among dyslexic students. Reviews of calculator use among students with "learning disabilities" or low math performing students showed that in general, calculators did not interfere with math learning, but in fact overall students' improved math operational and problem solving skills.



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DYSLEXIA AND MATH

From the paper:

"The operational skills of these students improved as a result of calculator use during instruction. Students received the most benefit when calculators had a pedagogical role in the classroom and were not just available for drill and practice or checking work. In order to have a positive influence on students' operational skills, the findings suggest that calculator use during instruction should be long term (i.e., 9 or more weeks). With respect to problem solving, the skills of precollege students were not hindered by the inclusion of calculators in mathematics instruction. Based on a limited number of studies, the skills necessary to select the appropriate problem-solving strategies may improve as a result of calculator use..."

Research also showed that students' attitudes about math improved (what a surprise!).

Because most dyslexic students are prone to having difficulty with automatization, math facts retrieval, and working memory overload, the use of calculators in regular use while learning new concepts and approaches to solving problems allows students to get farther in grasping the big picture of math concepts and algorithms.

Problems arise when basic math facts retrieval becomes the gatekeeper for higher math - the need even more urgent as schools feel pressure to have students make up for lost math learning because of the COVID pandemic.

FEWER PROBLEMS, MORE UNDERSTANDING, AND A CALCULATOR

Dyslexic students typically need to be assigned fewer homework problems, but be allowed to take as much time as they need to understand why certain practices of math problem solving make sense, and let them use a calculator for routine calculations (and graphing work in higher math) while they are working to understand why certain ways of solving a problem are correct.

For those who would like to understand more about this subject and math for dyslexic students in general, I will go into more depth about this for our next Premium issue.

FINDING DYSLEXIA: DON'T DELAY



"When I first heard that I had dyslexia, I was overwhelmed by emotions; I was angry, sad, and very confused. With time, I began to see my diagnosis as a self-affirmation. I had been correct in suspecting that I had a problem with learning, when many of the adults around me said that the only issue was my anxiety. I had adapted to school, devising personal coping strategies and learning techniques."

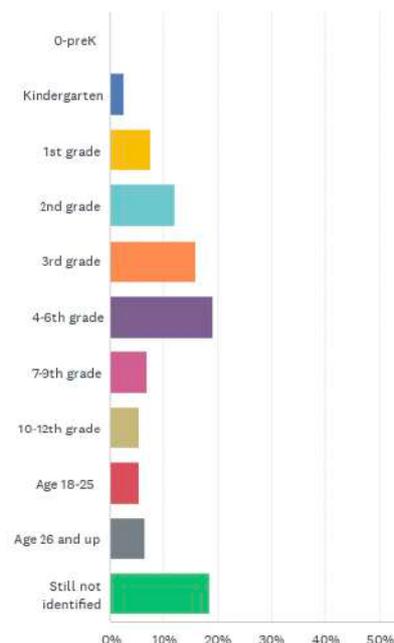
- Dr. Blair Kenney, family psychologist

When we conducted a survey of this community about the timing of their assessment for dyslexia, a number of striking observations were seen:

MOST DYSLEXIA IDENTIFICATION IS LATE

Although there are current efforts to identify early (perhaps too early, for example before kindergarten), dyslexia identification is typically quite LATE.

Elementary school is still the most common time when dyslexia is formally identified (58%), with middle school made up only 7% of the total having dyslexia formally identified then. Why is



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

DYSLEXIA

dyslexia identification so low in the middle school years? It might be that schools are less focused on literacy per se in the middle years. Being able to read fluently may be assumed, although almost half of the students known to be dyslexic haven't been assessed yet. What this should say to parents, tutors, or teachers of middle grade students with dyslexia is that they should be alert to the possibility that their student's school problems could be due to unrecognized dyslexia.

Small increases in identification seem to take place in high school and college - why? One reason may be the need to have accommodations in place for college entrance exams and college. The reading and writing demands increase dramatically in college (and financial aid often requires a full course load) so some students may find that getting their degree is impossible unless that have dyslexia formally identified and assistive technology and extra time on tests are granted as accommodations.

DELAY IN IDENTIFICATION

65% of individuals surveyed in our community (n = 188) said that formal diagnosis was delayed by at least 1 year. 22% said the delay in identification has been more than 3 years, and 23% have still not received adequate testing.

Reasons for delays varied, but the most common answers were not knowing where to look or how to find answers to their student's difficulties, others said that they were told by others to "wait" to see if testing was necessary. 1 in 6 asked to have their student tested at school, but the school refused.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY IN DYSLEXIA IDENTIFICATION

Fell 2 years behind in reading	28.79%	38
Fell 3 or more years behind in reading	17.42%	23
Fell significantly behind in all subjects	37.88%	50
Lost opportunities to remain in or enter accelerated/gifted programs	23.48%	31
Grade retention (held back at least one year in school)	14.39%	19

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The priorities of the IDEA are to:

- Ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services.
- Ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected.
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DYSLEXIA

The most common academic consequences of delayed dyslexia identification was students falling behind in all subjects. Dyslexia doesn't just have consequences for English class; it has implications for EVERY school subject.

There are good intentions with early dyslexia identification (for instance in pre-K or kindergarten), there is a tremendous societal harm with focusing all the funding for dyslexia on early ages. It is a good idea to educate early elementary teachers and start students on a strong literacy footing, but it is important to face the truth that current dyslexia identification policies result in more dyslexic students missed than identified, and these individuals deserve not to be passed over.

Middle school and high school students who go unrecognized fail to receive appropriate supports and intervention, to get counseled to avoid higher education, and to receive accommodations for classroom or college entrance exams. Dyslexic students who never were formally identified get passed over for scholarships, may fail to meet GPA requirements for athletic teams, and then may fail to get their degrees because course work is not accessible and they cannot use assistive technology to show their work. In trade occupations, a failure to be formally identified may cause trouble on licensing exams taken without appropriate accommodations, or even promotions to supervisor positions if appropriate supports aren't in place. Unrecognized dyslexia can also give individuals unfair hurdles at the hiring, project, and performance review levels.

With the recent passage of dyslexia laws in many states, there have also been rebranding of existing reading tools as measuring skills likely to be impacted by dyslexia, but many (some tools are as brief as 1 minute to administer) are not reliable as dyslexia screeners because the tests are too limited in their scope. This does not mean they are not providing valuable information; it means that they aren't reliably identifying people who are dyslexic - the tests are often narrowly applied - for instance to direct one's level in an established reading software.

BENEFITS OF TRUE DYSLEXIA SCREENING AND COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

The benefits of true dyslexia screening and comprehensive testing is that ideally test results will provide recommendations and suggest accommodations that can be used for years in school or in the workplace.

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DYSLEXIA

The [Neurolearning Dyslexia Screening Test](#) (Neurolearning is a social purpose corporation partner to Dyslexic Advantage) and it has a \$39.99 online test that generates a 15+ page report with recommendations appropriate for school or workplace. It provides a dyslexia score based on test results and has been used by leading assessment centers like the Office of Accessible Education at Stanford University. A high score qualifies individuals for the free e-book service (US citizens) through [Bookshare.org](#) as well as other resources. The screening test is superior to conventional reading screening tests because of its inclusion of auditory and visual processing features, sensitivity to discrepancies that may arise due to giftedness and dyslexia, and sensitivity to factors such as inattention, more extensive language disability, or intentional inaccurate responses (see more about the test [HERE](#)).



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Some users have used the documentation to successfully request IEP or 504 supports in schools or accommodations at work, but this result may vary. Some institutions may demand more extensive (i.e. multi-hour) testing for accommodations. If potential test-takers are concerned that they may not be able to interpret the results of the report, the test can also be administered through a dyslexia professional, like a psychologist, or tutor.

Sometimes it is possible to get free or low cost testing through your public school, private school, college, or university. Some community colleges require you to be enrolled in a course, but otherwise assess dyslexia for free. Some corporations may pay for outside testing and then even have free assistive technology and technology trainers if dyslexia is identified.

Professionals that test for dyslexia are typically learning specialists that may be educational psychologists, neuropsychologists, MDs (neurologists, developmental pediatricians), or other educational specialists with specialty training (for instance MEds, educational therapists). Because of the pandemic, many professionals are also conducting comprehensive testing remotely (like the [Summit Center](#) on the opposite page). If you are an adult, always check beforehand if a professional is testing adults or only children. In the past, some basic dyslexia assessment was available for free through the [Department of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) in the US, but we have heard back from some saying that services have been more limited since the start of the pandemic.

DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION



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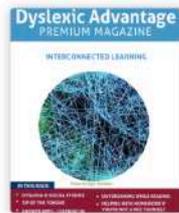
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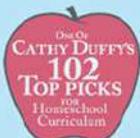
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DYSLEXIA

More information about workplace accommodations is available through AskJan.org, another free service paid for by the federal government.

Even many who may have considered dyslexia for years, but not formally had their dyslexia identified, may find formal test results organizing and empowering. Researcher Dr. Ruth Gwernan Jones found that dyslexia identification seems to cause a cascade of realizations and downstream actions that lead to self-acceptance and positive coping. From here [work](#):

"without identification of dyslexia, difficulties with reading and writing are most often attributed by others such as teachers, peers and/or parents to low intelligence and/or lack of effort. Some participants rejected this understanding and others internalised it...Identification of dyslexia provided a means of making sense of difficulties, bolstered self-belief in intelligence, and initiated changes in support and personal motivation which, for the majority of participants, were notably beneficial."

Blair again:

"My diagnosis has also helped me to take myself a little less seriously. Now, when I make a dyslexic mistake, I usually laugh. Understanding my dyslexia (both the strengths and the weaknesses that come with it) makes it possible for me to feel more comfortable with my learning difficulties and with myself. Soon after I was diagnosed, I started making jokes about myself, talking to my friends about my challenges, and cutting myself slack when I needed it. Of course, I still experienced moments in school when I found it hard to laugh, but these times were greatly reduced once I had a concrete explanation that validated my struggle."



PREMIUM ISSUE SEVENTY-ONE NOVEMBER 2021

Dyslexic Advantage PREMIUM MAGAZINE

PREMIUM



DYSLEXIA & MOTIVATION

- DYSLEXIA AND ACCELERATED READER
- TEACHING AND MOTIVATION
- REMOTE WORK HACKS
- STORYTELLING IN MATH FOR DYSLEXIA
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MASTER STORYTELLER AND TEACHER CALDECOTT WINNER JERRY PINKNEY

"I truly believe dyslexia made me the achiever I am in my art, and it made me who I am as a person..."

- Jerry Pinkney

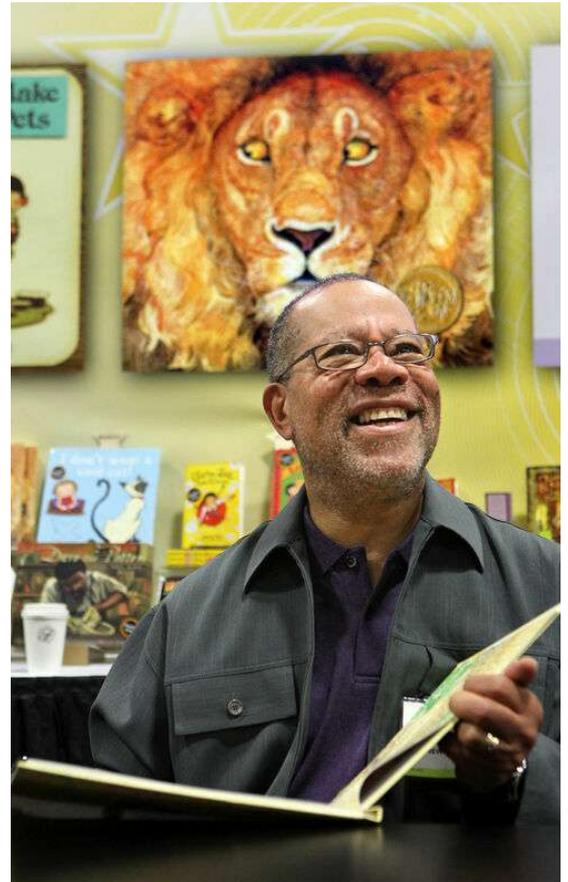
It is with great sadness that we learned that Jerry Pinkney, one of the greats of children illustration passed away in October at the age of 81. Our son, [Krister Eide](#), a budding children's book illustrator himself, had a chance to meet Jerry at a convention pre-pandemic. He said that Jerry was a thoughtful and generous teacher (photo bottom right).

In his lifetime, Jerry illustrated over 100 children's books and won many honors, including the coveted Caldecott Medal for his near worldless masterpiece, *The Lion and the Mouse*, based on the Aesop's fable.

Jerry struggled to read and write, but he found making pictures "centered my being, enabling me to focus. This creative activity bolstered my self-esteem."

Recalled, Jerry:

"I was putting marks on paper to learn and make peace with myself... the act of writing a note is still a challenge. Yet, I love to read, no matter how slowly."



[Legendary Illustrator Jerry Pinkney](#)

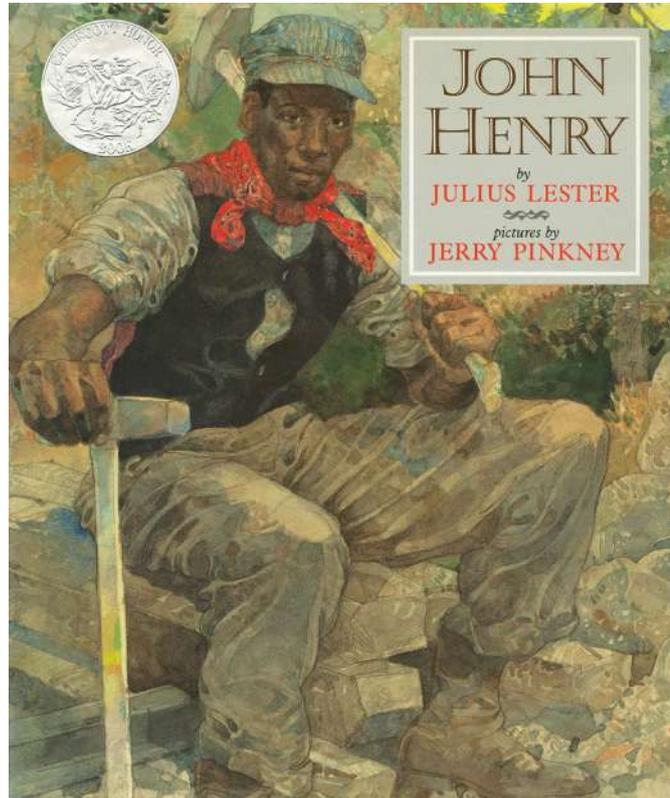


Jerry Pinkney was also acclaimed for writing and illustrating books that honored black heritage.

Jerry shared that he grew up with his parents retelling classic folktales that captured his imagination when he was little.

He **remembered** that Little Black Sambo was treasured in his household despite its more recent critical reevaluation.

"The tale of a small boy of color who exhibited courage and wit, and triumphed over something much larger than himself," was both appealing and affirming. These stories most often had a lesson, and they were told with the whole body, animated by laughter or punctuated with frowns, each teller embellishing tales told many times before. "I needed those stories—they filled a place in my daydreaming world and fired up my imagination. "



Jerry Pinkey's talk at the Norman Rockwell Museum.





Guidance on IEPs During Pandemic

Disability Scoop



Literacy Materials Get Science of Reading Overhaul But Will Teaching Change?

Edweek



Mom's Stress Over Dyslexia Support for Son

BBC



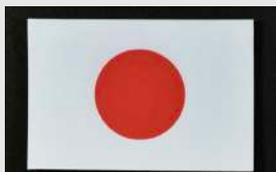
Asian American Kids Under-Recognized for Learning Disabilities

NBC News



Dyslexia Has Its Benefits; teachers need more training about this

iNews



Visual Elements Make Japanese Easier to Learn for Those with Dyslexia

Japan Times

CONGRATULATIONS STEVEN SEASON 2 LEGO MASTERS!

Congratulations to Steven Erickson and his brother Mark for winning the title of Lego Masters! We previously interviewed Steven in our June 2021 issue where he talked about his dyslexia and how making things always came easy to him although reading and spelling were more difficult.

In truth, many people predicted Steven and Mark might win the season and the brothers had beaten last year's season winners in another match up. The creations are truly inspiring. Their final 24 hour winning build was Warden of the Woods at right. You can see in all of their creations - it's not only so much ingenuity in their building, but also wonderful character and set creation and storytelling.

If you are a LEGO enthusiast your self or are encouraging one, check out the best builds of the season in the video below.



Congratulations again to Steven and Mark! They'll be splitting the \$100,000 prize and Steven will be using his part to build his own house!

Check out Steven's website and store [HERE](#).



Identify Learning Needs with Remote Assessments

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Summit Center specializes in helping students with diverse learning profiles and differences -- including kids who are dyslexic, gifted or both -- also known as twice exceptional. We now offer virtual testing, so we can test your child through the computer in the comfort of your own home. We evaluate strengths and challenges, and offer specific strategies and recommendations to maximize potential. We also offer remote counseling and consultation for anyone who needs added support.



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"Once I read Summit Center's report, I finally understood why my son was so frustrated. We made the changes he needed, and everything is better now. Thank you!"



“It’s a gift that I see things differently. I have an understanding about things others don’t have.”
- Jerry Pinkney

Above: Cover for Jerry's *The Lion and the Mouse*